

# TEACHER DISPOSITIONS

## Building a Teacher Education Framework of Moral Standards

Edited by Hugh Sockett



*Serving Learners*

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# Preface

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This volume is a welcome beginning to what must become an increasingly sophisticated examination of teacher dispositions and the role of teacher education in shaping them. Ultimately that examination must culminate in the creation of a code of ethics for the teaching profession. Such a code must become the framework for the development of professional dispositions.

The NCATE 2000 standards reframed expectations for schools, colleges, and departments of education from an emphasis on curriculum to an emphasis on outcomes for candidates. In order to clearly articulate its expectations, NCATE conceptualized these outcomes in terms of knowledge, skills, dispositions, and performance. While this conceptualization treats these outcomes discretely, in reality teacher education must help candidates develop as teaching professionals. The conceptualization was developed to draw attention to the attributes essential to professional teaching and to frame the evidence that NCATE would expect to see.

The new NCATE standards for the first time made the development of professional dispositions an explicit obligation of teacher educators. NCATE believed that the time had come for teacher educators to pay attention not merely to knowledge and skill development and teaching and learning but also to the moral and ethical development of teachers. At the same time, NCATE recognized that there was not yet a professional consensus about the moral and ethical dimension of teaching. NCATE saw its new expectations for the development of dispositions as unleashing a search by all institutions for the moral and ethical foundation of the profession of teaching.

Soon, arising from the collective energies of all its institutions, we hope the profession of teaching will develop and embrace a code of ethics to serve as a professional framework for the development and assessment of teacher dispositions. In the meantime, this collection of essays will help all institutions take part in the search for the foundation.

—Arthur E. Wise, President  
National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education



# Introduction

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Candidates for all professional education roles develop and model dispositions that are expected of educators. The unit articulates candidate dispositions as part of its conceptual framework(s). The unit systematically assesses the development of appropriate professional dispositions by candidates. Dispositions are not usually assessed directly; instead they are assessed along with other performances in candidates' work with students, families, and communities. (NCATE, 2002, p. 19)

The standards developed by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) at the beginning of this decade addressed the need to incorporate moral and ethical standards in the theory and practice of teacher education. They proposed an emphasis on dispositions that, although opaque, would necessarily lead to issues of a teacher's character and personality (i.e., his or her moral agency). For many teacher education institutions accustomed to a benign neutrality on moral issues, especially on controversies, and wedded to techniques embedded in the knowledge-base developments of the 1990s, the obligation to articulate dispositions programmatically as well as in the context of institution and unit assessment represented a major challenge.

This collection of three essays is written by members of the Task Force on Teacher Education as a Moral Community of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE). Founded by Barbara Burch during her presidency of the Association and chaired first by Hendrik Gideonse and then by Mary Ellen Finch, the task force has worked to raise the profile of moral thought and practice in the work of the Association through presentations, forums, conference sessions, a best practice award, and preconference workshops. The experience of the task force members, working with AACTE's central administration, led to the conclusion that the injection by NCATE into its procedures of an explicit attention to moral agency in students and teachers had left many institutions in difficulty. These essays are intended to help units and institutions grapple with these important problems.

In the first essay, Hugh Sockett focuses on three (of several) moral traditions that influence how we think about teaching: the Aristotelian emphasis on character; the Kantian stress on rules; and the more recent articulation of relationships, made most familiar to teacher educators by Nel Noddings. Sockett explains the differences of stance toward teaching explicit in these

positions, delineating the kinds of dispositions (or moral and intellectual virtue) germane to each. He explores the implications of moral development within each, but he also reminds us that students do not come to college as vessels empty of morals: Many already have serious religious and moral commitments, and the process may be better seen as exploring existing moral attitudes and sentiments in the framework of the public role of the teacher. From that base, he argues for two main positions to influence the articulation of dispositions: first, that moral dispositions have a cognitive core, and second, that David Norton's ideal that a person have "meaningful work" and "meaningful living" encourages teacher educators and students to live lives of integrity, of wholeness, in which the professional and the personal, although distinct, are not separate moral domains.

In the second essay, Erskine Dottin focuses on the salient question of moral life within an academic unit and marshals Dewey's complex thought to show how moral dispositions then might be articulated. NCATE places a premium on conceptual frameworks, and requires units to demonstrate candidate performance on dispositions. Many units have responded to these expectations in a manner suggesting that dispositions are add-on features and not naturally inherent in the process of education. Dottin argues that the moral quality of knowledge comes not from ingesting subject matter but instead from the social ends to which the knowledge is applied. He therefore (a) spells out a Deweyan approach to the acquisition of dispositions against the NCATE requirements for a conceptual framework, (b) outlines three Deweyan propositions as a basis for exploring the development of a conceptual framework, and (c) describes a model for implementation of desirable ends and addresses the educative process to facilitate those ends.

Finally, Mary Diez turns to the vexing problem of assessment. Drawing on her work with the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium's Standards Development Group as well as on the ongoing work in assessment by her colleagues at Alverno College, she identifies five principles to guide the assessment of teacher candidates' dispositions. These principles address the notion of assessing dispositions, provide critiques of specific approaches to the assessment process, and suggest implications for teacher educators' practice. Diez presents the case for each principle and provides scenarios illustrating the principles in action.

Together, these papers contribute to the continuing conversation about the place of the moral in teacher education.

—Hugh Sockett, Fairfax, Virginia

# I. Character, Rules, and Relations

*Hugh Sockett*

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The development of professional dispositions in a teacher is a process of moral education, given that teaching quality is primarily a moral, not technical, matter (Sockett, 1993). Yet significant philosophical differences of approach can yield descriptions of desirable moral dispositions equally different in content. The implicit argument in this paper is that units and institutions seeking to make the NCATE descriptions of dispositions less opaque must face up to the characterization and teaching of dispositions as a form of philosophical inquiry.

The explicit aim is to examine three major moral positions and to see what they yield in terms of moral dispositions. In the second part of this paper, therefore, I will illustrate the character of three moral perspectives from Western moral thought, with a brief comment on the different stances each has regarding moral development. In the third part, I will suggest that if we are serious about the development of moral dispositions, then we have to face two central challenges to our institutions and to our curriculum: (a) the promotion of the integrity, the wholeness, of the person/teacher, or what Norton calls “meaningful work to meaningful living” (Norton, 1991, p. 80); and (b) the centrality of knowledge in the development of dispositions. But to begin, I emphasize that neither students nor teacher educators are, morally speaking, clean slates. The NCATE standards may oblige us to characterize dispositions we seek to develop, but we neglect at our peril those dispositions that individuals in the teaching–learning engagement already have.

## Students and Teacher Educators

### Where the Student of Teaching Is

In terms of my religion, I am invisible. My professors, they look at me, see the color of my skin and think they know my story. I am African-American, I am Jewish. How can they see me if they do not know me? How can they teach me if they do not see me? (Kazanjian, 1999, para. 1)

The delineation of target dispositions is always in danger of triviality if no clear attempt is made to understand the existing moral perspectives the student/intending teacher has and what it means to educate from those perspectives. No student will be devoid of a moral background, however myopic or expansive it may be. Indeed, most classes of intending teachers will contain many people from different religious or nonreligious traditions, and consequently, these intending teachers will have strongly articulated moral perspectives that find expression as a commitment of service to children. Such heterogeneity may even be apparent in those institutions with a religious foundation, whether Catholic, Methodist, Jewish, or others that eschew indoctrination into specific dogmas as their mission. Yet, given the religiosity of American culture (a study by the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, 2001, indicated that 81% of Americans identify themselves with a specific religion), the likelihood is that many students will practice a religion (see also Public Agenda Foundation, 2005). We may assume that students already will have established moral views about personal and social behavior rooted in a religious standpoint. Sensitivity by teacher educators to the different religious and moral viewpoints of intending teachers, therefore, would seem morally important if we are to “start where the student is.” Yet that must mean also trying to work one’s self as a teacher educator out of the strange and uniquely American phobia about the word “moral” in moral education. The term *moral education* seems so controversial, even frightening, that it gets neutralized with various kinds of euphemisms such as *social education*, *character education*, or *values education*.

Teacher educators thinking about the development of moral dispositions are not in the business of giving people a new set of moral stripes (i.e., those determined by a college committee) for use in school. Such a view—namely, that professional dispositions have to be developed *de novo* in the student as moral agent—needs to be abandoned. First, we should not, morally speaking, conceptualize the life of a teacher as split in two: one life comprising home-based moral values and another life of school-based moral values and attitudes happily provided by teacher education (but see Robert Jackall’s study, 1988, of corporate managers living with such splits in the world of business). Such a notion would severely diminish the importance of each student’s moral integrity, which is seen as wholeness. Second, if we admit that a student is already grounded in some kind of moral perspective, the pedagogical task then becomes one of building on that moral grounding as the center of the teaching and learning process and, in doing so, respecting and educating the individual moral perspective of the student. Third, institutions must avoid

constructing dispositions with a deficit model of the person/student, as if the development of dispositions consisted of just correcting undesirable elements such as prejudice. Young students are not moral imbeciles; the task for teachers is one of education, not remediation. The task might appropriately be broadly conceived as Deweyan. That is, the mission is not merely finding out the individual's moral sensitivities and commitments but educating by exploring the value inherent in them (Wilson, 1968).

Notwithstanding the more or less developed moral stances with which a teacher comes to learn, to teach is to take on a public role, and students will not have developed moral sophistication in areas in which they have little or no experience. That public role rightly will demand expressions and complexities of moral life that may be new to the developing young teacher. For instance, students encouraged to speak their mind as a matter of individual conscience will find that the public role of the teacher constrains the teacher's freedom to express whatever moral point of view he or she may have, a problem that must clearly form part of the moral education agenda for teachers. Overall, the task in teacher education is to connect what one might call the primary moral sentiments, beliefs, and attitudes of the person learning to teach to the moral complexities implicit in the public role. It is to find out where the student is and develop an educational stance about professionalism somewhere between declarative moralizing at one end and disarming neutrality at the other.

## Where the Teacher Educator Is

Yet the teacher educator, like the student, has a moral perspective that may continue to be explored and developed. Indeed, he or she needs to be grounded in a coherent moral posture from which discussion of professional dispositions can proceed with a student. Three moral traditions in the practice of teaching are worth examination.

Suppose a teacher educator is watching student John teach a lesson and notices that he is particularly sarcastic with sixth-grader Susan, constantly puts the child down when she tries to answer, and generally bullies her intellectually. How might the postlesson discussion begin? What characteristic moral responses might teacher educators bring to consideration as they review lessons with student John?

Consider first Teacher Educator A. He says, "John, are you deliberately choosing to become the sort of person and teacher who hurts other people?" This question emphasizes the student as an emerging person and his *character*.

It is directly in the tradition of Aristotle, as articulated by such scholars as Alasdair MacIntyre (1984) and David Norton (1991).

Consider Teacher Educator B. She inquires, “John, why have you not yet learned the rule that you must not single out students and bully them in this way?” This response stresses the social context of *rules*. It is the classical liberal position in terms of the progress of moral development. This position, which emerged from Hobbes, Kant, and Mill, is widely articulated by John Rawls (1971, 2001), Lawrence Kohlberg (1981, 1984), and such followers as Fritz Oser (1994).

Consider Teacher Educator C. She sits next to John on a school bench and, putting her arm around his shoulders, says, “John, let us talk together about how we all try to create caring relationships with children.” This approach focuses on *relationships*. It is known widely as a feminist position variously articulated in our generation by Carol Gilligan (1982), Nel Noddings (1988), Mary Field Belenky and her coauthors (1986), and many others. The position grows from the work of Martin Buber (1970) and others.

Each of these responses could be used by teacher educators, but they represent hugely different emphases in how the moral agent conducts his or her life and, therefore, how the student teacher might be expected to act in a classroom.

## The Ethical Underpinnings of the Responses

What, then, are the moral perspectives underlying these three responses? How might each perspective regard the moral development of those dispositions characteristic of the position, and, thereby, what will count as the professional development to be assessed?

### Character: Is This the Sort of Person You Want to Become?

The fundamental idea behind an ethics of character is that knowledge, through education and self-knowledge, affords intrinsic rewards to the individual, issuing in the self-fulfilling conduct that Aristotle called *eudaimonia*. How we conceive of ourselves and of our lives is what matters. Being a human being demands taking responsibility for one’s self and for what kind of human being one becomes. Following ethical rules is subordinate to that self-discovery. Rules are desirable insofar as they assist in a person’s self-understanding. Who one becomes is one’s own choice, a matter of one’s own initiative. “[T]he self is a task, a piece of work, the work of self-actualization” (Norton, 1991, p. 6).

Three ideas do not apply to this ethics of character. First, it is not an elitist view of moral agency; rather, framed democratically, there is in Barber's terms "an aristocracy of everyone" (Barber, 1992, p. 5). Human beings are seen as invested innately with potential. Second, as Norton points out, this position is not egoistic; rather, by conducting this project of one's self, the project will be of objective value to others. Third and most important, although the method appears individualistic, one's choices and one's development rest in interdependence with others.

This ethics-of-character model is also appropriate for a democratic society. If the purpose of government is to enhance the life of human beings and that enhancement can be done only by individuals themselves, then the major function of government is to provide the conditions for getting the best opportunities in position for individual self-discovery and self-development. The task of government, then, demands the removal of obstacles, such as poverty, that prevent such self-actualization (Norton, 1991, p. 80). Enhancing the life of human beings means enabling them to acquire moral virtues, understood as *dispositions of character*.

By Norton's neo-Aristotelian account of the ethics of character, the primary task is to engage the individual's initiative through self-discovery—that is, in the old Greek phrase, to "know thyself." Such self-discovery is not compartmentalized. For instance, if in adolescence we acquire or are taught ways of examining our lives, that knowledge will extend to everything from how we conduct ourselves on the basketball court to how we conduct the relationship with our beloved. The foundation of virtue, by Norton's account, is moral integrity, because it unifies the virtues, which once again can be seen as dispositions of character. It brings together all aspects of the self, desires, interests, and roles that we can think of as separable. It implies wholeness, completeness, and the profound sense of honesty one has in confronting who one is.

In this tradition and connected to self-knowledge and integrity, Plato's cardinal virtues of wisdom, courage, temperance, and justice may be found. Out of these cardinal virtues we fashion our character; we choose to become the people we are and we do that on our own initiative. This idea applies to us, of course, as established or would-be teachers. Our moral life is always a project-in-being, a task, in modern jargon, of continuous improvement. We need to ensure the connection of meaningful work and meaningful living. If virtues are dispositions of character and dispositions are the contemporary currency of discussing the moral character of teachers, then we can add self-knowledge and integrity to wisdom, courage, temperance, and justice. I

will return shortly (see “Differently Conceived Moral Development” below) to examining these in the context of teacher education.

## **Rules: What Is Right to Do?**

The primary mode of understanding morality in the classical liberal tradition involves the question, “What is it right to do in this situation?” This question represents a marked break with ethics of Aristotelian origins. For Immanuel Kant, for instance, the answers were built around categorical imperatives such as “Act only as if you were a law-making member of the kingdom of ends”; in other words, do what you would want everyone to follow. This formal idea needs substance. Mill fits the substance of the rules into the idea of bringing about the “greatest happiness to the greatest number,” while John Rawls (1971, 2001) and others view justice as the supreme principle. (Contemporary politics seem to operate more on Mill’s principle than on Rawls’.) Therefore, the decision about what is right to do or which rules to follow must be interpreted against such substantive views (i.e., justice, greatest happiness) of the primary, or group of primary, principles that form the criterion for the articulation and establishment of rules.

Integral to the idea of what is right to do is the idea of moral, not legal, duty. That is, the rules become connected to the individual following them through the idea that the agent is morally bound to follow the rules. But when everyone has duties to everyone else in moral terms, reciprocity is created: One person’s duty becomes another person’s right. So rules get framed in a context of rights as well as duties, and these contexts matter hugely in a democracy and in a political framework in which we speak of natural rights, human rights, and the rights of man. The Golden Rule, “Do as you would be done by,” characterizes the central feature of reciprocal rights and duties. The social contract, if there be one, is necessarily one defined by rules as commitments. Law consists of rules of one kind or another, so the rule of law demands that individuals know what a rule is, how to follow a rule, how to make judgments about the introduction of new rules, and how to apply the old ones.

We have seen so far that the ethics of character focuses on the individual’s personal development. Now we can see that the ethics of rules focuses on having the individual follow moral rules derived from principles of social organization (often thought of as implying a social contract.) When we take justice to be the primary principle of social organization, it must be interpreted across many spheres of human life, from issues of the fair distribution of resources (i.e., distributive justice and social justice), to matters of sanctions

where coercion is needed to punish malefactors (i.e., retributive justice), to all rules of impartiality. However, this principle of justice (or any other) considered as primary in a democratic frame often will conflict in application with such principles as equality and liberty. An emphasis on freedom, for example, often comes at the expense of equality and social justice, and the possibilities of conflict are inevitable between principles and rules. The upshot is that rules *do not determine their application*. (Just as the rule “Love thy neighbor” immediately evokes the question “Who is my neighbor?” so every rule requires exactly that kind of thought in application.) Human beings constantly make judgments about how rules apply, what to decide when there is conflict, and so on. Regarding the principles backing an ethic of rules, nothing is open and shut.

This matter of applying rules has led to one important feature of talk about the ethics of rules, as far as teachers are concerned. Richard Hare (1963) emphasized that each individual must build principles of action for himself or herself rooted in the Kantian principle that those rules should be universal. If, for example, I decided that as a moral principle it is my duty at Christmas to contribute more to charities than to my family, then I would be constructing that principle for myself, although I would believe it is my duty in part because it could—indeed should—be of universal applicability. The ethics of rules demands that individuals construct, interpret, and weigh the rules as they act morally. One makes decisions of principle under this ethic that then become our moral habits. Such principles form the moral bedrock from which a person operates.

So we now have a picture of the person whose moral life is framed by an ethics of rules. He or she has a set of principles, derived from principles of social organization such as liberty or justice, that frame the moral life. Rules are followed, and in some cases created, by the individual within a sense of duty and responsibility as well as an awareness of one’s rights as a human being. Such rules, of course, must be followed autonomously: I must choose to obey the rules. When I obey the rules under the orders of others (i.e., heteronomously), I am not behaving as a full-fledged moral agent. Above all, I must constantly decide where the rules apply. The responsibility of the individual regarding an ethics of rules is primarily cognitive, so one might call the dispositions it fosters *dispositions of intellect* to set alongside the *dispositions of character* we have earlier noted.

What would these dispositions be? In general terms for the moment, I suggest wisdom, consistency (in the application of rules), fairness and impartiality (from the principle of justice), and open-mindedness in the consid-

eration of rules and their place in the context of an ethics of rules rooted in justice. Notice the absence of interpersonal virtues. To these issues, too, we will return.

### **Relationships: How Do We See This Together?**

It was against the ethics of rules derived from central principles of classical liberalism that Carol Gilligan developed her important thesis that women think about moral issues, especially dilemmas, not in terms of rules and principles but in terms of relationships. Her target was Kohlberg's analysis of moral development (we'll discuss this concept shortly). She has been followed by many scholars, not exclusively by those whom we might label *feminist* (a term often deployed as a substitute for thought). The distinction Gilligan was after is illustrated in this anecdote. The youth deserting the army and coming back home will get from his father the stern and detached admonition, "Go back and take your punishment like a man," while from his mother he will hear the soft welcome, "Come to me, my baby." The woman *naturally* feels differently about what is critical in a moral situation. The most critical element in the moral notion of caring is contained in the word "we" in the statement I posed: "Come and sit next to me, John, while we think about how we all try as teachers to be more caring with children." The focus is not on the individual teacher or parent caring for the child, as if it were a piece of antique furniture on which one lavished care and attention. Rather, the focus is on the *relationship* between what Noddings (1984) called "the one caring" and the "one cared-for." The notion of justice, which we have just explored, is thought of from this perspective as detached, as paternal, without the receptivity, relatedness, and responsiveness characteristic of caring and typically thought of as maternal. (I am going to put on one side the issues of the parental analogy, notwithstanding the importance of the notion of *in loco parentis* in how a teacher frames his or her role.)

Centering the moral in relationships focuses on how "we meet the other morally" (Noddings, 1984, p. 5) and on the uniqueness of human encounters. It is empirically obvious, but worth indicating philosophically, that the experience we all have of the challenges of caring for and being cared for are complex and highly intricate. We have only to think of our relationships with our close family members—our children, our parents, our siblings—to comprehend that complexity. From the inside, in Noddings' view, the one caring experiences a displacement of interest from his or her own reality to that of others. The one caring says, "I feel your pain," as it were. This displacement goes well beyond a feeling of empathy or even compassion; rather, the caring

one sees the other person's reality as a real possibility for himself or herself. "I must make a commitment to act. The commitment to act on behalf of the cared-for, a continued interest in his reality through an appropriate time-span, and the continuing renewal of that caring are the essential elements of caring" (Noddings, 1984, p. 16). For the cared-for one, on the other hand, the reception of the authentic attitude of the one caring transforms the relationship.

Three major concepts are at the core of this moral idea of caring, according to Noddings (1984). *Receptivity* defines a relationship in which both parties are open to the other, building a context of trust and understanding. *Relatedness* suggests the ability of both to fashion the relationship, to contribute to it, and to have it grow. *Responsiveness* implies the readiness to commit to a relationship, whatever it brings. These three terms form *dispositions of care*. I use that term advisedly. It is somewhat unhappy, I think, but useful as a heuristic against those of character and intellect.

These three dispositions connect deeply to moral sentiments. The first connection involves the centrality of interpersonal trust in receptivity. Second, one builds on one's heritage as a family member able to relate to other people and on those abilities that are psychologically connected to parental relationships. Third, the idea of responsiveness implies the notion of commitment to the person, to the "other," as opposed to commitment to the "rule." But there is, as Norton (1991) points out, a problem for the caring one: How can she do this before she has a self to give? If Belenky's account of stage development in women is correct, the answer to this question cannot be a simple matter. We will return to these issues later. Finally (and briefly), I conclude this section with the different accounts of moral development.

## Differently Conceived Moral Development

Each stance toward morality requires different sets of what I will call primary dispositions.

1. Primary dispositions of *character* in an ethics of character are self-knowledge and integrity in the context of wisdom, courage, temperance, and justice.
2. Primary dispositions of *intellect* in an ethics of rules are wisdom, consistency (in the application of rules), fairness and impartiality (from the principle of justice), and open-mindedness in the consideration of rules when the ethics of rules is rooted in justice.

3. Primary dispositions of *care* include receptivity, relatedness, and responsiveness in the context of the creation of trust.

Each position differs in its account of the moral development of the individual, and thus each must influence how we conceive the development of dispositions among students for teaching. Institutions must articulate both a substantive position and a view of development, which would be as listed below.

*Development of dispositions of character.* First, the dispositions of character are fostered through self-knowledge and self-discovery. Norton's (1991) interpretation of Aristotle is that the opportune time for such development is during adolescence and youth when, for example, exposure to the intricacies of different vocational choices provides for the development of lifelong goals and ideas, what Norton calls "meaningful work to meaningful living" (1991, p. 82). The self-discovery in this period provides for an "inherent propensity to spread from the realm in which it is first engaged to other things" (p. 82). (We need not be surprised that the adolescent helping out in a youth club or Sunday school applies for entry to teaching.) What matters here is the identification of an individual with certain kinds of values. Norton puts it even more strongly: "Values-identification is the actualization of an implicit identity" (p. 85). It is crucial that we defer to others' responsibility for their own self-actualization. Using this view, which I have not attempted to articulate fully, the central task of teacher education would be for the student to take the initiative in discovering what values he or she identifies with, then explore ways to understand those values as virtues of character (i.e., intellectual courage).

*Development of dispositions of intellect.* Most readers are sufficiently familiar with the stage-development scenario established first by Piaget: pre-operational, concrete operations, and autonomous. Each stage was characterized by Kohlberg (1981, 1984) as pre-conventional, conventional, and post-conventional, with two categories within each:

Preconventional:

1. Obedience and punishment
2. Individualism, instrumentalism, and exchange

Conventional:

3. Good boy/good girl
4. Law and order

Postconventional:

5. Social contract
6. Principled conscience

The emphasis in this view of development is on how people think and how they act in accordance with rules. For example, at the first stage, people behave according to socially acceptable norms because they are told to do so by an authority figure who threatens sanctions. The second conventional stage is characterized by a view that right behavior means acting in one's own best interests, but such behavior includes both doing what will gain approval and abiding by laws to do one's duty. The third stage of moral thinking is elusive, Kohlberg thought, for most people. It involves genuine interest in the welfare of others and later a mix of universal principle and conscience. To accept this view of moral development, however, we would clearly need students to understand and operate at stage 3, because it is difficult to see what effective guidance they could give to children in moral terms without a profound understanding of universalizability and the importance of judgment and questions (see Kohlberg, 1981, 1984).

*Development of dispositions of care.* Third, Belenky et al.'s (1986) account of moral development, included within the development of knowledge and identity, is very different from Noddings', but it is more typical of an ethic of caring. Belenky et al. gave an account of the epistemological development of women. Their study of women is highly suggestive for teacher education as a mirror in which students can see themselves. The "ways of knowing" in their title are

- Silence
- Received knowledge: Listening to the voices of others
- Subjective knowledge: The inner voice: The quest for self
- Procedural knowledge: The voice of reason
- Separate and connected knowing
- Constructed knowledge: Integrating the voices

The emphasis on development for teacher education would be the development of the connected teacher. She would, like Noddings' ideal, stress the relationship, specifically in terms of trust, using the child's experience. She would seek to connect, to enter each child's perspective. She would do this not by some corrupt use of power, as O'Brien did with Winston Smith in Orwell's *1984*, but through authority that is framed cooperatively. Unlike an ethics of rules, which believes that rules can be determined to be correct or

not, this ethics of caring as connectedness emphasizes the idea that all knowledge is constructed and that, as with the ethics of character, what one knows and believes is perhaps the critical ingredient in one's personal identity.

## Implications for Teacher Education

Does the articulation of three different positions mean they are somehow exclusive? I think not, but I often have been struck by the way the examination of philosophical positions for intellectual reasons seems to undermine the possibility of individuals' reconciling these different views in their real lives (but see Katz, Noddings, & Strike, 1999, for a search for common ground between justice and caring). For example, Kohlberg (1981, 1984) virulently attacked the use of moral virtues in moral education, and his followers such as Fritz Oser (1994) argued that we have to reject virtues because we cannot measure them empirically. Such arguments have their place, but all moral positions assume that moral autonomy is central in moral agency. This idea of autonomy implies that individuals make choices about their moral lives and that those choices may entail seeing different aspects of the moral life through different moral emphases. Character does involve following rules and establishing relationships. Following rules and building a conscience is a form of character formation within which relationships have to be fostered. Relationships are always in some sense governed by rules and, as with marriage, they certainly form and test character.

Two claims from this articulation are primary for teacher education. First, Norton's (1991) account of meaningful work and meaningful living gives us a profound understanding of the complexity of becoming and being a teacher. Second, the core of any moral life is cognitive. Both these claims have a major impact on what we might see as the moral dispositions of the teacher and how these dispositions are conceptualized and placed within a teacher education program.

## Meaningful Work and Meaningful Living

Norton's (1991) account emphasizes that it is morally desirable that everyone (our teachers, especially) live lives that are integrated through meaningful work and meaningful living. We want students to see from this perspective a continuous moral transformation and interplay between their work and their lives. Given what I have briefly adumbrated about the Aristotelian approach, we also need to understand that virtues (or dispositions of character) are not independent but interdependent and that the dispositions of character, intel-

lect, and care are likewise interdependent. The person who is just will also be temperate. The person who is wise will also be courageous. This is what Norton calls an interpenetration of the meanings of these virtues (p. 102). *The relationship of ethics to practice is not an addition but a transformation.* A student who begins to understand himself or herself in the light of dispositions of character is not acquiring a new bag of virtues but is transforming his or her stance to encompass what teaching is and who he or she is.

But if, in this view of the ethics of character, the moral self-development of the individual is central, not merely an addition, what are we to make of the disintegrated NCATE standards in which moral dispositions are an add-on? This story would take too long to unravel. But fundamentally, our dominant epistemology of teaching remains trapped within a quasi-scientific approach to the practice of teaching and its research. Embodied in that notion of the so-called knowledge-base approach, our dominant approach gives rise to the incoherent view that the teacher is a technician with a topping of moral dispositions (see Sockett, 1993, 1996).

Yet, morally speaking, those dispositions of character, intellect, and care are the heart of the matter, not just the topping or the add-on. The development of dispositions of character, intellect, and caring are *the core of professional teaching*, each demanding knowledge and self-knowledge. As a practical addendum, a teacher also will need a complex set of skills and strategies, pedagogies and methods, knowledge of what is taught and knowledge of society and psyche. Yet the way that the NCATE standards are written seems to invite just this disintegrated picture of the person as teacher. That makes the challenge even more severe.

## Knowledge and the Moral Life

This is not the place to explain the strict limits that have to be placed around the presently fashionable notion that we construct knowledge. So let me start at the other end. Meaningful work and meaningful living must ultimately emphasize the place of knowledge of one's self, of others or material things, derived as it is from the *Nichomachean Ethics* of Aristotle, without which one cannot make moral progress. Many great novels, *Crime and Punishment* for example, explore this theme. If you also trace Kohlberg's ideas of development through Piaget to Kant, you will find the moral life viewed as essentially cognitive, although that tradition faces the problem first mentioned by Aristotle of *akrasia*, or weakness of will. In other words, we know what to do but don't do it. Even for Noddings, the apprehension of the other involves major cognitive effort if we are to connect, to understand the other, to place

ourselves in the other's reality. Primarily, our search for moral quality implies a search for knowledge, for what is true. Yet as learners in formal situations, we gain much of our knowledge through our contacts and relationships with others, especially with our teachers. These are people we come to trust.

Trust is a major ingredient in moral life. Whatever else is meant by trust, we know that it cannot be built if those in the trusting relationship do not care about the truth, are prone to telling lies, or deceive the other in major or minor ways. Even a minor deceit uncovered saps the confidence critical to trust. Morally speaking, it is of educational importance that students trust their teachers. What dispositions of character, intellect, or care are required for a teacher to establish that trust? Noddings would see this question as part of a caring relationship, as would I. Yet whatever else a teacher must do, he or she must be accurate about what he or she says, if trust is to have a chance.

This fact suggests that we may need to make an operational distinction between moral and intellectual virtues. This tactic will set aside the intricacies of the philosophical distinctions between the moral and the intellectual for another time. Earlier, I set out the main dispositions that directly arise from the three views of ethics I have characterized: self-knowledge and integrity, wisdom, courage, temperance, and justice (from character); wisdom, consistency, fairness, impartiality, and open-mindedness (from rules); and receptivity, relatedness, and responsiveness in the context of the creation of trust (from dispositions of care). Some of these dispositions, such as fairness, have obvious interpersonal moral contexts; others, such as consistency and open-mindedness, have a more intellectual (or cognitive) context. Some, such as bravery, can be both. A person may be brave both by hurling himself into a river to save a drowning child and by speaking his mind in a context of serious threat. Important dispositions of intellect, however, are sincerity and accuracy; sincerity, the characteristic of caring about the truth, is parasitic on accuracy itself (Williams, 2003).

Yet in all these cases, we cannot rely on our sentiments or feelings or on what we learned in college. We cannot be fair, impartial, or just in a particular context without the knowledge both of the situation and of what it means to act fairly, impartially, or justly. No one can be brave without a clear understanding of the situation and of its dangers. We cannot be brave by accident, but we can foster bravery as both a moral and an intellectual virtue in others. Being open-minded is not just thinking everyone has a right to an opinion and listening to that opinion, but being able to change one's mind in the light of new evidence—that is the hard part. We must be able to look at evidence, see it as evidence, and evaluate it. Knowledge counts.

When we think of dispositions, we must think of both moral and intellectual virtues. They come together, in brief, in the moral significance of the teacher who creates a relationship of trust with his or her students. Intellectually, the teacher at least must be honest and accurate, say what he or she thinks, be consistent, and perhaps be brave. Morally, the teacher must be impartial, compassionate, and kind, without prejudice and with a great sensitivity to the child's needs and interests. And, of course, the teacher must be much more, for each institution will develop its own perspectives and emphases in both moral and intellectual terms.

My central claim, then, is that teacher educators must put first and foremost the kinds of knowledge germane to those dispositions they emphasize. That emphasis must be wide-ranging and respectful of truth and of the problems that truth creates for ideology. It must have balance and challenge. Virtues hold cognitive imperatives. But the coherence is dependent on working with individual students on the Aristotelian project of creating their moral and intellectual personas inside and outside the classroom.

However, these arguments do suggest a way of conceptualizing teacher dispositions anew in the following way:

*Dispositions.* The professional virtues, qualities, and habits of mind and behavior held and developed by teachers on the basis of their knowledge, understanding, and commitments to students, families, their colleagues, and communities. Such dispositions—of character, intellect, and care—will be manifest in practice, will require sophisticated judgment in application, and will underpin teachers' fundamental commitments to education in a democratic society, such as the responsibility to set high standards for all children, harbor profound concern for each individual child, and strive for a classroom and school environment of high intellectual and moral quality.

Dispositions as professional qualities of *character* imply such virtues as self-knowledge, courage, sincerity, and trustworthiness. Qualities of *intellect* imply such virtues as truthfulness, accuracy, fairness, and impartiality. Qualities of *care* imply such virtues as tolerance, tact, discretion, civility, and compassion. Institutions will determine their own emphases and commitments across these three broad categories, enriched by their own traditions, experiences, and orientations.

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# II. A Deweyan Approach to the Development of Moral Dispositions in Professional Teacher Education Communities: Using a Conceptual Framework

*Erskine S. Dottin*

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## Introduction

The salient moral question in the development of a teacher education unit's conceptual framework is how colleagues, candidates, staff members, administrators, and relevant others ought to live in the unit. A unit's response to this moral question (a) will highlight those characteristics and dispositions seen as morally important in guiding life in the unit; (b) can help the unit to consider the values it wants to encourage in its candidates through their thinking, behaving, and feeling; and (c) will focus attention on how candidates, faculty members, and other personnel should behave ethically and on the highest good to which the unit aspires.

The standards of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE, 2002) place a premium on a unit's ability to share a conceptual framework that provides direction for curriculum, programs, and governance through the articulation of an underlying philosophy congruent with the broader mission of the institution in which the unit is located. That conceptual framework is, first, a way of thinking for oneself, a way of seeing, thinking, and being that defines the sense of the unit across all its programs, thereby specifying the reasons for its existence and how life ought to be lived in the unit. Second, the framework sets forth the operational manner of the unit regarding what candidates should know (i.e., content knowledge), what they should be able to do (i.e., curricular, technological, and pedagogical knowledge and skills), and to what they should be disposed (i.e., moral sensibilities). Third, it describes the knowledge base(s), derived from sound research and best practice on teaching and learning, upon which the learning

outcomes are grounded. Finally, it describes assessments and evaluation measures needed to produce the desired results in candidates' performance.

Yet the translation and operationalization of the conceptual framework has not been easy for many units to achieve. Of particular difficulty is the connection between the conceptual framework and the salient moral question—that is, the framework's articulation of how life in the unit ought to be lived and how that life will enable students to acquire requisite habits of mind and moral sensibilities or dispositions.

In this paper, I spell out a Deweyan approach to the acquisition of dispositions against the NCATE requirements for a conceptual framework. In Part I, I outline three of Dewey's central propositions as a philosophical basis for exploring the development of a conceptual framework upon which to build community like-mindedness, specifically using his model of a family. In Part II, I describe a model for implementation of desirable ends that are shaped by the NCATE requirements for a conceptual framework, and in Part III, I address the educative process to facilitate those ends.

## Part I. John Dewey: A Philosophical Basis

### Three Propositions

Dewey's view of moral agency is that the agent

must know what he is doing . . . must choose it, and choose it for itself . . . the act must (also) be the expression of a formed and stable character . . . . It must be voluntary; that is, it must manifest a choice, and for full morality at least, the choice must be an expression of the general tenor and set of personality. It must involve awareness of what one is about; a fact which in the concrete signifies that there must be a purpose, an aim, an end in view, something for the sake of which the particular act is done. (Dewey, 1960, p. 8)

This view embodies the three central propositions that (a) purpose is formulated through ends and means and their interaction; (b) human life is characteristically communal, and only through social intercourse do we create meaning and value; and (c) our intellectual and moral dispositions are cognitive.

First, "making moral judgments involves developing a sense of personal direction towards the goals that one foresees, however dimly, for oneself"

(Lipman, Sharp, & Oscanyan, 1977, p. 15); that is, the individual is making a connection between means and ends. What ends ought to be pursued? Dewey's comments seem moot to "the multitudes of men and women who take their aims from what they observe going on around them" (1960, p. 29) and who would think it "moral rebellion" not to follow convention or religious, political, or other powerful authorities. Yet, "there can, however, be no such thing as reflective morality except where men seriously ask by what purposes they should direct their conduct and why they should do so; what it is which makes their purposes good" (Dewey, pp. 29–30).

But this is a complex process for Dewey. First, one does not reach what he calls an end-in-view merely through wishful anticipation or through the "propulsive force of habit" (Dewey, 1960, p. 31). Second, one's end-in-view would not be "animating" without the thought of that end-in-view becoming a "desire centered in an object." That demands deliberation and inquiry, which implies "deferring immediate action" (pp. 31–32). The concept of "end" therefore "implies the need of looking ahead, of judging" (p. 38).

Therefore, Dewey insists,

acting with an aim is all one with acting intelligently. To foresee a terminus of an act is to have a basis upon which to observe, to select, and to order objects and our own capacities. To do these things means to have a mind—for mind is precisely intentional purposeful activity controlled by perception of facts and their relationships to one another. To have a mind to do a thing is to foresee a future possibility; it is to have a plan for its accomplishment; it is to note the means which make the plan capable of execution and the obstructions in the way . . . it is to have a plan which takes account of resources and difficulties. Mind is the capacity to refer present conditions to future results, and future consequences to present conditions. And these traits are just what is meant by having an aim or a purpose. (1916/1944, p. 103)

Moreover, in opposition to a positivist who would demand a harsh separation between ends (values) and means (facts), the end is not, in Dewey's view, to be seen as an externally imposed end that might lead to a separation between ends and means. Rather,

an end which grows up within an activity as plan for its direction is always both ends and means, the distinction being only one of convenience. Every means is a temporary end until we have

attained it. Every end becomes a means of carrying activity further as soon as it is achieved. We call it end when it marks off the future direction of the activity in which we are engaged; means when it marks off the present direction. Every divorce of end from means diminishes by that much the significance of the activity and tends to reduce it to drudgery from which one would escape if he could. (Dewey, 1916/1944, p. 106)

Dewey also visualizes a social end in which the ultimate end is “cultivation of power to join freely and fully in shared or common activities” (1916/1944, p. 123), for “any individual has missed his calling [as] teacher, student, who does not find that the accomplishment of results of value to others is an accompaniment of a process of experience inherently worthwhile” (p. 12). We “always must grow up, in a social medium . . . a medium of accepted meanings and values” through which we acquire “a mind of our own,” which cannot be just “a purely isolated possession of the self . . . building up knowledge anew on its own account” (p. 295). The social character and relationships necessary to the creation of meaning and value rule out moral individualism (Dewey, 1916/1944).

Finally, Dewey connects habits/dispositions with the cognitive through urging us to live in a manner that enables us to acquire “habits that render our action [conduct] intelligent” (Dewey, 1916/1944, p. 344). To him, it is clear that we “ought to live in a manner that enhances our growth through the application of our thinking to things already known for the purpose of improving social conditions. This requires the acquisition of *dispositions* both intellectual and social,” (p. 344), for

only that which has been organized into our disposition so as to enable us to adapt the environment to our needs and to adapt our aims and desires to the situation in which we live is really knowledge. Knowledge is not just something which we are now conscious of, but consists of the dispositions we consciously use in understanding what now happens . . . Knowledge as an act is bringing some of our dispositions to consciousness with a view to straightening out a perplexity, by conceiving the connection between ourselves and the world in which we live. (p. 344)

Kardash and Sinatra (2003) confirmed Dewey’s argument in this respect. Their studies positively correlate epistemological beliefs and cognitive dispositions such as willingness to consider alternative points of view. In addition,

Stanovich and colleagues found that certain dispositional propensities are highly related to problem-solving performance (Sa, West, & Stanovich, 1999; Stanovich, 1999; Stanovich & West, 1997, 1998). In the preceding paper in this monograph, Sockett also claims that the acquisition of dispositions is inherent in the process of education and must not be an “add-on” feature. Hansen (2001) characterized moral sensibility in Deweyan fashion. “Conduct in teaching,” he writes, “constitutes a pattern of action that supports meaningful teaching and learning. That pattern reflects, or emerges from, the teacher’s agency, intentions, will, thought, feeling, imagination, and memory. . . . Person and conduct come to light in complementary fashion” (p. 39). But, he continues, “the moral quality of knowledge lies not in its ‘possession,’ . . . but in how it can foster a widening consciousness and mindfulness” (p. 59), making explicit the connections of dispositions to knowledge. This “moral cast of mind,” Hansen writes, embodies commitments to “straightforwardness, simplicity, spontaneity, naiveté, open-minded integrity of purpose, responsibility, and seriousness” (pp. 45–56).

### **Dewey’s “Family” and the Building of Community Like-Mindedness**

In Dewey’s view, dispositions needed by teachers and other school personnel would be the habits that would render their actions (conduct) intelligent in the world of practice, and as such, those dispositions would guide how life is lived in a unit. The task here is to connect these philosophical insights and add Dewey’s characterization of the family to explore the dimensions of a unit’s conceptual framework. In Part II, I will describe a detailed model of implementation.

A conceptual framework enhances the making of moral judgments. That framework also provides and brings moral structure, coherence, and consistency to experiences in a unit if there is continuous analysis of relationships among beliefs, relationships between beliefs and actions, and relationships among actions. In teacher education units, “many acts are done not only without thought of their moral quality but with practically no thought of any kind” (Dewey, 1960, p. 10). In considering the conduct of a unit, we should reflect on Dewey’s deployment of the concept of the family since “the family in its moral aspects has one end, the common good of all its members” (Dewey & Tufts, 1913, p. 571). “It is an enduring form of association in which the members of the group stand from the beginning in relations to one another, and in which each member gets direction for his conduct by think-

ing of the whole group and his place in it, rather than by an adjustment of egoism and altruism” (Dewey, 1960, p. 164).

Dewey, however, also describes the idea of the community in this way:

Men live in a community in virtue of the things which they have in common; and community is the way in which they come to possess things in common. What they must have in common in order to form a community or society are aims, beliefs, aspirations, knowledge—a common understanding—*like-mindedness* [italics added] as the sociologists say . . . . The communication which insures participation in a common understanding is one which secures similar emotional and intellectual dispositions—like ways of responding to expectations and requirements. (1916/1944, p. 4)

Indeed,

individuals do not even compose a social group because they all work for a common end. The parts of a machine work with a maximum of cooperativeness for a common result, but they do not form a community. *If, however, they were all cognizant of the common end and all interested in it so that they regulated their specific activity in view of it, then they would form a community* [italics added]. But this would involve communication. Each would have to know what the other was about and would have to have some way of keeping the other informed as to his own purpose and progress. (Dewey, 1916/1944, p. 5)

Dewey goes on to warn us that we sometimes use each other for our own purposes, with expressions of power (physical, positional, or technical) that mean people who “remain upon this level . . . form no true social group, no matter how closely their respective activities touch one another. Giving and taking of orders modifies action and results, but does not of itself effect a sharing of purposes, a communication of interests” (Dewey, 1916/1944, p. 5).

With this, we are forced to confront the relationship between the individual and the common good, the whole-part relationships within a social context. If we use the analogy of family, then “interest in the social whole of which one is a member necessarily carries with it interest in one’s own self. Every member of the group has his own place and work” (Dewey, 1960, p. 165), but

to suppose that social interest is incompatible with concern for one's own health, learning, advancement, power of judgment, etc., is literally nonsensical. Since each of us is a member of social groups and since the latter have no existence apart from the selves who compose them, there can be no effective social interests unless there is at the same time an intelligent regard for our own well-being and development. (p. 165)

If, then, the unit is envisaged as a family or a system (a collective whole), then the individual parts emerge naturally (i.e., departments and programs both initial and advanced). Like the idea of family, the unit becomes more than one faculty member plus another faculty member plus another. It becomes an "enduring form of association in which the members of the [unit] stand from the beginning in relations to one another, and in which each member gets direction for his [her] conduct by thinking of the whole . . . and his [her] place in it, rather than by an adjustment of egoism and altruism" (Dewey, 1960, p. 164). Indeed, "the test of an industry is whether it serves the community as a whole, satisfying its needs effectively and fairly while also providing the means of livelihood and personal development to the individuals who carry it on" (p. 164).

The place of the individual faculty member or program in the moral life of the unit is determined by "the very problem of morals . . . to form an original body of impulsive tendencies into a voluntary self in which desires and affections center in the values which are common; in which interest focuses in objects that contribute to the enrichment of the lives of all" (Dewey, 1960, p. 168). Of course, Dewey is not alone in this kind of claim. "Individual self-actualization is inherently social," writes Norton (1995, p. 134), arguing in Aristotelian language that "the virtuous society [professional community] is a collective good that knits together, rather than circumventing, the goods of individuals" (p. 143). This understanding has implications for leadership, too. Conceptualizing the unit as a moral community of departments and programs both initial and advanced suggests that leadership by compulsion has no moral standing, although "persons may and do yield to the demand of arbitrary force simply because they will suffer if they do not. But such yielding develops a slavish weakness in them and an arrogant disregard of the rights of others in those who have power" (Dewey, 1960, p. 68). Demands (both external and internal) to which faculty members and programs in the unit will be subject need not proceed, therefore, from authoritative fiat but from a sense of belonging; from a respect for the judgments of leaders; and

from a mutual exploration of different expectations that leads to the elaboration of common ends, purposes, aims, and means.

## Part II. Means—Ends Connection in the Development of a Conceptual Framework

The NCATE standards (2002) indicate that a conceptual framework should provide the following structural elements:

- The vision and mission of the institution and unit;
- The unit's philosophy, purposes, and goals;
- Knowledge bases including theories, research, wisdom of practice, and education policies;
- Candidate proficiencies aligned with the expectations in professional, state, and institutional standards; and
- The system by which candidate performance is regularly assessed.

(NCATE, 2002, p. 12)

In this second part of the paper, I will examine vision, mission, philosophy, purpose, and goals that delineate desirable ends. We should remain aware of Dewey's insistence on the constant interaction of both means and ends (see above), although we separate them for analytic purposes. The means—ends connection in the structural elements of the conceptual framework must be grounded in the understanding that the connection is continuous. How, then, does this general Deweyan perspective apply to a conceptual framework of the three primary ends of vision, mission, and philosophy? What are the curricular means in a Deweyan sense? What is implied thereby for an educative process for acquiring dispositions?

### Vision, Mission, and Philosophy

Kerka (2003) contended that *appreciative inquiry*, as he called it, engages people and organizations in discovering what gives life to human systems when they are most effective and constructive and when they are using that knowledge to envision and create the preferred future. Such inquiry assumes that reality is socially constructed and that organizations evolve in the direction of the images that people in the organization create. Behavior in the present is influenced by the anticipated future. The first element, therefore, of a unit's conceptual framework is a description of what the unit wants to become, which can be captured in a vision statement (Peterson, 1995).

“Creating a vision forces us to take a stand for a preferred future” (Block, 1987, p. 102). A vision/theme should emerge as a result of collaborative dialogue among the faculty and the members of its professional community, a dialogue framed by Peter Senge’s (1990) exhortation that learning organizations are synonymous with shared visions. “Shared vision,” Fullan warned, “is important in the long run, but for it to be effective you have to have something to share. It is not a good idea to borrow someone else’s vision” (Fullan, 1993, p. 13).

A productive way to articulate a vision is to envision what life in the unit might be like if the unit were functioning at its healthiest (its peak moments) and then use that knowledge to create a preferred future (see Kerka, 2003). An example of that dynamic can be seen in the vision articulated by The Lion and Lamb Peace Arts Center of Bluffton College (OH) in its brochure, “I dream of a peaceable kingdom in which people give birth to children who ask, ‘Mother, what was war?’ ” (n.d.). Key components of a well-articulated vision statement will include the targeted population, the desired conditions, and the anticipated results in the desired future. Thus, the Bluffton vision statement reveals human beings as the targeted population, peace as the desired conditions, and no more war as the anticipated result. The process of creating a vision, of course, presupposes certain habits of mind or dispositions. An important alternative to the Utopia vision would be the capturing of a theme, construed as an effective means to communicate the essence of a vision and an easy way for people to remember the vision.

While the unit’s vision or theme communicates a desired future, the unit’s mission describes what the unit is charged to do. A vision or theme is not a mission. A mission statement is a broad, general statement of purpose that specifies a unit’s reason(s) for existence and establishes the scope of a unit’s activities. A unit’s mission statement should be congruent with the mission statement of the institution in which the unit resides. Mission statements should clearly delineate the unit’s purpose for its existence in terms of (a) who is to be served (the customers), (b) the services to be provided, and (c) how the services are to be provided (the unit’s activities).

In the delineation of both vision and mission, however, the unit’s philosophy is explicit. Is there a center from which the unit approaches the life of the teacher and the other school personnel’s preparation? Are there underlying commitments to any set of philosophical, psychological, and pedagogical beliefs? Does the unit offer reasons through these commitments for its approach to the life of the teacher and to other school personnel’s preparation?

The next structural element of a conceptual framework is the *why* of the unit's efforts, or its philosophy. The unit's philosophy should enable one to get a sense of the general underlying beliefs in the unit about the reality, truth, knowledge, ethics, and values that give meaning to the unit's existence and form the bases for critical decisions.

A philosophy of education vis-à-vis the unit's philosophy is a set of beliefs about reality, truth and knowledge, and ethics and values; about how human beings come to know and learn; and about best pedagogical practices. This element of the conceptual framework may be construed as the justification for the lens through which the unit sees the world of teaching and learning.

If the unit's vision/theme is thought of as the first creation in the development of a conceptual framework, then the values and principles upon which the unit's being and doing will be based may be seen as the second creation, or the road map to coherent construction of the mission and the framework. Here the unit begins to delineate the basis for its decisions, and consequently it begins to give meaning to its professional world through a philosophical lens. As a result, the unit's philosophical lens provides an underlying aim for its conceptualization of teaching and learning, knowledge and truth, and learning outcomes vis-à-vis institutional standards. This normative outlook challenges members in a unit to escape the immediacy of "how" and move to underlying values and principles related to "the why."

### **Translating Philosophical Aims Through Curricular Means: The Moral Life of the Unit**

John Dewey emphasized that "to have an aim is to act with meaning . . . it is to *mean* to do something and to perceive the meaning of things in the light of that intent" (Dewey, 1916/1944, p. 104). To have an aim is "to have a plan for its accomplishment; it is to note the means which make the plan capable of execution and the obstructions in the way . . . it is to have a plan which takes account of resources and difficulties" (p. 103). Not only is the unit's philosophy manifest in its aim, but the aim directs its action in making educational decisions about what to teach and how to teach it. Moreover, that aim or purpose acts as the stimulation of a unit ethos within which continuous improvement, renewal, and change can occur. An aim is not an abstraction but "is of value so far as it assists observation, choice, and planning in carrying on activity from moment to moment and hour to hour" (p. 107). But the aim, as an end, is not separate from activity.

An aim may be construed as a stimulus to intelligent action in the unit through curricular and other means. A unit's educational aim should emerge

from the educational languages of general education, content studies, professional and pedagogical studies, and field and clinical studies. If education is seen as the continued capacity for growth, then a unit's aim might be to produce education's best possible leaders, persons who can continue to grow after graduation, become lifelong learners, and give service to others.

The salient moral question can now be tackled. Asking the question *How ought persons to live in the unit?* means asking how the curriculum might be used to help persons in the unit acquire the necessary moral sensibilities (see Figure 2.1).

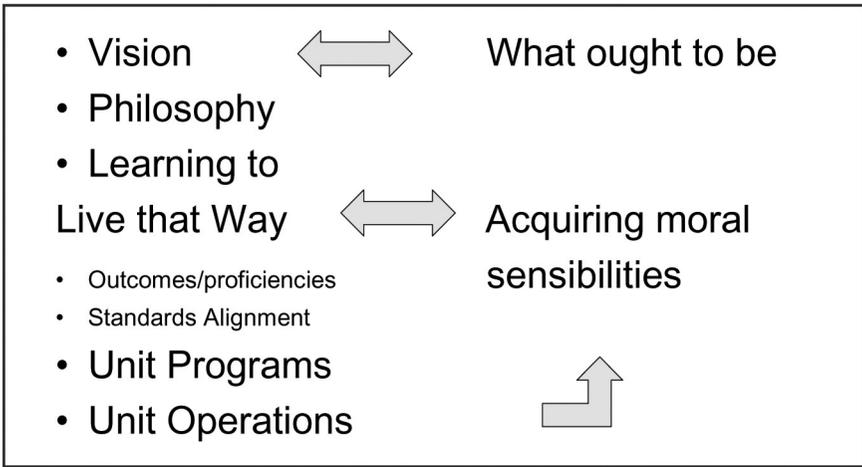
What is the curriculum supposed to accomplish? Hansen (2001) pointed us in the direction of how we might bring curriculum alive so that candidates may acquire appropriate moral sensibilities. He referred particularly to Michael Oakeshott's perspective on education as initiation into "what he calls 'inheritances' and 'achievements' of humanity" (Hansen, p. 59). These are

'languages' in which human beings have historically sought to understand themselves: who they are, why they are here, how to conduct themselves, how to realize whatever possibilities the human condition makes available. For Oakeshott, the languages of poetry, art, philosophy, science, history, and so forth constitute something other than prescribed bodies of fact and information, although the latter play an indispensable role in helping students make their way into the world. Rather to enter these languages is to enter a field of human adventures . . . one that features questions of meaning, understanding, and purpose rather than hardened answers or conclusions. (Hansen, 2001, pp. 59–60)

Clearly Oakeshott is not referring to curriculum canons.

If subject matter is construed not as bodies of fact but as "languages in which people, over the generations, have contemplated and questioned who they are, what they know, what they have done, how to lead a humane and flourishing life, and more" (Hansen, 2001, p. 84), then education enables one "to enter [those] languages, expand one's horizons, and participate in the ongoing human conversation" (Hansen, 2001, p. 84). The educational encounter then becomes transformative for all parties involved (i.e., teacher, student, and subject matter) because cognitive connections made through the acquisition of information (from the subject that is experienced) and technical–intellectual skill (from the method, or *how* the subject is experienced) influence the formation of social dispositions or "moral sensibilities" (i.e., habits accrued from the experience; Hansen, 2001). Meaning and states

## Figure 2.1. How Ought You Live in the Unit?



of mind or dispositions emerge from the transaction between subject and method.

The moral life in the unit may be enhanced through curricular means if the unit takes into consideration the content of the curriculum (meaning the relationship of general education, specialty studies, professional and pedagogical studies, and field and clinical experiences) as a means for candidates to (a) acquire cognitive knowledge through academic study (transmission), (b) acquire process knowledge or skills concerning professional practices and methods of inquiry (transaction), and (c) demonstrate moral sensibilities (Hansen, 2001) as reflected in professional values, ethics, and commitments (transformation).

Candidates may acquire depth and breadth of knowledge in languages, math, sciences, history, philosophy, literature, and the arts (general education); acquire knowledge of their respective fields of study, the structure of the respective field, the skills, competencies, concepts, ideas, and values of the field (specialty studies); acquire knowledge of the social, historical, and philosophical foundations of education; and acquire knowledge of theories of human development. They also may learn principles of effective practice; use of technology; techniques for evaluation/inquiry/research; and educational policy and related processes/skills of independent thinking. Related skill sets might include communicating effectively, making relevant judgments, collaborating with other professionals, participating effectively in educational systems, setting goals, developing curriculum, planning and managing

instruction, developing instructional techniques, designing/using evaluation and assessment techniques, creating instructional strategies for exceptionalities, and managing classroom and professional and pedagogical time. Knowledge gained in addition to the relevant methods used leads also to transformation in disposition.

The dispositions, or “habits that render our action [conduct] intelligent” (Dewey, 1916/1944, p. 344), enhance our growth through the application of our thinking to things already known for the purpose of improving social conditions. These habits include straightforwardness, open-mindedness, integrity of purpose, responsibility, simplicity, spontaneity, and naiveté (Hansen, 2001). For effective problem-solving and continuous learning, they may include persisting, managing impulsivity, listening with understanding and empathy, thinking flexibly, thinking about thinking (metacognition), striving for accuracy, questioning and posing problems, applying past knowledge to new situations, thinking and communicating with clarity and precision, gathering data through all senses, creating, imagining, innovating, responding with wonderment and awe, taking responsible risks, finding humor, thinking interdependently, and remaining open to continuous learning (Costa & Kallick, 2000).

“Certain traits of character,” however, “have such an obvious connection with our social relationships that we call them ‘moral’ in an emphatic sense—truthfulness, honesty, chastity, amiability, etc.” (Dewey, 1916/1944, p. 357). So if “character and mind are attitudes of participative response in social affairs” (pp. 316–317), then “a moral sensibility embodies a person’s disposition toward life and the people and events he or she encounters. It describes how a person fuses humaneness and thought in the way he or she regards and treats others” (Hansen, 2001, p. 32). “To be a teacher of students means developing the skills of moral perception, insight, and understanding that help the teacher fashion [an] educative environment” (Hansen, 2001, p. 67). Such skills extend to the social and emotional dispositions of caring, trusting, supporting, being compassionate, and offering the tact that brings pedagogical thoughtfulness (van Manen, 1991). Effective moral education must cultivate opportunities for candidates to think about how their behavior affects all those with whom they come, or will come, into contact.

## **The Educative Process for Acquiring Dispositions**

The acquisition of moral sensibilities is in part a matter of enculturation. “When teaching by enculturation, the tacit messages of the teacher’s behavior, the physical space of the classroom, the tenor of classroom interactions,

the standards and expectations exhibited, all become important” (Tishman, Jay, & Perkins, 1992, p. 7). This principle does not rule out entirely the element of direct instruction in teaching dispositions. But

moral qualities are shaped. Adults do not simply transmit moral qualities and beliefs to children. These qualities and beliefs emerge and continually evolve in the wide array of relationships that every child has with both adults and peers starting nearly at birth, and in children’s felt knowledge of what is harmful, true, or right. In these relationships, children continually sort out, for example, what they owe others, what they should stand for, what traditions are worth keeping, whether to follow rules, how to contribute to their family, classroom, and community—in other words, how to be a decent human being. (Weissbourd, 2003, pp. 7–8)

If the educative process is salient, then it must be located within a culture. The creation of a unit culture that facilitates the acquisition of moral sensibilities is contingent upon candidates’ seeing the disposition (exemplars), being able to interact with others in a manner that fosters the disposition (interaction with others), receiving direct instruction on the disposition (explanation and understanding), and having opportunities to receive feedback regarding the disposition (Tishman et al., 1992).

A unit must lay out in its conceptual framework the kind of educative process and environments the unit expressly intends to use to influence the intellectual and social dispositions of its candidates. In this process, one critical assumption is “that the habits of life and intercourse which prevail are chosen, or at least colored, by the thought of their bearing upon the development of [candidates]” (Dewey, 1916/1944, p. 19). The unit must recognize that the acquisition of certain habits must be seen as the background of educational growth and that such growth involves the candidates’ thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. This suggests that the educative process must be organized in a manner that enlists the natural active tendencies of candidates in their doing something (for example, teaching or counseling) that requires observation, the acquisition of information, and the use of the candidates’ imagination. The educative environment is a culture in which the process embodies moral attributes and dispositions central to moral professional practice. The unit’s *aim*, therefore, is to produce professionals who can engage in intelligent action and demonstrate wisdom in practice (i.e., pedagogical thoughtfulness).

Formally, the desired learning environment in the unit must facilitate for candidates (a) what is experienced, meaning the subject matter, concepts,

and understandings; (b) how the subject matter is experienced, meaning the method (i.e., the requisite skills needed to apply the concepts and understandings); and (c) the habits accrued from the experience, meaning evidence of educational growth. Such growth may be captured in the unit as outcomes of content, outcomes of processes, and outcomes of dispositions (Costa & Garmston, 1998), given the institutional standard of ensuring that neither faculty, candidates, nor subject matter remain the same as a result of the encounter.

When the institutional standards for candidate learning are framed by content, process, and disposition outcomes, then it becomes much easier for the unit to answer the question *Did the candidates learn?* by showing that the candidates know more, can do some things better, and are more aware of their habits of mind. The moral development of candidates, then, may be linked to the learning process by which and in which candidates come to accept the unit's institutional standards; that is, development can be linked to the meaning derived from the candidates' use of subject and processes to emerge as transformed professionals.

Institutional standards become the unit's criteria for judging the worth of candidate learning, and learning outcomes that embody institutional standards function to direct the unit's actions by providing a lens or focus as the unit engages in the process of education. These learning outcomes establish a framework for subsequent decisions in the unit in terms of what is taught and how it is taught.

Learning outcomes describe the characteristics of the life the unit envisions for its graduates. These characteristics also may be construed as institutional standards if standards are defined as normative positions of what should be. Every learning outcome instantiates an institutional standard consistent with the unit's vision or desired future as identified by a unit. Because the aim of the unit is to move its community toward common ends of educational growth, then the unit must place the characteristics it deems necessary for its candidates into the components of the educative process, for the *aim* is to produce professionals who can engage in intelligent action, or demonstrate wisdom in practice.

We must remember that the articulation of aims and purposes, with their wide-ranging concomitant curricular and moral means, is not simply the preserve of students entering the profession, but it is applicable to all levels of education in the moral purposes of the professional-teaching community. (For articulation of relevant levels, see "Glossary of NCATE Terms" in NCATE, 2002, pp. 45, 52.) This point is particularly true in the realm of

dispositions. The purpose of acquiring subject-matter knowledge and technical–intellectual skill is not only to influence the formation of a social disposition (Dewey, 1916/1944); a dispositional approach makes “the strong claim that being a good thinker *means* having the right thinking dispositions” (Tishman et al., 1992, p. 2).

Obviously, programs at the initial and advanced levels are different in degree, if not in kind. However, all programs, regardless of level, are interested in content, process, and dispositions outcomes. What will differ among these programs and levels is the respective proficiencies for candidates and the degree of execution of those proficiencies.

### **Part III. The Educative Process for Achieving Desired Moral Ends**

The justification offered for particular ways of life among teachers or other school professionals (such as administrators and counselors) should emerge from the knowledge base on teaching, learning, and related purposes. Each learning outcome identified by a unit should be justified as a reasonable way of life for teachers or other professionals through theoretical knowledge, contemporary research, or the wisdom of practice as delineated in the current knowledge base literature (Richardson, 2001). This knowledge base enables a unit to justify not only the purpose for having its outcomes but also the reasons for teaching candidates certain things and in certain ways so that they might come to possess the outcomes and have a greater impact on P–12 student learning.

In this final section of this paper, I focus on candidate proficiencies and outcomes, setting aside from the NCATE list alignment with other expectations and the problems of assessment (see Diez’s paper in this monograph).

#### **Candidate Proficiencies**

So what are the means by which the unit will help candidates to acquire the moral sensibilities it deems relevant to how life ought to be lived in the unit and in the world of practice? Let us first revisit Figure 2.1.

Candidate proficiencies provide an understanding of what candidates should know (knowledge), what they should be able to do (skills), and to what they should be disposed (dispositions). Because aims give rise to results, this element of the conceptual framework should describe the learning outcomes for candidates, or the institutional standards by which candidate learning (including the effect of candidate learning on P–12 student learning/performance) will be assessed. The unit’s values may be operationalized through

three major learning outcomes including (a) the acquisition of content/subject knowledge, (b) the acquisition of professional knowledge and skills necessary to apply the content/subject knowledge, and (c) the transformation characteristics inherent in (a) and (b). These criteria are generic in the sense that they frame the outcomes for candidates in all programs.

The unit's desired future, its philosophy, and its aim thus engender its need to develop clear articulation of moral professional agency from community deliberations and the detail provided in the broad elements of the knowledge base. This idea might be conceptualized in the following ways.

- An educational leader who is conversant with and understands subject-matter language
- A reflective practitioner who manifests wisdom in practice
- A moral pedagogue who manifests tact and pedagogical thoughtfulness

We have seen how the base of philosophical and moral knowledge in Dewey's work on teaching can give us a new perspective on the articulation of institutional purposes through a conceptual framework and the consequential imperatives for community thought, design, and action. But Dewey also instructs us in other relevant matters. For candidates to acquire the necessary proficiencies (in other words, to enhance their habits of mind), the unit must create a culture that facilitates the acquisition of these habits or moral sensibilities. "Any environment is a chance environment so far as its educative influence is concerned," notes Dewey, "unless it has been deliberately regulated with reference to its educative effect" (1916/1944, p. 18). This educative effect, it should be remembered, is to help candidates acquire subject matter knowledge and technical skill to influence the formation of dispositions/moral sensibilities. In other words, the salient question for candidates is not *Can you play the piano?* but *Do you play the piano?* The first question, contend Tishman et al. (1992), refers to ability; the second goes beyond ability to inclination. Cognitive capacities determine what a person can do, while dispositional factors determine what a person does within the limits of those capacities (Baron, 1985). According to the old saying, it is not enough for a man or woman to be good; he or she must be good *for something* (Dewey, 1916/1944, p. 359).

If the profound significance of the educative environment is one thing we learn from Dewey, another is that working toward getting candidates, faculty members, and staff in the unit to demonstrate habits of mind through wisdom in practice is a moral endeavor. For "what is learned and employed in an occupation having an aim and involving cooperation with others is moral

knowledge, whether consciously so regarded or not” (Dewey, 1916/1944, p. 356). The moral development of candidates, we can infer, should be linked to the learning process (i.e., the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and dispositions) by which and in which candidates come to accept the unit’s institutional standards. In other words, we must examine the meaning (in the Deweyan sense) derived from the candidates’ use of subject knowledge, process, and technical skills to emerge as a transformed professional (the demonstration of acquired dispositions as cognitive connections). “Teaching is a moral endeavor that should be undertaken with skill,” Hansen (2001, p. 5) argued. It does not comprise a set of value-neutral, discrete skills that should be carried out morally. Teaching is a practice that generates the need for particular skills and methods. It is not a set of occupational skills pieced together to fulfill a social function defined apart from those skills. The purposes of teaching both inform and come alive in method and in technique (Hansen, 2001). We see Dewey’s insistence on the interaction of means and end at work in this holistic conception of teaching.

For if the unit is to move beyond compliance and focus on the moral end of its endeavor, then laying out candidate proficiencies should not degenerate into modes of competency reductionism, but instead it should be framed to help candidates establish cognitive connections in their respective subject areas and consequently acquire pedagogical thoughtfulness. Learning sessions in the unit might operate by starting with a desired candidate proficiency as the learning objective and then laying out the content knowledge, the process and technical skills, and the habits of mind or dispositions needed to achieve the learning objective.

I want to offer a brief, final comment on assessment. The assessment of learning as it relates to the objective would address knowledge, skills, and dispositions as shown in Figure 2.2.

In using the performance task as evidence of overall learning in a course, we assume that by pursuing social ends (such as developing a paper, engaging in case analysis, producing a journal, or teaching a lesson) and by using content knowledge and thinking skills, certain intellectual, emotional, and social dispositions will be formed—namely the moral sensibilities, dispositions, or habits of mind that make professional action more intelligent and thus more ethical. Consequently, scoring rubrics for performance tasks should amplify the dispositions as guiding content and skill use. By deliberately adopting and assessing moral sensibilities or habits of mind, the unit changes the design of its activities, determines its selection of content, and enlarges its assessments. The larger the circle in which the unit outcomes exist, the more influence is

## Figure 2.2. Overview

Objective	Content	Process and technical skills	Dispositions	Assessment(s)
	Concepts, topics to comprehend	Individual, group thinking	Habits/ dispositions to accomplish task	Indicators of performance

exerted on the values of the unit and on the moral dispositions that guide how life ought to be lived in the unit.

## Conclusion

Living implies growth. For Dewey, education is growth. We could do worse than conceptualize ourselves, without our units, as living through a conceptual framework that demands growth in the unit. To modify Dewey's thoughts, "The criterion of value of [the unit's conceptual framework] is the extent to which it creates a desire for continued growth [in the unit] and supplies means for making the desire effective in fact" (1916/1944, p. 53).

If a conceptual framework is to enhance growth, to enhance the making of moral judgments, and to provide moral structure, coherence, and consistency to experiences in a unit, then there must be continuous analysis of relationships among beliefs, relationships between beliefs and actions, and relationships among actions. This process requires good thinking and the making of judgments. In other words, it means going beyond compliance with external mandates. According to Dewey, "The most important problem of moral education in the school concerns the relationship of knowledge and conduct. For unless the learning which accrues in the regular course of study affects character, it is futile to conceive the moral end as the unifying and culminating end of education" (1916/1944, p. 360).

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# III. Assessing Dispositions: Five Principles to Guide Practice

*Mary E. Diez*

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In the previous two papers, the authors argue that the development of teacher candidates' professional dispositions is a process of moral education (Sockett) and that the unit's conceptual framework expresses moral commitments to guide how faculty, candidates, and other personnel conduct themselves (Dotin). The assessment of moral dispositions as a National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) requirement (NCATE, 2002, p. 14) also poses challenging questions for teacher educators, largely because few have experience with nontraditional assessment methods or in developing assessments other than those for knowledge and skills. An exception to this inexperience is found in the faculty at Alverno College, whose work with assessment over the past 30 years has addressed complex combinations of knowledge, skill, attitudes, values, and dispositions through the use of performance assessment (Alverno College Faculty, 1994; Alverno College Faculty, in press; Loacker, 2000; Mentkowski & Associates, 2000).

This reflective paper draws on the work of the Alverno College faculty, and specifically on that of the teacher education faculty, to identify five principles that might be useful in guiding the development of appropriate and meaningful processes to assess teacher candidates' dispositions. For each principle, I will outline a scenario showing the impact of the principle in the assessment of candidates, although references to other scenarios will occur throughout discussion of the principles. The principles are as follows:

1. Assessing dispositions requires "making the invisible visible" through active means.
2. Dispositions can (and should) be assessed both in structured ways and through ongoing observation of the candidate in action.
3. Dispositions should be assessed over time, as part of an ongoing reflection process.
4. Criteria used in the assessment of dispositions should be public and explicit.
5. The process of assessing dispositions has moral meaning for teacher educators and for their practice.

## Context

Before I elaborate on the five principles, I must articulate two aspects of the context central to this discussion of learning from practice about assessing dispositions. First, although there are multiple published sources about the Alverno curriculum, I will highlight only those aspects relevant to the current topic. Second, because the work of the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC, 1992) has influenced both state licensing requirements and the NCATE process, I will provide some historical background on the development of the INTASC standards, drawing upon my experience on the consortium's Standards Development Group.

### Alverno College

In 1972, the faculty at Alverno College redefined the baccalaureate degree, making graduation contingent on the demonstration of eight abilities developed across course work in general education and in the academic majors and minors. Abilities “represent an integrated combination of multiple components, including skills, behavior, knowledge, values, attitudes, motives or dispositions, and self perceptions” (Alverno College Faculty, 1994, p. 9). For example, effective speaking is not simply a skill; it also requires relating ideas, projecting one's voice, using knowledge, valuing either the topic or the audience or both, and perceiving oneself as able to perform. Alverno students are required to demonstrate eight abilities at four developmental levels as part of their graduation requirements. In addition, they demonstrate advanced abilities related to their major and minor areas of study. The eight abilities are communication (of which speaking is one aspect), analysis, problem solving, valuing in decision making, social interaction, development of a global perspective, effective citizenship, and aesthetic engagement. Development and demonstration of the abilities is guided by performance assessments developed by faculty members across the college; thus, Alverno students engage in hundreds of assessments over the course of their liberal arts education.

The teacher education programs at Alverno are set within the context of the eight abilities and the assessment process. Like our colleagues in other areas, we in teacher education have developed advanced abilities to describe the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of a beginning teacher. Our model is developmental as well, spelling out expectations for the developing teacher and for the experienced professional. The advanced abilities are conceptualization, diagnosis, coordination, communication, and integrative interaction (Diez, 1990). These advanced abilities are the heart of our conceptual

framework, and our descriptions of them incorporate key dispositions. For the sake of this reflection, I've identified three that should seem fairly evident to anyone who has worked in the profession. They are respect for others, willingness to maintain engagement with learners, and willingness to do what it takes to help students learn.

## **The Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC)**

In the early 1990s, when the INTASC Standards Development Group broke the standards into three parts—knowledge, dispositions, and performances—we were responding to specific concerns of that time. We realized that if we integrated knowledge, skills, and dispositions in our standards statements (the way that the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards had crafted its documents describing accomplished teaching), then teacher education institutions and state departments were likely to assess primarily for knowledge in looking at beginning teachers. Our reasoning was that most accountability at the time was based on knowledge testing. Thus, while we believed that knowledge is important, we also recognized that knowledge without the ability to use it meaningfully is not enough. We were concerned that knowledge and the ability to perform were not enough by themselves. We argued that teachers need to be *committed* to apply their knowledge and skills consistently, fairly, and with passion, and they need to avoid behaviors that would be hurtful to their students. We wanted to alert teacher educators and state department professionals to the kinds of behavior that would reveal problematic dispositions.

What we did not envision or discuss was how the links among knowledge, skills, and dispositions might be lost in separating our documents into the three categories. As one reads any of the standards, the links exist, but our decision may have had the unintended consequence of policy makers and teacher educators looking at dispositions as stand-alone characteristics calling for stand-alone assessments. In turning now to the five principles, I hope to make clear how assessment can be used appropriately, avoiding the disconnect among knowledge, skills, and dispositions.

## **Principle 1: Make the Invisible Visible Through Active Means**

By definition, dispositions are not physical movements; they occur “inside” the person as the motivator for action. In fact, the use of the term in psychology refers to the probability or likelihood that persons will engage in certain

kinds of behavior (Bartussek, 1972). According to Mullin (2003), in applying the literature on dispositions to the teacher education context, “dispositions are dimensions of human personality that have a consistency about them and are characterized, exemplified, or typified in behavior patterns” (p. 5).

In talking with teacher educators, especially before NCATE specified the assessment of dispositions as an expectation, I found that many had concerns about candidate dispositions but did not think they could address them. Some said that dispositions were impossible to assess; others feared that to assess them might lead to legal challenges. Recently, I heard a faculty member at another institution describe his son coming home from middle school and complaining bitterly about a teacher who had put him down with sarcastic remarks in social studies class. The faculty member realized that the teacher was a graduate of his program, whose sarcastic manner in education classes had been a continuing cause of concern. But because the candidate had had a high grade point average and because the program had established no criteria for social interaction, the faculty didn’t think they could refuse to recommend licensure when the candidate had graduated.

Many teacher educators have suggested that their hands are tied in using information about candidate dispositions because they fear threats of legal challenge. But with states and NCATE requiring attention to assessing dispositions and with experience suggesting that well-documented assessments and explicit criteria *can* stand up to legal challenge, the claim that assessing dispositions may be illegal is losing significance. However, as I suggest below, the assessment of dispositions first should provide information to help candidates grow into an understanding and practice of the moral expectations of teachers. When assessment is used formatively first, the question of legal challenge is less of an issue.

Although one can make a convincing case that dispositions cannot be assessed directly, the term *directly* is key to the issue of assessing dispositions. Teacher educators have used at least two approaches in developing processes to assess them. First, they have made judgments based on inference, drawing upon their sense of the candidate from interacting with him or her. Second, they have assessed the candidate’s actual behavior, focusing on actions, explanations, and reflections that can be tied to dispositions.

Depending on the clarity of evidence underlying the judgment, the first approach is problematic. Having examined assessment instruments from a variety of institutions, I question the validity of some instruments that appear to ask the faculty to make judgments about student dispositions with no link to the evidence behind the judgment. For example, because faculty members

have some experience from their own educations with tools such as Likert scales, they have appropriated the methodology for use in assessing dispositions, asking faculty to rate candidates in their classes. One might argue that faculty members are drawing upon experience with each candidate, but the line of evidence is lost because it is not made explicit. Moreover, as Delandshere and Petrosky (1998) argued, when ratings reduce complex, multidimensional aspects of performance to numbers, they also limit the possibility that candidates receive concrete, personal feedback. Similarly, Likert scales that ask candidates to rank themselves on a range of dispositions are useful to a degree, but they lack access to the candidate's thinking behind the ratings, which is more useful information than the rating itself.

The second approach, in which faculty members assess a candidate's actual behavior (for example, looking at the candidate's action in a specific instance or at her reflection on why she chose to act in a certain way), holds more promise. In looking at action, the assessor must be able to determine that the action observed justifies the judgment that the candidate has a given disposition (and is not, for example, play-acting). Moreover, this approach to assessment often involves the candidate in looking at the behavior with the assessor. In the case of a social studies candidate who consistently puts others down, the first step might be a conversation about what transpired in a particular instance, asking him to describe what happened, what he intended, and what he perceived others inferred from his action. Questions related to varied moral frameworks, such as those described by Sockett earlier in this volume, could be applied in the conversation to assist the candidate in examining his behavior, its sources, and its meaning in a larger moral framework.

This second approach is both more responsible as faculty research and fairer to candidates than the first because it suggests that dispositions be assessed only by looking at the evidence found in words and actions. As the INTASC Standards Development Group recognized, what we care about are dispositions that are revealed in the way we act and treat others and in the way we talk about how we make choices.

In response to those who worry about legal challenges, this second approach to assessing dispositions argues that it is possible to assess a person's actions, explanations, and reflections as evidence linking dispositions and actions. Actions, explanations, and reflections can be judged against public, explicit criteria. For example, criteria based on principles of civil discourse can guide the assessment of candidates' interaction in group discussions. Criteria based on learning theory can guide assessment of candidates' explanation of

unit and lesson design in relationship to the needs of a group of learners and of candidates' reflection on how well a lesson went.

The assessment of a key disposition such as “respect for others” is a good example of assessing a disposition that requires “being made visible” in action. Far from considering respect a nebulous concept, Alverno’s initial teacher-licensure program has multiple assessments that link action to respect. One is a simulated group-interaction task, which we videotape as candidates participate. Candidates are asked to take the role of a group of teachers called together by the district superintendent to respond to an issue the superintendent was concerned about (the actual issue varies from semester to semester). We use explicit criteria for social interaction, assessing how candidates show respect for other speakers in a group as demonstrated in

- active nonverbal attention to persons as they speak,
- positively reinforcing the contributions of others,
- explicitly building on the contributions of others, and
- challenging others’ ideas without attacking them.

In looking at the videotape of the interaction, the candidates and the faculty assessors can point to concrete examples of nonverbal movements and oral statements, using the criteria to analyze evidence of showing respect to others. These same criteria are used for a variety of assessments that involve interaction, including the group discussion that is part of our portfolio/interview assessment prior to student teaching.

In field-experience assessments, similar criteria related to respect are made explicit in relationship to how candidates treat K-12 learners. Again, we use specific criteria to look for respect as shown in

- positive nonverbal attention to the students,
- consistently recognizing students by name,
- effectively following up on students’ questions and comments, and
- making appropriate adjustments to meet the needs of learners as the lesson unfolds.

Again, using live observation and videotape, the candidates, the cooperating teachers, and the faculty supervisors can point to concrete examples of nonverbal movements and oral statements, using the criteria to analyze evidence of showing respect to others.

## **Scenario: Fred**

Fred (all names are fictitious) was a postbaccalaureate candidate who came into the program with a bachelor’s degree in math and a master’s in his-

tory. His analytic assignments were generally adequate, but he had difficulty maintaining connections with students in the middle school classroom, and his lesson plans were erratic—sometimes well done and sometimes very disjointed. In addition, he didn't listen well to other students in class discussions, and he didn't show much self-awareness in his reflections, even after intensive instruction and feedback.

Fred was unsuccessful in the external assessment that involved taking the role of a teacher working with three other teachers on a task assigned by the superintendent. He also was unsuccessful in his fourth field experience, largely due to inconsistent engagement with students and inconsistent quality of planning. The faculty allowed him to go through the portfolio/interview assessment that is the admission to student teaching, primarily to have another set of eyes review his work and interact with him. Two practitioners—a principal and a teacher—assessed Fred's portfolio, his interaction with them, and his interaction in a group with another student. Their decision: Fred was not ready for student teaching.

Fred was advised that he could not student teach and that to apply again, he would need to demonstrate improvement in both social interaction and planning. To make those improvements, he was advised (a) to take an acting or improvisation course to build his ability to show engagement and respect; and (b) to work as a paraprofessional or volunteer in a school setting for 6 months, documenting his planning work. If he satisfied those requirements, the department agreed that at the end of 6 months, we would observe his interaction as he worked with learners and colleagues.

Fred did not accept our advice readily. He called several times insisting that he had the right to student teach because he had taken and passed most of his courses (however, he had also failed a key course, the fourth field experience). He threatened to call the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and to get a lawyer. The Department supported our process and decision, and he did not go to a lawyer. He began to volunteer at a school, but he was asked to leave after 2 weeks; the principal had several concerns about his interaction with the students and teachers.

The series of assessments that guided our decision to refuse Fred admission to student teaching is geared to identify key dispositions in action. First, the simulated professional-group interaction captures candidates on videotape interacting with their peers. This medium is useful because we can view the tape with candidates whose performance does not meet criteria, providing them with feedback on their performance and suggestions for improvements they need to make. Concerns most often relate to showing respect for oth-

ers in the group. Second, the fourth field experience places the candidate in a classroom and requires him to videotape a series of lessons, as well as to be supervised by a faculty member who observes several live lessons. Across the lessons, we look for consistent engagement with and respect for learners, along with effective lesson design and implementation. Third, the portfolio/interview assessment engages external professionals in looking at the candidate's collection of evidence supporting readiness for student teaching and in interacting with the candidate (including a group discussion with two candidates and two external professionals). Again, the focus is on the dispositions of respect for others and the willingness to produce quality work.

## **Principle 2: Use Both Structured Assessments and Ongoing Observation of the Candidate in Action**

Structured assessments call for candidates to produce evidence in varied ways (i.e., simulation, practice in the classroom, or structured reflection). But in naturally occurring, everyday interaction, we also can look at what happens in the college classroom or in the P–12 setting. Teacher educators can fairly and accurately assess dispositions such as respect for others, willingness to do what it takes to help students learn, and willingness to maintain engagement by developing structured assessments and by attending to candidate's behaviors that occur naturally as they act. Both methods require the application of criteria that link the evidence of the action to the dispositions.

The three assessments in the Fred scenario are examples of structured assessments of respect through simulated and actual professional discussion as well as classroom interaction. Another structured assessment format is guided reflection (for example, using a set of questions focused on the candidate's field work in a P–12 classroom). Responses to a prompt such as “How did you show respect for diversity in the classroom?” can be assessed using criteria related to

- effectively planning to incorporate meaningful experiences for diverse learners,
- using positive terms in referring to specific students, and
- thoughtfully linking concrete examples of their practice to principles of invitational learning (referencing our use of Purkey & Novak's framework, 1996).

Other assessments of dispositions such as respect can be made in the course of practice. The same social-interaction criteria used in the structured

discussion can be applied in observing how a candidate treats others in informal class settings. Cooperating teachers can be taught to record observations regarding day-to-day interactions and their impact on children and adults in the school. Does the candidate consistently listen to learners? Does the candidate consistently use positive terms in talking about learners? Cooperating teachers have told us that they appreciate having the explicit social-interaction criteria to guide their ongoing observation of candidates.

Willingness to do what it takes to help students learn can be assessed in both structured assessments and in those occurring in the natural course of working with learners. In a typical structured assessment, assessors ask candidates to complete lesson plans that include a rationale about their decision-making related to the needs of learners with whom they are working. Positive evidence would call for candidates to

- accurately identify those varied needs,
- clearly demonstrate how the lesson provides differentiation for individuals and groups,
- accurately assess the impact of the lesson, and
- thoughtfully reflect on what is needed next to continue to meet the learners' needs.

Similarly, the cooperating teacher or faculty supervisor could address the candidate's willingness to do what it takes to help students learn in the course of the candidate's practice. He or she can observe whether or how the candidate attends to the needs of all learners and makes adjustments over time to meet those needs.

A final example addresses the third target disposition, the willingness to maintain engagement. Key structured assessments are videotapes of work with learners, for which the candidate has been asked to both tape herself working in the classroom and watch the tape, assessing her engagement. Through guided reflection questions, the candidate looks at how she deals with stress or with challenging learners, and she can set goals for the next stages of her growth in maintaining engagement.

Informal, ongoing assessments of this disposition can be made by cooperating teachers and faculty supervisors. For example, the cooperating teacher can observe for consistency in the candidate's work with learners and how he handles problems that arise in the classroom. Formative feedback can help the candidate become aware of when he is disengaging or missing cues from learners.

## Scenario: Susie

At the midpoint of the second field experience, Alverno teacher education candidates participate in a behavioral-event interview process, one-on-one with a faculty member. In this interview, the candidates respond to a series of requests to tell stories about their experiences (e.g., “Tell me about a time when you felt effective working with children or young adults”). The faculty interviewer follows up on the initial story with questions to probe what the candidate did in more detail and what he or she was thinking during the experience. The hour-long interview is recorded, and the candidate listens to the interview, completes an analysis/reflection sheet based on the five advanced abilities in education, and returns for a second interview focused on feedback.

One semester, I interviewed Susie, whose stories were all about a single child. Sometimes she talked about other children in the background of the story in a denigrating way. When she returned for feedback, I asked her, “Did you notice that all your stories were about a single child?”

“Oh, yes,” she said, “I don’t like children in groups.” That led us into a very productive discussion about her options, and Susie transferred at the end of that semester to another program.

This interview is a good example of an assessment that is structured to invite candidates to talk about their views of children, teaching, and themselves. In most cases, their reflection reveals the kind of respect and caring that we hope to further engender. But in some cases, like Susie’s, the reflection provides key information about a disposition that, unless changed, would make teaching a bad choice.

If we did not have this interview process, I suspect that naturally occurring events in fieldwork assignments would provide data regarding Susie’s disposition about working with groups of children, but the placement of this assessment early in her program was helpful both to her and to the faculty.

## Principle 3: Dispositions Should Be Assessed Over Time, as Part of an Ongoing Reflection Process

In reviewing assessment plans for teacher education programs across the country, I see a tendency to match aspects of a standard with one course or one assessment, creating grids and charts that show that everything is “covered.” Two problems with this approach are worth noting. First, the danger in assigning aspects to one specific course is that candidates may develop a

check-off mentality, in which they view their program as a set of requirements to be completed and then never thought of again. The public-speaking requirement is most commonly prey to the check-off mentality, as if a candidate were ready for a lifetime of communication with children and adults on the basis of one speech class.

Second, few aspects of meaningful standards can be fully developed by a single course; rather, candidates are introduced to ideas and processes and spiral back to them several times over the course of a program. Candidates may write philosophy-of-education statements early in the program, but that statement of their guiding beliefs develops much more fully as it is influenced by course work, fieldwork, and ongoing reflection. The ability-based program at Alverno acknowledges that candidates need multiple demonstrations of problem solving at increasingly complex levels of performance to meet graduation requirements. Even then, the candidate is not finished: We recognize that teachers continue to grow and learn after college.

We have found, along with other researchers (Boud, 1995; Candy, 1991; Schön, 1987), that reflection skills are key to lifelong learning. Thus, because candidates can grow and mature in dispositions as in other aspects of teaching, we should ask candidates to explore their motives and reasoning in reflection as an ongoing part of the assessment process. There are challenges here, however, for teacher educators. Many candidates come to our programs having been taught not to incorporate their beliefs and values into what they write, perhaps because their high school or previous college instructors viewed such reflection as inappropriately subjective. The assessment of dispositions requires that teacher educators find a way to have candidates thoughtfully explore their reasoning and motivation and look at how they enact it through their words and actions.

The approach at Alverno, expressed in the valuing of decision-making ability that we nurture across the curriculum, is that candidates need to learn to express the links between what they believe and how they act and to see that one influences the other. Our students across majors at the college explore the valuing process in diverse courses across the curriculum. In beginning courses, “a student identifies her own and others’ values and some key emotions they evoke . . . [and then] she connects her values to her behavior” (Alverno College Faculty, in press). The focus of her study may be values related to fictional characters, scientific phenomena, or psychological principles. Early education courses engage students in looking at values embedded in the beliefs and practices of cultural groups.

At the intermediate level, students broaden their understanding of the context of their own values, “more precisely analyzing the roles of groups, cultures, and societies in the construction of values and their expression in moral systems or ethical frameworks” (Alverno College Faculty, in press). Education candidates engage in this work specifically in relationship to school settings, examining both their own values and the values at play in decisions made at the school and district levels.

Finally, at the advanced level, candidates “explore and apply the value systems and ethical codes that are at the heart of the field” (Alverno College Faculty, in press). In teacher education, this means that candidates read and reflect on value controversies, identifying explicit issues within the profession. For example, how should teachers deal with a focus on testing in schools that narrows the curriculum, reducing or eliminating the arts? What is the responsibility of the individual teacher and groups of teachers to advocate for curriculum that will provide a rich experience for learners? The candidates also examine ethical issues, both through structured review of cases and through discussion of issues raised in their school placement sites or in current news stories. For example, in a gender-equity study, some Alverno faculty members developed materials that help candidates look at how the organization of the classroom might make it more difficult for boys, in particular, to be meaningfully engaged. In working with a case, candidates examine options for providing more “floor time” for all students to minimize conflict and promote engagement, building a sense of the candidates’ ethical responsibility to meet the needs of their learners.

Building reflection skills involves developing a language to talk about practice—one’s own and that of others (Delandshere & Petrosky, 1998). It takes time and practice and, above all, good prompting questions to engage candidates in building this language. The following questions are taken from a series of field logs completed by candidates across 3 or more semesters. The first set focuses on building observation and reflection skills in observing classrooms.

*Prompt:* Describe the classroom culture at your field site. Use the following considerations as ways of determining the kind of community created in the classroom.

- Respect and relationship building between students and between the students and the teacher
- Respect for diversity (i.e., student backgrounds, varied abilities, student needs)

- How teaching and learning occur in the classroom
- Physical setup of the classroom
- Classroom management and methods of conflict resolution

The second prompt guides candidates to reflect on their own experiences in teaching and to explain their decision-making processes.

*Prompt:* Design and implement a lesson that incorporates one or more reading strategies in your content area.

- Why did you select this strategy or strategies for this particular group of students?
- Did the implementation proceed as planned? If not, how did you adjust?
- How did you make the decision to make changes?
- What, if anything, would you do differently if you were to teach the lesson again?
- What questions does this experience raise for you about supporting students as readers in your content area?

In addition to the reflective logs used in field placements, the candidates engage in self-assessment as part of the assessments given in their classes. With guidance from their faculty members, the candidates use the self-assessments to develop skills over time in looking carefully at their performance in relationship to criteria. For example, the framework for self-assessment (Locker, 2000) describes patterns that typify the development of student self-assessment ability. After a semester or two, students typically can report on their own behavior and organize details to see some patterns in performance. Intermediate students can explain the significance of these patterns, making sense of performance in the context of disciplinary frameworks. And advanced students extend the use of disciplinary frameworks to “synthesize patterns of behavior and processes over time and in varied contexts” (Locker, 2000, pp. 153–154).

Zeichner’s (2000) case study of the Alverno elementary-education program noted that “the constant and rigorous demands on students to analyze their own practice and have it analyzed by their peers and teacher educators according to explicit criteria seems to develop habits of inquiry about one’s own teaching that carry over into at least the first 5 years of teaching” (p. 53).

In the early 1990s, I attended a Project 30 meeting (bringing together liberal arts and teacher education faculty) at which a liberal arts dean made an impassioned statement that “beginning teachers can’t reflect.” In contrast,

Uhlenbeck, Verloop, and Beijaard (2002) concluded in their thoughtful study of assessment that “beginning teachers should be *required* [italics added] to question and reflect on their actions and beliefs” (p. 249). They argued that making one’s assumptions explicit and one’s thinking accessible is necessary for ongoing professional growth, pointing out the critical role of reflection in both constructing and expanding the knowledge base for teaching.

To give the liberal arts dean his due, reflection is not an automatic practice; it has to be taught. If candidates are to learn how to reflect, teacher educators need to work with them developmentally, building the skill to examine and critique practice both in terms of why they did what they did and in terms of how well their action and explanation measure up to criteria appropriate for the profession.

### **Scenario: Carrie**

Carrie entered our program as a fundamentalist Christian. In her freshman year, she completed the reflective-response entries required in the Human Relations Seminar. The course, focused on understanding and respecting diversity, was difficult for her because she was not open to taking perspectives other than her own and often condemned other perspectives. She received feedback in this and other courses that challenged her to examine the quality of her reasoning as well as to look at issues of respect for diverse viewpoints. At the end of the semester, she decided to transfer to another institution.

After a semester each at two other institutions, Carrie reapplied to Alverno. She said that she had found that she wasn’t satisfied with the more traditional learning environments and missed the challenges she had thought she disliked. Once back in classes, she still struggled with applying her “one-way-is-right” approach, but gradually, with feedback and modeling, she began to become more open to other perspectives and to extending the range of her views, particularly related to teaching contexts. Her reflections in the guided logs for fieldwork showed a gradual shift to grounding her comments in evidence and to listening to others’ perspectives.

By the time she reached student teaching, Carrie was particularly good at diagnosing students’ learning needs and was creative in developing approaches to support their learning, working effectively with inner-city students in a middle school. Her reflections gave evidence that she was channeling her beliefs into positive actions to support learners, and faculty members observed that she no longer used statements of absolutes to substitute for thinking through what was needed.

The quality of Carrie's reflection did not improve without a good deal of work on her part and ours. Feedback from the faculty helped her to see what she was doing and saying, and the kinds of assessments she worked on guided her development. Her story suggests not only that dispositions need to be assessed over time, but that the process of reflection over time is a powerful lever for change in a candidate's awareness of herself and her dispositions (see also Diez & Blackwell, 2001, on this point). Carrie's story also suggests that assessment of dispositions should not be used to screen students out of teacher education too early (the exception being serious moral issues, of course). Had we used assessment to screen Carrie out rather than to work with her, the profession would have lost a very fine teacher.

## **Principle 4: Criteria Used in the Assessment of Dispositions Should Be Public and Explicit**

This principle has been implicit in much of the previous discussion, but it is important to explore its meaning in depth, because the use of public and explicit criteria is a critical factor in the assessment of dispositions. In fairness, the candidates need to know the basis for our assessment of their performance, whether we are assessing knowledge, skills, or dispositions. My objection to the use of Likert-style instruments by faculty members to rate or rank students on a range of dispositions is precisely that such rankings lack public and explicit criteria for what is expected. As a result, accuracy, consistency, and fairness are jeopardized.

In our experience at Alverno, the development of criteria requires that we both understand what we're looking for in a performance and express that in ways that allow others to visualize what a good performance would be (Loacker, Cromwell, & O'Brien, 1986). The qualitative dimension is essential to an effective criterion. It is not enough that the candidate "assessed the impact of her lesson on the learners"; she must do so "accurately" and/or "thoughtfully." At times we specify that candidates must use a particular framework for reflection (e.g., Purkey & Novak's, 1996, invitational learning or Cambourne's, 1999, conditions for learning). Thus, the criteria provide reminders and guidance about the performance expected.

Criteria not only make clear what the expectations are but, as we saw with Carrie, provide a means of growth toward those expectations. One mechanism for growth is the use of criteria to guide faculty feedback. Research on the Alverno program (Mentkowski & Associates, 2000) provides detail on

how feedback helps candidates to understand both outcomes and criteria. The criteria are also an important basis for self-assessment, which Alverno faculty describe as involving the four processes of (a) observing oneself in action, (b) interpreting the performance, (c) judging the quality of the performance, and (d) planning for next steps (Loacker, 2000). Once candidates understand them, the criteria can play a key role in providing candidates with language for talking about dispositions.

It is important to note that when I use the term *criteria*, I'm not talking about a rubric with four levels, but rather clear explanations of what is expected and clear descriptions of what a good performance "looks like." The point is not to rate candidates from 1 to 4, which would be difficult at best with a disposition such as honesty, but to identify how or whether their performances give evidence of the meaning of the disposition, particularly as expressed in the candidate's expression of purpose. A critical companion element to public and explicit criteria is the use of detailed evidence guiding the judgment of whether a criterion is fulfilled.

Having criteria related to respect for diversity helped faculty members provide appropriate challenges for Carrie. Without clear criteria, it could be too easy to avoid the confrontation that a candidate's absolutist and/or uninformed statements invite. But respectful confrontation can lead to real growth, as evidenced by Carrie's ability to expand her perspectives. Faculty use of clear criteria helped her see what the expectations were and helped her to examine where her reliance on absolutes fell short.

### **Scenario: Phyllis**

Phyllis entered an alternative, postbaccalaureate teacher preparation program offered collaboratively by Alverno and two other institutions in conjunction with our local urban public school district. With her cohort, she participated in an intensive summer school session, working side by side every morning in a middle school classroom with a teacher selected as a strong role model and taking teacher education classes every afternoon for 6 weeks. Because the program was intended to prepare candidates to take on an internship role in the fall, the schedule was intended to give the group a sense of the demands of the teaching role.

Phyllis clearly enjoyed interacting with middle school students, but her cooperating teacher and program coach (full-time supervisors were assigned on a 1-to-8 ratio in this program, both in the summer and during the school year) noticed that she failed to come with lessons completed and materials

prepared. They met with her to review the criteria that spelled out expectations for performance.

Despite the fact that she had been a very strong undergraduate student in mathematics, Phyllis exhibited a similar problem in her course work. Remarking that no one should expect her to do all this reading about education, she also complained about the written assignments (some of which overlapped with the lesson planning that she had to bring to her middle school classroom). Again, her instructors sat down with her and talked about the importance of building the knowledge and skill base for teaching, going over her written work to highlight areas that needed improvement.

With guidance from her cooperating teacher, coach, and course instructors, Phyllis showed some improvement as the summer progressed, but she came to the director's office at the end of the summer session, saying that she was withdrawing from the program. "I just don't want to work as hard as teachers need to," she said, adding that she admired those in the cohort who could take on the challenge she was rejecting. In Phyllis's case, clear expectations expressed in criteria helped her to come to terms with her lack of a disposition critical to teaching: willingness to do what it takes to help students learn. Because the criteria for performance were clear and reinforced by feedback, Phyllis made the determination that she did not have the disposition to make it as a good teacher.

## **Principle 5: The Process of Assessing Dispositions Has Moral Meaning for Teacher Educators and for Their Practice**

In his preceding paper, Dottin makes an eloquent case for looking at how the unit conducts itself as a key moral question, and Principle 5 supports that notion. The dispositions that are modeled by faculty and staff members are surely part of the implicit curriculum that candidates experience. This point may be subtle, but it is critical. If the faculty model the dispositions they want candidates to hold, then the candidates are more likely to develop them. Zeichner (2000) noted that "at Alverno, it is expected that faculty will work hard as part of a team to develop and implement the best possible teacher education program and the institutional structure encourages such work" (p. 52). Clearly holding ourselves to a strong work ethic supports our expectation that our candidates will develop the disposition of willingness to do what it takes to help students learn.

It is troubling when, in the implementation of the INTASC standards and the NCATE processes related to dispositions, units fall prey to what I have called elsewhere the Norma Rae syndrome (Diez, 2004). If you recall the movie starring Sally Field, her character becomes involved in labor organizing, to the neglect of her household chores. In a stirring scene, she throws whatever's at hand into a saucepan and yells at her husband, "You want cooking? I'll give you cooking!" The message is that one can comply with demands on a surface level without providing what is really being asked for. Sometimes I wonder if teacher educators aren't engaged in their own Norma Rae moments when they say in effect, "You want dispositions? I'll give you dispositions."

Thus, the assessment of dispositions has important moral meaning for our practice as teacher educators. As Dottin argues, the dispositions we nurture and assess must be set in the context of our knowledge and beliefs about teaching as expressed in our conceptual framework. They can't be appropriated from a list and inserted in an otherwise unchanged program. Rather, we need to take thoughtful time to examine what our conceptual framework statements imply for the development and assessment of dispositions. Sockett's clear explication of very different starting and ending points regarding character, rules, and relations is a useful framework for our thinking. His emphasis on the importance of living lives of integrity in both personal and professional domains is a critical reminder that teaching is a moral endeavor.

What does it say about us as teacher educators if we create assessments that are not tied to evidence or that make arbitrary judgments about candidates? In a Norma Rae moment, teacher educators might be satisfied with a set of Likert-scale judgments of their candidates (after all, these numbers are easy to aggregate and put into charts for NCATE), but should moral teacher educators be satisfied? What does it say about us if we use a check-off system that may satisfy a state department bureaucrat or an accrediting agency but that does not contribute to the thoughtful development of candidates? How do we build a truly moral approach to guiding candidates to be teachers committed to lifelong growth? Our own moral compass needs to be our guide in developing assessments of dispositions tied to our conceptual framework, illuminated by clear criteria and applied in meaningful ways in both structured and natural situations.

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