Prospective Student Teachers' Concerns Regarding the Student-Teaching Experience

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Abstract: *The capstone requirement for all kindergarten to grade 12 teacher candidates is the student-teaching experience, and teacher educators must prepare prospective student teachers well for this event. An awareness of characteristics and concerns expressed by prospective student teachers may support teacher educators' efforts to prepare teacher candidates to be effective in the classroom and to learn from the student-teaching experience. Using Q methodology, data from 54 prospective student teachers were collected and analyzed regarding their concerns specifically related to this experience. Four discrete student types emerged, each with distinctive subjective concerns: (a) managing students, (b) managing instruction, (c) making the grade, and (d) managing difference. The authors believe that Q methodology was uniquely beneficial in providing a nuanced and thus potentially valuable picture of teacher-candidates' concerns regarding the student-teaching experience.*

The student-teaching experience—a structured, supervised, unpaid internship in which a student undertaking teacher education gradually assumes increasing responsibility for instruction, classroom management, and other related duties—is generally the culminating instructional event in a teacher-preparation program. Typically occurring during the final semesters of the program, it presents an opportunity for teacher-education students to integrate all of their learning into a comprehensive package of pedagogical skills, knowledge, and strategies.

Prospective student teachers (defined in this report as students who have not yet engaged in the culminating student-teacher experience) must be well-prepared for this experience, and much research has been directed toward this goal. An awareness of typical characteristics and beliefs of prospective student teachers supports teacher-educators' efforts in preparing their students to be effective in the classroom and to learn from their student-teaching experience. For example, knowing that

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entering teacher candidates are predominately white and female (Brookhart & Freeman, 1992) suggests that teacher educators might endeavor to instill in their students dispositions and techniques compatible with culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2010). Other characteristics noted in the 1992 review by Brookhart and Freeman of 44 studies seeking to identify the characteristics of teacher candidates include traits such as the following: lower SES than other college students, motivations of altruism and inclination to service, high levels of confidence in their teaching abilities, more anxieties about instructional tasks than relationships with pupils, and beliefs that nurturing is more important than academics.

Given their responsibility for shaping entering teacher candidates into effective student teachers, teacher educators seek to encourage beliefs and dispositions believed to promote and predict teacher effectiveness. Young and Wilkins (2008) analyzed 32 student-teacher evaluation instruments to locate specific behaviors or characteristics thought to be essential for successful teaching and found consensus in the following three areas: professional behaviors (*relationships, work habits, professional growth*, ethics, acceptance of criticism, and service to the school), professional ways of thinking (*reflectivity, respect for learners*, and critical thinking), and personality characteristics (*enthusiasm*, personality, self-confidence, and leadership). The italicized dispositions listed above were the most agreed upon, with *relationships* with students and colleagues used by 69% of the institutions for evaluating their student teachers, and *reflectivity* being the second-most agreed-upon disposition (56%).

As teacher educators, we recognize that we hold similar expectations for our student teachers. Accordingly, our particular focus for this study was in obtaining, from the students themselves, their specific concerns regarding their incipient initiation into the formal student-teaching experience. We reasoned that such an investigation might provide us with information about our students in the form of discreet constellations of attributes that, if known to teacher educators, would be valuable in focusing instruction to build on students' dispositional strengths and personal and cultural characteristics. Our intent in this study was to generate typologies of prospective student-teacher concerns and dispositions that might have potential benefit for teacher educators as they prepare their students for the student-teaching experience.

Background

Concerns of Teacher-Education Students

While few studies focus their gaze specifically on fears and concerns directly linked to this topic, results of several related investigations provide some background for the current study.

Three recent studies represent the views of prospective student teachers *prior* to the formal student-teaching experience (Campbell & Thompson, 2007; Chang, 2009; Swennen, Jörg, & Korthagenl, 2004). Across all three of these studies, prospective student teachers shared a concern regarding motivating students to learn. Additional concerns appearing in at least two of the three studies included doing well when being observed, appearing competent to parents, helping students achieve their potential, and diagnosing and working with social, emotional and other needs. In addition, concern for students' learning was expressed as guiding students' growth, helping them value learning and increase accomplishment, and helping students apply their learning. Not surprisingly, classroom-management issues were present (gaining students' respect, maintaining classroom control, and working with disruptive students). Few personal concerns, such as becoming a good teacher, managing time issues, or selecting and teaching content well, were noted (Swennen, et al., 2004). Similarly, items of least concern included too many non-instructional duties, too many pupils in one class, lack of freedom to initiate innovative instruction, and inadequate teaching salaries. However, while these studies shed light on the *general* concerns of teacher-education students prior to their student-teaching experience, they did not specifically link their investigations directly to the student-teaching experience itself.

Other recent studies identified concerns of student teachers *during* student teaching. Cakmak (2008), using a questionnaire developed for the study, found that the highest concerns of secondary-level student teachers involved classroom management, maintaining students' attention, teaching methods, undesired conduct in the classroom, motivating students, and teaching at the students' level.

Poulou's (2007) examination of the reflective journals written by student teachers during their student-teaching experience documented an attention shift in both professional and personal areas over the period of student teaching, from concerns regarding instructional tasks and personal capacity to manage students and classrooms to a primary focus on individual pupils' needs and their own development as teachers and persons. This symbolized for Poulou an interaction between beliefs and experiences, adding depth to our understanding of the value of the student-teaching experience.

Research Purpose and Questions

While these indications of concern about the student-teaching experience may be universal, we sought more specific information about prospective student-teaching concerns. Our exploration was guided by these questions: What is most concerning to the students in our teacher-preparation programs as they anticipate their student-teaching experience? What constellations of characteristics might be formed by their concerns that may prove useful in planning and implementing interventions designed to result in an effective student-teaching experience for all stakeholders?

Method

We take the view that an examination of attitudes and concerns in the field of teacher education best takes an instrumental perspective, that is, a behavioral view toward identifying attitudes. Rokeach (1974) defines instrumental values or attitudes as "ideal modes of behavior" (p. 222), (vs. "terminal values" as "ideal end-states of existence," p. 222), that is, having an immediate presence and effect rather than being felt as an overarching archetype. As such, they have useful functions, including being directed toward satisfying personal needs ("becoming a good teacher") and avoiding punishment ("whether students like me or not") and as a way of expressing identity ("being fair and impartial") (Katz, 1960). To that end, we based our Q sample on the Teacher Concern Checklist developed by Fuller and Borich (in Borich, 1988) with input from Swennen, et al.'s (2004) "card-sort" instrument, also based on the Fuller checklist. Both seemed to fit our notion of values as both "instrumental," that is, values exemplified through behaviors, and "value-expressive" (Katz, 1960), that is, values that express one's self-image.

Brookhart and Freemen (1992) judge that an overemphasis on survey methodology to obtain information about beliefs is a concern because surveys may not accurately capture the actual thoughts and opinions of those surveyed. We felt that Rokeach's (1974) method of requiring participants to rank items in a list of values as a forced-distribution procedure was effective in accessing participants' opinions. Because Q methodology is a similar research method with which we have some experience, we chose that tool for this investigation. Q methodology, described as a qualitative research technique combining the "richness of interviews with the standardization of a survey" (Donner, 2001, p. 24), is used for identifying and describing a range of possible perspectives, regardless of the number of people holding a particular view (van Exel & de Graaf, 2005). This point is crucial for this study, because even infrequently held views may have large effects on

how teacher educators prepare students for the student-teaching experience.

Q methodology theorizes that "only a limited number of distinct viewpoints exist on any topic. Any well-structured Q sample, containing the wide range of existing opinions on the topic, will reveal these perspectives" (van Exel & de Graff, 2005, p. 3). Participants (the P sample) are given a set of statements (the Q sample) to be sorted among a predetermined number of points anchored at the extremes by, for example, "most agree" and "most disagree," with the center point being "neutral." The resulting Q sort is a prioritized, rank-ordered set of statements. Thus, similar to a structured interview, the outcome will be different for every participant. Using software designed specifically for this methodology, the results are factor analyzed. Z scores for each statement are calculated and help to identify statements that distinguish between, or identify consensus among, factors.

The outcome is a population of viewpoints rather than a population of people (van Exel & de Graaf, 2005), allowing for the thorough understanding of a range of viewpoints. Q methodology has been used to examine teachers' beliefs about discipline practices, beliefs about children, and attitudes toward teaching practices (Rimm-Kaufman & Sawyer, 2004; Rimm-Kaufman, Storm, Sawyer, Pianta, & LaParo, 2006), explore children's attachment behavior (DeSchipper, Stolk, & Schuengel, 2004), and understand teachers' beliefs about inclusion (Berry, 2010; Zambelli & Bonni, 2004).

Participants. Participants were recruited from a four-year undergraduate teacher-preparation program in a private suburban college located adjacent to a large urban area. Participants were recruited to represent a range of program completion: entering teacher candidates (freshmen), students on the threshold of student teaching (juniors), and students who had completed student teaching (seniors). A small number of sophomores were present in the classes where data collection took place, and it was decided to retain these in the participant pool. Seventy-seven early-childhood, elementary, and adolescence-education students performed Q sorts. Of the 54 participants whose Q-sorts were statistically flagged for inclusion in the analysis, 40 had not yet started student teaching; 47 were females; 33 were dual childhood and special-education majors, 11 dual early-childhood and special-education majors, four adolescence majors and six non-education majors; 46 were European Americans, five were African Americans, and three were of other ethnicities; 48 were age 22 or under; 19 were freshmen, seven sophomores, 12 juniors, and 16 seniors; 12 were from urban backgrounds, 24 suburban, 17 rural, and one unknown.

Design and procedures. To develop the Q sample, we examined the Teacher Concern Checklist both as developed by Fuller and Borich (in Borich, 1988) and as represented by Swennen, et al's (2004) card-sort instrument. To update and adapt the items to our own context (teacher preparation), we made several revisions to the Borich items, a number of them suggested by Swennen, et al. For example, we eliminated the items "Feeling under pressure too much of the time" and "Clarifying the limits of my authority and responsibility." We restated and/or expanded a number of items; for example, "Feeling more adequate as a teacher" became "Becoming a good teacher" and "Whether or not I'm well-prepared for teaching in my area." The item "The wide diversity of student ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds" became "Adapting to the needs of ethnically and linguistically diverse students." We added other items that we believed represented typical student-teacher concerns as well as current pedagogy, such as "Communicating with parents," "Using technology in the classroom," "Knowledge of multiple evaluation strategies to assess student work," and "Maintaining pupil records."

We then invited teachers who had recently completed their teacher preparation programs to review the revised list and check for validity, resulting in a final list of 29 items in the Q sample (See Appendix).

To accomplish the Q sort, each participant sorted the 29 randomly numbered statements along nine points on a continuum, with the extremes labeled "most concern" and "least concern." After sorting, respondents recorded each statement's number in the appropriate cell on a worksheet grid.

Data analysis. Using MQMethod freeware individual sorts were factor analyzed using centroid analysis procedures. After examining the first eight-factor solution and several trials, a four-factor solution was selected as most conceptually coherent, because this array produced the fewest confounded Q sorts (Watts & Stenner, 2005). Varimax rotation and program-generated flags were used.

Results

Fifty-four of the 77 participants loaded on one of four factors. The interpretive tools available for assigning meaning to the quantitative outcomes included the original Q sorts and the distinguishing statements from representative sorts for each factor. Statements that were scored at the extremes of the continuum (i.e., +4, +3, −3, −4) were particularly important for understanding the factors. Each factor's six highest- and lowest-ranked Q statements (±2, ±3 or ±4) are shown in Table 1.

Distinguishing statements, generated by the analysis software, are indicators of key differences among the subgroups. In this study, 10 to

16 distinguishing statements were found for each of the four factors (Table 2). For example, a distinguishing statement given a high-concern value (i.e., +3 or +4) by one of the factors, compared with lower concern values (e.g., 0, -3, or 1) given the same statement by the other three factors indicates a characteristic of the factor that is substantively different from the other factors.

Table 1: Statement Numbers and Positions for Highest- and Lowest-Ranked Statements for Each Factor

Q-Sort Ranking		*Factor 1 Managing Students*	*Factor 2 Managing Instruction*	*Factor 3 Making the Grade*	*Factor 4 Managing Difference*
High Concern	*(+4)*	19*	6	22*	26*
		6	25*	21	19*
	(+3)	21	4*	11*	20
		18*	21*	20	13
	(+2)	8	(7*)	(8*)	8
		17*	(16*)	(24)	24
Low Concern	*(–2)*	(2)	(28)	(14*)	16*
		(10)	10	2	27*
	(–3)	15	1	6*	11*
		12*	29*	1	22*
	(–4)	23*	2	15	1
		29*	26*	29	29

**Distinguishing statements. All statements in this table have z-scores >1.0 or < –1.0, with the exception of the scores in parentheses.*

In the paragraphs below describing the four subgroups identified in this study, the specific numbers of the statements supporting each claim are shown in parentheses.

Factor 1: Do I Have the Right Stuff? Managing Students

Factor 1 represented 16 participants. More than half, (N=9) were freshmen or sophomores. Highest-concern items selected by Factor 1 teachers included concerns regarding maintaining positive classroom behavior (17), maintaining students' attention (18), and motivating students to learn (19). Low-ranking issues regarded multiple assessment strategies (23), lack of freedom in instruction (12), and class size (29).

Factor 2: Do I Have the Right Stuff? Managing Instruction

Factor 2 represented 13 participants. Similar to Factor 1 participants, 84% (N=11) of these teachers had not yet begun their student-teaching experience, and most were freshmen and sophomores. Highest-concern items included becoming a good teacher (21), getting a favorable

Table 2: Distinguishing Statements by Factor: High and Low Concern*

	Factor number and name **Number and text of Q statement**
High Concern	*Factor 1: Do I have the right stuff: Classroom management* **17 Maintaining positive classroom behavior** **18 Gaining and maintaining students' attention during lessons** **19 Motivating students to learn**
	Factor 2: Do I have the right stuff: Effective instruction **21 Becoming a good teacher** **16 Getting a favorable evaluation from my college supervisor** **25 Selecting and teaching content well** **7 Efficient use of time** **4 Adequately presenting all of the required material**
	Factor 3: Do I have the right stuff? Making the grade **11 Getting a favorable evaluation from my cooperating teacher** **22 Getting along with my cooperating teacher**
	Factor 4: What do I do about problematic students? Fearing difference **26 Being fair and impartial** **19 Motivating students to learn**
Low Concern	*Factor 1: Do I have the right stuff: Classroom management* **23 Knowledge of multiple evaluation strategies to assess student work** **12 Lack of freedom to initiate innovative instruction** **29 The number of students in my class(es)**
	Factor 2: Do I have the right stuff: Effective instruction **29 The number of students in my class(es)** **26 Being fair and impartial**
	Factor 3: Do I have the right stuff? Making the grade **6 Whether or not I'm well-prepared for teaching in my area**
	Factor 4: What do I do about problematic students? Fearing difference **11 Getting a favorable evaluation from my cooperating teacher** **22 Getting along with my cooperating teacher** **16 Getting a favorable evaluation from my college supervisor** **27 Getting along with my college supervisor**

This table presents high-concern statements with z-scores > 1.0 and low concern statements with z-scores < –1.0.

evaluation (16), selecting and teaching content well (25), and using time efficiently (7). Among the least-concerning items were class size (29) and being fair (26). Interpretation based on the distinguishing statements associated with the factors suggests that, while they shared with Factors 1 and 3 participants a concern about being adequate for the job, their specific apprehension had to do with instruction, rather than classroom management, that is, selecting and teaching content, making effective presentations, and efficient use of time.

Factor 3: Do I Have the Right Stuff? Making the Grade

Factor 3 represented 17 participants. Differentiating these participants from those associated with the other three factors, 82% (N=14) were juniors or seniors, and 47% (N=8) had just completed their student-teaching semester. Items of highest concern included getting along with and receiving favorable evaluations from the cooperating teacher (11, 22). Least-concerning items involved anxieties about being prepared for teaching in their area (6).

The interpretation we reached based on the distinguishing statements suggests that there is a group of preservice teachers who appeared to exhibit strong practical self-concerns; they sought the strongest possible evaluation as they completed their student-teaching experience. This was a high-stakes outcome; evaluations from cooperating teachers are conveyed to prospective employers such as school principals, and thus may have significant implications for future employment and entrance into the teaching profession.

Factor 4: What Do I Do About Problem Students? Fearing Difference

Factor 4 represented eight participants. Seventy-five percent (N=6) were freshmen or sophomores, and none were involved in student teaching. Half of the participants loading on this factor were from rural backgrounds. Highest-concern items and distinguishing statements included being fair (26) and motivating students to learn (19). Their least-concerning issues included getting along with both the cooperating teacher and the college supervisor, as well as receiving favorable evaluations from these two people (11, 16, 22, 27).

What was unique about this factor was their strong concern about being "fair" (26). Similar concerns about fairness have been shown to be persistent in small numbers among corresponding populations (Berry, 2010). Although this factor had the fewest loading participants, recall that an advantage of Q methodology lies in the identification of a wider range of perspectives than might be uncovered by more traditional factorial analyses (Wolf, et al., 2011). Despite the small numbers, this outcome should be concerning to teacher educators, because even a small proportion of teachers fearful of, or resistant to, teaching

assignments involving diverse (i.e., ethnic, linguistic, disabled) populations can be highly consequential for students in these teachers' classrooms and for the teaching profession as a whole (Berry, 2008).

Based on their ethnic majority status and largely rural backgrounds, it may be hypothesized that participants loading on this factor have had little personal experience with diverse students and evidently felt some anxiety about this, recognizing that they may eventually teach in unfamiliar suburban or urban contexts (Berry, 2007). The majority of this group was younger and at a considerable distance from their student-teaching placements, thus, the apparent lack of apprehension regarding personal evaluation and grading by classroom supervisors or college personnel during and after their student-teaching experience.

Discussion

We believe that these results illustrate how personal and contextual variables may inform our understanding of the characteristics of prospective student teachers. We found that, while participants loading on Factors 1, 2, and 3 had strong concerns regarding their own abilities to be effective in the classroom, these three factors were differentiated by secondary concerns, that is, managing students, managing instruction, and making the grade, respectively. Factor 4 was dominated by anxiety about teaching a broad range of diverse students. The factor-analytic methodology used in this study added to our understanding of preservice teachers' concerns about teaching and about their developmental trajectories by identifying specific group differences within a demographically similar population. An analysis failing to recognize the demographic heterogeneity of this group of participants might obscure these more subtle distinctions.

Results suggest that Factor 1 participants focus their concerns on classroom management (17, 18, 19), hardly a surprising finding for student teachers (Goh & Matthews, 2011; Fletcher, Mountjoy, & Bailey, 2011) but, perhaps unexpectedly, descriptive of only one out of the four factors. We hypothesize that classroom-management anxieties center on the uncertainties of assuming an authoritative role consonant with effective classroom management. Pellegrino (2010) noted that the failure to establish an appropriately authoritative role in the classroom may result in an unproductive learning environment characterized by student misbehavior and lack of respect for the teacher.

Factor 2 participants were characterized by concerns regarding selecting and presenting content (4, 25), mirroring some of the top concerns found by Swennen, et al. (2004) and generally supporting Fuller's (1969) hypothesis that less-experienced teachers are more concerned about their own classroom performance than about their students' academic characteristics and achievement. We felt that this set

of concerns was appropriate for preservice teachers and reflective of their institution's expectations regarding desirable emerging skills and dispositions, as well as indicative of serious interest in becoming effective teachers.

Participants loading on Factor 3 seemed to be focused on performance rather than on how to accomplish instructional tasks effectively. Their concerns centered on whether their classroom performance measured up to expectations (11, 22), particularly from their cooperating teacher and college supervisor. This result may be due to increased confidence in their instructional role and emerging expertise. Based on the results of this study, we hypothesize that at this point in their teacher-preparation program, having just completed their student-teaching experiences and within days of graduation from their teacher-preparation program, and perhaps even searching for employment as a teacher, they were focused on receiving a top grade for their student-teaching efforts.

Factor 4 participants' concerns reference anxieties regarding treating students fairly, especially students who have disabilities (8) or represent different ethnic backgrounds and histories (24). It has been hypothesized that stronger concerns about meeting students' individual needs would be associated with more teaching experience (Fuller, 1969; Berry, 2010). In other words, more experienced teachers would exhibit greater desire for or resistance to dealing with diverse populations. Our results suggested that young, inexperienced, and perhaps most importantly, rural teacher candidates, with perhaps few multicultural experiences to date, might also be anxious on this point, suggesting the need for experiences during teacher preparation that counter these initial impressions.

In summary, the homogeneity of this group of preservice teachers disappeared under careful analysis, and we were able to identify a typology of prospective student teachers with varying characteristics and dispositions. One group focused on classroom management, another on instructional responsibilities, a third on finishing well, and the fourth on managing difference and diversity in the classroom. It may be that unique demographic or contextual characteristics represented in each group contributed to the differences that emerged.

Implications and Conclusion

The research method used in this study possesses the inherent limitations of self-report instruments and one-semester self-studies. Another limitation was that all participants were from one teacher-education program. Future research could supplement self-report data with other data such as direct observation and include other universities and instructors. Additionally, our data suggest the possibility of

interesting associations among the four factors and ethnicity, nature of home community (rural, suburban, urban), and major, and these should be investigated in greater depth.

Further explorations may include extending this research to larger and more diverse higher-educational settings across wider geographical areas with larger sample sizes, as well as extending down to address these issues with high-school students interested in a teaching career. Also, an assessment tool based on this research could be developed to improve and measure teacher-education curriculum to address the preservice teacher fears discussed here.

An additional target for further investigation could involve an implied theme of this study, that is, preservice teachers' anxieties with respect to meeting their own professional expectations, as well as those of their cooperating teachers. We have observed that the pressures our students place on themselves range from the most arduous (perfectionist) to the least (apathetic). We believe our emerging teachers should be passionate about their chosen profession, but this should not manifest as an obsession to teach the perfect lesson to ideal students. Conversely, if future teachers care little about their teaching and their students, they should have been counseled out of any teacher-education program long before the student-teaching experience. While professional development and mentoring may eventually moderate either of these perspectives once a novice teacher begins professional practice, nevertheless, at the conclusion of the student-teaching experience, and regardless of evaluations from their cooperating teacher and supervising faculty, only student teachers can assess for themselves whether and how they have met their own personal expectations.

Implications

Several implications arise from the results of this study. First, preservice teachers need to be well-prepared for the important task of classroom management (West-White, 2007). Classroom management is a learned skill, just as reading a text or riding a bike is a learned skill. To become competent at classroom management takes practice and understanding of management principles. Survey courses focusing on general principles of student motivation and classroom management as well as advanced classes focusing on classroom applications could be offered. Other methods of content delivery should also be considered, such as embedding classroom-management concepts throughout all courses, and drawing on the expertise of parents, principals and experienced teachers, all who will hold different perspectives on classroom management.

Second, the process of becoming an effective teacher, and overcoming one's fears regarding personal adequacy is often enhanced

by repeated engagement in authentic classroom contexts at the level of practica, rather than mere observation (Ferber & Nillas, 2010; Kent, 2005; Zeichner, 2011). More time in the field could be used for planning, teaching and grading activities. In addition, students who are currently completing their student-teaching experience may be able to share their reflections and insights with their peers to help alleviate this concern (Brannon & Fiene, 2010). Underclassmen would benefit from this exposure to these experiences of student teachers who are on the front-lines. Knowing what to expect will, we believe, lower the anxiety of preservice teachers and have a positive effect on their future teaching responsibilities.

Third, we believe that positive relationships with cooperating teachers may be enhanced by exposing preservice teachers earlier to the classrooms and the teachers with whom they will eventually student teach. The positive or negative outcome of the student-teaching experience is often more about relationships and getting along than it is about teaching the curriculum (Anderson, 2007; Rajuan, Beijaard, & Verloop, 2007; Sağ, 2008). Student teachers' relationships with their cooperating teachers typically progress from introduction to honeymoon, and eventually getting along, and even agreeing-to-disagree phases. Having preservice teachers involved in practica and field experiences in the same classrooms in which they will eventually complete student-teaching assignments will allow additional time for these relationships to grow and foster mutual respect, increased mentoring, heightened readiness for student teaching and beyond, provision of more in-depth feedback, and reduction of some of the anxiety associated with the cooperating teacher as an authority figure. Benefits for the cooperating teacher could include increased stipends; they typically receive no compensation for practica experiences and a meager amount for supervising student teachers. This may ameliorate to some extent cooperating teachers' concerns regarding adequate time to focus on student achievement, effective instruction, and their students' tests scores, often regarded as reasons for legitimately declining invitations to work with student teachers.

Fourth, anxieties related to dealing with student differences and diversity can be reduced through the development of increased personal capacity (by means of accumulating classroom experience and knowledge of instructional strategies that benefit all students), and increased situational capacity (for example, support from colleagues) (Berry, 2007). Diversity concerns often coalesce around perceived issues of "fairness" (Berry, 2008). Student teachers may perceive the issue of fairness as either important or "not my responsibility." Many may accept a needs-based concept of fairness, but some find it difficult

to discard the notion that differential treatment necessarily results in some form of advantage for some students (Berry, 2008).

Conclusion

It seems self-evident that learning to teach involves beliefs that predispose one to becoming an effective teacher and pedagogical skills that develop over time. Well-researched and valid insights into the characteristics and dispositions of our teacher candidates will help to strengthen educational outcomes for all students. Preparing lessons, setting up the classroom, planning and teaching the curriculum, and managing student work all evolve as students absorb program content, conduct classroom observations, and engage in course practica. Teaching activities change as teachers acquire classroom experience. Novice teachers eventually become accustomed to the realities of the classroom context. Awareness of the beliefs and dispositions of their teacher candidates can assist teacher educators in directing their efforts to produce beginning teachers with high potential to become successful educators.

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Appendix: Q Sample

1 Whether the students like me or not
2 Using technology in the classroom
3 Adapting to the needs of gifted & talented students
4 Adequately presenting all of the required material
5 Collaboration with teachers/staff
6 Whether or not I'm well-prepared for teaching in my area
7 Efficient use of time
8 Adapting to the needs of students with disabilities
9 Diagnosing students with learning problems
10 Working with paraprofessionals/teacher aides
11 Getting a favorable evaluation from my cooperating teacher
12 Lack of freedom to initiate innovative instruction
13 Communicating with parents
14 Giving sufficient attention to each student
15 Too many non-instructional duties
16 Getting a favorable evaluation from my college supervisor
17 Maintaining positive classroom behavior
18 Gaining and maintaining students' attention during lessons
19 Motivating students to learn
20 Dealing with problematic students
21 Becoming a good teacher
22 Getting along with my cooperating teacher
23 Knowledge of multiple evaluation strategies to assess student work
24 Adapting to the needs of ethnically and linguistically diverse students
25 Selecting and teaching content well
26 Being fair and impartial
27 Getting along with my college supervisor
28 Maintaining pupil records (e.g., recording progress, report cards)
29 The number of students in my class(es)