

# Chapter 12

## The Role of Teacher Dispositions in a Global Teaching Context

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### ABSTRACT

*Dispositions are a vital aspect to teacher preparation. Dispositions provide the holistic view to teaching future teachers that is often missing in teacher preparation programs. Commonly, the focus of training in teacher preparation programs is on pedagogical and content specific instruction. However, teacher preparation programs have a greater responsibility to further prepare candidates through dispositional development. In the 21st century, it is imperative that teachers are communicatively and culturally competent. Teacher dispositions relate directly to 21st century skills. This chapter focuses on defining dispositions, explaining their significance in teacher preparation programs and establishing how dispositional training can be employed in practical settings. Including teacher dispositions as an integral aspect of teacher preparation globally could help to establish meaningful and clear connections regarding what is truly needed for successful intercultural and international education in the 21st century.*

### INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, teachers must be communicatively and culturally competent and able to teach their students to be communicatively and culturally competent. Teacher dispositions relate directly to 21st-century skills, as defined by professional organizations and teacher preparation programs. The concept of teacher dispositions can be readily applied to the rapidly changing context of 21st-century education worldwide. Indeed, including teacher dispositions as an integral aspect of teacher preparation globally

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-7998-4697-0.ch012

could help establish meaningful and clear connections regarding what is truly needed for successful intercultural and international education.

Dispositions are clearly a vital and current aspect of teacher preparation. Indeed, the accreditors of teacher preparation programs in the United States refer to teacher dispositions as necessary components in accredited programs (CAEP, 2019; AAQEP, 2020). While teacher dispositions' general idea is agreed upon as important, parties have not yet completely united on the definition, specific wording, and exact requirements for what constitutes these specific teacher dispositions. Generally, dispositions are the personal and professional qualities and attitudes of a teacher and could be viewed as what many colloquially call *soft skills*. Dispositions provide a holistic view of teaching future teachers that are often missing in teacher preparation programs. Commonly, the focus of training in teacher preparation programs is on pedagogical and content-specific instruction. However, teacher preparation programs have a greater responsibility to prepare candidates through dispositional development further. Fostering an awareness of dispositions helps teacher preparation candidates access the most fundamental aspects of who they are personally and professionally (Schussler & Knarr, 2013). Dispositions of teacher preparation candidates are assessed through accreditation procedures and therefore, must be cultivated (Cummings & Asem-papa, 2013; Jones & Jones, 2013) via the intentional introduction to and teaching of the dispositions.

While it is the responsibility of teacher preparation programs to develop dispositions within teacher preparation candidates, the lack of clarity in both the definition and the assessment of dispositions within teacher preparation programs has made the transfer of dispositional knowledge to a practical application classroom difficult. Further, dispositions are difficult to define because of their subjectivity. As a result, teacher preparation programs have struggled to find concrete ways to develop, document, and assess dispositions (Neumann, 2013). Dispositional development is especially essential in English Language Learner teacher candidates' preparation as dispositional nuisances such as tone, syllabic stress, facial movements, and hand gestures are often transferred to students without teacher awareness. This chapter will focus on defining dispositions, explaining their utmost significance in teacher preparation programs, and establish how dispositional training can be employed in practical settings. The connection between teacher dispositions and the 21st-century global world of education is important to consider. Therefore, this chapter will focus on defining dispositions, explaining their utmost significance in teacher preparation programs, and establishing how dispositional training can be employed in practical settings worldwide.

## **BACKGROUND**

When asked about the qualities they admire most in their teachers, students most commonly state dispositional qualities instead of content knowledge or pedagogical traits. Dispositional aspects of a teacher are what set great teachers apart from those that are just mediocre. Dispositions help teachers form the relationships that are necessary for truly effective teaching. Moreover, studies that research dispositions of teacher preparation candidates show that when teacher preparation candidates experience problems in their fieldwork during their teacher preparation training, those issues are often rooted in dispositional factors (Cochran-Smith, Cannady, McEachern, Piazza, Power, & Ryan, 2011). Dispositions have played an integral role in Teacher Education for decades. Classic works (Schön & Shulman, 1983; Shulman, 1986) focused on how teachers must be reflective practitioners and must relate appropriately and professionally. Shulman (1986) specifically wrote about the link between content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and teacher dispositions concerning evaluating teachers. Paying more attention to the intentional

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