Evaluating Teacher Candidates Dispositional Qualities in Special Education

TED 2013
Background

- Traditionally - Measured knowledge of content & Skills
- 1990’s - Dispositions became a requirement in Teacher Education programs
- 2002 - NCATE Disposition mandates

(Wise, 2005)
Definition

- “Professional attitudes, values, and beliefs demonstrated through both verbal and non-verbal behaviors as educators interact with candidates, families, colleagues, and communities.

- Attitudes, beliefs related to values like caring, honesty, fairness, empathy, respectfulness, responsibility, and thoughtfulness

(National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Educators (NCATE), 2007)
Measuring Dispositions

- NCATE expects institutions to assess professional dispositions based on observable behaviors in educational settings.

- 2 professional dispositions:
  - Fairness
  - Belief that all students can learn

(NCATE, 2007)
What are Professional Disposition Qualities?

- Dispositions are guided by beliefs and attitudes related to values such as caring, fairness, honesty, and responsibility.

- Example(s):
  - Belief all students can learn.
  - Commitment to a safe and supportive environment.

(NCATE, 2007)
Why Assess?

- Predictive of how teachers might act in their own future classrooms.
- Applies knowledge & skills in their own classroom teaching
- Leads to an increase in quality of student learning
- Leads to an increase in job satisfaction

(Borko, Liston, & Whitcomb, 2007; Wadlington & Wadlington, 2011; Rushton, Morgan, & Richard, 2007; Kokkinos, 2007; Teven, 2007).
Why Assess?

Teacher Candidate (TC):
- To know what is expected of them
- Understand and learn that dispositions are just as important as knowledge & skills.
- Increases awareness by monitoring & assessing dispositions throughout the program.

(Rike, 2008; Wayda & Lund, 2005, Taylor & Wasicsko, 2000)
When should dispositions be assessed?

- Entry into teacher education program.
- During all field experiences.
- During student teaching.
- Anytime a concern is raised.
Assessing Dispositions

Teacher Education Programs:

- Need to be flexible & determined by local cultural norms & expectations.
- Ongoing reflection process at the beginning & throughout training program.
- Provides support if performing poorly.

(Beverly, Santos, & Kyger, 2006; Flowers, 2006; Hillman, & Scarano, 2006; Schulte, Edick, Edwards, & Mackiel, 2004).
Purpose

- Assess teacher candidates’ self-reflections on their professional dispositions in comparison with cooperating teachers’ perceptions of those dispositions.
- Conducted during student Teaching in SPED program.
Professional Disposition Qualitative (PDQ)

- **Assumptions**
  1. Dispositions are developmental & will improve overtime
  2. Dispositions are observable
  3. Dispositions are changeable
  4. Dispositions are situational

- **Goal**
  - Assess teacher candidate dispositions and cooperating teachers’ perceptions of those dispositions.

(Lindquist, Altemueller, Brewer, and Kincaid, 2011)
Context

Who:

- Teacher Candidate (TC):
  - Teacher in training
- Cooperating Teacher (CT):
  - Practicing in-service teacher in K-12 classroom

When:

- Midterm- Student Teaching semester
Context

Entry into the Program
EDSE 270 Course

Block 1

Block 2

Student Teaching

Midterm (Week 5)

Final 2013
# Background Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional Dispositions Qualities (PDQ)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>37 items</td>
<td>27 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 pt scale</td>
<td>3 pt scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3 Contents:</strong></td>
<td><strong>3 Contents:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Professional Commitment &amp; responsibility</td>
<td>• Professional behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Inter-Intrapersonal skills</td>
<td>• Inter-Intrapersonal skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Attitudes toward learners</td>
<td>• Responsible behavior</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Lindquist, Altemueller, Brewer, and Kincaid, 2011-paper)
Research Questions

1. Do teacher candidate self-reflection ratings on professional dispositions differ from cooperating teachers’ disposition ratings?

2. What three items on the PDQ are the highest and lowest rated items for:
   a. CT
   b. TC
Method

Participants

Teacher Candidates
- Spring 2012 (N=12)
- 2012-2013 (N=31)

Cooperating Teachers
- Spring 2012 (N=14)
- 2012-2013 (N=27)
PDQ Instrument

- Teacher Candidates & Cooperating Teachers
- Paper form
- Midterm Survey during Student Teaching
- 27-item questionnaire
- Assess teacher candidate’s dispositions
  - Likert Scale:
    - 1 (Unacceptable)
    - 2 (Appropriate)
    - 3 (Advanced)
## PDQ

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional Behavior</td>
<td>1-13</td>
<td>--“Considers all points of view and shows appreciation for diversity”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal/Intrapersonal Behavior</td>
<td>14-23</td>
<td>-- “Demonstrates high energy and enthusiasm when teaching”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>--“Uses effective communication strategies when speaking with students, families peers and professionals”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsible Behavior</td>
<td>24-27</td>
<td>--“Prepares, organizes, and meets assignment due dates”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data Analysis

- First step: Reliability Analysis

- **Question 1:** CT ratings differ from TC ratings?
  - T-Test, Logistic Regression

- **Question 2:** What three items on the PDQ are the highest and lowest rated items for:
  - a. CT
  - b. TC
  - Descriptive Statistics
    - Top 3 and Bottom 3 Items per Group
  - Logistic Regression
Reliability

- The Professional Dispositions Qualities Rubric was tested for reliability.
- Cronbach’s alpha 0.959 > 0.9
  - Very high internal consistency
Results: Q1

TC and CT ratings

- The TC self rate was overall lower than the CT’s rating.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Candidate</th>
<th>Cooperating Teacher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>2.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- However, there was not a significant difference in the overall mean score between TC and CT ($t = 0.7085$, p-value $= 0.481$).
## Results: Q2

Table 1. Three highest rated items by student teachers, cooperating teachers from the PDQ Survey. 2012-2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Item #</th>
<th>Survey Items</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher Candidate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Demonstrates enthusiasm for learning</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>0.457</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Maintains professional boundaries with all individuals</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>0.477</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Dresses appropriately for the situation.</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>0.485</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cooperating Teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Interacts positively with learners, including those from diverse backgrounds.</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>0.415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Demonstrates enthusiasm for learning.</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>0.431</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Arrives on time</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>0.435</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Results: Q2

Table 1. Three lowest rated items by student teachers, cooperating teachers from the PDQ Survey. 2012-2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Item #</th>
<th>Survey Items</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Teacher Candidate</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Uses effective communication strategies to teach learners.</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>0.445</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Collaborates equally during group activities.</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>0.445</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Collaborates effectively with peers.</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>0.452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Cooperating Teachers</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Conveys confidence when interacting with students peers and or professionals in small group situations.</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>0.500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Uses effective communication strategies to teach learners.</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>0.501</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Contributes relevant information during group activities.</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>0.496</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Evaluating the Student Teaching Experience in Special Education Teacher Education
Question 2: Logistic Regression

Logistic Regression was run to test out if there was a difference between responding as proficient or advanced for CT verses TC from the highest and lowest items.

The following top and lowest items were found to be significant:

- **Item #10**: CT score higher than TC, (alpha = 0.06).
  - The odds that a CT scores TC as a 3 verses a 2 is 0.473 times the amount a TC will score themselves a 3.

- **Item #27**: CT score higher than TC, (p = 0.08).
  - The odds that a CT scores TC as a 3 versus a 2 is 0.459 times the amount a TC will score themselves a 3.

- **Item #8**, CT score higher than TC, (p= .018)
  - The odds that a CT scores TC as a 3 versus a 2 is 0.328 times the amount a TC will score themselves a 3.

- **Item #18** CT score higher than TC, (p=.044)
  - The odds that a CT scores TC as a 3 versus a 2 is 0.39 times the amount a TC will score themselves a 3.
Discussion

- Overall
  - Dispositions are an important component to assess in a teaching training program.
  - Midterm data is useful to determine if interventions are needed.
  - Teacher candidate’s self reflection and cooperating teachers ratings of the teacher candidates helps to keep teacher candidates accountable. Good for consistency.
  - Developed a measure to assess student’s dispositions.
  - Assessed if TC and CT differ in their ratings.
Implications

- Lead to disposition task force.
- Development of a new rubric
  - 2014 Proposed Rubric
    - 12 items in rubric form
    - Assessed at Midterm & End of semester by both CT and TC.
    - Will be used across SPED and Elementary Undergraduate programs.
    - Introduced at first contact in the program.