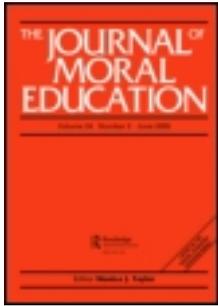


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Building awareness of dispositions: enhancing moral sensibilities in teaching

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The purpose of this paper is to explain why and how dispositions can operate as a mechanism for enhancing teacher candidates' moral sensibilities. Dispositions conjoin the knowledge and skills of teaching with the commitments one has to achieve intended purposes. Dispositions build candidates' awareness of their own perceptions (and misperceptions) and how they can best connect their intentions with their practice, given their perception of the specific teaching situation. Teacher education programs foster candidates' moral sensibilities when they help candidates connect their intention with their perception and with their practice. After exploring a conceptual rationale, three teacher candidates' case study analyses are presented, illustrating a window into candidates' inclinations toward particular behaviors and their awareness, or lack of awareness, into how they perceive teaching situations and connect their intention and practice.

Please imagine the following hypothetical scenario. A serious car accident occurred. People are trapped inside the cars. Their medical status is unknown. Here is what five people who witnessed the accident chose to do:

Person A rushed to the cars and attempted to free the people inside.

Person B rushed to the scene, but did not go near the cars.

Person C stayed away from the accident altogether.

Person D drove to the nearest convenience store.

Person E also drove to the nearest convenience store.

Based on this information, consider: who possesses the disposition of wanting to help others? How do you know?

Consider this additional information: Person A only went to the scene because he needed to impress his girlfriend; he would not have stopped had she not been with him. Person B is a doctor, but she knew she was not strong enough to free people from their cars. However she wanted to help once people were freed from

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the wreckage. Person C called 911 immediately, but since a number of people rushed to the scene, he thought it was best to stay out of the way. Person D did not own a cell phone but immediately went to the nearest convenience store to call for help, despite being late for his second job, a job he desperately needed to keep his home out of foreclosure. Person E did not call anybody, on her cell phone or otherwise, but went to the nearest convenience store to pick up the latest gossip magazine and cigarettes. Does this information cause you to change your initial response? If so, why?

The car accident scenario illustrates the difficulty in determining an individual's dispositions when one only has access to a snapshot of the individual's behaviors. Initially Person A appeared to possess the disposition of wanting to help others, but clearly maintained alternative motives for his actions. Initially it was unclear from the actions of Persons B and C what they intended, but then it seemed they acted purposefully and were inclined to help in some way. Though Persons D and E exhibited the same initial actions, their intent was to achieve very different purposes. Each person's actions represent one indicator of his/her disposition to help others. But, unless these actions are understood within the context of each person's intention to achieve particular purposes, the information they provide may be useless.

This scenario provides insight to teacher educators as they attempt to instill dispositions into their certification programs. It highlights how teacher education frequently misuses dispositions, but it also implies a direction with which dispositions *could* be used. When dispositions gained popularity as a useful construct for teacher education in the early 1990s, they were not supposed to operate as a prescriptive list of desirable behaviors. Dispositions became a way to address the less tangible aspects of teaching, like teacher commitments, values and beliefs (Diez, 2007). However, the use of behavioral checklists as a means to assess teacher candidate dispositions has proliferated. This reductionist approach disregards the intended purpose and limits the capacity of the construct to address more meaningful aspects of teaching, like the impetus driving one's behaviors and the purposes that person desires to achieve. These aspects of teaching encompass one's moral sensibilities. When construed broadly, as encapsulating one's 'sound professional judgment in action' (Dottin, 2009, p. 85) and the process of achieving 'desirable ends' (Tom, 1984), dispositions inherently describe a moral activity.

Achieving desirable ends is a necessary component of quality teaching. According to Fenstermacher and Richardson (2005) quality teaching is achieved when good teaching—the moral worth of an activity—combines with successful teaching—the 'realization of intended outcomes' (p. 186). An 'effective teacher' engages in quality teaching by enacting knowledge and skills in particular contexts to reach desired ends (Schussler, Stooksberry, & Bercaw, 2010). As we describe in this paper, dispositions are an essential component of quality teaching and therefore must be cultivated to increase teacher effectiveness. The purpose of this paper is to explain why and how dispositions can operate as a mechanism for enhancing

teacher candidates' moral sensibilities. To illustrate, three teacher candidates' case study responses are presented. Implications for ways teacher education can foster candidates' moral sensibilities are discussed.

Using dispositions to enhance moral sensibilities: in theory

Teacher educators have considered ways to foster teachers' moral sensibilities for years. As we will explain, dispositions provide a panoptic, multi-faceted approach. Dispositions embody teachers' behaviors as well as the impetus underlying those behaviors. Dispositions embrace the *why* of teachers' decisions, not just the *what*. Furthermore, fostering awareness of dispositions helps teachers access the most foundational aspects of who they are, professionally and personally. These foundational aspects intimately relate to one's moral sensibilities.

Defining dispositions

Dispositions have become a catchall construct for aspects of teaching aside from knowledge and skills. To justify how dispositions can enhance moral sensibilities, it is important to be clear about the definition. As described in the accident scenario, beyond depicting *actions*, dispositions entail the *inclinations* of a person to behave in particular ways, the *context* of a situation and a person's *awareness* of his or her¹ inclinations and what the context requires for desired outcomes to be reached. We draw from two main bodies of literature in the formulation of this definition: psychological studies examining 'thinking dispositions' (Perkins, Jay, & Tishman, 1993; Perkins, Tishman, Ritchhart, Donis, & Andrade, 2000; Ritchhart, 2002; Tishman, Jay, & Perkins, 1993) and literature on the 'self' of the teacher (Bullough & Gitlin, 1995; Kelchtermans & Vandenberghe, 1994; Korthagen, 2004; Tickle, 1999). Both bodies of literature help describe dispositions as: 'What teachers have the ability to put into practice' (Feiman-Nemser & Schussler, 2010, p. 179).

According to psychologists studying thinking dispositions, intelligent behavior in normal life circumstances depends less on traditional 'abilities-centric' notions of intelligence than on one's thinking dispositions. Their 'triadic model' of dispositions includes a person's: (1) abilities—behaviors or capacities for behaviors; (2) inclinations—tendency toward particular behaviors; (3) sensitivities—alertness to when particular behaviors make sense in particular situations (Perkins et al., 1993). To illustrate: a teacher may possess the knowledge or ability to 'take into account a variety of learners' needs when planning instruction and assessments' (Johnson, Evers, & Vare, 2010)², but may not be alert to when a situation calls for these competencies. Sensitivity and inclination are important because 'everyday contexts', as well as classrooms, 'present a wilderness of vaguely marked and ill defined occasions for thoughtful engagement' (Perkins et al., 2000, p. 270). Sensitivity means not just possessing particular knowledge and skills but '*acting* on them in relatively uncued conditions' (Tishman et al., 1993, p. 149). That means being

able to know when and how to design instruction to meet the needs of all learners, not just doing so when prompted in a diversity or methods course. Teacher educators have labeled this knowledge-into-practice rift as a ‘problem of enactment’ (Kennedy, 1999, p. 70) and suggest ‘adaptive expertise’ as the solution (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005). Adaptive experts possess a breadth of core competencies so they operate efficiently, yet with flexibility as situations change. This means, teachers must possess an awareness of the teaching context and an inclination to adapt accordingly.

However, teachers require more than just an awareness of the external context to teach most effectively. Teachers need an awareness of the internal context, an awareness of the self, in order to understand how they are interpreting a teaching situation through their own individual lens (Schussler, 2006). Arguing for a biographical approach to teacher development, Nias (1989) claims, ‘The attitudes and actions of each teacher are rooted in their own ways of perceiving the world’ (as cited in Kelchtermans & Vandenberghe, 1994, p. 49). Teacher educators researching the teacher as self claim that effective teachers are aware of these ‘subjective educational theories’ (Kelchtermans & Vandenberghe, 1994) that bear on their teaching decisions. These teachers are aware of the underlying impetuses that guide their behaviors. Steeped in the theory of symbolic interactionism, thinkers exploring the teacher as self believe that behavior results from the meanings individuals attribute to aspects of their environment. To understand a classroom environment it is not only important to examine the actions of the individuals, it is imperative also to examine how they interpret situations based on their interactions with others. According to prominent social interactionist, George Herbert Mead:

The relation to the whole field of consciousness finds its expression in consciousness of self. But the consciousness of self depends primarily upon social relations. The self arises in consciousness *pari passu* with the recognition and definition of other selves. (Mead, 1964, p. 121)

The cyclical interplay between the formation of the self and the formation of interpretations one has with others in the environment impacts the teacher’s identity as well the teacher’s effectiveness, i.e., his ability to engage in good teaching and successful teaching. Although teachers possess a professional identity, it is not separate from their personal construction of self (Tickle, 1999). Knowledge of pedagogy and professional experiences in classrooms are subject to the individualized perceptions of each individual teacher. Perceptions are shaped by a combination of attributes unique to each individual, including prior experience, beliefs, culture, values and cognitive abilities (Schussler, 2006). How teachers perceive what happens within their classrooms affects their decisions to act: ‘Teachers do not merely implement programs or apply instructional practices, they interpret them through the filter of their own values and beliefs’ (Ritchhart, 2002, p. 49). For example, teachers may interpret the phrase, ‘He is a good student,’ very differently. Depending on the individual’s values, beliefs and personal experiences in

school, this phrase could mean the student is very curious, or is well disciplined, or knows the answers immediately or is willing to work hard. The interpretation will affect the teacher's behaviors toward that student, despite whether the teacher is aware her perception is an interpretation. This could have positive or detrimental consequences depending on whether the student's behaviors are aligned or misaligned with the teacher's interpretation. This in turn affects the teacher's effectiveness, namely, her ability to engage in quality teaching. Therefore, teachers must develop an awareness of the self to maximize their effectiveness. 'Through self-knowledge [teachers] recognize their own values and the biases that might color their perception of others; and through self-awareness they can assess the effects of their behavior on pupils' (Borich, 1999, p. 95).

To summarize, quality teaching extends beyond one's abilities or external behaviors. It includes one's inclinations towards acting and thinking in particular ways and one's awareness of why those behaviors and ways of thinking make sense in specific situations to achieve intended purposes. All teachers possess dispositions which affect their teaching, though they often lack awareness they possess dispositions or that dispositions affect their teaching in specific ways. Developing awareness can increase the teacher's effectiveness by aligning their intentions with their perceptions.

Defining moral sensibilities

Because dispositions involve the intention of a teacher to achieve particular ends that presumably meet the broad purposes of education, the construct of dispositions encompasses the moral aspect of teaching. Through their interactions with others and the purposes they achieve, teachers enact their values constantly. Because they are often unaware of how others perceive their actions, their values are often enacted unconsciously. Teachers are bombarded with a myriad of stimuli that require them to make instantaneous decisions, decisions based on their values and how they choose to relate to others, especially their students. Reflecting on one's pedagogy is challenging. Articulating the purposes one wants to achieve and reflecting on whether the values inherent in those purposes are being enacted through one's pedagogy requires cognitive sophistication as well as experience. It may feel like a luxury that few teachers can afford. Yet, it is necessary. A number of teacher educators report that the values candidates articulate in course assignments are often not in alignment with their actions in the classroom (Johnson, 2008). For this reason, it is necessary to understand how to enhance teachers' moral sensibilities by building awareness of their dispositions while candidates are engaged in teacher preparation programs.

We describe moral sensibilities as encompassing two broad areas: (1) the inclination to think through assumptions and ramifications behind one's values, considering desirable ends and processes to achieve those ends; and (2) the responsibility one has to care for others as the teacher.

Values and desirable ends

Thinking about how moral sensibilities relate to teaching is imperative as teacher candidates enter teacher education programs with an extensive value system in place (Sockett, 2006). In acting moral, teachers do not merely distinguish between right and wrong (Dill, 1990; Strike & Soltis, 1985), they acknowledge that right and wrong exist on a continuum. Such distinctions help guide one's behaviors: 'Moral problems... are questions about what ought to be done in a particular educational context about furthering others' welfare (e.g., students, colleagues) or in resolving moral dilemmas and conflicts' (Strom, 1989, p. 268). *What ought to be done* begs the question: Whose values? To answer this question, a number of approaches to moral development in education seek an externally imposed structure to determine either moral virtues (e.g., character education) or the reflective skills for determining what is moral in a particular situation (e.g., reflective judgment model). However, what ought to be done does not need to be defined externally, especially when referring specifically to teachers. In describing the strengths and limitations of three approaches to reflecting on the moral foundations of teaching—deliberative, relational and critical—outlined by Valli (1990), Hansen (1998) concludes that the morals teachers must draw upon as teachers 'are those embedded in the practice itself... The moral meaning of teaching can be derived from the basic terms of the work itself' (p. 652). Veugelers (2010) affirms the importance of both the virtues themselves—a 'value approach'—as well as the process for determining values—a 'developmental approach' (p. 650). Because dispositions are context specific, connecting intended purposes with one's inclination to think and act in particular ways, they align well with the cultivation of teacher candidates' moral sensibilities.

For many teacher educators engaging in the cultivation of candidates' moral sensibilities, indoctrination of values is a credible danger (Dill, 1990). To avoid such accusations, many teacher education programs have made efforts to avoid linking dispositions with moral sensibilities. For example, to remove a perceived ideological bias, NCATE, the major accrediting body of teacher education programs in the United States, removed the phrase 'social justice' as an example of a disposition teacher education programs may foster (see National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, 2002, 2008). The misguided attempt to appear value-free, or at the very least, ideologically neutral, has likely resulted in many programs relegating dispositions to nothing more than behaviors.

This approach is misguided because it ignores the role values play in the work of teachers, and teacher education neglects using candidates' values as a catalyst for insightful reflection. When teacher candidates have highly developed moral sensibilities, their values are the result of systematic, reflective thought combined with their personal beliefs. The process has both a cognitive dimension and an ontological dimension. The cognitive dimension involves ongoing reflection on the 'means-end connection' and a continual questioning of what is 'desirable' which 'presupposes a sense of purpose' (Dottin, 2009, p. 84). The ontological dimension

explores the deepest layers of a teacher's identity, including the teacher's personal 'mission' (Korthagen, 2004). According to Korthagen, personal mission involves 'becoming aware of the meaning of one's own existence within a larger whole, and the role we see for ourselves in relation to our fellow man' (p. 85). That is not to say that a quality teacher does not possess competencies, i.e., knowledge, skills and attitudes that are capacities for the teacher to behave in successful and good ways. However, Korthagen contends that 'competence is not equated with competencies' (p. 94) and it is only when synergy exists between all the essential qualities of a good teacher—from behavior and competencies to beliefs and personal mission—that a teacher will be most effective. In other words, the teacher's deepest sense of purpose and his capacities for achieving that purpose align.

Responsibility to care

Because teaching occurs in a social context, the idea of desirable ends must include the relationship between people and what defines the nature of that relationship. Teachers have a moral responsibility to influence the development of their students (Tom, 1984). In fact, Hansen (1998) situates the quest to define the moral dimensions of teaching firmly within the relational dynamics taking place within classrooms: 'Teaching means attending to students, listening to them, speaking with them in intellectually serious ways, identifying their strengths and weaknesses with an eye on supporting the former and overcoming the latter, and more' (p. 653). Teachers have a responsibility to cultivate both the 'intellectual traits' and the 'moral virtues' of their students (Fenstermacher, 2001; Sockett, 2009). In other words, teachers must foster each student's development—intellectually, socially, emotionally, morally—which requires being in relationship with each student.

A prerequisite to this relationship is teachers' inclination to care for their students (Noddings, 1984). Mayeroff (1971) describes care as helping one to 'actualize' (p. 1). To help another actualize, one must understand others from their perspective and allow others to develop and reach their potential. It is not possible to help another actualize unless one knows the other's desires and needs and is willing to understand the other from that person's perspective.

To care for another person... I must be able to be *with* him in his world, 'going' into his world in order to sense from 'inside' what life is like for him, what he is striving to be, and what he requires to grow. (Mayeroff, 1971, p. 30)

Similarly, Noddings (1984) describes caring as a two-way relationship where the 'carer' experiences 'engrossment and motivational displacement' (p. 16). This means carers, for a span of time, put aside their own needs and become concerned with the needs of another. They place themselves in the situation of the other and attempt to act in a way that 'furthers the other's purpose or project' (Noddings, 1992, p. 16). Although Noddings limits her description of care to the relationship between individuals, care can also include the relationship between a person and a

group or an idea that affects people (Mayeroff, 1971), such as social justice or free speech.

Dispositions and moral sensibilities

For a teacher to appreciate her values and how these values affect the way she thinks through desirable ends and the means to achieve those ends and to understand how she views her responsibility to care for others, she must possess an awareness of the self and how the self melds into the professional identity of the teacher. To cultivate quality teaching, teacher education programs must foster this awareness in teacher candidates. Candidates who learn a decontextualized repertoire of knowledge and skills will struggle to discern which knowledge and skills are required to reach desired outcomes in particular situations. Therefore, their moral sensibilities may be disconnected from their practice, and their articulated values may conflict with ways they interact with others. If teacher education programs are to help candidates connect their intention with their perception and with their practice, they must foster candidates' moral sensibilities. Dispositions are a promising mechanism to accomplish this. To illustrate this theoretical argument more tangibly we provide the following illustrative examples, which highlight the awareness three teacher candidates possessed at different phases of the same teacher education program. Specifically, we were interested in awareness of their values, how they achieve desirable ends and their responsibility to care for others.

Using dispositions to enhance moral sensibilities: in practice

From a pool of 43 participants, we examined how three candidates analyzed a written case study. Although analyses of case studies do not show behaviors, they provide a window into candidates' thinking, capturing their inclinations toward particular behaviors. Furthermore, if candidates articulate why those behaviors make sense given the situation (i.e., their values, desired ends, how they ought to relate to others), they demonstrate a heightened awareness of their moral sensibilities. These candidates are presented to highlight the different starting points for candidates who are at different phases in the same teacher education program. Although there is some variation in the complete data set (i.e., some wrote more or less than their classmates or showed greater or less awareness of the reasoning behind their decisions), these three cases were specifically selected to highlight the prominent themes we identified of candidates at each phase of their program. Both researchers read all 43 case analyses and agreed on the three selected. Programmatic information is provided to contextualize the participants' experiences.

Setting

The participants attended a midsized, public university in the western United States. The authors were not associated with the teacher education programs,

allowing for a greater degree of objectivity. Teacher preparation occurs primarily in the fifth year. Education courses include 42–47 credit hours, including courses about democratic practices, access and equity, teaching special populations, literacy development, second language acquisition and two teaching practica. The first practicum includes six weeks of a teaching experience embedded within one of the methods courses. The second practicum includes twelve weeks of student teaching. Prior to the practica, teacher candidates participate in some field experience comprised mainly of observation. The credential program includes a dispositional framework composed of five specific dispositions that faculty assess and students self-assess at three points during their programs. The purpose is to help teacher candidates develop their dispositions throughout their programs and to monitor their professional growth. Briefly, these dispositions include: appreciates and values human diversity, believes that all children can learn, committed to continue self-directed learning and reflection, participates in collaborative relationships with colleagues and students, committed to the expression and use of democratic values.

The total group of participants included 43 teacher candidates from elementary (28%) and secondary (49%) programs (23% unsure or not seeking certification). Candidates were 74% female and 26% male. Forty per cent of the candidates had parents with at least a bachelor's degree. Seventy-five per cent grew up in a suburb or small town. The participants were at one of three phases in their program: (1) early—no field experience, (2) middle—some field experience, (3) later—teaching experience during practicum.

In this article, we focus on the written case study analysis of three teacher candidates, one at each phase of the program. The case study was adapted from a journal entry of a former student teacher. To appeal to candidates in both elementary and secondary school settings, we used two parallel cases with similar issues—'Maria' and 'Marcus'. The following is an abbreviated version of the Marcus case:

Mr Goldstein [cooperating teacher] looked over Marcus's plans for a two-week unit exploring cell processes and building students' reading comprehension. He asked Marcus, 'What do you have planned for higher and lower level learners?' This took Marcus a bit by surprise. The science classes were tracked according to ability... During the second day of the unit, Marcus realized how challenging it is to time a lesson. Students became so engaged and asked so many questions when Marcus mentioned the concept of 'cloning' that the lesson took more time than he allotted... Marcus was unsure whether to stop the students or to let them continue asking questions since many of them were so interested. He felt the district science curriculum looming over him, but also knew he was supposed to be pushing literacy skills for the standardized tests... When he revised his plans, Marcus created some worksheets so that he would have extra work available for students who finished early as well as extra work on specific skills for students who were behind...

One particular student, Yesenia knew very little English (her mother knew none)... Marcus solicited Andy, one of the Hispanic students in the class who was fluent in both Spanish and English, to interpret directions for Yesenia... Later Marcus determined Andy was 'picking on' Yesenia by giving her incorrect directions. Marcus called

Andy's parents and explained the situation. Andy's father... felt that having a student such as Yesenia in class was negatively affecting his son's learning. Since his son was often placed with Yesenia to help interpret, his son was not learning what he could be learning in biology. He stated that he did not want his son working as Yesenia's 'personal tutor' any longer.

Candidates responded to the following three questions after reading the case: (1) What are the major issues of this case? (2) What does Maria/Marcus need to be thinking about in relation to her/his teaching? (3) How should Maria/Marcus proceed?

Additionally, one of the researchers conducted focus group interviews with two groups of students from each phase of the program. Groups consisted of two–six participants. The purpose of the focus groups was to ask candidates more specifically about their own backgrounds and values related to education, how they believed their values and backgrounds effected the way they viewed the case study, and whether they thought they made any assumptions in the case study. In this article, the researchers used this information for the purpose of explaining *why* the candidates at each stage may have analyzed the case study as they did.

Phase 1: Chris

Chris was enrolled in a course about democracy in schools taken by elementary and secondary certification candidates. The course focused on assisting candidates in 'developing, clarifying, and evaluating educational values and positions' (course syllabus) for the purpose of being an active participant in decisions regarding public education. The syllabus included numerous topics related to equity, equality, conflict and discourse.

Chris's case response

Main issues: (1) the inclusion of less capable students in a 'regular' classroom; (2) managing class time efficiently so that every student can work to their potential; (3) how effective is tracking students in getting a more homogenous group of kids. I think these are the major issues of the case because they demonstrate some of the questions educators have about how to best organize schools so that all of the kids get the education they deserve. Are Marcus' lessons designed in a way to get kids thinking about the topic, or could his example (cloning) be distracting his students from the goals of the lesson? Marcus needs to keep trying different things to find what works. Also, other teachers and faculty could have suggestions on what he could try. I think that revising his plans was a good first step for Marcus.

Phase 1 themes

Chris' focus is primarily on academic exercises and lesson planning, rather than moral issues. This selective attention exemplifies the majority of students in the earlier stages of their program whose primary concern involved instructional

techniques, not discernment of desired ends and means to achieve them. However, Chris and others at this stage generally exhibited some moral sensibilities, though superficially. Chris' claim that the teacher in the case should focus on 'how to best organize schools so that all of the kids get the education they deserve' demonstrates a generic and abstract responsibility to others. It is what Hansen (2001) labels a 'big, broad ideal, familiar and compelling' (p. 172) and also lacking in substance. Chris shows concern for the 'right' end result (students getting the education they deserve), but barely touches on the means to get there (organizing schools). It is also notable that Chris completely avoids any of the difficult relational issues of the case, like the responsibility Marcus has to work with Yesenia, the ESL student, and whether using a student to translate was appropriate. Like other participants at this phase, specifics about the responsibility of the teacher are mostly lacking.

Phase 2: Pat

Pat was in a course titled 'Fundamentals of teaching practice' for elementary certification candidates. The course focused on 'instructional and management strategies to meet the educational needs of a diverse student population' (course syllabus). Topics for this course included an introduction to a variety of instructional strategies, lesson planning, motivation, English language learners and issues of equity.

Pat's response

... There is the issue of Yesenia. If she understands what Andy did to her, she probably feels embarrassed and hurt. Also, Andy, a valuable resource for helping Yesenia, can no longer be used. Although I don't think Andy should've been Yesenia's 'personal tutor', I do think he has valuable abilities (such as being able to speak Spanish) that could be used to help a struggling student. Lastly, there is the issue of Andy and what he did. I think this is a major issue because he was deceptive, and although he was probably given more responsibility than he should've been, he acted in an inappropriate way... It is not appropriate to rely on another student to take on the responsibility of helping a non-English speaking student. I think Maria needs to find ways to help Yesenia herself... She should also probably apologize to Andy and his father for using him the way she did.

Phase 2 themes

Pat exemplifies the majority of responses at this stage of the program as the major identified issue in the moral domain focuses on the responsibility to students. Pat seeks to lessen the overwhelming responsibility being placed on the students by placing the responsibility back in the hands of Maria. The impetus for this transfer of responsibility seems to stem from Pat's belief that overly relying on another student is wrong, and Maria doing it herself and maintaining responsibility is thus right. Pat displays this same sense of right and wrong when considering Andy and

his father. Pat believes that Maria should apologize to Andy and his father, implying that using Andy as a translator was wrong and apologizing would help to make it right. More evident than candidates at earlier stages, candidates at this stage at least indirectly articulated what they considered to be the right ends based on their values and addressed a broader range of moral dilemmas evident in the case, demonstrating an incipient awareness of their moral dispositions. However, Pat and others mostly glossed over details about what it takes to achieve these ends.

Phase 3: Rory

Rory had just finished a six-week practicum attached to a literacy course in the secondary certification program where he engaged in extensive teaching for the first time. Candidates across all content areas take this course as a way of developing secondary students' literacy skills across the curriculum. The course also aims to help teacher candidates use instructional literacy effectively with diverse students.

Rory's response

There were many issues raised in this case study, but I will only discuss four. The first issue was the issue of tracking. Tracking is a major issue because it almost predetermines the student potential based on the history of the student... This is a shameful part of the strategy... A second issue was raised when Marcus decided to give the students who were able to complete the work at a faster rate, additional work. The issue appears when it comes time to grade the student appropriately. How does the teacher give the same grade to a student who completed much more work than the student who did not? Another issue is the idea of moving on in the curriculum at the risk of losing students... One might argue that it is unfair to leave the struggling students behind. But just as it is unfair to do that, it is unfair to make the excelling students wait around for the struggling students. Teachers have a very tough balancing game that they must play every day. When is the extra time spent too much, and when is it not enough? ... Many people would like to think so, but teachers cannot be solely responsible for the education of their students. The last issue I would like to mention is the main issue of this case study, the issue of Yesenia and Andy... asking a student to take on the responsibility and translate whenever Yesenia needs is too much. Marcus completely overstepped his limits when he did this. Of course, Andy had no right to falsify the information that he was supposed to be translating. Marcus's limits exist in a gray area of acceptability where it is very hard to determine where it turns black, or white... Concerning Yesenia, he should seek a paraprofessional or look into the idea of resource classrooms for her. She should be involved with these types of outlets until she is able to adequately learn in a general education setting... Students need to be challenged and each student has a unique level that needs to be met.

Phase 3 themes

Unlike Chris and Pat, Rory has experience teaching, which seems related to heightened awareness of his dispositions and more sensitivity to the complexity of moral issues in the case study. Rory acknowledges a number of moral dilemmas in

the case from the fairness of assessment to responsibilities of teachers and students, and he tries to discern the best means to achieve particular purposes by considering multiple perspectives. For example, when he discusses the delicate balance and ‘gray area of acceptability’ that teachers must navigate in order to make the right decision, Rory acknowledges the tension that exists in trying to be fair when he considers how doing what is right for one student can put another student at a disadvantage. Although he does not offer a means to reconcile this tension, he does attempt to view the situation through multiple lenses. Rory’s willingness to question and explore these tensions is also evident when he asks, ‘How does the teacher give the same grade to a student who completed much more work than the student who did not? ... When is the extra time spent too much, and when is it not enough?’ Again, he does not offer answers, but demonstrates a willingness to explore questions related to desired ends and means to achieve those ends.

Rory is also more purposeful than candidates at other phases of their programs, about thinking through how to meet desired goals. Rory poses some of the same big picture ideas as those in the earlier stages regarding students’ needs, how those needs should be met and how members of the classroom should be relating to each other. However, unlike the others, Rory begins analytically thinking about enacting these larger ideals when he articulates possible courses of action for working with Yesenia, the ESL student. Candidates in this phase also addressed a broader array of responsibility to others—the responsibility of the students, the teachers, the parents and the system in general. It is also worth noting that Rory demonstrated a unique awareness of his own views regarding the teacher’s responsibility. When he states, ‘Many people would like to think so, but teachers cannot be solely responsible for the education of their students’, Rory acknowledges his own value system in regards to responsibility, while indirectly acknowledging the moral thinking of others. This type of awareness was lacking in candidates in the prior two phases.

Implications for teacher education

The written case study analyses of teacher candidates in three distinct phases of their teacher education program provide some rudimentary baseline information into the moral underpinnings of candidates’ thinking as they approach complex teaching situations. This work is exploratory, intended to provide a theoretically-rich foundation upon which others can launch empirical investigations. The purpose is to provide preliminary insight into how dispositions can foster moral sensibilities by first offering a conceptual rationale and then considering three illustrative examples. We theorize that the key idea underlying how to enhance candidates’ moral sensibilities lies in building their awareness. This does not mean indoctrinating them with specific political ideologies as some have criticized. It does mean helping teachers to become more aware of how their values affect what they do with students each day.

In order to align candidates' intention with their perceptions and their practice, teacher education programs must provide opportunities for candidates to consider how their values and ideals translate into actions in specific contexts. Chris possessed a limited capacity to consider how the instructional decisions she suggested for Marcus derived from the broad educational ideals she professed. Chris did not even perceive the complicated relational dynamics that dominated Pat's case analysis. Therefore, Chris would find it difficult to fulfill her ideal to give all students 'the education they deserve' if she lacked an awareness of students' needs and the classroom interactions that hindered or advanced students' development. The disconnect between intention and practice is not new, as referenced by the 'problem of enactment' (Kennedy, 1999). Beginning teachers learn the vocabulary of teaching; most teachers were good students and know how to succeed in school. In a mixed methods study assessing candidates' moral development, Johnson (2008) noted candidates proclivity to use phrases that 'parroted' their instructors when writing their teaching philosophies, but many candidates contradicted these philosophies when they analyzed their own teaching. One way our conceptual rationale adds to this literature is through forging an explicit link between intention, *perception* and practice, a link that is largely lacking in extant literature.

Teacher educators seeking to provide multiple, scaffolded opportunities for candidates to consider how their values and ideals translate into actions must help candidates identify the locus of any disconnects. Is it a case of inaccurate assumptions leading to misguided perceptions, as noted in previous studies (see Schussler, Bercau, & Stooksberry, 2008), or is the disconnect between one's stated values and how one enacts them in practice? We hypothesize that one reason Rory's case analysis demonstrated more sophisticated reflections regarding his values, desired ends and the means to achieve those ends is because Rory had experience observing and teaching in actual classrooms. In our focus group interviews, we noted that candidates at Rory's stage adopted a professional identity and thought of themselves as teachers. They possessed the greatest amount of empathy for the teacher in the case study, connecting their decisions regarding Marcus and Maria, with decisions they had made with their own students. In addition, Rory perceived a broader range of issues than candidates earlier in their programs and explored the nuances of various tensions he perceived in the case. Rory also articulated more questions than direct statements. Such questioning may show a nascent ability to consider how values impact one's decisions and how one perceives his/her responsibilities towards others in the role of the teacher. With focused questions from a teacher educator, Rory could develop his efficacy in navigating these tensions and aligning his intentions, perceptions and practice. Similarly, Chris could become more adept at perceiving the complexities of different teaching situations and at determining how to enact the ideals she articulates. Thus, we suggest that coupling cases with actual experiences and guided questioning about one's values and worldview may prove most potent as a means to probe candidates' values and assumptions regarding how their decisions meet the appropriate moral aims of schools.

Additionally, we recommend candidates have opportunities to observe and analyze how they themselves as well as others connect intentions, perceptions and practice. This approach is consistent with current research on practices of learning to teach which suggest structured, systematic analyses of teaching events using authentic classroom artifacts (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005). However, our recommendation involves more than just the implementation of instructional practices; our approach helps candidates discern the deepest layers of their identity, including what Korthagen labels their ‘mission’ (2004), and we refer to under the broad construct of ‘intention.’ Candidates are more likely to enact their intentions when they possess a broad repertoire of knowledge and skills in both pedagogy and content. Purposeful intentions and perceptual awareness of the self and the situation will not result in appropriate actions if the teacher lacks sufficient knowledge and skills. Chris will not be able to give all students ‘the education they deserve’ if she does not possess the knowledge and skills to differentiate instruction, create lesson plans, diagnose learning needs, communicate effectively and a host of other competencies. Despite best intentions, the doctor in the accident scenario could not help the victims without assistance as she lacked the physical skill to free them from their cars.

In sum, teacher educators must remember that values are not just rhetoric, and dispositions are more than just outward behaviors. If teacher educators are to help candidates connect their intention with their perception and with their practice, they must foster candidates’ moral sensibilities. Dispositions are a promising mechanism to accomplish this. Dispositions build candidates’ awareness of their own perceptions (and misperceptions) and how they can best connect their intentions with their practice, given their perception of the specific teaching situation. Aligning one’s intentions, perceptions and practice involves thinking through one’s values, how one achieves desired ends, and how one relates to others, in essence a moral undertaking. It is essential that beginning teachers reflect on how they achieve such alignment. As the opening scenario demonstrates, they need the space to move beyond the outer layer of their actions and delve into the core of what drives their decisions. By building this awareness, we can foster teaching that is purposeful and enhance the moral sensibilities of those who teach. This is a complex process, but one that is vital for the growth and benefit of teacher candidates and students alike.

Notes

1. For gender equity, the authors alternate between male and female pronouns when a singular pronoun is used.
2. Many teacher education programs include teaching diverse learners in their desired dispositions. This particular phrase is an action component of one of Winthrop University teacher education program’s dispositions concerning ‘fairness’. Each of their four broad dispositions are comprised of ‘actions’ and ‘judgments’.

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