

Professional Dispositions Reflection Essay

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My current professional disposition is the product of many years of growth and learning throughout the different stages in my life, but more specifically and more recently from the past 3-4 years due to my time teaching English abroad, teacher preparation courses, field experiences in elementary school classrooms, as well as feedback given to me by educators in the field of elementary education. Constant reflection is an essential part to success in any profession, and teaching is no exception. In the text *Teaching in K-12 Schools: A Reflective Action Approach*, the authors describe reflective action: “Reflective action is made up of many elements and is related to an individual’s willingness to be curious and assertive in order to increase self-awareness, self-knowledge, and new understandings of the world in which we live and work. It is not something that occurs easily for most of us and it takes time to develop.” (p. 12). The actions a person decides to take as a result from reflection is what is really important. Reflective action takes practice, but it also takes dedication. Professional disposition surveys are important reflections on strengths and weaknesses in order to become more prepared for taking new action or new direction.

Scholarship

In the category of scholarship, my biggest strengths are in oral and written communication as well as the professional identity/lifelong learning. I give credit to my oral and written communication skills to a solid education background and skills sharpened from professional experience over the years. The aspect of lifelong learning in teaching is part of what draws me to the profession. I appreciate that teaching is a profession in which professional

growth is available and encouraged. Problem-solving and critical thinking are vital to reflective action. “Teachers who use reflective action care deeply about the ways to improve their own classroom performance and how to bring the greatest possible benefit to the lives of their students” (p. 10). Looking for alternative approaches and solutions is part of professional scholarship and shows dedication to one’s career. I would love the opportunity to attend conferences/seminars/workshops to learn new skills. During student teaching, I will find time to visit other classrooms and speak with other teachers in order to gain a diverse range of perspective.

I have not had much experience with Data-based case conceptualization. I imagine this area can be more involved with assessment, which I have not had enough experience in. I am, however, very eager and willing to learn and see different ways in which teachers deal with assessment.

A successful feeling for a teacher is knowing that you are ready. The Wong text says that “effective teachers are ready” (p.89). This means that the teacher has looked at the situations from all angles, have reflected on different approaches and different actions to take, and are ready for whatever will happen. I will strive and work hard in order to feel this way when faced with my own classroom.

Teamwork

I work very well on my own, but also well with others. I have lived and worked in Japan, teaching English to students of all ages, where I was in command of my own classroom, but also collaborated and had professional growth workshops with other teachers in the school. Having

lived abroad only strengthened my ability to adapt to and be flexible with change. I am also very easy going, and usually make friends easily, which can help a lot in the workplace. I enjoy hearing what others have to say and feel that I can find value in sharing experiences with one another. On the other hand, I can improve more with responsiveness to feedback. Although I am a good listener and communicator, I sometimes have a difficult time completing necessary actions or responding in a timely manner. It is easy to get caught up in other tasks or one's personal life, so responsiveness to feedback, although openly received, needs improvement.

Active Reflection

Self-awareness is my strength in this area. I often reflect on my own performance on many things that I do in my life. I also reflect on my weaknesses and take note of what needs to change or what needs to be done better. I enjoy making lists and writing in logs to document and keep track of progress, however, simply writing these things down will not improve my approach. I must take a more active role in reflection by not only writing down how I feel or how I performed or the results, but I must also plan for a different approach or a different action in order to yield different or better results. I must be more deliberate and committed to taking the next step, to make adjustments. The saying "Actions speak louder than words" is the message here - I must act on my words in order to see change. I think that an important thing for teachers to do is set goals for themselves. Just as teachers plan goals or benchmarks for their students, teachers should list goals for themselves to reach in order to see if they are on track with what they want to accomplish for themselves. In the Tomlinson text, a teacher who uses differentiated instruction can learn to improve this skill by listing some skills that a teacher should develop over time as she/he consciously and reflectively works on differentiated instruction (p. 17). I

think this is a great and simple tool to use that requires reflection, and “checking in” with yourself and the list to keep on track. This practices not only self awareness but also reflection and reflective action.

Responsible Citizenship

Dependability and respect for human diversity are my strong points for this area. When I make a commitment or promise and when others are depending on me, I can always be counted on to be true to my word. I deeply respect people who are honest and loyal, and so I try to treat others how I would like to be treated in return. Because I have a passion for travel and have enjoyed learning about other cultures at a young age, I have had a strong respect for human diversity for as long as I can remember. All children have the right to learn in a safe and nurturing environment - this is something all teachers must believe in and respect. This includes the acceptance and respect for all kinds of learners and people. I welcome diversity, and just like seeing new parts of the world through travel, I believe that exposure to different cultures and different human interactions is a great way to feed the mind and the soul, and to raise well-rounded individuals for today’s society.

My weak points are time management and community outreach. Growing up, my family and I were never very involved with the community, nor was our neighborhood the type that new everyone on the block. I do believe that being a part of the community is an important part of the role of a teacher, therefore I will need to improve on this area once I am placed at a school. I will do my best to get to know the parents of my students, but also the community in which the school is in and the communities from which my students come from. It is important and helpful

to know the kinds of backgrounds and issues my students will be talking about and bringing with them into the classroom each day, and these are shaped by the communities in which they live. Time management has always been a difficult skill for me to improve. Although I am dependable and complete tasks when they need to be completed, managing my time to a better pace or allotting time for improved efficiency and productivity has always been a challenge. I tend to want to do too much, and I tend to believe I can do more than I really can in a small amount of time. I must try to think more realistically about time for certain tasks, so that I can put forth my best efforts. I would like to manage a good balance between work and personal life. In work, I would like to balance time with students, with colleagues, with parents, and with the community in order to be a great teacher. A reflective action approach will be helpful here for me to brainstorm different ways to manage my time better, reflect on their effectiveness, and think of other approaches to try.

References

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