Professional Disposition Plan

Jessica Paisley

ECE 650

National University

Abstract

 The first part of this paper lists five dispositions of teaching and philosophy and includes descriptions of behaviors for each disposition. For each disposition I choose two of the descriptions that best describe my teaching and philosophy. I explain the reason I chose my two through references to course work and course material and personal experience. The second part is a self reflection in which I discuss what Responsible Citizenship, an element of STARS, means to me, how it connected with my learning in this class, how it influences my teaching, and how I will implement it in my teaching practice. In the third part I share my challenges and goals. I also discuss my learning and personal growth action plan. .

**Name:** Jessica Paisley

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For each of the **5** Disposition described below, there is a prompt. Respond to each prompt by choosing **two** Description of Behaviors that **BEST** describe your teaching and philosophy.

Write one paragraph on each behavior that you choose and provide support in the way of an example from your personal experience and/or a reference to theory/course work.

Your response to each prompt should be no more than three paragraphs.

Please type your response to each prompt directly into the form.

**This assignment is graded and is REQUIRED.** Your instructor will evaluate your responses using the Dispositions Rubric. **The Assignment is worth 60 points.**

| **Dispositions** | **Descriptions of Behaviors** |
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| Disposition #1**Committed to Life-Long Learning** | * Demonstrates superior knowledge of subject matter, curriculum, and/or relevant professional practices.
* Seeks ongoing understanding of current issues and trends in education field
* Thinks critically and identifies multiple approaches for solving problems
* Proposes more than one solution/hypothesis that indicate a deep comprehension of the problem
* Communicates issues/problems clearly and comprehensively either verbally or in written format
* Cultivates a professional identity and is viewed a lifelong learner who adds much to his/her profession
* Reviews results relative to the problem evaluate outcomes.
* Describes realistic and specific workable plans for increasing his/her knowledge and skills
* Integrates alternate, divergent, or contradictory perspectives or ideas fully and questions assumptions
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| **Prompt for Disposition #1** |  I demonstrate my commitment to life-long learning by (1) thinking critically and identifying multiple approaches for problem solving. The children I teach are all different therefore I use multiple approaches to work with them and solve problems. I know what works well with one child may not work well with another child. It is important that I understand each child and learn what approaches work best for him/her.  I also (2) review results relative to the problem and evaluate outcomes. I know that it is important to review and evaluate the effects of my response to a problem and decide if a different approach may have a better outcome or the problem was effectively solved. Handling problems appropriately and efficiently gives those around me including myself, confidence that I am capable of teaching the children and providing them a secure environment where they can be comfortable while learning. Examples of ways I evaluate outcomes are, I observe their fine motor skill to look for improvement over time and I ask questions to check their comprehension of the lesson and new material.  |
| Disposition #2**Builds Collaborative Relationships** | * Models professional dress, attendance, punctuality, confidentiality, integrity, civility routinely
* Utilizes consistently strong active listening skills
* Uses effective and correct verbal communication that enhances interactions with colleagues, students, and parents/guardians
* Responds promptly to electronic communication
* Helps the team move forward by articulating the merits of alternative ideas or proposals
* Engages team members in a way that facilitate their contributions to meetings
* Completes all assigned tasks in a timely and thorough manner with little to no supervision
* Supports a constructive team climate through active collaboration with others, encouragement and support of efforts of others and facilitation of decision making
* Treats members respectfully and uses positive vocal or written tone, facial expressions, and/or body language to convey positive attitude
* Fosters and maintains positive relationships with students, parents, teacher, the administrators and the community.
* Motivates teammates by expressing confidence about the importance of the task and the ability of the team to accomplish it.
* Performs service, targeting diverse populations and groups in the community through school programs, child advocacy as well as professional associations and community organizations
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| **Prompt for Disposition #2** |  I build collaborative relationships in my school setting by (1) modeling professional dress, attendance, punctuality, confidentiality, integrity, and civility routinely. I believe my job is very important and make responsible choices in what I wear to work, arrive to work early, respect others views, and acknowledge the importance of matters and confidentiality. I always arrive to work early. It’s nice to have the time to organize things for the day and converse with the director and other teachers. Any concerns or ideas about the day’s schedule can be addressed and adjustments can be made. I also believe that to build collaborative relationships it is important to (2) support a constructive team climate through active collaboration with others, and encouragement and support the efforts of others and facilitation of decision-making. I enjoy the people I work with and exchanging ideas. I think my positive relationships with the adults (parents, teachers, director) are apparent to the children. When I am with other teachers, we have fun teaching lessons and doing activities together. I think this creates a warm, inviting environment the children want to be a part of and they are excited about learning. I am always available to talk with parents or faculty if there is a problem. My relationships with them are important and I want them to know that how/what they feel is important to me so I do my best to handle problems responsibly and timely. When staff members become comfortable, caring teams, they are actually better able to remain focused on the children in care. In settings where teachers have a strong sense of collegiality, interactions are genuine and relaxed and individuals feel free to express their thoughts openly. Conflicts resolve more easily, and each one feels supported by the other in times of stress. (Baker & Manfredi/Petitt, 2004, p. 25)  |
| Disposition #3**Reflects on Practice** | * Envisions a future self that builds on prior experiences to respond to new and challenging contexts
* Advocates for democratic and social justice values
* Recognizes and values interdependent, collaborative social interactions
* Values student ideas and facilitates student group work
* Reflects on actions and interactions and makes adjustments to improve practice independently and on a consistently regular basis
* Has a realistic awareness of personal strengths and weaknesses and the impact they have on professional interactions and relationships with others
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| **Prompt for Disposition #3** |  I actively reflect on my teaching practice when I (1) value student ideas and facilitate student group work. “Many instructional strategies invite teachers to have students work in small groups or independently. Using those strategies makes it easier for a teacher to reach out to individuals and to match activities or process to needs of individuals” (Tomlinson, 2001, p. 80). Children’s ideas sometimes add to or extend a lesson in a way I would not have thought of on my own and the children enjoy it more and the lesson is improved. Effective teachers, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC 2005) states, “create a climate of mutual respect for children by being interested in their ideas, experiences, and products” (Epstein, 2007, p. 15).  Group work helps promote democracy in the classroom and is a great way for children to learn about one another and value and appreciate differences in feelings and perspectives. Democracy in the early childhood classroom means conditions of equality and respect for the individual… It calls for ‘reflective problem solving and decision making, managing one’s emotions, taking a variety of perspectives, and sustaining energy and attention toward focused goals’. (Epstein, 2007, p. 85) I also (2) have a realistic awareness of personal strengths and weaknesses and the impact they have on professional interactions and relationships with others. I am aware of my strengths and weaknesses and value professional interactions that can assist me in my weaker areas. I believe my strengths and other teachers’ strengths can be used to benefit student and teacher development. One of my strengths is my ability to bond and develop strong, healthy attachments with the children. They are always excited to see me when I arrive and run to hug me good-by when I am leaving. |
| Disposition #4**Demonstrate Equity and Fairness** | * Demonstrates evidence of adjustment in own attitudes and beliefs due to working within diverse communities
* Consistently demonstrates sensitivity to and acceptance of students and their families and their unique needs
* Provides evidence of experience in civic engagement activities and describes what she/he learned about her or himself
* Tailors communication strategies to effectively express, listen, and adapt to others to establish relationships to further civic action
* Demonstrates ability and commitment to work collaboratively across and within community contexts and structures to achieve a civic aim
* Interacts and responds with all students equitably
* Looks for and creates opportunities to respond to and enhance cross-cultural understandings in classrooms, the school and the community
* Invites and integrates students’ individual differences into the learning environment
* Encourages cultural sensitivity and perspectives by designing learning experiences and learning environments that empower all students.
* Respects, models and promotes the uniqueness of each person
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| **Prompt for Disposition #4** |  I demonstrate equity and fairness in my classroom when I (1) interact with and respond to all students equitably. It is important to me that all of the children I teach feel loved and valued. I consider children’s social-emotional development a priority and know the effects a caring teacher has on a child. A caring teacher teaches the child that he is safe, listened to, and understood. Her responses teach him that what he does is important; he has an impact on the people around him. The child learns that the world can be trusted and that if he needs help or comfort, someone special will be there to take care of him. (Baker & Manifredi/Petitt, 2004, p. 96) I also, (2) respect, model, and promote the uniqueness of each person. I appreciate children’s differences and model behavior to let students know they are appreciated and valued. By doing so, my students respect one another and learn differences are to be appreciated and we can all learn from one another.  Examples are, when I know a child has a skill I will let him/her demonstrate it for the class (ballet, karate, etc) and I will have children teach others words in their language. These are all activities the children enjoy being part of.  |
| Disposition #5**Believes All Children Can Learn** | * Looks for, inquiries about, and implements a variety of strategies to engage all levels of student abilities and interests
* Persists with students to help them understand and encourages students at all levels to reach their maximum potential.
* Holds high expectations for all children and guides students towards self-responsibility in learning.
* Utilizes assessment data to guide instruction and improve learning.
* Encourages students at all levels to take risks
* Implements strategies evidenced to be more effective with all students.
* Connects relevant experience and academic knowledge of exemplary practices to effectively facilitate learning for all children
* Models culturally responsive pedagogical practices.
* Applies the knowledge of the standards of their profession and/or state standards
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| **Prompt for Disposition #5** |  I believe all children can learn. In my classroom, you will see me (1) looking for, inquiring about, and implementing a variety of strategies to engage all levels of students and abilities. The children I teach are young and their learning styles, interests, and abilities vary greatly. It is important that I adjust lessons and activities to support all students’ learning styles, interests, and abilities to make sense of new information.  Process of sense making can be differentiated in response to student readiness, interest, and learning profile:* Differentiating process according to student *readiness* means matching the complexity of a task to a student’s current level of understanding and skill.
* Differentiating process according to student *interest* involves giving students choices about facets of a topic in which to specialize or helping them link a personal interest to a sense-making goal.
* Differentiating process according to students learning profile generally means encouraging students to make sense of an idea in a preferred way of learning -- for example, exploring or expressing what they learn kinesthetically, or spatially, or verbally, or creatively; or deciding to work alone versus with a partner; or sitting on the floor to do work versus sitting in a straight chair. (Tomlinson, 2001, p. 80)

 I also (2) am persistent with the children to help them understand and encourage children at all levels to reach their maximum potential. I encourage children to be engaged in instruction and do the best they can at their level. I am patient with each child and give him/her the time they need to complete the task and participate in discussions. I encourage children to do things on their own and add guidance when necessary in order for them to complete the task and not be too discouraged or overwhelmed. When they have confidence in themselves, they are more excited about learning and trying new things. My goal as a teacher is to support each child, show them how important they are, and help them develop a love of learning. I think the more I teach, the more I learn and the more strategies I discover to engage all levels of students’ abilities and interest. Working and talking with other teachers also provides me with knowledge on how to improve my strategies and gives me ways to understand and encourage children to reach their maximum potential. |

**Part II: Personal Reflection**

 Responsible Citizenship is the STARS (scholarship, teamwork, active reflection, responsible citizenship, standards of exemplary practice) element that has emerged as a theme for me as a result of my work in this class and my responses to the Disposition Form. Responsible Citizenship believes in fairness, integrity, and that all children can learn. It requires scholarship, teamwork, active reflection, and standards of exemplary practice.

**Why is this element particularly important to you as a professional? What drew you to this element?**

 This element is particularly important to me because it requires integrity and scholarship, respect for others and teamwork, active reflection, and standards of exemplary practice.

 Scholarship helps me make informed, evidence based decisions and it also helps me with curriculum development (planned and unplanned).

Every school has a planned, formal acknowledged curriculum, but it also has an unplanned, informal, and hidden one that must be considered. The planned, formal curriculum focuses on the goals, objectives, subject matter, and organization of instruction; the unplanned, informal curriculum deals with sociopsychological interaction among students and teachers, especially their feelings, attitudes, and behaviors. (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2013, p. 9)

 Also, as a teacher working with others, it is important to me that we work together and respect one another; through active reflection I am able to make continuous improvements to meet the needs of all students; and standards provide me with tools to assess students learning and outcomes.

 I was drawn to this element because it is committed to fairness and the belief that all children can learn. All children have strengths and weaknesses. It is important that I observe each child, recognize their strengths and weaknesses, and adjust my teachings to provide them effective learning opportunities.

**How does this element connect with your learning in this class? What did you learn about yourself in light of this element as you participated in class this month?**

 This element connects with my learning in this class because through my readings I was reminded of the importance of relationships and meeting the children’s needs. “Strong relationships between families and caregivers allow communication to flow naturally and smoothly. In child care this generally translates into fewer mistakes, easier adjustments, and milder upsets. Each child is better understood, and the care between home and center is seamless” (Baker & Manifredi/Petitt, 2004, p. 18).

 As I participated in class this month I learned that by talking with others and sharing thoughts and experiences we can all learn from or relate to one another in many ways and areas.

**What are the implications for your teaching practice?**

The implications for my teaching practice are to provide children learning experiences so they believe in themselves and that they can and want to learn. By reflecting on my teaching and outcomes, I will continue to make adjustments to improve the quality of care I provide and of my lessons. I will continue learning new information through readings and teacher collaboration.

Effective professional development is sustained, ongoing, content-focused, and embedded in professional learning communities where teachers work over time on problems of practice with other teachers in their subject area or school. Furthermore, it focuses on concrete tasks of teaching, assessment, observation and reflection, looking at how students learn specific content in particular context, rather than emphasizing abstract discussions of teaching. (Darling-Hammond, 2010, p. 226)

 For me the strongest part of Responsible Citizenship is believing all children can learn. I know all children can learn and want to create a classroom climate that exudes this to everyone that enters.

**Part III: Learning and Personal Growth Goal and Action Plan**

Challenge:

I love working with children and want to provide them high quality learning experiences and a warm, safe, and healthy environment. Every moment I spend with the children is valuable and filled with things to consider and choices to make. Each child is unique and has his/her own learning style, abilities, and interests. It is important that the care and information I provide them is adjusted accordingly.

Goal:

My goal is for children to feel loved, love learning, and believe in themselves. I want to develop my curriculum, design lessons, and create a healthy environment where the children feel warm, safe, and comfortable and try their best.

Action Plan:

Continue to invest time in my education.

Observe students’ strengths and weaknesses in all developmental domains (social-emotional, language, cognitive, perceptual and motor) and adjust my teaching and behavior to better meet the students’ needs. ([www.cde.ca.gov](http://www.cde.ca.gov))

Keep open, continuous communication with teachers and parents. Have teachers observe the students and me and ask for thoughts and suggestions on modifications to improve my teaching and relationships with children. Connect with parents and let them know how important their child is to me and ask them if they would like anything added or changed.

Ask the children their opinion on what they like about school and try to include their likes more often in the curriculum and environment.

Keep records on changes, progress, and outcomes.

References

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