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### Abstract

Teacher preparation programs identify knowledge, skills, and dispositions as desired outcomes in preparing candidates to impact student learning. Of the three outcomes, dispositions are by far the most subjective and challenging to identify and assess. This paper outlines the process by which Liberty University developed its dispositional model, known by the acronym SCRIP: social responsibility, commitment, reflective practice, integrity, and professionalism. It details how the dispositions, which are based on the Fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5, are assessed, and analyzes the results of candidate development in each of the five areas. Implications for Christian schools are presented.

*Keywords:* dispositions, teacher education

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Student life-change through teacher influence is the result of a quality education. The stimulus of the teacher's knowledge and character produces an indelible impact in the minds and hearts of children through pedagogical practices. As stated by Jesus in Luke 6:40, "A pupil is not above his teacher; but everyone, after he has been fully trained, will be like his teacher" (New American Standard Version). The inspiration of the teacher, as declared by Jesus was not just a theoretical statement. Jesus exemplified the depth and breadth of the master teacher's influence as he impacted the lives of those he taught, using the attributes of knowledge (Luke 4:32), instructional skills (Matthew 7:28, 29), and character (Hebrews 4:15). From the time of Christ, this tripartite model has resonated as a fundamental mantra for teacher preparation in Christian institutions of higher learning. In recent years, the three-fold model for teacher competency has become a universal expectation. The shift from teacher preparation, focusing on the traditional elements of knowledge and pedagogy, to the inclusion of character dispositions has resulted in the need to restructure teacher training and assessment. State and national accrediting agencies have embraced the importance of these multilateral components as essential elements for recognition of teacher preparation programs. The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) stipulated in the first of its 2008 Unit Standards:

Candidates preparing to work in schools as teachers or other school professionals know and demonstrate the content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge and skills, pedagogical and professional knowledge and skills, and professional dispositions necessary to help all students learn. Assessments indicate that candidates meet professional, state, and institutional standards.

Of the three competency essentials, determining and measuring dispositional beliefs, due to their subjectivity, postulates the greatest challenges. The complexity of the task is first realized in simply attempting to define the term *disposition*. Some literature sources recommend defining the term by using a theoretical approach to learning. Others stress definition based on alignment as an outgrowth of an institution's mission, vision, and educational goals. Yet other sources stress the need for a combination of theoretical and institutional approaches.

Once defined, the task of nurturing teacher candidates in development of the dispositions adds additional complexities. At issue is whether character is an in-born trait or whether it is developed through influences over time. The theoretical view espoused becomes a critical source in determining the means by which teacher education programs will incorporate dispositional emphasis and how they will assess the nurturing process.

A review of the literature reports the struggle to define dispositions, the theoretical basis for determining how dispositional development occurs, the controversies surrounding the inclusion of dispositions in teacher preparation, and current assessment practices. A brief review of the literature is reported in the next section of this paper. Application of the theoretical to the practical is then illustrated through the story of Liberty University's efforts to merge biblical truth and national accreditation dispositional mandates. The analysis describes Liberty's efforts to nurture teacher candidates and assess results of its five-element paradigm. The elements, based on the Fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5, were identified by the acronym SCRIP: social responsibility, commitment, reflective practice, integrity, and professionalism. The reflective analysis of the Liberty's dispositional development becomes a contributor to the body of knowledge that can benefit other institutions as they develop or revise their

dispositions. The Liberty process provides a substantive procedural design for dispositional planning, nurturing, and assessment.

## **Literature Review**

### **Definitions**

Research on dispositions began in the 1960s with studies on perceptions of the qualities and attributes displayed by effective educators (Cummins & Asempapa, 2013). In the early 1990s, the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) began requiring teacher education programs to identify dispositions based on their own missions and conceptual frameworks and to assess dispositional behaviors in their candidates (Brewer, Lindquist, & Altemueller, 2011). This resulted in a broad range of interpretations as to what was intended by the term *dispositions*. In an effort to reduce ambiguity, NCATE defined dispositions as

Values, commitments, and professional ethics that influence behaviors toward students, families, colleagues, and communities that affects student learning, motivation, and development as well as the educator's own professional growth. . . . They are steered by attitudes and beliefs related to values like caring, honesty, fairness, empathy, respectfulness, responsibility, and thoughtfulness. (Johnston, Almerico, Henriott, & Shapiro, 2011, p. 392)

Although programs were granted latitude to identify the dispositions most congruent with their own institutional missions, NCATE prescribed two dispositions: (a) fairness and (b) the belief that all students can learn (Cummins & Asempapa, 2013).

Ambiguity prevailed, however, as various definitions and interpretations were embraced. As early as 1985, Katz and Rath (1985) defined a disposition as “an attributed characteristic of a

teacher, one that summarizes the trend of a teacher's actions in particular contexts" (p. 301).

Other definitions also gained attention:

- Dispositions are "not behaviors but rather are determiners of behaviors and represent the ways in which one views the world" (Richardson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 31).
- A disposition is "a point of inception for one's behavior and thought" (Schussler, 2006, p. 251).
- Dispositions are "the personal qualities or characteristics that are possessed by individuals, including attitudes, beliefs, interests, appreciations, values, and modes of adjustments" (Taylor & Wasicsko as cited in Johnston, et al., 2011, p. 392).
- A disposition is "a pattern of behavior exhibited frequently and in the absence of coercion, and constituting a habit of mind under some conscious and voluntary control, that is intentional and oriented to broad goals" (Schulte, Edick, Edwards, & Mackiel as cited in Johnston et al., 2011, p. 392).
- "Dispositions are individual's tendencies to act in a given manner and are predictive of patterns of action. It suggest that teachers are likely to apply the knowledge and skills they learn in teacher preparation programs to their own classroom teaching when they are not being critiqued" (Johnston et al., 2011, p. 392).

The term has often been used generically to refer to dispositional properties—powers, capacities, tendencies, and liabilities—while others have used it more specifically to describe a particular function, such as "an internal filter that affects the ways a teacher is inclined to think and act on the information and experiences that are part of his/her teaching context" (Serdyukov & Ferguson, 2011, p. 109).

### **Theoretical Models**

In addition to the variety of definitions, there have also been a multitude of models offered on which to construct a framework for dispositions. Mueller and Hindin (2011) developed their conceptual framework on John Goodlad's notion of social consciousness, by which teacher candidates base their dispositions on the practice of good stewardship. Ruitenberg (2011) described two different theoretical models. The first being Dispositions for Good Teaching: difference, dialogue, disillusionment, and democracy. (The concept of disillusionment, or "dis-illusionment," refers to the practices of being open minded and of examining assumptions.) Ruitenberg's second model is a phenomenological perspective. In this model, dispositions are not so much abstract concepts as they are "felt tendencies, bodily inclinations, postural leanings" (p. 47); they are expressions of lived experiences of teachers as they share professional interactions and life itself with their students.

Assuming that dispositions were synonymous with perceptions, Cummins and Asempapa (2013) based their theoretical model on five categories of perceptions:

- Perceptions about Self
- Perceptions about Others
- Perceptions about the Subject Field
- Perceptions about the Purpose and Process of Education
- General Frame of Reference Perception (p. 100)

A different set of five categories may be found in the model espoused by Murrell, Diez, Feiman-Nemser, and Schussler (2010). These, however, were conveyed as five key concepts related to teacher dispositions:

- Dispositions depend on knowledge and skills.
- Dispositions are about ethical, moral actions.



- Dispositions relate to a teacher's professional identity.
- Context influences the enactment of professional dispositions and practice.
- Dispositions can be cultivated and developed. (pp. 9-15)

Serdyukov and Ferguson (2011) proposed Six Domains of Dispositions: (a) Intellectual Dispositions represent the penchant “to think and act around issues related to content and pedagogy” (p. 109). (b) Cultural Dispositions relate to a teacher's ability to address needs of diverse learners. (c) Moral Dispositions exhibit an awareness teachers have of their own core values, principles, and beliefs. (d) Professional Dispositions are those that display a teacher's educational preparedness. (e) Attitudinal Dispositions reflect abilities to relate and interact well with others, and (f) Character Dispositions describe individual traits that make one an amicable person in general.

Richard Osguthorpe's (2013) model was one of moral coherence. He bemoaned the technical approach, too often the tactic taken in order to avoid controversy over what is perceived as subjective values. This technical approach, he noted, settles for such superficial dispositions as “oral and written communication, class attendance, listening ability, and peer collaboration” (p. 19). Osguthorpe argued that the controversy and confusion over which specific dispositions should be identified would be irrelevant if the focus were on moral coherence. Although his model articulated a clear argument against the overemphasis on accountability and assessment, it fell short on practical solutions. He generally promoted “a broad conception of the moral work of teaching, including character education and moral development theory and practice” (p. 18).

**Identified Dispositions**

The review of the literature revealed many specifically identified dispositions by various universities, professional associations, researchers, and theorists. Below is a composite list of dispositions that represent the diversity of thought regarding what qualities are desirable in effective teacher candidates:

Appearance	Lifelong Learning
Attendance	Listening Ability
Attitude	Meaningful Purpose and Vision
Authenticity	Moral and Ethical Integrity
Belief that All Students Can Learn	Oral Communication
Care	Passion for Teaching
Character	Persistence
Collaboration	Poise
Collegiality	Positive View of Others
Compassion	Positive View of Self
Commitment	Punctuality
Creativity	Professional Relationships
Critical Thinking	Professionalism
Dependability	Rapport
Diversity	Reflection
Emotional Wellness	Reflective Practice
Empathy	Respectfulness

Enthusiasm	Responsibility
Fairness	Responsiveness to Feedback
Honesty	Self-Development
Human Interaction	Sensitivity
Initiative	Social Responsibility
Integrity	Spiritual Sensibility and Purpose
Interpersonal Skills	Thoughtfulness
Intrapersonal Skills	Written Communication
Intrinsic Motivation	Zeal for Learning
Leadership	

### Controversies

**Social justice.** As the above list illustrates, there are many inconsistencies and multiple interpretations as to how to construe the concept of dispositions and which specific dispositions should be identified and assessed for teacher education candidates. The controversy, however, goes much deeper. Claudia Ruitenberg (2011) explored some of the arguments related to dispositions, especially as it is perceived by teacher education candidates. She found that the most maligned aspects were those related to social justice. Teacher candidates complained that their professors often took the role of “thought police,” investigating the degree to which candidates held acceptable political and social views.

**Religious beliefs.** Ruitenberg (2011) illustrated her conclusions with a 2001 lawsuit decided by the Supreme Court of Canada between Trinity Wesleyan University (TWU) and the British Columbia College of Teachers (BCCT), which is a professional regulatory body for BC

teachers. BCCT had revoked its approval for TWU to train licensed teachers for BC schools because the university required all students to sign an agreement to refrain from, among other non-biblical behaviors, sexual activity, including homosexual acts. BCCT's grounds for revoking approval were based upon its professional dispositions requiring all teachers to "act in unbiased and respectful ways to all students" (p. 42). The court ruled in favor of the university, distinguishing between personal beliefs and professional conduct. The court declared, "The freedom to hold beliefs is broader than the freedom to act on them. Absent concrete evidence that training teachers at TWU fosters discrimination in the public schools of British Columbia, the freedom of individuals to adhere to certain religious beliefs while at TWU should be respected" (p. 43).

**Reflection.** In addition to the perceived collision between religious beliefs and professional dispositions, another controversy concerns the emphasis given reflection in teacher preparation programs. Reflective journals or autobiographies are common assignments that typically require candidates to evaluate their own beliefs. This form of reflective thinking reveals to professors beliefs that may or may not be relevant to professional dispositions. As Ruitenberg (2011) concluded,

A teacher-educator does not necessarily have the right to know all the beliefs of a teacher candidate, but they do have every right to know how the teacher candidate is likely to *act* in professional situations, including ways in which candidates may be required to act in ways incongruous with personal beliefs. (p. 43)

Ruitenberg (2011) cautioned teacher education programs from focusing so much on the evaluation of candidates' personal beliefs that they neglect cultivating actions that display professional dispositions.

**Predispositions.** In addition to the controversy related to religious beliefs and professional dispositions is the confusion between predispositions and dispositions. The connotation of predispositions is that they are part of one's personality or temperament and cannot be changed. It is, therefore, imprudent to confuse predispositions with dispositions, which may be displayed at will and may be developed through experience. According to Ruitenberg (2011), teacher preparation programs should not waste efforts on evaluating predispositions but should instead invest in increasing candidates' inclinations to display professional behaviors.

**Endowed or malleable?** The above controversies all have implications for the assessment of dispositions, but none so much as the question of whether dispositions are fixed or malleable. Carol Dweck's (2006) book *Mindset* challenges readers to evaluate the degree to which they hold a fixed or growth mindset, and it applies these two mindsets to sports, business, relationships, parenting, and education. Regarding dispositions, a fixed or growth mindset determines how one defines and assesses them. For example, if dispositions are fixed, they are like intrinsic personality traits that are not necessarily intentional. If they are malleable, they can result in principle-based behaviors that are indeed intentional and can increase in intentionality.

Cummins and Asempapa (2013) acknowledged that there is a measure of credibility to the claim that dispositions may be endowed, that teacher candidates either have a propensity toward certain dispositions or not. Nevertheless, their study demonstrated that candidates can acquire and strengthen dispositions when provided with strategic learning experiences. Though personality may play a significant role in dispositions, neither personality nor dispositions are fixed. Exposure to and application of specific dispositional behaviors over a period of four years can indeed support and develop professional dispositions.

**Assessment of Dispositions**

If a teacher education program leans toward the assumption that dispositions are endowed, the program may focus heavily on the assessment of dispositions—especially upon candidates' entry into the program—in order to eliminate candidates who may not possess the required dispositions (Cummins & Asempapa, 2013). This process may involve an interview before candidates are officially accepted into the program or a series of assessments early in the program to identify candidates who should be counseled out of teacher education and into another field of study. Osguthorpe (2013) applied the term “moral disposition police” to teacher educators who invest their greatest efforts identifying “teacher candidates of deficient disposition and poor moral character for the purpose of removing them from the program” (p. 21). Such programs may implement highly developed data-collection systems to assess dispositions without much emphasis on cultivating or improving dispositions in candidates who prove to be deficient in them.

Johnston et al. (2011) noted four purposes for assessing dispositions: (a) A systematic assessment process with well-articulated dispositions clearly communicates expectations to candidates. (b) Teacher educators are under a professional obligation both to identify and to measure dispositions. (c) A validated assessment system serves to ensure consistency and to limit the subjectivity of raters. (d) Strategic assessment of dispositions heightens candidates' self-awareness of who they are, what they believe, and how their beliefs will impact their students. These purposes, however, cannot be fulfilled unless the assessment system itself is valid. While it has become an undisputable assumption that teacher candidate knowledge and skills can be measured with valid assessments, questions abound regarding the feasibility of valid assessment of dispositions (Cummins & Asempapa, 2013). The problem of subjectivity prevails when it comes to identifying and assessing affective qualities of successful teacher candidates.

To minimize the unavoidable subjectivity of disposition assessment, researchers agree that operationalization is required (Cummins & Asempapa, 2013; Johnston et al., 2011; Osguthorpe, 2013). This process involves the development of operational definitions of the construct being assessed, whereby indicators are described. According to Cummins and Asempapa, these indicators should be “observable traits or behaviors within an educational setting” (p. 101). Although operational definitions may serve to limit rater subjectivity, Johnston et al. acknowledge that there will continue to be “an amount of subjectivity present. . . . Raters/experts may agree to the indicators but not agree upon or understand what is meant by each indicator. . . . [E]xact behaviors associated with these indicators still remain subjective” (p. 392).

In addition to operationalization, programs have increased the validity of dispositional assessment by implementing rubrics, rating scales, self-reflection evaluations, and checklists (Johnston et al., 2011). Osguthorpe’s (2013) concern, however, is that these methods often isolate dispositions from practice, divorcing them from the very knowledge and skills with which every disposition should be integrated. It is common for knowledge and skills to be assessed together and for dispositions to be assessed by a different form and in a different context. Osguthorpe argues that NCATE’s emphasis on the three elements of knowledge, skills, and dispositions was never intended to departmentalize them one from the other. Therefore, every assessment of a disposition should be tied to a display of knowledge and/or skills. For example, items on a rubric might read as follows: “interacts with students respectfully,” “grades tests fairly,” or “talks with parents compassionately” (p. 23).

### **Improving Dispositions in Candidates**

If the program’s inclination is that dispositions are malleable, its assessment system will be less about selecting the right candidates or eliminating the wrong ones and will be more about

improving dispositions in all candidates throughout the duration of the program. Because dispositions are not developed naturally (Cummins & Asempapa, 2013), an intentional effort on the part of teacher educator is needed in order to ensure that there is dispositional growth in candidates from their entry into the program until their completion of it. The question remains, then, as to the most effective means of cultivating dispositions. The cultivation of dispositions, per Murrell et al. (2010), is not accomplished via indoctrination but is a “formation or transformation of candidates” (p. 19). According to Cummins and Asempapa (2013), dispositions are acquired in the context of community through a variety of scaffolding processes. These scaffolding methods tend to be arranged in either structured course assignments or clinical field experiences.

Structured course assignments, though limited in their effect, have been shown to bring about improvement in candidates’ dispositions, especially in dispositions related to diversity (Mueller & Hindin, 2011). An activity common in such assignments involves self-assessment and reflection of personal beliefs. As stated earlier, though perceived by some as controversial, having candidates journal about their personal values, attitudes, and beliefs enhances self-awareness (Brewer et al., 2011). If framed appropriately, reflection—whether in journals or group discussions—affords opportunities for candidates to examine their biases from various perspectives. Reflection may also be implemented into assignments beyond the typical journal or group discussion. Case studies and scenarios have been shown to be factors that can improve dispositions (Ruitenberg, 2011). However, the most powerful influence by far on candidates’ improvement of dispositions is their involvement in clinical field experiences. Though field experiences do not guarantee dramatic transformation in all candidates, they are cited most frequently as the factor most influential when it comes to improving dispositions (Mueller & Hindin).



When it comes to dispositions, providing meaningful feedback is perhaps the most challenging factor for teacher educators (Osguthorpe, 2013). Typically, they have no qualms offering criticism of a candidate's lack of content knowledge or weakness in implementing instructional skills, but they hesitate being as forthright in their feedback on dispositions, possibly for fear of it seeming like a personal attack (Osguthorpe). In order to learn from how various teacher preparation programs handled insufficient dispositional performance, Brewer et al. (2011) reviewed the approaches of five universities. Four of them were similar to the three-tiered approach of Metropolitan State College. Upon the first instance of an unsatisfactory display of a disposition, a Professional Dispositions Form was completed and signed by the teacher candidate, advisor, and professor. If there was no improvement or if another concern was observed, the teacher candidate met with the advisor, professor, program coordinator, and department chair to document an improvement plan. In the case of a third concern, the candidates was counseled into another major and sent a dismissal letter. A fifth program, Murray State University, had a distinct feature from the other four. It was more positive and proactive than the others and was noticeably less punitive. At the beginning of their teacher preparation program at Murray, all candidates were required to develop individual improvement plans for growth in the professional dispositions. They outlined specific action points to reach their goals during their four-year program. If a concern was raised throughout the program, the candidate's growth plan was the starting point for the conversation.

### **Dispositions Development and Assessment at Liberty University**

When Liberty University's School of Education (SOE) received its previous NCATE accreditation renewal report, the review team cited improvement needed on Standard 2: Assessment System and Unit Evaluation. They specifically noted that the SOE had not defined its candidate dispositions sufficiently and was not clearly articulating how they were taught and

assessed within the structure of department courses. Their journey in response began with the process of defining dispositions, which led to identified terminologies, improved instructional practices, and establishment of valid forms of assessments.

### Identifying Dispositions

To define dispositions that would be required of all SOE future teacher candidates, a six member faculty task force was established. The task force began its work by reviewing the SOE's mission statement and conceptual framework. The goal was to ensure that identified dispositions would align with the overall purpose and goals of the university and the mission statement of the SOE. "The mission of the Teacher Education Program at Liberty University is to develop competent professionals with a Biblical world view for Christian, public, and private schools." The mission's conceptual framework visualized by three concentric circles represented what all SOE teacher candidates should know, implement, and believe (see Figure 1). At the focal point of the concentric circles is the image of the Holy Bible, symbolizing the centrality of God's Word as the basis from which teacher preparation is nurtured and matures.



*Figure 1.* Conceptual framework graphic.

The SOE instructional outcomes for students prepared to enter the teaching profession are that each SOE graduate:

**Knows** biblical values, moral dimensions, and ethical implications synthesized with academic knowledge

**Implements** skills as a gift from God, because teaching/leadership is a calling from God

**Believes** and practices personal integrity, social responsibility, sensitivity to the needs of others, and the betterment of humanity.

Though competencies were listed for each of the three areas, the task force's internal review agreed with the NCATE report that dispositions were not clearly identified for the "Believes" category.

Accepting as true that Christian character is best reflected by the descriptive work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer, the task force chose the Fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23 as the biblical core for SOE candidate dispositions. The choice of definitive terms that connected the passage lexes with educational language involved a great deal of discussion. Task force members often and openly conveyed passionate convictions about particular dispositions they believed could not be neglected.

An illustration of the careful parsing of words that took place, before arriving at the final list of dispositions, centered on the issue of whether to use the term *social justice* or *social responsibility*. A concern about the distinct connotation of each term was voiced, especially in light of *social justice* being a commonly used term in liberation theology. Unaware to the committee, a candidate was listening outside the conference room door. Wearing a red armband to indicate his protest against abortion, he stepped inside the room and challenged the committee to use the term *social justice*. "It is a biblical concept," he said, "that the world has stolen. The church needs to reclaim it." He went on to quote Micah 6:8, "He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." The task force considered the matter carefully, but chose the term *social responsibility*; because the committee felt it aligned more clearly with the Fruit of the Spirit's descriptor of internal character rather than social justice's emphasis on a call to social action.

The task force developed and recommended five dispositions, aligning them with indicators of the Fruit of the Spirit:

- **Social Responsibility:** love, joy, peace, goodness
- **Commitment to the Profession:** faithfulness, longsuffering
- **Reflective Practice:** faithfulness
- **Integrity:** goodness
- **Professionalism:** gentleness, meekness, temperance

The acronym SCRIP was used to communicate to candidates that the desired life dispositions teachers should display are rooted in Scripture. Each construct was further operationally defined by observable behavioral indicators (See Figure 2).

### **Practice**

The dispositions, embedded in the conceptual framework and incorporated in the SOE Program Learning Outcomes (PLO), were integrated in all graduation required education courses. Revisions ensured that all eight major areas contained linear course chronology of seven-to-eight benchmarks that incorporated the SCRIP components. The design of field experiences and clinical practices emphasized the purpose of effective teaching as that of enabling candidates to develop knowledge, skills, and dispositions, which are integral to student learning. The PLOs and dispositions for BS and MAT Degrees leading to initial licensure are illustrated in Figure 3.

1. Displays a sense of <b>Social Responsibility</b> and the belief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates the belief that all students can learn</li> <li>• Demonstrates a sense of fairness, justice, and equity for all students</li> </ul>
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that all students can learn.  Fruit of the Spirit: Love, Joy, Peace, Goodness (Gal 5:22,23)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Differentiates instruction to meet the needs of all diverse learners</li> <li>• Demonstrates empathy and sensitivity to human needs</li> <li>• Provides opportunities and motivation for all students to learn</li> <li>• Interacts effectively with students to provide a positive, structured learning environment where student access, success, and achievement is priority</li> </ul>
2. Demonstrates <b><u>C</u>ommitment</b> and Work ethic.  Fruit of the Spirit: Faithfulness, Longsuffering (Gal 5:22,23)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follows through on commitments</li> <li>• Takes responsibilities seriously</li> <li>• Completes assigned tasks on time</li> <li>• Attends class, field experiences, meetings, etc. consistently and promptly</li> <li>• Shows the self-discipline and work ethic essential to be planned, prepared, and organized for successful instruction and learning to occur.</li> <li>• Demonstrates a persevering commitment to each student's learning success.</li> <li>• Demonstrates initiative in participating in professional development opportunities.</li> </ul>
3. Demonstrates <b><u>R</u>eflective Practice</b> . Fruit of the Spirit: Faithfulness (Gal 5:22,23)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Considers thoughtfully educational matters and the practice of teaching</li> <li>• Makes choices after pondering ideas and experiences</li> <li>• Learns from journaling and discussions with colleagues</li> <li>• Utilizes data to make informed decisions</li> </ul>
4. Displays personal <b><u>I</u>ntegrity</b> .  Fruit of the Spirit: Goodness (Gal 5:22,23)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Models exemplary citizenship through moral leadership</li> <li>• Acts in an ethical and moral manner</li> <li>• Values honesty inside and outside of the classroom</li> <li>• Demonstrates trustworthiness</li> <li>• Abides by a professional code of ethics; maintains confidentiality and discretion.</li> </ul>
5. Displays <b><u>P</u>rofessionalism</b> in behavior and actions.  Fruit of the Spirit: Gentleness, Meekness, Temperance (Gal 5:22,23)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respects authority, colleagues, students, and others</li> <li>• Accepts constructive feedback in a respectful, appropriate manner.</li> <li>• Demonstrates appropriate behavior; possesses patience, self-control, and flexibility when obstacles or difficult situations occur.</li> <li>• Effectively manages personal emotions and feelings and reacts reasonably to situations.</li> <li>• Adheres to proper, formulated chains of command / expresses a grievance in a dignified, temperate manner</li> <li>• Acts confidently and maturely.</li> <li>• Is prompt and responsible in attendance for class, field experiences, meetings, etc.</li> <li>• Dresses in a dignified, modest manner that adheres to the dress code of the Host School.</li> <li>• Effectively uses the English language in speech and writing</li> <li>• Maintains enthusiasm and passion for the teaching profession.</li> <li>• Cooperatively collaborates with administrators and colleagues to form learning communities.</li> <li>• Views learning as a life-long activity.</li> </ul>

Figure 2. Liberty University School of Education dispositions with indicators: SCRIP.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>INT: BS &amp; MAT (Initial Licensure)</b></p> <p>A graduate of the <b>Initial Licensure (BS &amp; MAT)</b> program:</p> <p><b>INT-A. <i>KNOWS</i> Christian values, moral dimensions, and ethical implications synthesized with academic knowledge</b></p> <p>INT-A1. Demonstrates a broad base of professional and general knowledge.  INT-A2. Demonstrates knowledge of content in the endorsement area.</p> <p><b>INT-B. <i>IMPLEMENTS</i> skills as a gift from God, because teaching is a calling from God</b></p> <p>INT-B3. Integrates skills in speaking, writing, reading, and listening for effective classroom communication, peer leadership, and professional involvement.  INT-B4. Designs and selects a variety of instructional strategies based on the developmental levels and individual needs of the learner.  INT-B5. Applies knowledge of content areas and curriculum goals to design and supervise appropriate instruction.  INT-B6. Enhances the success of all diverse learners, providing for special needs and diverse backgrounds.  INT-B7. Manages classroom climate and procedures to motivate students and maximize learning.  INT-B8. Integrates a variety of assessment strategies to improve student learning.  INT-B9. Integrates appropriate technology and resources to support instruction and to facilitate professional development opportunities.  INT-B10. Provides evidence of student learning at the grade level and content appropriate for the endorsement.</p> <p><b>INT-C. <i>BELIEVES</i> and practices personal integrity, social responsibility, sensitivity to the needs of others, and the betterment of humanity</b></p> <p>INT-C11. Models personal integrity and sensitivity to human needs.  INT-C12. Demonstrates behaviors of a reflective practitioner, articulates a Biblical worldview, and seeks opportunities for collaboration and professional development.</p> <p><b>DISPOSITIONS (all programs): S-C-R-I-P</b></p> <table> <tr> <td>D1. Displays a sense of SOCIAL Responsibility and the belief that all students can learn.</td> <td>D3. Demonstrates REFLECTIVE practice.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>D2. Demonstrates COMMITMENT/ work ethic.</td> <td>D4. Displays personal INTEGRITY.</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>D5. Displays PROFESSIONALISM</td> </tr> </table>		D1. Displays a sense of SOCIAL Responsibility and the belief that all students can learn.	D3. Demonstrates REFLECTIVE practice.	D2. Demonstrates COMMITMENT/ work ethic.	D4. Displays personal INTEGRITY.		D5. Displays PROFESSIONALISM
D1. Displays a sense of SOCIAL Responsibility and the belief that all students can learn.	D3. Demonstrates REFLECTIVE practice.						
D2. Demonstrates COMMITMENT/ work ethic.	D4. Displays personal INTEGRITY.						
	D5. Displays PROFESSIONALISM						

Figure 3. PLOs (Program Learning Outcomes) for BA and MAT Initial Licensure Candidates

## Nurturing

Candidate nurturing begins with the demonstration of dispositions by instructors. Nurturing continues with multiple forms of communication of the conceptual framework, stressing the importance of the dispositions to teacher education candidates throughout the program. Dispositionally outcome aligned lessons and assignments are structured to meet identified course and SOE objectives. Numerous rubrics are used to assess candidates' acceptance of nurturing components, and candidates' understanding as to application processes in educational methodologies. Candidates who demonstrate misunderstanding or lack of commitment are assisted by academic and spiritual support services available at the university.

**Assessment**

Once the dispositions and indicators were identified by the original task force, the development of a systematic assessment process was undertaken. The result was the Program and Learning Assessment Cycle for Excellence (PLACE). The five cyclical elements included: (1) Purpose & Goals; (2) Data Collection – taken from the Conceptual Framework’s Knows (content knowledge), Implements (skills of being a teacher), and Believes (dispositions); (3) Data Analysis (at specific times during the year); (4) Action Plans for continuous improvement; and (5) Implementation of the action plans. The five elements were scheduled into the academic calendar, as evidenced in organized events such as an annual institution-wide Assessment Day and an SOE faculty retreat for data analysis.

In order to enhance cycle objectivity, the SOE annually selects a series of program assessments to be reviewed by faculty members outside of the program. First, the faculty members rate the degree to which assessment activities accurately require candidates to perform in the identified standards. Next, they rate the effectiveness of the rubric instrument used as an evaluation tool for candidate proficiency in the standards. Lastly, they review actual candidate samples of work in order to norm the evaluation process—the goal being to increase objectivity among multiple faculty members who review the course benchmark assignments.

Ongoing data collection takes place at each of four formal Gates through which candidates must pass to enter and continue in the teacher education program. A multiplicity of assessments takes place within each of the Gate decision points. These assessments continue from the student’s initial application to the program to follow-up interviews after program exit through alumni surveys. The primary tool for collecting assessment data is benchmark assignments that correlate with each major aspect of the conceptual framework (Knows,

Implements and Believes). There are 40 benchmark assignments that correlate with the conceptual framework and all learning outcomes.

Dispositions are self-assessed by candidates at the beginning of the program and again as part of a summative assessment. Each candidate's belief in the conceptual framework is measured by an educational philosophy paper and dispositional surveys articulated at the conclusion of specified courses. In these end-of-course surveys, candidates describe how they demonstrated each of the dispositions within the course requirements and during the semester in their personal lives outside of school. Using a rubric, course instructors add their assessment of the candidate's demonstration of the dispositions during the course (see Figure 4).

<b>Disposition Rubric</b>					
For this assignment students reflect on how they have successfully displayed the dispositions listed below during their course or practicum. The dispositions that are embedded in the Conceptual Framework and learning outcomes were identified and related to the Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5).					
	<b>Strongly Agree (4 pts)</b>	<b>Agree (3 pts)</b>	<b>Neither Agree or Disagree (2 pts)</b>	<b>Disagree (1 pt)</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree (0 pt)</b>
<b>Social Responsibility (1.000, 20%)</b>					
<b>Commitment / Work Ethic (1.000, 20%)</b>					
<b>Reflection (1.000, 20%)</b>					
<b>Integrity (1.000, 20%)</b>					
<b>Professionalism (1.000, 20%)</b>					

*Figure 4.* Dispositional Rubric completed by course instructors

Because of the subjectivity in analyzing dispositional elements, data collected from multiple sources provides opportunity for cross-analysis and a means to improve objectivity. Using triangulation of assessments by course instructors when evaluating philosophy papers



(Tables 1 and 2), student reflective self-reporting during practicum experiences (Tables 3 and 4), and observational reports from cooperating teachers/mentors (Tables 5 and 6) and university supervisors (Tables 7 and 8) after student teaching (undergraduate) and internship (graduate) clinicals, the impact of the SOE dispositional emphasis to student professional preparation showed correlation. As noted in Tables 1 and 2, course instructors indicated strong alignment of student philosophical positions with the SOE dispositions.

Data is assessed by the SOE each semester. The 2013/2014 school year was the first full year involving all assessments noted in this paper. For illustration purposes, the data from the spring semester of 2014, the most current data available, was used in this analysis.

Table 1

**Numbers of SOE Undergraduates Aligned with Dispositions as Evidenced in EDUC 360 Written Philosophy Papers (Spring, 2014)**

	Strongly Agree (4 pts)	Agree (3 pts)	Neither Agree or Disagree (2 pts)	Disagree (1 pts)	Strongly Disagree (0 pts)	Mean	Mode	Standard Deviation
Social Responsibility...	108	3	0	0	0	3.973	4.000	0.162
Commitment / Work	103	7	1	0	0	3.919	4.000	0.304
Reflection...	111	0	0	0	0	4.000	4.000	0.000
Integrity...	111	0	0	0	0	4.000	4.000	0.000
Professionalism...	105	5	1	0	0	3.937	4.000	0.278

Table 2

**Numbers of SOE Graduate Students Aligned with Dispositions as Evidenced in EDUC 504 Written Philosophy Papers (Spring, 2014)**

	Strongly Agree (4 pts)	Agree (3 pts)	Neither Agree or Disagree (2 pts)	Disagree (1 pts)	Strongly Disagree (0 pts)	Mean	Mode	Standard Deviation
Social Responsibility...	107	0	0	0	1	3.963	4.000	0.383
Commitment/Work	107	0	0	0	1	3.963	4.000	0.383
Reflection...	107	0	0	0	1	3.963	4.000	0.383
Integrity...	107	0	0	0	1	3.963	4.000	0.383
Professionalism...	105	2	0	0	1	3.944	4.000	0.404

General field experiences throughout the program provide opportunity for student self-reporting, and thus afford the closest means for true self-disclosure, as opposed to written ideals that might be skewed in the positive. Students strongly rated their alignment with the SOE dispositions as they reflected on applicable practices in these opportunities (Tables 3 and 4).

Table 3

**Numbers of Undergraduate SOE Students Rated as Demonstrating Dispositions During Field Experiences Prior to Student Teaching (Spring, 2014)**

Dispositions	Strongly Agree (4 pts)	Agree (3 pts)	Neither Agree or Disagree (2 pts)	N/A	Mean	Mode	Standard Deviation
Displays a sense of Social Responsibility and the belief that all students can learn.	219	5	0	1	3.98	4	0.15
Displays a sense of Commitment / Work Ethic.	216	8	1	0	3.96	4	0.23
Displays a sense of Reflective Practice.	211	12	1	1	3.94	4	0.26
Displays Integrity.	220	5	0	0	3.98	4	0.15
Displays a sense of Professionalism in behavior and actions.	220	4	1	0	3.97	4	0.19

Table 4

**Numbers of Graduate SOE Students Rated as Demonstrating Dispositions During Field Experiences Prior to Internships (Spring, 2014)**

Dispositions	Strongly Agree (4 pts.)	Agree (3 pts.)	Neither Agree or Disagree (2 pts.)	Strongly Disagree (0 pts.)	N/A	Mean	Mode	Standard Deviation
Displays a sense of Social Responsibility and the belief that all students can learn.	202	14	3	0	5	3.91	4	0.33
Displays a sense of Commitment/Work Ethic.	199	19	3	1	2	3.87	4	0.44
Displays a sense of reflective Practice.	180	30	4	1	9	3.80	4	0.50
Displays Integrity.	201	21	0	0	2	3.91	4	0.29
Displays a sense of Professionalism in behavior and actions.	204	19	0	0	1	3.91	4	0.28

The data from student teaching cooperating teachers and internship mentors in public and private school settings consistently reported that Liberty students rank outstanding or high in dispositional practices as classroom teachers (Tables 5 and 6).

Table 5

**Numbers of SOE Undergraduate Students Rated by Cooperating Teachers as Demonstrating Dispositions During Student Teaching (Spring, 2014)**

Dispositions	Consistently Outstanding (5 pts.)	High (4 pts.)	Effective (3 pts.)	Satisfactory (2 pts.)	Mean	Mode	Standard Deviation
Displays a sense of social responsibility and the belief that all students can learn.	137	9	0	0	4.94	5	0.24
Displays a sense of commitment/work ethic.	123	19	3	1	4.81	5	0.49
Displays a sense of reflective practice.	125	19	2	0	4.84	5	0.40
Displays integrity.	138	7	1	0	4.94	5	0.27
Displays a sense of professionalism in behavior and actions.	128	17	1	0	4.87	5	0.36

Table 6

**Numbers of SOE Graduate Students Rated by Mentors as Demonstrating Dispositions During Internships (Spring, 2014)**

Dispositions	Consistently Outstanding (5 pts.)	High (4 pts.)	Effective (3 pts.)	Satisfactory (2 pts.)	Not Evaluated/ Observed (0 pts.)	Mean	Mode	Standard Deviation
Displays a sense of social responsibility and the belief that all students can learn.	160	23	0	0	0	4.87	5	0.33
Displays a sense of commitment/ work ethic.	163	15	4	1	0	4.86	5	0.45
Displays a sense of reflective practice.	156	22	4	0	1	4.81	5	0.55
Displays integrity.	167	14	1	1	0	4.90	5	0.37
Displays a sense of professionalism in behavior and actions.	167	13	2	1	0	4.89	5	0.39

The data from university supervisors generally agreed with the cooperating teachers' and mentors' ratings of Liberty students as outstanding or high in dispositional practices as classroom teachers (Tables 7 and 8). Not understood by university officials was the discrepancy in total numbers of undergraduate students rated.

Table 7

**Numbers of SOE Undergraduate Students Rated by University Supervisors as Demonstrating Dispositions During Student Teaching (Spring, 2014)**

Dispositions	Consistently Outstanding (5 pts.)	High (4 pts.)	Effective (3 pts.)	N/A (0 pts.)	Mean	Mode	Standard Deviation
Displays a sense of social responsibility and the belief that all students can learn.	85	16	1	1	4.82	5	0.41
Displays a sense of commitment/work ethic.	83	18	2	0	4.79	5	0.45
Displays a sense of reflective practice.	79	24	0	0	4.77	5	0.42
Displays integrity.	86	17	0	0	4.83	5	0.37
Displays a sense of professionalism in behavior and actions.	81	22	0	0	4.79	5	0.41

Table 8

**Numbers of SOE Graduate Students Rated by University Supervisors as Demonstrating Dispositions During Internships (Spring, 2014)**

Dispositions	Consistently Outstanding (5 pts.)	High (4 pts.)	Effective (3 pts.)	Mean	Mode	Standard Deviation
Displays a sense of social responsibility and the belief that all students can learn.	120	33	1	4.77	5	0.43
Displays a sense of commitment/work ethic.	120	28	6	4.74	5	0.52
Displays a sense of reflective practice.	114	35	5	4.71	5	0.52
Displays integrity.	121	31	2	4.77	5	0.45
Displays a sense of professionalism in behavior and actions.	118	32	4	4.74	5	0.49

### Implications

Teacher education programs, in meeting accreditation mandates to integrate dispositions in the training of teacher candidates, experience a major task of defining, developing, and assessing affective elements. The journey of the Liberty University School of Education provides a practical and effective outline, by which Christian educational institutions of higher learning can develop and assess their unique dispositional terms and indicators.

- Review the institution mission and vision and the education department/school mission statements.
- Review the body of literature for theoretical direction and support.
- Develop a list of potential dispositions.
- Determine dispositions that align best with the mission statements.
- Establish definitions and indicators for the selected dispositions.
- Develop the means by which the dispositions will be embedded in teacher education courses.
- Develop assessment strategies to evaluate student disposition understanding and life practices.
- Utilize assessment data to analyze the effectiveness of the dispositions as they nurture student professional growth.
- Utilize assessment data to analyze effectiveness in meeting program outcomes and to initiate change for improvement in short and long range planning.

### **Conclusion**

The Apostle Paul admonished his pupils (the members of the church at Philippi) to “Keep putting into practice all you learned and received from me—everything you heard from me and saw me doing” (Philippians 4: 9, New Living Translation). It is the task of institutions of higher learning to lay a clear foundation from which learning outcomes can be understood, accountability can be achieved, and students can find fulfillment in program completion. Based on the admonition of Jesus and of state and national accreditation agencies, all members of the educational community have a responsibility to model the pursuit of knowledge and the manifestation of identified dispositions through pedagogical practices. The journey of the

School of Education at Liberty University provided a practical model for incorporating dispositional mandates to program conceptual frameworks. The model is useful for initial dispositions development and for assessment and revision of instructional practices. As Jesus and his student Paul understood and taught, the product of whole teacher development will be realized in life changes within the whole child.

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