

Running Head: DISPOSITION TEST

Daniel Bell

Trinity University Disposition Test

11/12/08

EDTE 636: Psychology of Exceptional Children and Youth

L. Lawrence Riccio, EdD

**TRINITY UNIVERSITY DISPOSTION TEST****Pre-Test**

**Directions:** Select the choice below that you feel best completes the given statement:

1. Adhering to professional ethics encompasses
  - a. honesty, trustworthiness, confidentiality, and integrity as an educator.
  - b. morality, spirituality, and faithfulness.
  - c. kindness, sincerity, helpfulness, and likeability.
  
2. Demonstrating professional work habits means
  - a. feeding co-workers, driving students to school, making friends with your boss.
  - b. staying later than expected at work, over-planning for lessons, double and triple-checking all grading.
  - c. punctuality, appropriate dress, attentiveness, field experience, maintaining commitments.
  
3. Having a disposition towards reflection and lifelong learning means
  - a. being able to contemplate the implications of staying committed to a full time position.
  - b. having an orientation towards reflection, awareness of stress, an active ability to improve, and a willingness to receive feedback.
  - c. understanding the potential consequences of not thinking before you act.
  
4. Being committed to understanding and embracing diversity means
  - a. understanding that beliefs and behavior are influenced by culture, gender, and exceptionalities, and that it is important to guide students to embrace diverse perspectives.
  - b. wearing different nation's colors everyday and having a variety of international flags in your classroom.
  - c. traveling to various nations and interacting with other cultures to truly understand how diverse this world is.
  
5. A commitment to advocacy is
  - a. paying very close attention to your student's thoughts, feelings, and interests so as to best educate them.
  - b. a desire to advocate for students and prioritizing their best interests along with their families and communities.
  - c. calling student's parents frequently to make sure they are aware of their child's continuing progress and interventions.

**Disposition Test**

**Directions:** Select the choice from the lists below that you feel best represent the appropriate disposition in the given scenarios with regards to upholding your role as a professional educator.

- 1. A student approaches a teacher in confidence and confides in the teacher that they are homosexual, but are horrified at the thought of *anyone* knowing, whether it be peers or adults. Later, in the staff lounge, the teacher brings this topic up to several of his co-workers looking for advice on how to handle the situation. The teacher's co-workers decide to bring this up to the school's principal and call the student's parents. At what point was the disposition of adherence to professional ethics violated?**
  - a. When the teacher agreed to speak with the student in confidence.
  - b. When the student disclosed such a potentially controversial subject with the teacher.
  - c. When the teacher spoke of what the student disclosed to him to his co-workers.
  - d. When the co-workers decided to take further steps in regards to the new information given to them.
  
- 2. At the end of a very long day, a teacher is ready to go home; he has changed out of his work attire, made dinner plans with his spouse, and is looking forward to a relaxing night. At the last minute, the teacher finds out that they are expected to be at a parent-teacher meeting. What would be the best way for the teacher to exemplify professional work habits?**
  - a. Going to the meeting as is, without changing to work attire.
  - b. Not attending the meeting, but getting the okay from his boss to do so.
  - c. Changing back into work attire, canceling his dinner plans, and attending the meeting.
  - d. Leaving work and having dinner with his spouse.
  
- 3. A teacher plans a lesson with his co-teacher and implements it. The head teacher thinks the lesson went very well, but the co-teacher sits down with the head teacher after words and tells him he thinks the lesson did not go well and did not accomplish the objectives originally set out. The co-teacher feels that the lesson must be re-done and re-implemented. In what ways could the head teacher show a disposition of reflection and lifelong learning?**
  - a. The teacher could first thank his co-teacher for his feedback, then write about the experience – what went wrong, what went right, and the implications of that. Then the teacher could further reflect on the experience by discussing it with other co-workers and administrators, and then discuss with his co-teacher the best way to improve on the lesson.
  - b. The teacher could tell his co-teacher that because he felt it went well, that it did and they must move on to the next lesson.

- c. The teacher would reflect on the lesson privately, then move on to the next lesson.
  - d. The teacher could completely scrap the lesson and have his co-teacher create the next one without his help.
4. **A new student begins in a teacher's class and it turns out that this student is ESL from an obscure country that many Americans, including the teacher and the rest of his class, know little to nothing about. The ESL student has what appears to be strange grooming, verbal, and interpersonal habits, which causes the students in the class to tease and shun the ESL student. How could the teacher show a commitment to understanding and embracing diversity?**
- a. The teacher could ignore the ESL student's habits and hope the other students just get used to him.
  - b. The teacher could talk to the ESL student in private about how his actions are creating negative responses from the rest of the class and discuss with the student what American students are more comfortable with in their classroom.
  - c. The teacher could first research the ESL student's country on his own, and then create, with the ESL student and his family's input, an open and involving lesson for his class regarding the ESL student's country, culture and society.
  - d. The teacher could talk to the ESL student's parents about the situation and ask them to encourage their child to tone down his disruptive behavior.
5. **A teacher has a student that obviously requires more accommodations in the classroom and during assessment than her IEP currently calls for. What would be the most appropriate way for the teacher to show a commitment to advocacy?**
- a. The teacher could ignore the student's IEP and do what he feels is best for his student and his classroom.
  - b. The teacher could stick to the current IEP until the next IEP meeting.
  - c. The teacher could discuss with the student what the student feels is best.
  - d. The teacher could first discuss the situation with his superiors and the student's family; the teacher could then develop new accommodations that better suit the student's needs in the classroom and implement them; and finally the teacher could attend the student's next IEP meeting and advocate, with evidence from implementation, that the newly developed accommodations be integrated into the student's IEP.



**DISPOSITION TEST ANSWERS**

**Pre-Test**

1. a
2. c
3. b
4. a
5. b

**Test**

1. c
2. c
3. a
4. c
5. d

## **REPORT ON FINDINGS**

### **Results**

Of the three educators I administered my disposition test to, all of their answers on the pre-test were the same, and the majority of their answers on the actual test were the same. Only questions one and two had different answers. Two teachers answered “a” for number one, while the third answered “c.” For number two, two answered “c” and the other answered “b.”

In regards to the post-test where the educators were given a chance to explain themselves and reflect on their answers, they all made more than acceptable and reasonable arguments for what their answers were on the test. Even though the ones that answered “a” for number one and “b” for number two were technically incorrect, they were able to support that answer in accordance with their perspective on the subject. This shows that even though they may not completely adhere to the disposition or agree with it, that they are not in lack of a reason for feeling the way they do.

### **Intervention**

Depending on who this test is administered to and to how many educators, an informational and even interactive workshop on the dispositions could be appropriate to follow-up on the test. This could one, be a good way to clarify the dispositions and show educators why they are important and relevant to education. Also, a workshop would be a good way for teachers who feel differently (and noted so on their post-test) about a disposition to voice their opinion and discuss with peers what path they feel is best for an educator to take.

If the test is only given to a small group or one or two people, one-on-one sessions may also be appropriate to accomplish what the workshop mentioned above would, but on a smaller scale.

An instrument to monitor progress may also be relevant here, especially for those who answered in an opposing manner to a disposition. The instrument could help the teacher reflect on how they feel about their side of the argument and if their way truly works in an educational environment as opposed to the disposition. Then, perhaps, after some time has passed, they could take the test again and see if their answer has changed due to the instrument.

In specific regard to my test subjects, I would intervene in the one-on-one way described above where I would discuss with them the dispositions, why they are relevant and important, and why a couple of their answers deviated from the desired answers. We could discuss their perspective and discuss an instrument to track if their view of the disposition truly works best.

### **Validity and Reliability**

According to *Classroom Assessment Online* (n.d.), the reliability of a test refers to the “extent to which assessments are consistent” while validity refers to the “accuracy of an assessment.” In other words, a test is reliable when it can be given multiple times and it can be altered but test for the same responses, and all the while still have the same results. A test is valid when it truly measures what it is supposed to measure by matching instructional objectives and when the scores are in agreement with an external criterion.

These tenets relate to my Disposition Test in that, as *North Central Regional Educational Laboratory* (2008) points out, proper assessments should reflect actual knowledge or performance and should engage and motivate students to perform to the best of their ability. Engagement and motivation are especially important to my test because that is what this test is meant to do. The aim of my test is to bring Trinity's dispositions to teachers' attentions and motivate them to utilize the dispositions in their day to day professional lives. The actual objective of the test, or what I am testing for, is to gauge educator's knowledge of the dispositions and how they would adhere to the dispositions in a real-world situation. It would otherwise be impossible to present a valid test without having an objective for the test.

Though I believe my test to be both reliable and valid, I would first like to discuss why a test of this nature is difficult to be ideally reliable and valid. Laura Colosi (1997) points out that validity may be more important than reliability in that there is no point in a test being consistent if it doesn't accurately measure what it is supposed to. Accurately measuring facts and figures is very straightforward. Dispositions, on the other hand, have a much more biased nature because they deal with codes of ethics, the idea of right and wrong, levels of commitment, power, advocacy, etc. Ideas like these are not the same across the board like a math problem is, and thus judging a test's validity on dispositions can be difficult. Educators come from all walks of life, perspectives, backgrounds, cultures, etc. and presenting them with an issue of ethics or advocacy, even if it seems reliable to one group of people, it may have much different meaning to a different group of educators. For example, just from my findings, even though the first two questions on the test were answered inconsistently, each answer was acceptably justified in the post-

test section. So does that mean that their answers were wrong? Yes, if according to the assumption that Trinity's Dispositions are universal. But if we take into account that the test is biased and that different teachers will have different opinions and stances on the dispositions, then perhaps no.

For the most part, with the exception of the inconsistent answering of questions one and two, the test is reliable, especially because I administered it to three different teachers of different ages, genders, races, backgrounds, and at different times of the day. And as I noted above, the inconsistency of the first two questions can be explained when the post-test is taken into consideration.

In terms of validity, I believe my test is valid as long as the inherent bias of the dispositions are taken into account. For better or worse, each teacher that I administered my test to seemed to have a solid grasp on the disposition – at least in terms of where they were coming at the dispositions from in their own perspectives, which is evidenced by the justifications in the post-test. And the fact that each teacher answered all of the dispositions correctly on the pre-test truly conveys the validity of the test because the main objective of the test is to test the knowledge of the dispositions. It is testing how they apply to realistic situations that places the test's validity in a gray area.

References

Classroom Assessment Online. (n.d.). *Reliability and validity*. Retrieved November 7, 2008 from <http://fcit.usf.edu/assessment/basic/basicc.html>

Colosi, L. (1997). Reliability and validity: What's the difference? Retrieved November 9, 2008 from <http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/tutorial/Colosi/lcolosi2.htm>

North Central Regional Educational Laboratory. (2008). *Reliability, validity, and fairness of classroom assessments*. Retrieved November 7, 2008 from <http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/methods/assment/as5relia.htm>