Teacher Educators’ Dispositions: Footnoting the Present with Stories from our Pasts

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Purpose
The goal for this study was to move beyond reflection to take a critical stance that attended to issues of power and teacher knowledge.

The Article
This critical ethnographic self-study of seven teacher educators in one university department, from multiple disciplines, reversed common notions of studying the dispositions of our students and turned the focus onto our own struggles with our dispositions as teachers of teachers. Findings illustrate the powerful positions and judgmental stances we held as we navigated our teaching as well as a need for teacher educators to devote time to deliberate critical self-study of their own dispositions.

What this Means for the Field
University educators are charged with preparing pre- and in-service teachers for today’s school populations; however, university faculty may assume the role of fostering and evaluating their students’ dispositions toward diversity without having first examined their dispositions toward their own students. We advocate that teacher educators explore their own historically situated identities and use self-understanding as a tool for critique to examine not only how they teach, but also why they are drawn to particular goals. Self-understanding can be defined as “the personal knowledge one has about his or her own psychology.” Admitting and working through our problematic dispositions was essential for our growth as teacher educators. An important component of trying to effectively scaffold the development of our students’ dispositions involves knowing our motivations, especially in the area of dispositions, if we are to meet our students’ educational needs in meaningful ways.

Citation

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