






Guided by the La Sallian motto, "Enter to learn, lea




area knowledge to an understanding and eventual application of effective pedagogy through observation and participation in diverse classrooms to see how P-12 students learn and think at various stages in their development; (4)

described as “an ensemble of settled dispositions – of habitual feelings and desires” (Kronman, in Brooks, 2015, p. 57). At Virginia Wesleyan, we see dispositions as qualities that are necessary to possess good character, a vital part of the expressed mission of our Teacher Education Program. Within teacher education, dispositions have been defined as “patterns of behavior exhibited frequently, consciously and voluntarily by educators (Katz, 1993) and often demonstrated through a positive attitude, engagement, a value of diversity, and commitment to effective communication” (Baum & Swick, in Pang, et al., 2014). Correlating with these frequently identified dispositions are key character strengths (hope, perspective, creativity, zest, collaboration, social intelligence, and gratitude) identified by Ormrod (2006) as contributing strongly to a sense of self-efficacy, the confidence in one’s own ability to achieve intended results, which, when combined with curiosity, kindness, honesty, and perseverance (often referred to as “grit”), lead to a greater sense of global life fulfillment and satisfaction, or a positive disposition toward life and vocation. Research on dispositions in teacher education indicates there is a “correlation between teachers’ positive dispositions and students’ self-determination”, including acknowledgement of (expressing gratitude for) students’ individual efforts (Hong and Shull, in Pang, et al., 2014). Additionally, research finds that “teachers who foster a caring learning environment improve students’ reported sense of efficacy” (Hong & Shull, 2009; Johnston, et al., in Pang, et al., 2013). Both Maslow and Covey felt it necessary to address social and emotional needs – Parker’s “inner landscape” – as powerful motivators and speak of “the heart” in terms of having relationships which are satisfying interactions, which in the case of the literature cited above are satisfying interactions with students in the classroom, and with other teachers, administrators, parents, and community stakeholders. As such, character plays a significant role in a teacher’s success both in and out of the classroom. Thus, the cultivation of good character and the dispositions associated with good character seems in keeping with states’ guidelines and professional education organizations’ (e.g. InTASC, CAEP) calls for teacher education programs to cultivate positive dispositions and assess these dispositions as one part of continual program improvement. Based on the research and established guidelines, the potential conclusion is that the more of the critical character traits that are possessed by teachers in terms of dispositions, the more likely those teachers are to persist in the profession and to have a positive impact on the learning of P-12 students.

In VWU’s programs, we identify good character as part of our mission, and include as part of the needed dispositions the goals and learning outcomes of evaluative and reflective practice (InTASC 9) and knowledge of education trends and issues (InTASC 10), as well as the additional behaviors and dispositions needed to become successful, reflective educators. The dispositions are cultivated and developed through coursework across the curriculum, but primarily through the professional studies courses and through interactions with education faculty and education professionals, both in university classrooms and during site-based and formal field experiences. It is our firm desire to communicate these dispositions to candidates, faculty, and school partners to ensure that all parties are contributing to and reinforcing the development of qualities and traits that empower teachers and define good character.


Academic Knowledge

Academic knowledge is developed through the fulfillment of General Studies and Frames of Reference requirements and specially designed endorsement area programs (, pp. 41- 44). The General Studies Program at VWU is designed to instru



Aesthetic Understanding, knowledge of Historical Perspectives, the ability to employ the scientific method from the Natural Science Laboratory courses, the ability to analyze data and models from a Quantitative Perspective, a critical understanding of Institutional and Cultural Systems in human society, the ability to engage in Literary Textual Analysis, and an understanding of how Ethical Values and Faith Perspectives shape worldviews ().

Discipline-based knowledge is a prerequisite for effective teaching (Wilson, Floden & Ferrini-



education faculty, state guidelines, and feedback from our school partners and alumni. We integrate these resources into our program structure in order to prepare our candidates with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions identified in both the InTASC Standards (2011




The Education Department at Virginia Wesleyan University

Semester 1: Summer (13 hours)

EDUC 510		





Of course, it is extremely important for all VWU students to attend class regularly and to submit assignments in a timely