Predispositions and Dispositions

The College of Education and Allied Professions has adopted a 2-level model of dispositions seen as important in the preparation of professional educators. The foundational level we are labeling as **predispositions**. These are core personality traits that serve as the building blocks for derived and higher-order individual characteristics. The theoretical framework we are using is the Five Factor Model of Personality (McCrae, 2011), which posits that there are five broad, overarching personality factors that account for most of the variation in human individual differences. These are: Extraversion (versus introversion; Agreeableness (versus disagreeableness); Conscientiousness (versus undisciplined); Neuroticism (versus emotionally stable); and Open to Experience (versus close-minded and conventional). These core traits are theoretically seen as innate; while they vary in modifiability, there are limits set by genetic reaction ranges. Thus, while our Dispositional Framework focuses on the 10 identified surface level, or derived, characteristics, we are mindful that students enter the program with core traits already in place. Our model includes the measurement at the gateway of these core personality traits, followed by subsequent assessment of the 10 acquired dispositions that we strive to nurture and enhance through the professional education program.

 **Predispositions** **Dispositions**

Proposed Linkages



The figure above indicates hypothesized associations between the “Big 5”personality traits and the 10 Dispositions identified by the CEAP framework. In some cases empirical linkages already exist, and in other cases we expect to establish regression formulas that allow the Big 5 to predict outcome dispositions. For example, while Building Positive Relationships clearly reflects the Extraversion dimension of personality, it is likely that Agreeableness also contributes. Because dispositions such as Building Positive Relationships and Collaborating Effectively have been identified as key, it is reasonable to assume that the teacher education candidate may enter the gateway with innate personality characteristics that predispose them relevantly with regard to these outcome dispositions. That is, our curriculum and co-curricular experiences can likely help a student develop collaboration and relationship-building skills, **assuming threshold levels of Extraversion and Agreeableness**. If they are innately too low on either or both of these core traits, we may not be able to help them achieve acceptable dispositions. The same argument can be made with regard to Conscientiousness and the development of professional behaviors such as responsible behavior, trustworthiness and dependability, and good judgment. The entering student likely needs a threshold level of basic Conscientiousness if we are to achieve acceptable levels of these important dispositions throughout the training and education of the student.

This 2-level dispositional model is essentially a structure to support ongoing research and program development. We measure all students on the Big 5 at program entry, and then use the 10 dispositions for all subsequent measurement. As our database grows, we will be able to see empirically how basic traits relate to outcome dispositions and in time we can then to a more effective job at the point of admissions, and we may also be able to modify the teacher education program to more effectively help students to reach desired levels of dispositions.

McCrae, R. R. (2011). Personality theories for the 21st century. *Teaching of Psychology*, *38*(3), 209-214.

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| **Five-Factor Model of Personality** |
|  |  | Lo | Hi |
| **Extraversion** | Reserved,sober, aloof, retiring | Sociable, active, talkative, optimistic |
|  | E1: Friendliness | Formal, reserved, distant | Like people, close attachments |
|  | E2: Gregariousness | Loners | Enjoy company of others |
|  | E3: Assertiveness | Keep in background | Dominant, forceful, ascendant |
|  | E4: Activity Level | Leisurely, relaxed in tempo | Rapid tempo, vigorous, busy |
|  | E5: Excitement-seekiing | Low need for thrills | Crave excitement and stimulation |
|  | E6: Cheerfulness | Less exuberant | Cheerful and optimistic |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Agreeableness** | Cynical, rude, uncooperative | Trusting, helpful, good-natured |
|  | A1: Trust | Skeptical, suspicious | Believe others are honest |
|  | A2: Morality | Willing to manipulate, lie | Frank, sincere, genuine |
|  | A3: Altruism | Self-centered | Generous, concerned for others |
|  | A4: Cooperation | Aggressive, competitive | Defers to others, cooperates |
|  | A5: Modesty | Arrogant, conceited | Humble, self-effacing |
|  | A6: Sympathy | Hard-hearted, realistic | Tender-minded |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Conscientiousness** | Careless, lazy, unreliable | Organized, reliable, hard-workiing |
|  | C1: Self-efficacy | Low opinion of abilities, inept | Feel well prepared, competent |
|  | C2: Orderliness | Disorgankized | Neat, tidy, organized |
|  | C3: Dutifulness | Casual conscience and morallity | Strictly ethical and principled |
|  | C4: Achievement-striving | Lackadaisacal, not driven | High aspirations and drive |
|  | C5: Self-discipline | Tend to procrastinate, quitters | Self-motivated to get job done |
|  | C6: Cautiousness | Hasty, snap decisions | Cautious and deliberate |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Neuroticism** | Calm, relaxed, unemotional | Worrying, nervous, emotional |
|  | N1: Anxiety | Calm, relaxed  | Fearful, apprehensive, worrying |
|  | N2: Anger | Easygoing, slow to anger | Ready to experience anger |
|  | N3: Depression | Rarely experience depression | Prone to guilt, sadness, dejection |
|  | N4: Self-consciousness | Undisturbed by awkward situations | Sensitive to ridicule |
|  | N5: Impulsiveness | High tolerance for frustration | Desires are irresistable |
|  | N6: Vulnerability | Good coping | Unable to cope with stress |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Openness to Experience** | Conventional, unartistic | Curious, broad interests |
|  | O1: Imagination | Prosaic, keep mind on task at hand | Vivid imagination, active fantasy life |
|  | O2: Artistic Interests | Uninterested in art and beauty | Deep appreciation for art, poetry |
|  | O3: Emotionality | Blunted affect, low value for feelings | Experience deep, intense feelings |
|  | O4: Adventurousness | Prefer routine | Prefer novelty and variety |
|  | O5: Intellect | Narrow focus, low curiosity | Enjoy philosophical arguments… |
|  | O6: Liberalism | Accept authority, tradition, conservative | Ready to re-examine values |