

**A Comparison of Preservice Teachers' Self and Peers' Perceptions of Teaching
Dispositions**

Mary J. Samoei
University of Arkansas
E112D AFLS Building
Fayetteville, AR 72701
mjsamoei@email.uark.edu
479-966-8715

Catherine W. Shoulders
University of Arkansas
E111A AFLS Building
Fayetteville, AR 72701
cshoulde@uark.edu
479-575-3799

A Comparison of Preservice Teachers' Self and Peers' Perceptions of Teaching Dispositions

Introduction/Conceptual Framework

The process through which undergraduate students become licensed teachers is largely a collaborative one through which students form a cohort with their peers (Parr, & Aldridge, 2016; Sellick, Shoulders, Johnson, & Goodwin, 2017). These cohorts can be valuable in allowing preservice teachers to form critical friendships, wherein they informally solicit and offer feedback focused on teaching improvement in content knowledge, pedagogical skill, and teaching dispositions (Sellick et al., 2017). Critical friendships can assist preservice teachers in identifying areas for self-improvement, of which they may remain ignorant without their peers; research has shown that preservice teachers can be overly confident in their abilities as a result of the Dunning-Kruger effect (Podgorssek & Lipovec, 2017). This phenomenon occurs when students with higher abilities tend to underestimate themselves, while those with lower abilities tend to overestimate themselves (Kruger & Dunning, 1999). Peer evaluation with critical friends may assist preservice teachers in overcoming the Dunning-Kruger effect, as well as alert teacher educators to students in need of development within their teaching dispositions.

Given that a strong relationship exists between the teachers' dispositions and the quality of their teaching, teacher educators face a great challenge when they encounter a student who lacks dispositions essential for teaching but does well in areas related to knowledge and pedagogical skills (Schulte, Edick, Edwards, & Mackiel, 2004), particularly when the student is unaware of their lack of quality dispositions. Utilizing informally constructed critical friendships among peers within a teaching cohort to identify whether a Dunning-Kruger effect exists may assist preservice teachers in adjusting their perceptions of competence and needs for improvement.

Methods

The purpose of this study was to determine the difference between preservice teachers' perceptions of their teaching dispositions and their peers' perceptions of their teaching dispositions. The population included a census of Agricultural Education preservice teachers entering their final semester at [University] ($N = 5$). All students identified as female. Student E did not complete the internship as a result of low standardized test scores (a passing score is required to enroll in the internship). In January of 2019, all preservice teachers were given a paper version of the Educational Disposition Assessment (EDA), which is designed to highlight areas of concern and identify exemplary behaviors for preservice teachers throughout their educational program (Almerico, Johnston, & Wilson, 2017).). The EDA is intended to be completed by preservice teachers as a self-assessment, as well as by those evaluating the preservice teachers' dispositions. Dispositions evaluated by the EDA include oral communication, written communication, professionalism, positive attitude, preparedness, appreciation of and value for cultural and academic diversity, collaboration, self-regulation, and social-emotional learning. The EDA was deemed to possess construct validity and be free of racial bias, gender, and ambiguity by appropriate panels of experts during its creation (Almerico et al., 2017). Interrater reliability scores on the original instrument were deemed to be "indicative of highly moderate relationship[s]" (Almerico et al., 2017, p. 26) for each construct. Preservice teachers were asked to complete the instrument for themselves, and then for each of their peers. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics; students' mean scores were calculated for each construct, as was the mean score of their peers' ratings of them. Confidence intervals were

calculated for each of the peers' mean scores on each construct for each student and were used to determine whether there were differences between students' scores for themselves and their peers' scores for them on each construct.

Findings

For each construct, students' mean scores for themselves and the confidence interval produced by the means of peers' scores for each student are displayed in Table 1. Students' self-scores that are higher than their peers' scores for them are indicated by *, while those that are lower than their peers' scores are indicated by an underline.

Table 1

Comparison of Students' Scores of Themselves and Peers' Scores for Them on Each Construct

	Student A		Student B		Student C		Student D		Student E	
	Self <i>M</i>	Peer <i>CI</i>	Self <i>M</i>	Peer <i>CI</i>	Self <i>M</i>	Peer <i>CI</i>	Self <i>M</i>	Peer <i>CI</i>	Self <i>M</i>	Peer <i>CI</i>
Oral Communications	1.67	1.17-1.83	<u>1.00</u>	1.46-2.04	1.33	0.92-1.74	<u>1.00</u>	1.25-1.91	1.67*	0.733-1.10
Written Communications	2.00	1.59-2.19	1.00	0.60-1.84	1.00	0.80-2.07	<u>1.00</u>	1.40-2.16	2.00*	0.57-1.65
Professionalism	<u>1.40</u>	1.76-2.04	2.00	1.68-2.02	<u>1.60</u>	1.68-2.03	<u>1.80</u>	2.00-2.00	2.00*	0.77-1.13
Positive Attitude	<u>1.00</u>	1.69-1.83	2.00*	1.35-1.98	1.67	1.17-1.83	<u>1.00</u>	1.26-1.91	1.33*	0.46-1.04
Preparedness	1.50	1.29-1.84	<u>1.00</u>	1.22-1.90	1.75	1.43-1.94	<u>1.25</u>	1.80-2.07	2.00*	1.00-1.00
Diversity	1.50	1.19-2.06	<u>1.00</u>	1.19-2.06	1.00	1.00-2.25	2.00	2.00-2.00	2.00*	0.59-1.41
Collaboration	1.67	1.46-2.04	<u>1.00</u>	1.46-2.04	1.67	0.83-1.83	<u>1.00</u>	1.17-1.83	2.00*	1.02-1.65
Self-regulation	<u>1.00</u>	1.58-2.17	2.00	1.36-2.14	<u>1.00</u>	1.36-2.14	<u>1.00</u>	1.58-2.17	1.00	0.19-1.06
Social-emotional Learning	1.33	1.46-2.04	2.00	1.46-2.04	1.67	0.80-1.53	<u>1.00</u>	1.35-1.98	1.67*	0.30-1.36

Conclusions & Recommendations

Preservice teachers who successfully completed their internships and were hired as agriscience teachers (Students A-D) largely perceived their dispositions as lower than or similarly to their peers' perceptions of their dispositions. Alternately, Student E, who was not successful in completing her internship, perceived her dispositions as higher than her peers perceived them in all constructs, with the exception of *Self-regulation*. These findings suggest a Dunning-Kruger effect was present for all students in this cohort (Kruger & Dunning, 1999), similarly to other preservice teacher cohorts (Podgorsek & Lipovek, 2017). Sharing these findings with students and guiding interactions between critical friends to focus on dispositions may assist those needing dispositional development in recognizing that need.

This study was completed using one cohort of students, and therefore should not be generalized beyond this population. We recommend researchers replicate this study to determine whether the Dunning-Kruger effect exists for preservice teacher dispositions among other

cohorts. Finally, researchers should examine the impact of critical friendships on adjusting preservice teachers' dispositions and perceptions regarding their dispositions.

References

- Almerico, G., Johnston, P., & Wilson, A. (2017). *EDA Technical Guide*.
- Kruger, J., & Dunning, D. (1999). Unskilled and unaware of it: how difficulties in recognizing one's own incompetence lead to inflated self-assessments. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 77(6), 1121.
- Podgoršek, M., & Lipovec, A. (2017). Self-assessment ability of pre-service teachers. *New Educational Review*, 48(2). doi:10.15804/ner.2017.48.2.17
- Parr, B., & Aldridge, K. A. (2016). The Stakeholders Speak-Directions for the Next Century of Agricultural Education at Auburn University. *NACTA Journal*, 60. 21-27.
- Sellick, S., Shoulders, C. W., Johnson, D. M. & Goodwin, H. L. (2017). Experiences of Agricultural Education Preservice Teachers Engaging in Critical Friendships. *Journal of Agricultural Education* 58 (4), 291-306. doi.org/10.5032/jae.2017.04291
- Schulte, L., Edick, N., Edwards, S. & Mackiel, D. (2004). *The development and validation of the Teacher Dispositions Index*. Unpublished manuscript, Department of Education, University of Nebraska, Omaha, Nebraska.