THE DISPOSITIONS OF TEACHERS OF ARTISTICALLY TALENTED STUDENTS

Kyle Guzik
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“What is a castle?—that was your starting question today,” the teacher said. After the girl wrote a response, on paper, the teacher snapped a photograph of the page, in order to upload it to the girl’s playlist card.

She might also send it to a parent’s phone, using AltSchool Stream, an app that enables instant communication between home and school. Meanwhile, above the students’ heads, a network of white audio recorders hung from the ceiling, and fish-eye lenses were embedded in the walls. The goal of this surveillance system, AltVideo, is to capture every word, action, and interaction, for potential analysis.

“Does every castle have torture?” the teacher said, her voice sounding sunny, if a bit distracted. “That’s a good starting question for tomorrow.”
“For us to complete our mission, we need to get to the fifty million kids in public school,” he said. So far, AltSchool’s data pool was small, and not particularly “actionable.” But, Mediratta went on, “Raj and I both come from big-data backgrounds. We have this deep belief that, as we start pulling in data, we will be able to find ways to help teachers and improve the system.”

Both men were particularly excited about the data that might be gathered through AltVideo. “It allows the teacher to be what I like to call ‘retroactively omniscient,’” Mediratta said. He noted that a teacher could unobtrusively observe a student who had taken a long time completing an assignment and determine if he had been struggling or goofing off. The video also allows the AltSchool real-estate team to discern how to improve the layout of its schools. Bhatia clicked on his laptop to show me a recording that had been made in a classroom the previous morning as students were settling in. “We are hoping to be able to use it to make inferences—like what peer groups exist in the classroom,” he said. (Pity the student who tries to pass notes under AltVideo’s watchful eye.)

Mediratta envisaged a time when AltSchool technology would get “into the sci-fi realm.” What insights might be drawn from aggregated data culled from video and audio? He spoke of the video moments that teachers were bookmarking. “The next useful thing would be for us to analyze all the things that are bookmarked, and to draw inferences,” Mediratta said. “Like, bookmarks seem to happen when the classroom is noisy. So let’s generate a few other interesting moments that the teacher might want to look at—say, a moment when the classroom was full of kids but was dead quiet. What was happening there? Is this good? Is this bad? Or you could look at a moment when it was absolutely chaotic—but maybe that is what the activity called for. So we can start applying machine learning to this data to start driving inferences. Maybe what we should be doing is detecting when the classroom gets noisy, and then we could have the head of the school, who is also an educator, stop by your classroom and participate and help.”
Mitchell’s schools are also distinguished from public schools by their different tone. Staff and students pledge to avoid errors that arise from "the comfort of popular opinion and custom," "compromise" and "over-reliance on rational argument." Students must vow "to be obedient and loyal to those in authority, in my family, in my school, and in my community and country, So long as I shall live."

The schools also use a rigid instructional approach in which teachers stick to a script and drill students repeatedly through call and response. Latin is taught as early as elementary school.

Mitchell’s company has managed the schools' staffs with similar rigor. A strong sense of hierarchy took root as the schools expanded. When a new corporate office was built to house the management company, teachers jokingly began calling it the "White House."

From the "White House," Mitchell and other top administrators could watch teachers in their classrooms via surveillance cameras installed in every classroom, in every school. During a tour of school grounds with this reporter, Mitchell and the school's IT director discussed surveillance software called iSpy. "We need to call it something else," Mitchell offered with a chuckle. "Call it iHelp or something."

Mitchell said the cameras give administrators the ability to observe teachers in action and offer them tips and coaching.

Charter School Power Broker Turns Public Education Into Private Profits

Baker Mitchell is a politically connected North Carolina businessman who celebrates the power of the free market. Every year, millions of public education dollars flow through Mitchell’s chain of four nonprofit charter schools to for-profit companies he controls.

by Marian Wang ProPublica, Oct. 15, 2014, 5:45 a.m.
GUIDING QUESTIONS

1) How has teacher disposition been defined historically? What has prompted the current interest in the concept of teacher disposition? How has educational policy provoked and responded to investigation into the nature of teacher disposition?

2) Why should the definition of teacher disposition be expanded to consider the contexts of subject matter and student population with which teachers work? What evidence can be found to support the notion that teachers of artistically talented students have unique dispositions that are distinct from all teachers in general?

3) What is a plausible definition for disposition in the context of gifted art education? What are the consequences of adopting this definition?

4) How has teacher disposition been assessed in the past? What approaches are most appropriate for teachers of artistically talented students?
DISPOSITION

noun

1. the predominant or prevailing tendency of one's spirits; natural mental and emotional outlook or mood; characteristic attitude: a girl with a pleasant disposition.

2. state of mind regarding something; inclination: a disposition to gamble.

3. physical inclination or tendency: the disposition of ice to melt when heated.

4. arrangement or placing, as of troops or buildings.

5. final settlement of a matter.

6. bestowal, as by gift or sale.

7. power to make decisions about or dispose of a thing; control: funds at one's disposition.
The dispositions of teachers of artistically talented students can be defined as the intentional patterns of action enacted by these teachers in the following contexts:

1) The disposition of gifted art educators to view themselves primarily as artists who also teach or as teachers who also make art.

2) The disposition of gifted art educators to identify with particular artistic schools and movements as well as the degree to which gifted art educators incorporate the artistic influence of these schools and movements into instruction.

3) The aesthetic dispositions of gifted art educators, which includes their individual inclinations towards particular aesthetic judgments and forms of art appreciation, in addition to the degree to which a gifted art educator is aware of and intentionally constructs and critiques the aesthetics of his or her art education practice.

4) The disposition of gifted art educators to enable their students to interact with the greater art world.

5) The disposition of gifted art educators towards notions of liberal education.

6) The creative dispositions of gifted art educators.
1) The disposition of gifted art educators to view themselves primarily as artists who also teach or as teachers who also make art

*Hand with Reflecting Sphere*

M. C. Escher (1935)
2) The disposition of gifted art educators to identify with particular artistic schools and movements as well as the degree to which gifted art educators incorporate the artistic influence of these schools and movements into instruction.

Frances Benjamin Johnston
Six girls in art class, drawing at easels, Eastern High School, Washington, DC, 1899
3) The aesthetic dispositions of gifted art educators, which includes their individual inclinations towards particular aesthetic judgments and forms of art appreciation, in addition to the degree to which a gifted art educator is aware of and intentionally constructs and critiques the aesthetics of his or her art education practice.

Marcel Duchamp

*In Advance of the Broken Arm*

Nov. 1915, New York

wood and galvanized-iron
American snow shovel
readymade
4) THE DISPOSITION OF GIFTED ART EDUCATORS TO ENABLE THEIR STUDENTS TO INTERACT WITH THE GREATER ART WORLD
5) THE DISPOSITION OF GIFTED ART EDUCATORS TOWARDS NOTIONS OF LIBERAL EDUCATION

Septem Artes Liberales, by Herrad of Landsberg (1180 CE).

"Seven fountains of wisdom flow from Philosophy which are called the seven liberal arts. The Holy Spirit is the inventor of the seven liberal arts, which are: Grammar, Rhetoric, Dialectic, Music, Arithmetic, Geometry, Astronomy."
6) THE CREATIVE DISPOSITIONS OF GIFTED ART EDUCATORS

Chaïm Soutine: Chemin de la Fontaine des Tins à Céret (1920)

(represents the Gorges du Loup, a narrow canyon in the hills around Gourdon, in Provence, France)
CLARK AND ZIMMERMAN (2004)
things done according to virtue … are done justly or temperately not [only] if (1) they themselves are of certain kind, but also if (2) the agent who acts is of a certain disposition, namely, (a) when he knows what he does, (b) when he intends to do what he does and intends to do it for its own sake, and (c) when he acts with certainty and firmness (1105a 29 – 34)

NCATE (2001) defines dispositions as follows:

The values, commitments, and professional ethics that influence practices and behaviors toward students, families, colleagues, and communities and affect student learning, motivation, and development as well as the educator’s own professional growth. Dispositions are guided by knowledge bases and beliefs and attitudes related to values such as caring, fairness, honesty, responsibility, and social justice. For example, they might include a belief that all students can learn, a vision of high and challenging standards, or a commitment to a safe and supportive learning environment (p. 30).
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR GIFTED CHILDREN (2013). NACG-CEC TEACHER PREPARATION STANDARDS IN GIFTED EDUCATION.

Standard 4.3 states: “Beginning gifted education professionals collaborate with colleagues and families in using multiple types of assessment information to make identification and learning progress decisions and to minimize bias in assessment and decision-making” (NACG, 2013b, p. 4).
TEACHER DISPOSITION IS NOT MONOLITHIC


TWO IMPORTANT CASE STUDIES


TYPES OF GIFTED ART EDUCATORS


