THOUGHTS OF ONE FORMER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL ON TEACHER DISPOSITIONS, HIRING PRACTICES AND NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND

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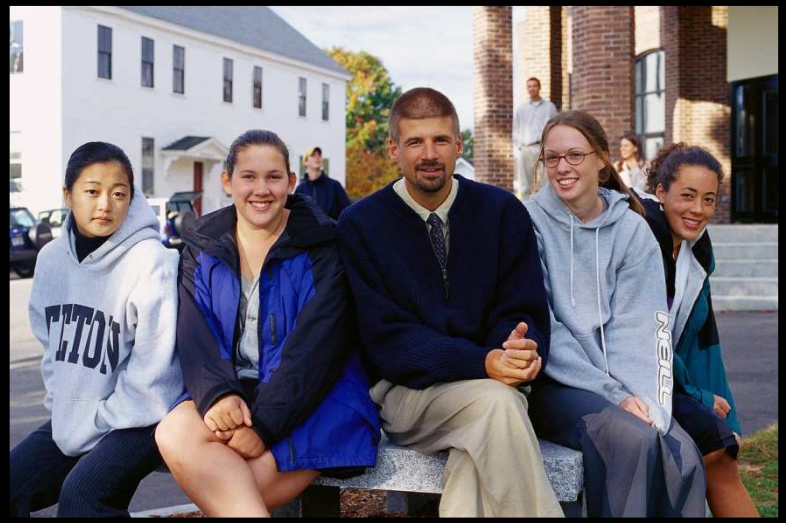
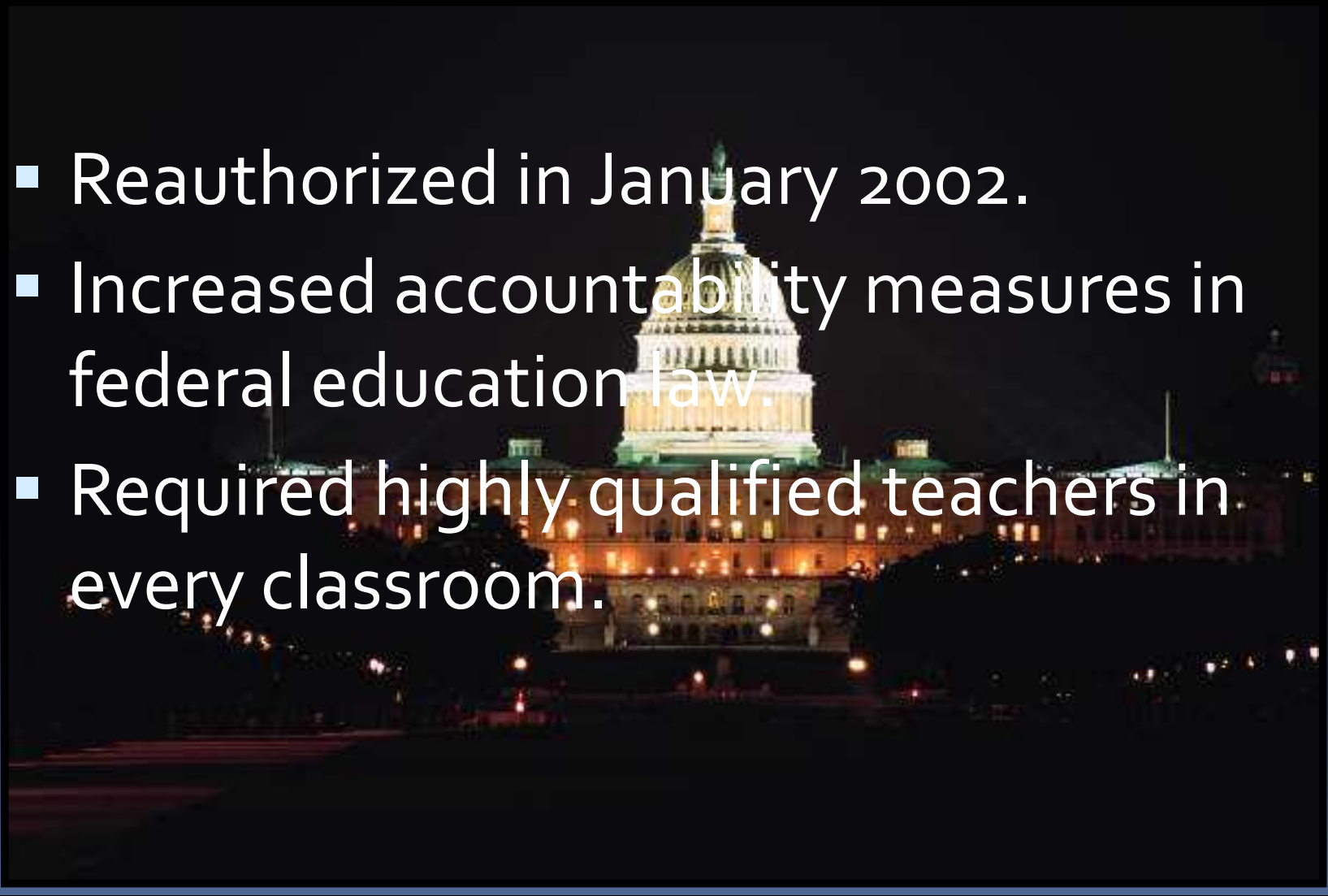
Teacher quality is widely recognized by policymakers, practitioners, and researchers as the most powerful school-related influence on a child's academic performance (NCLB, 2002).

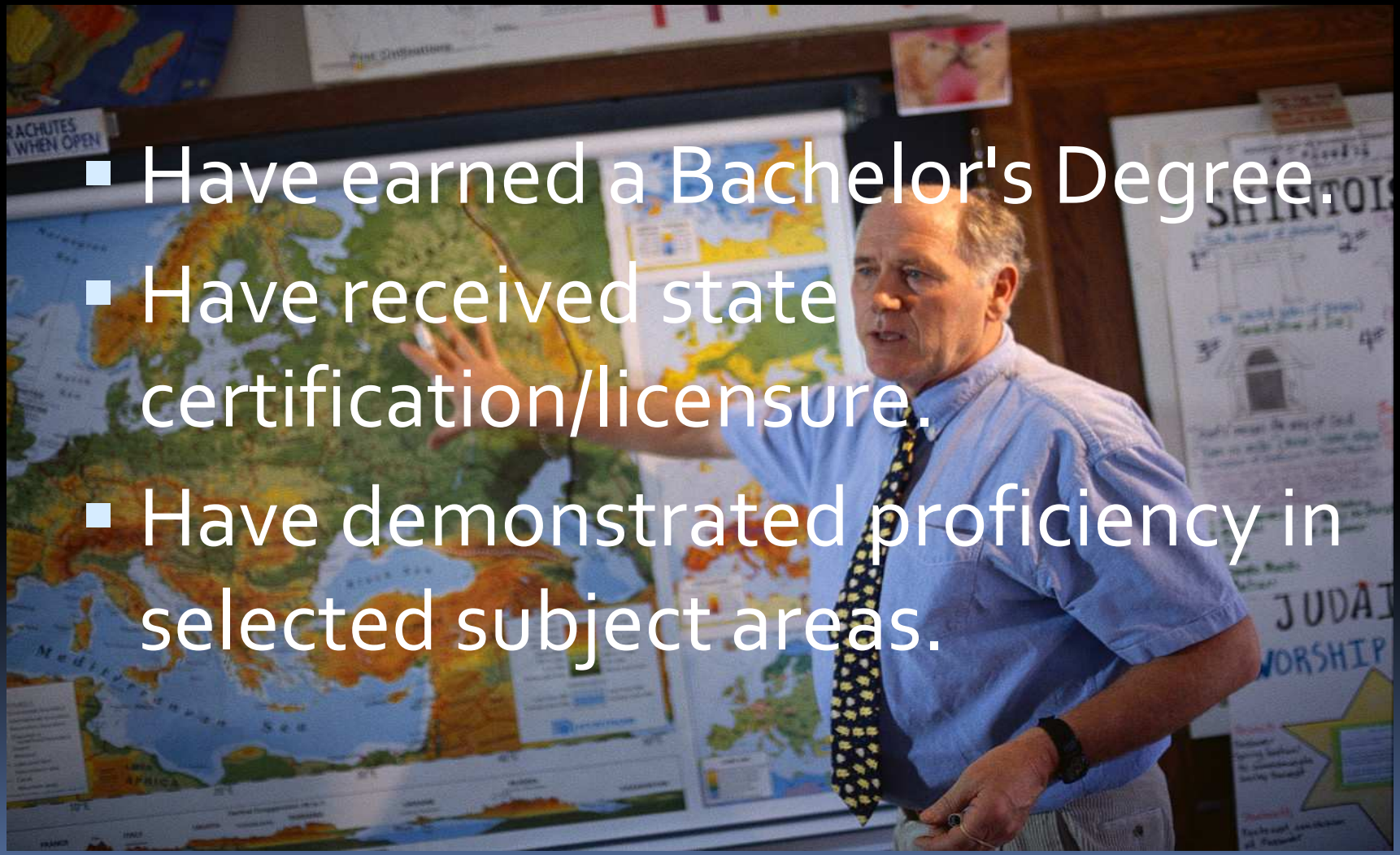


No Child Left Behind (NCLB)



- Reauthorized in January 2002.
- Increased accountability measures in federal education law.
- Required highly qualified teachers in every classroom.

Highly Qualified Teachers

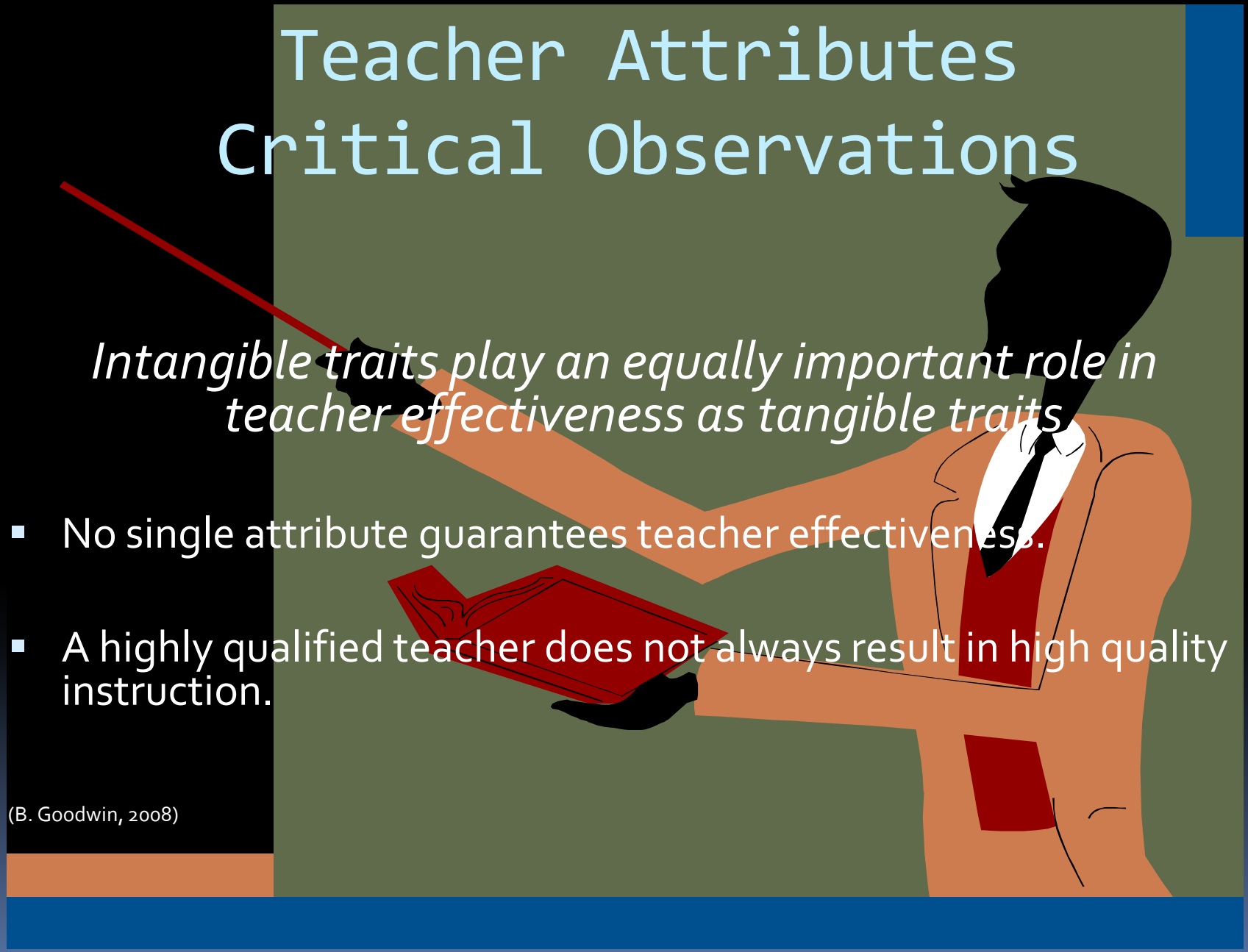


- Have earned a Bachelor's Degree.
- Have received state certification/licensure.
- Have demonstrated proficiency in selected subject areas.

Teacher Attributes Tangible vs. Intangible

- Tangible teacher attributes are characteristics which can be quantified or measured.
- Intangible teacher attributes are difficult to measure such as teacher dispositions and attitudes.

Teacher Attributes Critical Observations



Intangible traits play an equally important role in teacher effectiveness as tangible traits.

- No single attribute guarantees teacher effectiveness.
- A highly qualified teacher does not always result in high quality instruction.

(B. Goodwin, 2008)

Teacher Dispositions and NCLB

Despite the increased awareness of intangible teacher attributes playing an equal role in student achievement as tangible attributes, the definition of a Highly Qualified teacher remains focused on tangible attributes.

Defining Dispositions

A disposition is a behavior exhibited frequently in the absence of force, and results in a behavior that is voluntary and adapted to achieve broader outcomes Katz (1986).

National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education Expects Institutions of Higher Education to assess professional dispositions based on observable behaviors in educational settings.

Professional attitudes, values, and beliefs demonstrated through both verbal and non-verbal behaviors as educators interact with students, families, colleagues, and communities. These positive behaviors support student learning and development.

NCATE requires institutions of higher education to demonstrate fairness and the belief that all students can learn.

NCATE Executive Board, 2007

What Does This Mean for Teacher Preparation Programs?

Low student achievement is often blamed on Incompetent teachers, with Teacher Education Programs ultimately being held responsible for failing to prepare teacher candidates to meet the diverse needs of students in today's education system.

G. Goodman, 2008

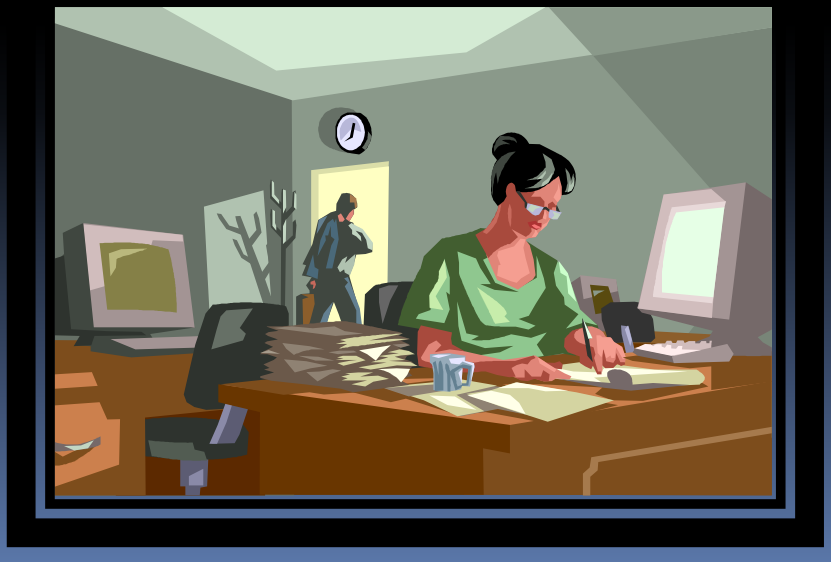
What Does This Mean for Teacher Preparation Programs?

- Pressure to reform teacher education
- Raising student achievement.
- Development of pencil-and-paper tests to measure *tangible* attributes of teachers.

(G.Goodman, 2008)

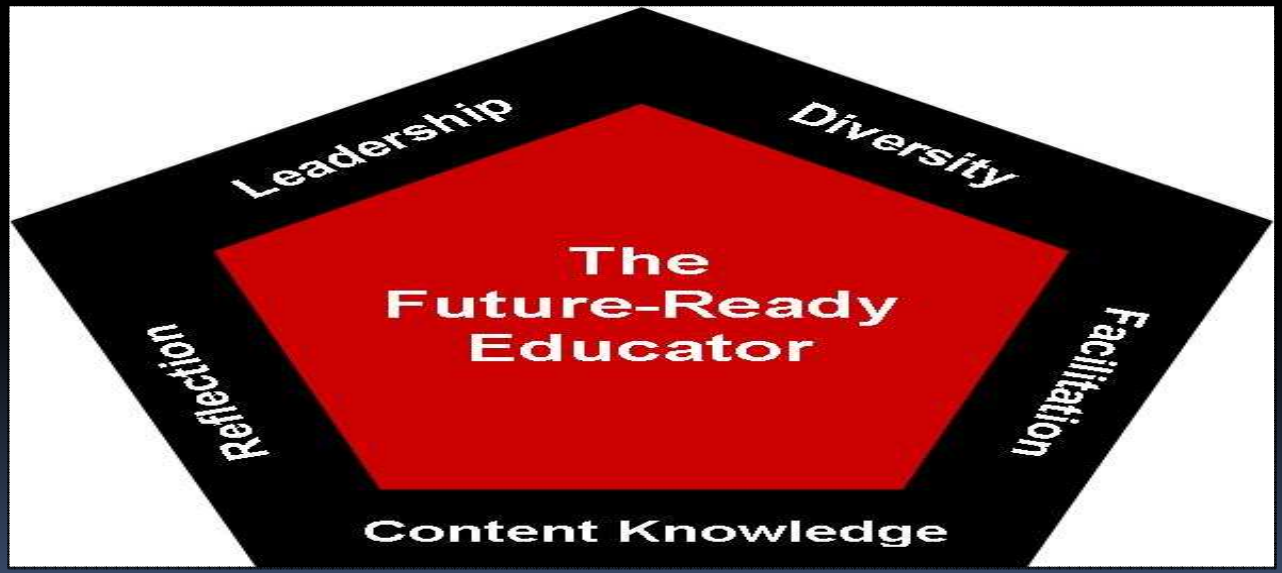
What Does This Mean for School Principals?

Successful principals seek both tangible and intangible attributes in teachers they hire.

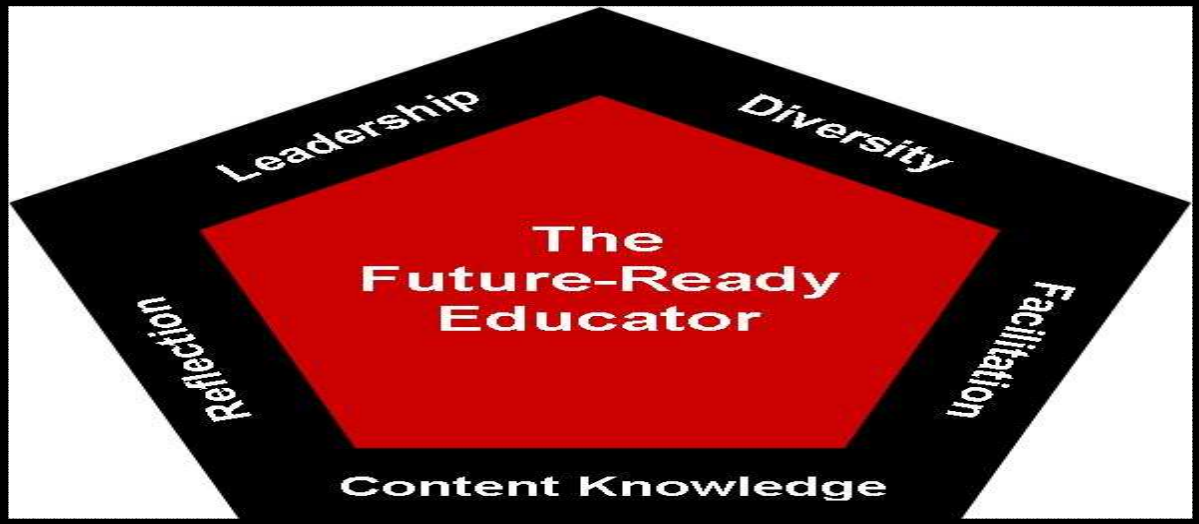


What Qualifications Do Principals Seek in Teachers?

Teachers who are *passionate about teaching students and are willing to learn effective strategies to meet student needs.*



B. Jiang retrieved Sept. 2010 http://castle.eiu.edu/~edjournal/workingwithbeginning.pdf



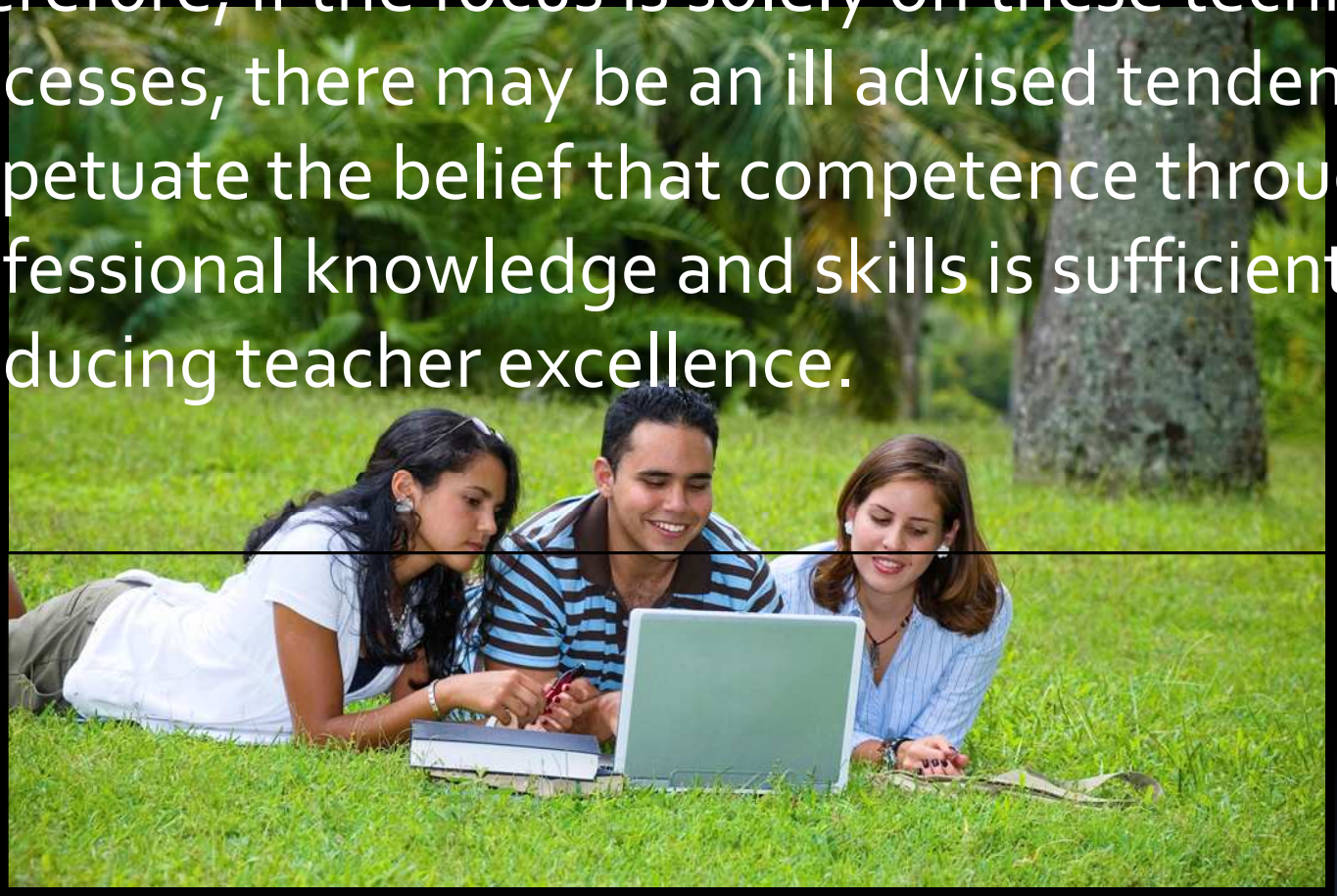
Teachers who focus only on teaching methods, classroom management, lesson design, and assessment risk becoming cogs in the technical process of education.

Wenzlaff (1998)

Our immediate charge is to prepare teachers to teach; our enduring mission is to empower them to personalize and own the craft of teaching.

(Amobi, 2006 p. 23)

Therefore, if the focus is solely on these technical processes, there may be an ill advised tendency to perpetuate the belief that competence through professional knowledge and skills is sufficient for producing teacher excellence.



(Thornton, 2006)

Improving the Teacher Education Program at Institutions of Higher Education

- Assessing and supporting teachers in the area of intangible attributes continues to be a challenge.
- Paper and pencil assessments focusing on intangible attributes are unable to assess teaching dispositions.

  (Darling-Hammond, 2000)
- Future research continues to be needed to determine the most effective way to measure dispositions.