

**The Perceived Traits of the “Ideal Student” among  
Students of Education and Prospective Teachers**

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The purpose of the present study is to present a psychometric inventory for measuring several aspects of professional values, attitudes, expectations and behaviors that teachers have about the ideal student traits. The underlying assumption of the present endeavor is that the developing of a measuring tool for these aspects is a sine qua non for any intervention and evaluation in civic education. It may describe the interrelationships among the different aims or goals of education. Furthermore, such an inventory would enable us to monitor the professional development of prospective teachers and teachers throughout their career empowerment.

## **Background**

### **Belief System**

In recent years, the definition of teachers' beliefs with regard to pedagogical concepts has constituted a subject of worldwide research as part of an attempt to understand teachers' professional development (Bramald, Hardman, & Leat, 1995; Oppewal, 1993). Richardson (1996) views beliefs as part of a group of constructs that define and describe the structure and content of mental states believed to drive one's actions. She differentiates among the conceptions held by students, prospective students and teachers. The assumption underlying the present study is that the "ideal student" trait system, as perceived by prospective teachers and undergraduate students in Education, is an operational definition of their educational goals (Maslovaty & Iram, 1997). This perception is influenced by their personal, professional and social belief system (Maslovaty, 2002). Richardson (1996: 113) notes that one of the difficulties in pre-service teacher education is student-teachers' lack of practical knowledge, resulting in their difficulty in connecting their beliefs to their teaching practices.

### **Teachers' perceptions of ideal student traits**

Teachers' perceptions of the ideal student trait system can be defined as the reflection of their professional beliefs in their educational goals. Aschbacher (1994) found that one of the most important competencies in teacher preparation and professional development is developing expertise in articulating learning goals for students. This is a prerequisite for designing classroom activities and specifying criteria for judging students' and teachers' work. Benyamini and Limor (1995) claim that the teachers' notions of student traits represent their expectations, which, in turn, are believed to be influenced by formal pedagogical ideology and defined by educational standards. Kallstad and Olweus (1998) found that Norwegian teachers' goal emphases are to a considerable degree the result of professional socialization.