



Conceptual Framework

Duke University
Teacher Preparation Programs

The Unit's Vision:

Emerging from our own reflective processes, the theme of the Unit's conceptual framework is grounded in our commitment to the teacher as *LEARNER* (*Liberal Education, Advocacy, Reflection, Nurture, Engagement, and Respect*). We are convinced that effective teacher preparation requires more than a simple banking model of depositing pre-conceived facts into candidates perceived to be empty vessels. Rather, we assert that our attending to collaborative knowledge production, honing a complex and multi-faceted skill set, and nurturing particular dispositions, enables and encourages our candidates to develop as educators who seek to continue their learning long after they leave our program. Because we believe in the critical importance of schooling in a democracy, we affirm conceptualizing teachers as “public intellectuals and engaged critics capable of resurrecting traditions and memories that provide new ways of reading history and reclaiming power and identity in the interests of creating a democratic society that affirms difference, justice, equality, and freedom” (Giroux, 1995). Accompanying candidates on their journeys towards understanding themselves as teachers – and in that process understanding teachers as learners, intellectuals, and cultural workers – motivates us and drives our efforts.

The Unit's Mission:

The “teacher as LEARNER” concept grows out of the Unit's stated mission. In turn, the specific knowledge, skills, and dispositions that our curriculum emphasizes are

rooted in these assertions. Our formal mission statement (see below) highlights the interplay between teaching and learning – as depicted in our conceptual framework’s catch phrase – that serves as the foundation of all our programmatic efforts.

The mission of the Duke University Teacher Preparation Programs is to prepare liberally educated, culturally responsive, and reflective teachers for leadership roles in education.

Since the previous visit the unit has revised our mission statement to better reflect our commitment to advocating for the professionalization of teaching. In light of current trends in the popular and political discourses around teaching and schools, we resist the reduction of teachers to the role of well-trained technicians implementing a prescribed curriculum determined out of the context of their classrooms. Instead, we as mission critical, the accompanying and preparing of thoughtful professionals, to serve as emerging leaders in the classrooms and schools they serve.

The Unit’s Philosophy:

The philosophical commitments undergirding and reflected in the Unit’s vision, mission, and conceptual framework can be summarized as follows:

1. We believe every child has a fundamental right to a quality, respectful education. In keeping with that belief, we expect teachers to be thoughtful and critical in their engagement with broad cultural discourses and advocates for students constituted both at the center and on the margins of schooling practices.
2. We believe that teachers are professionals and that Education must reclaim its status alongside the other historically recognized “professions” (Divinity, Law, and Medicine). We resist efforts to reduce teachers to technicians and students to

cogs in a social machine; rather we expect teachers to claim their roles as public intellectuals working in the service of society.

3. We believe an effective democracy is dependent on a thoughtful and well-educated citizenry. While individual betterment and a competitive workforce are worthwhile goals, our work is dedicated to a larger vision for freedom balanced with engagement, prosperity balanced with equity, and compassion balanced with empowerment.

The knowledge bases we privilege, goals we set, and standards we measure, are all extensions of these philosophical assertions.

Candidate Proficiencies – Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions:

In 2010, the Unit revisited and streamlined our stated *Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions (KSDs)* to more directly align with the revised Professional Teaching Standards initiated from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. Beginning with the Fall semester of that year, the new KSDs went into effect. Because of the recent implementation of these revised KSDs most of the data gathered for our report reflects our earlier version (effective through Summer 2010). Thus, the following chart reflects the earlier version of our KSDs as they align with our current version.

The knowledge, skills, and dispositions are derived from the Unit's mission, vision, and conceptual framework in conversation with the University and informed by professional and state standards. Listed below are the KSDs active from 2003-2010:

Content Knowledge

1. Candidates demonstrate knowledge of the subject area(s) in their area of licensure, as prescribed by the North Carolina Program Approval Standard and by the academic departments in which they earn their degrees.

Pedagogical Content Knowledge

2. Candidates effectively apply a variety of teaching strategies practiced by teachers in their content areas.
3. Candidates understand the needs of diverse learners, and they plan and implement lessons accordingly.

Professional Knowledge and Skills

4. Candidates know the basic principles of child and adolescent psychology, and they incorporate this knowledge into their instruction and interaction with students.
5. Candidates know the philosophical, historical, and societal roots and foundations of education, and have developed a philosophy of teaching.
6. Candidates know and understand ethical, legal, and policy issues that inform current education debates.
7. Candidates know and understand curriculum issues that inform current education debates. Candidates use this knowledge to adapt methods and materials to reflect best practices in their area of licensure.
8. Candidates work collaboratively with family members, school colleagues, and community resources to enhance the educational experiences and well being of all learners.

Pedagogical Knowledge and Skills

9. Candidates have developed and implemented effective methods for classroom management that reflect best practices, and they implement these methods successfully in the classroom. They have established a classroom environment in which students can become engaged in the learning process.
10. Candidates have developed and implemented effective methods for planning lessons and units that reflect best practices, and they implement these methods successfully in the classroom. Their lessons and units help students to connect concepts to applications.

11. Candidates have developed and implemented fair and equitable assessment systems, and this philosophy is demonstrated consistently throughout their field experience. Candidates use assessment results to inform their teaching.
12. Candidates know and understand how to utilize technology to facilitate teaching, as demonstrated by its appropriate and considered use in their field experiences; they regularly integrate technology effectively into their teaching plans.

Dispositions

13. Candidates exhibit the characteristics of professional teachers and emerging leaders – the work well with colleagues, they are punctual, they are responsible, they consider personal presentation, they plan ahead.
14. Candidates practice regular reflection, and they use this reflection to monitor and adjust their teaching. They use feedback from their classes, their colleagues, and their supervisors to modify their teaching.
15. Candidates consistently engage in ethical behaviors that reflect consideration for a diverse population of learners and for the rights and needs of all who are invested in the success of children and adolescents.
16. Candidates are committed to educational equity. They believe that awareness of and adjustments for cultural differences contribute to the academic success or failure of students.

The new KSDs (effective summer 2010) are as follows:

1. Candidates exhibit the characteristics of professional teachers and emerging leaders.
2. Candidates understand the needs of diverse learners and model the behaviors of culturally responsive teachers.
3. Candidates demonstrate core content knowledge in the academic areas for which they seek licensure.
4. Candidates believe all students can learn and use a variety of effective instructional methods to positively impact student learning.
5. Candidates practice regular reflection to increase their effectiveness in the classroom and to grow and thrive in their profession.

A chart demonstrating alignment between the old and new KSDs, can be found in the evidence room.

Knowledge Bases: Expounding on the Teacher as LEARNER

As previously named in our institutional report, the Unit has adopted a conceptual framework based in a commitment to the understanding the *Teacher as LEARNER* (*Liberal Education, Advocacy, Reflection, Nurture, Engagement, and Respect*). Here, in the explication of our knowledge bases, we take up each component of our conceptual framework in conversation with both the body of scholarship that informs our thinking around it. By the title of each point in our framework, the KSDs (older version) with which they are most aligned are noted. While several KSDs relate to more than one aspect of the framework, the four *dispositions* (13-16) show up repeatedly. We see this as a reflection of the integration of these core dispositions throughout the curriculum.

Liberal Education: Old KSD 1, 5, 13, 14, 15, 16; New KSD 3

In an era in which the trend in teacher preparation has been dominated by what Liston and Barko (2009) describe as a growing “professional orthodoxy” in which the methods of a progressive model for learning and teaching (reform-based content, constructivist-oriented learning, and student-focused pedagogy) are taken as the only viable framework and presented as unquestionable and without interrogation, we claim a different approach. That is not to say that we find the contemporary articulation of the progressive agenda in and of itself objectionable, indeed it shapes much of our curriculum; what we do find problematic is any education effort that privileges a

particular knowledge base uncritically, any model that seeks more to “train and inculcate” (p. 111) rather than to educate.

While we recognize that in many ways our commitment to liberally educated teachers “goes against the grain of a professional orientation” (p. 107), we remain committed to this vision. Beyond promoting a general sense of “well-roundedness,” the liberally educated teacher in our estimation is better prepared to think critically about the production and dissemination of knowledges in relation to the multiple demands and expectations placed on schooling. Again, Liston and Borko suggest, “Future teachers’ education should include an examination of their own personal and professional values as well as the larger educational and cultural values. The education we offer our candidates should engage them in the best that the liberal arts tradition has to offer: reflective self-discernment as well as critical understanding” (p. 110). We contend that a failure to engage emerging educators in this liberal arts tradition is unwise and ultimately unethical. Our culture, and especially our young people, deserve to be steered by thoughtful public intellectuals with solid ethical and philosophical groundings.

Advocacy: Old KSD 6, 8, 13, 15, 16; New KSD 1

Candidates in our programs are prepared to navigate the complexities of the teaching life, but with the assumption that among their most important professional responsibility is to function as advocates for their students within the educational system. Camp and Oestereich (2010) speak to “uncommon teaching,” as a challenge to the ways in which particular knowledge is codified in schooling practices and is then internalized as “commonsense.” Arguing that knowledge is culturally bound, the commonsense

assumption functions to privilege the lived experience of some students over others in the production of a “homogenized curriculum” (Sleeter, 2005) that fails to serve students living on the margins of hegemonic cultural norms. By repositioning the commonsense through uncommon teaching, “teachers act with the intent of transforming reality and actively advocate for teaching that reaches out to rather than preaches to students” (p. 21). They argue that teachers who resist the de-professionalizing impact of high-stakes testing and related policies problematize the commonsense assumptions of many school reform efforts, and are “professionals who are empowered to invoke professional judgment in order to meet the diverse needs of their students” (p. 21).

Peters and Reid (2009) draw from theories of resistance and discursive practice in their analysis of promoting advocacy in teacher preparation programs. In their paradigm, resistance strategies focus on counter-hegemonic social attitudes, behaviors and actions directed at dominant power structures with the hoped intent of redistributing power more equitably. This resistance and transgression of larger socio-political forces operates across individual and communal levels and “is enacted through critical self-reflection coupled with action” (p. 78). Resistance strategies are driven by an analysis of how power is exercised categorically and systematically, and are targeted at the explicit enforcers of social control.

Discursive practices, themselves forms of resistance, target hegemonic theories of otherness with the aim of reformulating the discursive positioning that ultimately control social (in this case schooling) practices:

“Discursive practices,” they assert, “define the rules that both control what can be said (language) and done (practices), and constitute the means by which people become positioned in relations of power. So, for example, students with disabilities have been historically positioned marginally and with little power in

the scientific, medical, and psychological discourses of special education. In contrast, disability studies scholars have engaged intentional discursive practices to re-position students with disabilities in relations of power by exposing and disrupting the foundations of the historical, political, and economic contexts in which disability is constructed and reinscribed (p. 79).

The development of both the knowledge bases and leadership skills necessary for effective advocacy is a common thread throughout our teacher preparation curriculum.

Our candidates are given opportunities to consider the ethical dimensions of the work of teachers, offering them spaces for analyzing injustices in educational systems and considering multiple strategies for resistance and reform. Further, the care and attention paid to the discursive power of language in producing the very terms by which any given social/cultural issue can be taken up are particularly privileged within a liberal education model for teacher preparation, echoing the concepts put forward by Peters and Reid (2009).

In preparing teachers as LEARNERS, the Unit endeavors to promote the sort of self-reflective, critical analysis of schooling and classroom practices that function to understand and resist unjust exercising of power. Through our own professional advocacy on behalf of all students, and particularly those disempowered by institutionalized systems of inequities, the staff and faculty of the Unit demonstrate our own professional commitments to advocacy. Further, our emphasis on service-learning and other socially engaged pedagogies, coupled with an ongoing classroom analysis of power in relation to schooling, invites candidates into considering their careers as teachers as commitments to lives of advocacy on behalf of those they serve.

Reflection: Old KSD 14; New KSD 5

The Unit's longstanding emphasis on reflection has been a defining characteristic of our work for decades. In our *Statement of Knowledge Bases* component of our last report, we named that a central objective of the teacher preparation programs "is to enable prospective teachers to help their own students acquire the skills, knowledge, appreciations, and understanding required to live full, productive, ethical lives in a democratic society. Informed participation in this democratic society requires the ability to reflect and engage freely in critical thought" (p. 8). The close linkage of reflection, critical thinking, and democracy is a reappearing theme in our conceptual framework. It is central to our mission, vision, and philosophy, looms large in our understanding of a liberal education, and here is explicated in its own right.

We recognize that the teacher as reflective LEARNER functions at multiple levels. At the most basic, we expect our candidates to reflect on their own instructional skills, understanding the importance of instilling a self-evaluative lens in fostering their continued desire for growth and excellence in their professional lives. We also teach and encourage a level of reflection that goes beyond the level of instructional skill and considers the teacher, student, parents, administration, classroom and school in their specific cultural contexts. In this way, we develop the multiple levels of analysis that are required of effective teachers in navigating their daily work. A third tier of reflection is developed through our curricular emphasis on understanding schooling within a broader social and cultural context, intimately linked to a functioning democracy, and as a positive force for change. As a small, interdisciplinary program, we resist the bifurcation of theory and practice, rather insisting that the writing of lesson plans and study of social foundations are both wrapped up in and implicated by one another.

In this regard, we seek to infuse a multi-tiered reflective stance into all of our work. As Bartolome (2007) argues:

“Gaining access to and actively creating methods and materials for the classroom is certainly an important step towards effective teaching. However, this practical focus far too often occurs without examining teachers’ own assumptions, values and beliefs, and how this ideological posture informs, often unconsciously, their perceptions and actions when working with linguistic-minority and other politically, socially, and economically subordinated students” (p. 264).

We contend the opposite could be said as well; that far too often those concerned with the educators’ ideological postures situate themselves over-against those ensuring that the practical skills are in place when we send candidates into the classroom. One of the advantages of our small faculty is that the very functioning of the Unit depends on our maintaining the particular perspectives of our specialties while not splintering into the sort of oppositional politics that clinging to sub-discipline identities invites. Like the candidates we produce, we are all charged with multi-focal, critical engagement of our field.

An emphasis on pedagogy, on a critical-thinking approach to teaching and teacher preparation, has been a long-held tradition in the Unit. We take seriously our University’s culture of academic rigor, and insist that extending that culture into the work of our unit is our vital service to society. “As a performative practice,” Giroux asserts, “pedagogy should provide the conditions for students to be able to *reflectively* frame their own relationship to the ongoing project of an unfinished democracy” (2007, p. 2). Our work, the preparation of teachers for public service, is at its core a wildly passionate commitment to furthering the democratic experiment.

Nurture: Old KSD 4, 9, 15, 16; New KSD 4

We value the centrality of caring and compassion as core themes in the teaching of teachers. In an age in which educational discourse is too frequently reduced to anxiety over standardized test scores, we stand by the assertion that our work demands loving attentiveness. Thus, the Unit promotes the value of the nurturing teacher.

Noddings reminds us that “first, we should want more from our educational efforts than adequate academic achievement and, second, that we will not achieve that meager success unless our children believe that they are themselves are cared for and learn to care for others,” (1995, p. 676). The nurturing teacher moves beyond a fuzzy sentimentality to committing towards pursuing the very best for the students about whom they care. Our choice of “nurturing” as a descriptor of our vision for the teachers our candidates will become implies a directionality in our caring. By this, we mean to suggest that we do not simply care in an ambiguous way, but rather we care passionately about the candidates we serve, the students they will teach, and the field itself. Our care becomes nurturance, it finds its feet and moves into action, as we companion and support candidates as they claim teaching as vocation. Further, “nurturing” indicates an appropriate degree of humility, we do not “produce” teachers out of the raw materials of candidates. They do not “produce” excellence out of the raw materials of students. Teaching is inherently relational and collaborative, we acknowledge and celebrate all that those we serve bring with them to the process. We nurture their gifts, honor their passions, and provide them with the skills to do the same for others.

“Nothing happens in a vacuum,” Cappel asserts; “Nobody become what they are without being influenced by and benefiting from the interventions of lots of people” (in Arnone, 2010, p. 46). Because we believe that teachers carry significant influence in the

lives of those the teach, we know that a nurturing stance is critical. Arnove (2010, p. 46) reminds of the significance of the inspirational aspects of our work, stating: “Master teachers motivate their students, unlock previously unrealized skills, and help them achieve world class levels.”

Engagement: KSD 1, 2, 7, 8, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16; New KSD 1

The Unit endeavors to prepare teachers engaged with their students, engaged with their content, and engaged with their learning communities. These multiple spheres of engagement work together in the formation of professional leaders ready to participate in the advancement of the field. Like Giroux, the Unit affirms, “Education is not neutral, but that does not mean it is merely a form of indoctrination. On the contrary, as a practice that attempts to expand the capacities necessary for human agency and hence the possibility of a democracy itself...” (p. 2). Expanding the capacities needed for human agency – engaging the knowledge, interpersonal relationships, and institutional contexts – that shape public discourse is indispensable to the functioning of democratic society.

Giroux continues:

“Democracy cannot work if citizens are not autonomous, self-judging, and independent – qualities that are indispensable for students if they are going to make vital judgments and choices about participating in and shaping decisions that affect everyday life, institutional reform, and government policy. Hence, pedagogy becomes the cornerstone of democracy in that it provides the very foundation for students to learn not merely how to be governed, but also how to be capable of governing” (p. 3)

As reflected in our mission, vision, and philosophy, the Unit’s commitment to democratic principles gives structure to our programs. The principle of engagement, of connection, is of great importance to the realization of that commitment.

The Unit also emphasizes service-learning in teacher education, both as a core component of our curriculum and through our housing of the Service Learning Program which serves the entire University. A substantial body of research has emerged supporting the positive impact of service-learning on teacher candidates (Harwood, Fliss & Goulding, 2006; Root, Callahan & Sepanski, 2002; Vickers, 2007). Teacher candidates who engage in service-learning “are more likely to become sensitive to students’ developmental needs, understand the social-emotional learning that can serve to support academic learning for the students, and develop a more realistic view of the teaching profession, which in turn can help them to adjust and stay within the profession,” (Billig and Freeman). The Unit’s commitment to critical community engagement through service-learning reflects our larger values and presuppositions about the relationship between teaching and service, and is consistent with the University’s mission and vision.

Respect: Old KSD 3, 8, 9, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16; New KSD 2

The final aspect of the Unit’s conceptual framework, in practice, undergirds all of the others. The core value of respect, for students, colleagues, oneself, as well as the larger schooling institutions and teaching profession, lies at the very heart of what we do. In particular, we endeavor to prepare candidates ready to engage schooling in culturally diverse contexts, demanding both self-awareness and respect for other cultural paradigms. Sleeter and MacLaren (1995) helpfully define multicultural education as “a particular ethico-political attitude or ideological stance that one constructs in order to confront and engage the world critically and challenge power relations” (p. 7). Nieto

(2000) moves to consider the development of multicultural teaching through the development of becoming a multicultural person – not suggesting that one adopt multiple cultural identifications, but rather that one’s life experiences inform one’s ideas about cultures different from one’s own, calling one to face internalized racism and bias, and opening space to understand the world from multiple perspectives and develop an ethic of multiculturalism. Through extensive fieldwork and service-learning opportunities, candidates in the Unit engage with and reflect upon experiences with students and colleagues across lines of race, class, gender, sexual identity, religion and language. From their first tutoring experiences through their internships, candidates are involved in an ongoing reflective conversation considering the ways they understand themselves and the others they encounter in their work as emerging educators.

Further, within the coursework making up the teacher preparation curriculum, the Unit takes up themes of cultural competency, culturally responsive teaching, critical multiculturalism, diverse learning styles, and curriculum differentiation; all of which come together to weave a web of strategies and discourses preparing professionals committed to the value of all students being both challenged and supported in respectful and appropriate ways. This two-tiered approach toward nurturing respect within our candidates – through cross-cultural experiences in the field, and classroom study of best practices – offers candidates the both the critical lens and relational experience that fosters respectful teaching.

Assessment:

A detailed description of the Unit's assessment plan can be found in the *Assessment Handbook* in the electronic evidence room. The following overview is excerpted from the Unit's *Policy and Procedures Handbook*:

Unit Assessment System

Assessments for each program are comprehensive, utilizing multiple instruments at multiple points. There are four data collection points at which each program formally assesses candidate progress toward mastery of the knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions (KSDs):

- Pre-admission/application;
- Pre-internship/post-admission;
- Mid-internship; and
- End of the internship.

In addition, each program conducts a formal survey of every former candidate at a fifth data collection point:

- After completion of the first year of teaching.

Major Assessments

Formal evaluation of candidate progress is based upon review of a minimum of three separate pieces of evidence at each collection point. Data are both qualitative and quantitative. Major assessments vary from program to program, but in general, the assessments used at each collection point are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Assessments Common to All Programs

| DATA COLLECTION POINT | ASSESSMENTS |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Pre-admission/Application | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Application• Formal interview• Cumulative GPA• Recommendations |
| Pre-internship/Post-admission | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lesson Plans• Research Paper• Philosophy Statement/Reflections |
| Mid-Internship | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mid-internship Evaluation• Curriculum Unit• Coursework Evaluations |
| End of Internship | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Final Internship Evaluation• LEA/IHE Certification of Teaching Capacity• Assessment Task/Plan• Leadership Assignment• Coursework Evaluations |
| End of 1st Year of Teaching | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1st-year teacher survey• Hiring principal survey |

Specific procedures for monitoring candidate progress and information on Unit survey and assessments are outlined in the program's Assessment Handbook.