

# The Conceptual Framework

## of the

# College of Education

(The Professional Education Unit)



Florida International University

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## Vision and Mission of the Institution and Unit

### Institutional Vision

These five words summarize FIU's vision: TOP \* URBAN \* PUBLIC \* RESEARCH \* UNIVERSITY.

### Unit Vision Statement

We seek a desired future in which the emphasis on inquiry is the means-ends connection to enhancing reflective intelligence

The desired future of the College of Education at Florida International University is one in which candidates, faculty, and staff embrace the shared experiences of a diverse, international, professional-learning community. The College will, therefore, strive to facilitate diverse learning environments where knowledge becomes the means to foster goal attainment for all those involved in the learning process. This process will necessarily involve the highest ethical standards, while emphasizing inquiry as the means-ends connection to enhancing reflective intelligence in a changing social, political, cultural and technological world.

**Theme:** The theme for the College of Education at Florida International University is: **facilitating personal, intellectual, and social renewal within diverse populations and environments.**

### Institutional Mission

Florida International University is an urban, multi campus, research university serving South Florida, the state, the nation and the international community. It fulfills its mission by imparting knowledge through excellent teaching, promoting public service, discovering new knowledge, solving problems through research, and fostering creativity.

### Unit Mission Statement

Our charge is to prepare professionals who have the knowledge, abilities, and habits of mind to facilitate and enhance learning and development within diverse settings; promote and facilitate the discovery, development, documentation, assessment, and dissemination of knowledge related to teaching and learning; and, develop professional partnerships in the larger community.

The mission of the College of Education includes a three-pronged approach. First, the College is charged to prepare professionals who have the knowledge, abilities, and dispositions to facilitate and enhance learning and development within diverse settings. Second, the College must promote and facilitate the discovery, development, documentation, assessment, and dissemination of knowledge related to teaching and

learning. The third part of the College's mission is to develop professional partnerships in the larger community that foster significant educational, social, economic and political change. Consistent with the institution's role of public, urban, multicultural research university, the unit's mission is to serve the population of Southeast Florida, the State, the Nation and the international community by imparting knowledge through excellent teaching, creating new knowledge through research, and fostering and nurturing creativity and its expression through service.

## **Philosophy, Aim, Unit Outcomes**

### Introduction to Unit's Philosophy

**Our philosophy is the center from which we approach the preparation of the professional educator and practitioner.**

In trying to form a professional community, it is critical to recognize that a community exists only by virtue of what members have in common. In fact, what members have in common emerges from shared aims, beliefs, and common understandings. In other words, our philosophy is the center from which we approach the preparation of the professional educator and practitioner. Our philosophy thus establishes some underlying commitments to a set of philosophical, psychological, and pedagogical beliefs, and, therefore, provides the reasons, through these commitments, for our general approach to the life of the teacher and other school personnel.

### Philosophy

**At the core of our philosophy are the following concepts: self-renewal (growth), social community, educative environments, reflective intelligence.**

Articulating an explicit philosophy enables the achieving of "a wisdom" which influences the conduct of life in the unit. The use of a "root metaphor" enables us to, therefore, tap into lived experiences to inform our educational community. Teaching and learning in the College of Education is perceived metaphorically, therefore, as "a self-renewing process." Unlike the idea of "reform," which implies inadequacy and needed change, the idea of renewal implies growth from an inside-out perspective, and a sense of continuity. Thus, to view teaching and learning as self-renewal is to see it as being similar to living things that renew themselves "through action upon the environment" (Dewey, 1916/1944, p. 2). According to John Dewey (1916/1944), "Education, in its broadest sense, is the means of this social continuity of life" (p. 2).

Based on Dewey's assertions, the teaching and learning process is critical to the continued existence (self-renewal) of the unit (the College of Education). The unit, or the social community, is the means through which faculty, staff, and candidates enhance their growth (self-renewal) through what Dewey calls "educative environments." To capitalize on a further assertion of Dewey, "What nutrition and reproduction are to physiological life, education is to social life" (Dewey, 1916/1944, p. 9). Teaching and learning in the unit "is thus fostering, a nurturing, a cultivating process ... it implies attention to the conditions of growth" (Dewey, 1916/1944, p. 10). Just as one does not make a plant grow

by pasting on leaves, so too, one does not make a candidate grow by pouring in information. Like plants, candidates grow and develop based on environmental needs.

Since “We never educate directly, but indirectly by means of the environment” (Dewey, 1916/1944, p. 19), then the faculty in the unit seeks to create the kind of teaching and learning environments that elicit the mental and moral sensibilities consistent with reflective intelligence.

Teaching and learning as “self-renewal” suggests that we must cultivate the minds of learners and provide them with the rich intellectual, pedagogical, and dispositional soil to grow personally and professionally. This “soil of learning” must, therefore, be tilled with knowledge of subject, professional and pedagogical knowledge and skills, and dispositions, that is, moral sensibilities, and habits of mind.

The educational environments conducive to this philosophy are thus structured to challenge candidates to engage in the habits of thinking that are consistent with reflective inquiry or as termed by Dewey, “the essentials of reflection” (Dewey, 1916/1944, p. 163).

**To engage in reflective inquiry presupposes a form of personal, intellectual and social renewal.** Consequently, we see a special connection between growth and “the application of our thinking to things already known for the purpose of improving social conditions. This requires the acquisition of dispositions both intellectual and social” (Dottin, 2005, p. 4). In fact, Dewey notes that:

Only that which has been organized into our dispositions so as to enable us to adapt the environment to our needs and to adapt our aims and desires to the situation in which we live is really knowledge. Knowledge is not just something which we are conscious of, but consists of the dispositions we consciously use in understanding what now happens. Knowledge as an act is bringing some of our dispositions to consciousness with a view to straightening out a perplexity, by conceiving the connection between ourselves and the world in which we live (1916/1944, p. 344).

Consequently, teaching and learning as self-renewal is meant to help both candidates and faculty develop relevant intellectual and social dispositions that reinforce their being “mindful” and thoughtful in their professional practice. .

## Linking Philosophy to Practice

The use of the Teaching Perspective Inventory (Pratt and Collins, 2001) helped us to further conceptualize how learning will be facilitated, the kind of person we are trying to produce, and the pedagogical actions congruent with those beliefs. Members of the unit completed the inventory, and the results were examined for points of common connections vis-à-vis beliefs, intentions, and actions.

### **Beliefs: How Learning Occurs**

Learning in the unit is thus seen as growth and development. “If education is growth, it must progressively realize present possibilities, and thus make individuals better fitted to cope with later requirements. Growing is not something which is completed in odd moments; it is a continuous leading into the future” (Dewey, 1916/1944, p. 56).

Learning, however, is not simply about satisfying individual subjective taste. As noted by Mortimer Adler (n.d.):

People sometimes take the same position about truth and goodness. The truth, they say, is merely what seems true to me. The good is merely what I regard as desirable. They thus reduce truth and goodness to matters of taste about which there can be no argument. Let me illustrate the mistake they make. If a man says to you, "That object looks red to me," you would be foolish to argue with him about how it looks. The fact that it looks gray to you has no bearing on how it looks to him. Nevertheless, you may be able to show him that he is deceived by the reddish glow from a light shining on the object and that, in fact, the object is gray, not red. Even after you have proved this to him by physical tests, the object may still look red to him, but he will be able to recognize the difference between the appearance and the reality. This simple illustration shows that while there is no point in arguing about how things look, there is good reason to argue about what things are. Similarly, if a person insists upon telling you what he likes or dislikes in works of art, he is expressing purely subjective opinions which cannot be disputed. But good critics try to express objective judgments about the excellences or defects of a work itself. They are talking about the object, not about themselves. To recognize excellence in a piece of music, one must have some knowledge of the art of composing music. If a man lacks such knowledge, of course, all he can say is that he likes or dislikes the music. The man who insists that that is all he or anyone else can say is simply confessing his own ignorance about music. He should not, in his ignorance, deny others the right to make objective judgments (para. 2-7).

Acquiring good scholarship in some field may, therefore, be construed as acquiring knowledge about that field. In fact, some scholars have contended that the acquisition of scholarship in a field is a prerequisite to candidates learning to recognize the moral requisites in professional conduct in that field.

Teaching and learning in the unit is also consistent with Aristotle's doctrine that teaching is the act of the teacher leading the pupil from what he/she knows to that which is unknown to him/her. Guidance and direction are integral to the foregoing idea of learning. In other words, candidates progress from dependent learners to independent workers.

Four general assumptions frame what we currently believe about teaching and learning. These assumptions are the following:

- Learners acquire new knowledge by constructing it for themselves
- Professional educators must demonstrate an in depth understanding of content to facilitate student learning or content to facilitate learning environments through professional service. .
- Educators are professionals with specialized knowledge.
- Effective preparation of teachers and other school personnel occurs over time through active engagement with new ideas, understandings, and real-life experiences; support and assistance is necessary during this process.

*Learners acquire new knowledge by constructing it for themselves.* We recognize that learning is an active process in which learners develop new knowledge over time, and through real-life experiences (Cobb, 1994; Novak and Gown, 1984). They do not

merely receive knowledge from others, teachers, textbooks or through electronic means. We now accept, however, that learning is more complex (although there are times when listening or reading stimulates learning). Learning is in part, a social process (von Glaserfeld, 1984; Vygotsky, 1962) that learners need to do for themselves. This does not imply that others are not influential in the process but recognizes the active role that learners play.

Many aspects of learner's existing knowledge influence learning (Cobb, 1994). Their expectations, attitudes, and beliefs about themselves and about knowledge, learning, schooling, and the community in which they live are also important. When individuals are learning effectively, they are deeply engaged in what they are doing and expect that it will make sense to them. They have confidence that understanding will come from persistence, interaction with new ideas and real-life experiences, dialogue with peers and teachers, attention to other possible ideas, and a willingness to change their view on the basis of compelling new evidence (Bruner, 1973; von Glaserfeld, 1989).

*Professional educators must demonstrate an in depth understanding of content to facilitate student learning or content to facilitate learning environments through professional service.* . The academic qualifications of teachers are vital to the success of the students they teach (Ravitch, 1983). Candidates in the College of Education at Florida International University gain content knowledge through both the General Education Core, and specialty, studies designed specifically for each educational program. The content of the core curriculum is an essential prerequisite for fulfilling the role of modeling what it means to be an educated person. It is a basis of knowledge for the professional educator, who may be called upon to teach, or facilitate learning environments through professional service. It also serves to help students develop and improve their thinking and reasoning abilities as well as develop knowledge that will help them to more effectively exchange ideas, thoughts, and feelings with others in the professional community.

*Educators are professionals with specialized knowledge.* While the General Education Core and academic emphases give educators a knowledge framework, this, in itself, does not guarantee effectiveness; they must be able, however, to transform knowledge into a form that can be taught or used to facilitate learning environments through professional service. The application and utilization of this specialized knowledge must be accompanied by reflection on its effectiveness in fostering student learning and enhancing learning environments (Schon, 1988, 1989).

Effective teacher preparation of teachers and other school personnel occurs over time through active engagement with new ideas, understandings, and real-life experiences; support and assistance is necessary during this process. Jerome Bruner's idea of a spiral curriculum is appropriate for the unit's programs. In Bruner's view, complex concepts are introduced to novices at the beginning of their education and then revisited in increasing depth and in varying contexts at later points in the curriculum. Consistent with this view, the unit believes that learners will construct knowledge over time through active engagement with new ideas, understandings, and life experiences. Therefore, the education faculty strives to be a catalyst for learning by creating an "inviting" environment for the student to experience and to interact with knowledge in a variety of forms.

### **Intentions: How Learning is Facilitated**

The kind of person the unit is trying to produce is, therefore, a person who evidences continued capacity for growth, and who thus engages in intelligent action, that is, demonstrate wisdom in practice. Learning in the unit is conducive to the development of a candidate with the tools for continued growth, a candidate who engages in *personal, intellectual and social renewal through wisdom in practice*.

### **Actions: How to go about doing what is to be accomplished**

Philosophical and psychological ends in the unit are therefore manifested in, and through the following pedagogical means:

- Problem solving and decision making activities that incorporate technology;
- Cross-disciplinary and interdisciplinary learning;
- Cooperative learning;
- Activity-oriented and product-based pursuits;
- Faculty modeling expected moral behaviors;
- Providing encouragement and feedback;
- Helping candidates to construct, that is make meaningful the information they learned;
- Using varied teaching strategies;
- Faculty and candidates working as co-learners in their educational growth;
- Using assessments, both traditional and alternative/authentic.

These pedagogical means are predicated on the idea of continued growth as being facilitated through the use of the senses and individual imagination, and the faculty of reasoning (Stevens, 2005).

## Translating the Unit's Philosophy through Curricular Means

Without purpose, without being guided by an aim and outcomes, curriculum becomes an end in and of itself, and increases the likelihood that standardization prevails. An aim may, therefore, be construed as a stimulus to intelligent action in the unit through curricular and other means. Our educational aim, therefore, serves as the link between curriculum and our vision.

### Aim

The unit's educative aim is to enhance the *continued capacity for growth of candidates, faculty, and staff by producing individuals who can engage in intelligent action, that is, demonstrate wisdom in practice*.

### Learning Outcomes

**Engaging learners in intelligent action so that they might demonstrate wisdom in practice.**

The unit's learning outcomes are captured in the characteristics it expects of its graduates; their being:

1. Stewards of the discipline.

2. Reflective Inquirers.
3. Mindful Educators.

Since we assume that meaning will emerge for all candidates from the transaction between content and processes then the educative aim becomes that of ensuring that neither faculty, candidates, nor subject matter remain the same as a result of the encounter. This educational encounter facilitates a *personal, intellectual, and social renewal* in which cognitive connections made through the acquisition of subject matter (content) and process skills (how the subject is experienced) influence the formation of dispositions (habits of mind) and moral sensibilities (Hansen, 2001).

As a result, the learning outcomes for ALL candidates in the unit (initial and advanced) are guided by content, process and dispositions outcomes. These outcomes may be considered as the road map for the unit to achieve its vision; they provide the conditions through which the unit strives to reach its ends. The learning outcomes, therefore, may be construed as the characteristics of the way of life the unit envisions for its graduates.

**The Content Outcome** – the concepts, knowledge and understandings candidates must have in their respective field of study. This may be visualized metaphorically as **stewards of the discipline** in which candidates are expected to:

- Know their content and pedagogical content.
- Know how to use this knowledge to help all students learn.
- Engage in cross-disciplinary activities to ensure breadth and depth of knowledge.
- Know how to experiment with pedagogical techniques through inquiry, critical analysis, synthesis of the subject, and the integration of technology.
- Know how to evaluate the results of their experimentation.

**The Process Outcome** – the requisite generic skills needed to be able to apply the content and pedagogical content -.- **reflective inquirers.** This means that candidates' professional development in the unit as **reflective inquirers is shaped by their ability to:**

- Reflect on practice and change approaches based on own insights.
- Reflect on practice with the goal of continuous improvement.
- Think critically about issues through a form of inquiry that investigates dilemmas and problems and seek resolutions that benefit students.
- Be sensitive to and understand individual and cultural differences among students.
- Collaborate with other professional educators, families, and communities.
- Foster learning environments that take into account technological resources.
- Use the richness of diverse communities and an understanding of the urban environment to enhance learning.
- Use knowledge to help learners foster global connections.

**The Dispositions Outcome** – the dispositions, that is, habits of mind (intellectual, and social) that render professional actions and conduct more intelligent. These dispositions, i.e., habits of pedagogical “mindfulness” and thoughtfulness (reflective capacity) create a form of interconnectedness by which the unit's candidates have a disposition toward enhancing the growth of all learners through the application of their thinking to things already known (content, process skills) for the purpose of improving social conditions. This requires that teachers and other school personnel demonstrate commitments to patterns of intellectual activity that guide their cognitive and social

behavior in educational settings with students, colleagues, families, and communities, thus enhancing their conduct in the world of practice – **mindful educators**.

These dispositions/habits of mind that make professional conduct more intelligent include candidates:

- Adopting a critical eye toward ideas and actions (Being Analytical).
- Withholding judgment until understanding is achieved by being thoughtful in his/her actions.(Managing Impulsivity).
- Working to see things through by employing systematic methods of analyzing problems (Persisting).
- Thinking about his/her own thinking (Reflective Thoughtfulness).
- Thinking and communicating with clarity and precision (Communicating Accurately).
- Showing curiosity and passion about learning through inquiry (Being Inquisitive).
- Showing a sense of being comfortable in situations where the outcomes are not immediately known by acting on the basis of his/her initiative and not from needing a script (Taking Responsible Risks).
- Recognizing the wholeness and distinctiveness of other people’s ways of experiencing and making meaning by being open-minded (Being Open-minded).
- Taking time to check over work because of his/her being more interested in excellent work than in expediency (Striving for Accuracy).
- Abstracting meaning from one experience and carrying it forward and applying it to a new situation by calling on his/her store of past knowledge as a source of data to solve new challenges (Applying Past Knowledge to New Situations).
- Showing sensitivity to the needs of others and to being a cooperative team member (Thinking Interdependently), and,
- Showing a sense of care for others and an interest in listening well to others (Empathic Understanding) (Costa & Kallick, 2004).

## **The Justification for the Learning Outcomes**

The unit’s response to the importance of its learning outcomes is vested in a knowledge base. This knowledge base is not the curriculum (general education, professional studies, etc.) but is, instead, the theories, research, wisdom of practice, and educational policy that serves as the justification for the learning outcomes, and the framework from which candidate learning proficiencies are derived.

## **The Knowledge Base**

The research on the professional preparation of teachers and other school personnel clearly shows that there are three major categories of learning. These categories are consistent with the three major learning outcomes for the unit (content knowledge, process skills, and dispositions). For example, Linda Darling-Hammond and John Bransford in their edited work, *Preparing Teachers for a Changing World (2005)*, contend that “... new teachers learn to teach in a community that enables them to develop a *vision* for their practice; a set of *understandings* about teaching, learning, and children;

*dispositions* about how to use this knowledge; *practices* that allow them to act on their intentions and beliefs; and *tools* that support their efforts” (p. 385).

According to the National Research Council (2000):

Teachers must come to teaching with the experience of in-depth study of the subject area themselves. Before a teacher can develop powerful pedagogical tools, he or she must be familiar with the progress of inquiry and the terms of discourse in the discipline, as well as understand the relationship between information and the concepts that help organize that information in the discipline. But equally important, the teacher must have a grasp of the growth and development of students’ thinking about these concepts. The latter will be essential to developing teaching expertise, but not expertise in the discipline. It may therefore require courses, or course supplements, that are designed specifically for teachers (p. 20).

In fact, Shulman (2005) contends that:

... professional education is a synthesis of three apprenticeships – a cognitive apprenticeship wherein one learns to think like a professional, a practical apprenticeship where one learns to perform like a professional, and a moral apprenticeship where one learns to think and act in a responsible and ethical manner that integrates across all three domains (p. 3).

### Content Knowledge Base

*Teachers and other school personnel should have a deep understanding of content, and of how to make content accessible*

Teachers and other school personnel should have a deep understanding of content, and of how to make content accessible (Shulman & Shulman, 2004; Boix-Mansilla & Gardner, 1997; Grossman, et al., 1999; Wilson, Floden, and Ferrini-Mundy, 2001).

The new science of learning does not deny that facts are important for thinking and problem solving. Research on expertise in areas such as chess, history, science, and mathematics demonstrate that experts’ abilities to think and solve problems depend strongly on a rich body of knowledge about subject matter (e.g., Chase and Simon, 1973; Chi et al., 1981; deGroot, 1965). However, the research also shows clearly that “usable knowledge” is not the same as a mere list of disconnected facts. Experts’ knowledge is connected and organized around important concepts (e.g., Newton’s second law of motion); it is “conditionalized” to specify the contexts in which it is applicable; it supports understanding and transfer (to other contexts) rather than only the ability to remember (National Research Council, 2000, p. 9).

Furthermore:

A logical extension of the view that new knowledge must be constructed from existing knowledge is that teachers need to pay attention to the incomplete understandings, the false beliefs, and the naïve renditions of concepts that learners bring with them to a given subject. Teachers then need to build on these ideas in ways that help each student achieve a more mature understanding. If students’ initial ideas and beliefs are ignored, the understandings that they develop can be very different from what the teacher intends (National Research Council, 2000, p. 10).

The above reinforces the relevance to educators of having content and pedagogical content knowledge base expertise.

### Process Skills Knowledge Base

*Teachers and other school personnel also need to know how to promote learning through a variety of instructional practices*

Teachers and other school personnel also need to know how to promote learning through a variety of instructional practices (Feiman-Nemser, 2001):

. . . the new science of learning is beginning to provide knowledge to improve significantly people's abilities to become active learners who seek to understand complex subject matter and are better prepared to transfer what they have learned to new problems and settings... The emerging science of learning underscores the importance of rethinking what is taught, how it is taught, and how learning is assessed (National Research Council, 2000, p. 13).

In the unit, teaching for active learning involves the following principles:

- Knowledge is discovered, transformed, and extended by students;
- Students actively construct their own knowledge;
- Learning is a social enterprise in which students need to interact with the instructor and classmates;
- Faculty effort is aimed at developing students' competencies and talents;
- Education is a personal transaction among students and between faculty and students as they work together;
- Learning is best when it takes place within a cooperative context; and
- Teaching is a complex application of theory and research that requires considerable instructor training and continuous refinement of skills and procedures.

The National Research Council (2002) maintains that: "Assessments for purposes of accountability ... must test deep understanding rather than surface knowledge.... A teacher is put in a bind if she or he is asked to teach [or actually teaches] for deep conceptual understanding, but in doing so produces students who perform more poorly on standardized tests" (p. 20). It should be added that these assessment concepts apply not only to teachers, but to other school personnel who contribute to facilitating the learning environments in which assessments take place.

The unit's professional and pedagogical knowledge base is further justified through a synthesis of cognitive science as well as through the philosophical and cultural contexts of students, classrooms, and schools. The teachings of philosophers John Dewey (1916/1944), Paulo Freire (2000), as well as cognitive psychologists Jerome Bruner (1973, 1996), Jean Piaget (1969, 1976), and Lev Vygotsky (1962) make important contributions to the design of the unit's curricula, experiences, and classroom strategies. Many of the unit's instructional techniques are consistent with the work of Armstrong (1999), Gardner (1999), and Jacobs (1997).

The programs also incorporate the thinking of numerous authors concerning curricular knowledge needed by teachers (Bloom, 1987; Hirsch, 1988; Daly, 1986), the

relationship to subject matter disciplines (Shulman, 1987), and the dynamics of subject matter knowledge in teaching (Ravitch, 1983; Proefriedt, 1994).

### Dispositions Knowledge Base

*Teachers and other school personnel must exhibit certain habits of mind or demonstrate “pedagogical thoughtfulness”*

If schools and other educational enterprises are not developing students’ dispositions to act and use their knowledge, ability, and skill, then these institutions are just wasting students’ time (Ritchart, 2002, p. 34).

Teachers and other school personnel must exhibit certain habits of mind or demonstrate “pedagogical thoughtfulness” such as “inquiry as stance” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999), determination and persistence, valuing, caring for and respecting children (Haberman, 1996). “Mindfulness,” and “thoughtfulness” under-gird the work of “good thinkers” (Langer, 1989) to the same degree that it does for teachers and other school personnel (Barrell, 1991; van Manen, 1991). Facione, Facione and Giancarlo (n.d.) suggest that professional educators must demonstrate a disposition toward critical thinking in order to exercise professional judgment:

Professionals are expected to exercise sound, ... judgment in interpreting and analyzing information, determining the nature of problems, identifying and evaluating alternative courses of action, making decisions, and, throughout, monitoring the process and impact of their problem solving activity so as to amend, revise, correct, or alter their decisions, or any element that led up to those decisions, as deemed necessary. Judgment in professional practice, correctly exercised, is a reflective, self-corrective, purposeful thinking process which requires the professional to take into account content knowledge, context, evidence, methods, conceptualizations, and a variety of criteria and standards of adequacy. Professional judgment is what educators have called ‘critical thinking’ but exercised in a practical professional setting (p. 1).

Sockett (2004) cautions that “the acquisition of dispositions is inherent in the process of education; it is not an add-on feature.” In fact, according to Hansen (2001): “The moral quality of knowledge lies not in its ‘possession,’ ... but in how it can foster a widening consciousness and mindfulness” (p. 59). This “moral cast of mind,” embodies commitments to “straightforwardness, simplicity, spontaneity, naivete, open-mindedness, integrity of purpose, responsibility, and seriousness” (Hansen, 2001, pp. 45-56). This suggests a cognitive connection to dispositions.

The notion that dispositions are grounded in cognitive contexts has been reinforced by Kardash and Sinatra (2003). These researchers found that epistemological beliefs, that is, beliefs about knowledge and cognitive dispositions, such as willingness to consider alternative points of view, are positively correlated. In addition, Stanovich and colleagues found that certain dispositional propensities are highly related to problem solving performance (Stanovich, 1999; Sa, West & Stanovich, 1999; Stanovich & West, 1997, 1998).

Pedagogues’ dispositions are, therefore, habits of pedagogical mindfulness and thoughtfulness (reflective capacity) that render their professional actions and conduct more intelligent (Dewey, 1916/1944). Habits of pedagogical mindfulness and

thoughtfulness mean pedagogues having a disposition toward enhancing the educational growth of all learners through the application of their thinking to things already known (content) for the purpose of improving social conditions. This requires that pedagogues demonstrate commitments to patterns of intellectual activity that guide their cognitive and social behavior in educational settings.

## **Candidate Proficiencies**

### **Learning and developing what the unit values.**

Since the unit's knowledge base provides the justification for the desired unit learning outcomes, it is this knowledge base that also facilitates the relevant generic candidate proficiencies for each outcome.

According to Maki (2002) "An institution has to assure itself that it has translated its [vision], mission and purposes [philosophy] into its programs and services to more greatly assure that [candidates] have opportunities to learn and develop what an institution values .... Without ample opportunity to reflect on and practice desired outcomes, [candidates] will not likely transfer, build upon, or deepen the learning and development an institution or program values" (p. 10).

The desired unit outcomes must, therefore, be manifested in the content to be experienced, the requisite practices and skills for experiencing the content, and the moral sensibilities (dispositions) inherent in the foregoing transaction.

### **Unit Outcome: Steward of the Discipline**

#### Requisite Candidate Proficiencies

- Knows content and pedagogical content.
- Knows how to use this knowledge to help all students learn.
- Engages in cross-disciplinary activities to ensure breadth and depth of knowledge.
- Knows how to experiment with pedagogical techniques through inquiry, critical analysis, synthesis of the subject, and the integration of technology.
- Knows how to evaluate the results of experimentation.

### **Unit Process Outcome: Reflective Inquirer**

#### Requisite Candidate Proficiencies

- Reflects on practice and change approaches based on own insights.
- Reflects on practice with the goal of continuous improvement.
- Thinks critically about educational issues through a form of inquiry that investigates educational dilemmas and problems and seeks resolutions that benefit students.
- Is sensitive to and understands individual and cultural differences among students.
- Collaborates with other professional educators, families, and communities.
- Foster learning environments that take into account technological resources.



**Unit Content Outcome**

- Know content and pedagogical content.
- Know how to use knowledge to help all students learn.
- Engage in cross-disciplinary activities to ensure breadth and depth of knowledge.
- Know how to experiment with pedagogical techniques through inquiry, critical analysis, synthesis of the subject, and the integration of technology.
- Know how to evaluate the results of their experimentation.

**Unit Process Outcome**

- Reflect on practice and change approaches based on own insights.
- Reflect on practice with the goal of continuous improvement.
- Think critically about educational issues through a form of inquiry that investigates educational dilemmas and problems and seek resolutions that benefit students.
- Are sensitive to and understand individual and cultural differences among students.
- Collaborate with other professional educators, families, and communities.
- Foster learning environments that take into account technological resources.
- Use the richness of diverse communities and an understanding of the urban environment to enhance learning.

**Standards  
(FEAP's)**

- 8 – Knowledge of subject matter
- 10 – Planning
- 12 – Technology

- 1 – Assessment
- 2 – Communication
- 3 – Continuous Improvement
- 4 – Critical Thinking
- 5 – Diversity
- 7 – Human Development & Learning
- 9 – Learning Environment
- 10 – Planning
- 11 – Role of Teacher
- 12 – Technology

**INTASC**

1 – Understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline... and can create learning experiences that make subject matter meaningful.

7 – Plans instruction based upon knowledge of subject matter, students, the community, and curriculum goals.

2 – Understands how people learn and develop, and can provide learning opportunities that support their intellectual, social and personal development.

3 – Understands how learners differ in their approaches to learning and creates instructional opportunities adapted to diverse learners.

4 – Understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage development of critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills.

5 – Uses understanding of individual and group motivation and behavior to create learning environments that encourage positive social interaction, active engagement in learning and self-motivation.

6 – Uses knowledge of effective verbal, nonverbal, and media communication techniques to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction.

8 – Understands and uses formal and informal assessment strategies.

9 – Is a reflective practitioner.

10 – Fosters relationships with

- Use knowledge to help learners foster global connections.

colleagues, parents, and agencies in the larger community.

**Unit Dispositions Outcome**

**6 – Ethics/moral sensibilities**

- Adopt a critical eye toward ideas and actions (Being Analytical).
- Withhold judgment until understanding is achieved by being thoughtful in actions.(Managing Impulsivity).
- Work to see things through by employing systematic methods of analyzing problems (Persisting).
- Think about his/her own thinking (Reflective Thoughtfulness).
- Think and communicate with clarity and precision (Communicating Accurately).
- Show curiosity and passion about learning through inquiry (Being Inquisitive).
- Show a sense of being comfortable in situations where the outcomes are not immediately known by acting on the basis of his/her initiative and not from needing a script (Taking Responsible Risks).
- Recognize the wholeness and distinctiveness of other people’s ways of experiencing and making meaning by being open-minded (Being Open-minded).
- Take time to check over work because of being more interested in excellent work than in expediency (Striving for Accuracy).
- Abstract meaning from one experience and carry it forward and apply it to a new situation

- by calling on store of past knowledge as a source of data to solve new challenges (Applying Past Knowledge to New Situations).
- Show sensitivity to the needs of others and to being a cooperative team member (Thinking Interdependently), and,
  - Show a sense of care for others and an interest in listening well to others (Empathic Understanding).

**Advanced Level: Institutional Standards**

**State Standards (FEAP's)**

**Professional Standards (NBPTS)**

**Unit Content Outcome**

- Know their content and pedagogical content.
- Know how to use this knowledge to help all students learn.
- Engage in cross-disciplinary activities to ensure breadth and depth of knowledge.
- Know how to experiment with pedagogical techniques through inquiry, critical analysis, synthesis of the subject, and the integration of technology.
- Know how to evaluate the results of their experimentation.

8 – Knowledge of subject matter  
10 – Planning  
12 - Technology

2 – Know the subject and how to teach subject.

**Unit Process Outcome**

- Reflect on practice and change approaches based on own insights.
- Reflect on practice with the goal of continuous improvement.
- Think critically about educational issues through a form of inquiry that investigates educational dilemmas and problems and seek resolutions that benefit students.
- Are sensitive to and understand

1 – Assessment  
2 – Communication  
3 – Continuous Improvement  
4 – Critical Thinking  
5 – Diversity  
7 – Human Development & Learning  
9 – Learning

1 – Committed to students and their learning.  
3 – Responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.  
4 – Think systematically about practice and learn from experience.  
5 – Are members of

- individual and cultural differences among students.
- Collaborate with other professional educators, families, and communities
  - Foster learning environments that take into account technological resources.
  - Use the richness of diverse communities and an understanding of the urban environment to enhance learning.
  - Use knowledge to help learners foster global connections.

Environment  
10 – Planning  
11 – Role of  
Teacher  
12 – Technology

learning  
communities.

### Unit Dispositions Outcome

- Adopt a critical eye toward ideas and actions (Being Analytical).
- Withhold judgment until understanding is achieved by being thoughtful in actions.(Managing Impulsivity).
- Work to see things through by employing systematic methods of analyzing problems (Persisting).
- Think about own thinking (Reflective Thoughtfulness).
- Think and communicate with clarity and precision (Communicating Accurately).
- Show curiosity and passion about learning through inquiry (Being Inquisitive).
- Show a sense of being comfortable in situations where the outcomes are not immediately known by acting on the basis of initiative and not from needing a script (Taking Responsible Risks).
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- Abstract meaning from one experience and carry it forward and apply it to a new situation by calling on store of past knowledge as a source of data to solve

6 – Ethics/moral  
sensibilities

- new challenges (Applying Past Knowledge to New Situations).
- Show sensitivity to the needs of others and to being a cooperative team member (Thinking Interdependently), and,
  - Show a sense of care for others and an interest in listening well to others (Empathic Understanding).

## The Unit’s Evaluation and Assessment System

The final structural element of the unit’s conceptual framework outlines the commitment to continuous improvement in the unit’s professional community, in other words, unit and program effectiveness. The unit’s evaluation and assessment system thus enables decisions to be made regarding whether the unit is achieving its vision, aim and learning outcomes, and, therefore, producing desired results.

The unit’s evaluation and assessment system, and its relation to the unit’s conceptual framework may, therefore, be visualized accordingly:

*“The Why”  
Philosophy/Outcomes*

*Programs/Initial  
Candidate Proficiencies*

*Programs/Advanced  
Candidate Proficiencies*

*Program Delivery  
Entry—Program—Exit—On the Job*

*Program Delivery  
Entry—Program—Exit—On the Job*

*[Internal/External/Programs Data]*

*Candidate Learning/Exam Results*

*Candidate Learning/Exam Results*

*[Internal/External/Unit Operations Data]*

*Resource/Productivity/Title II/Field/Faculty*

*Resource/Productivity/Title II/Field/Faculty*

*Data Collection/Analysis  
Aggregated assessment data*

*[Internal/External]*

*Data Collection/Analysis  
Aggregated assessment data*

*Use of Data for Candidate/Program/Unit Improvement*

The unit operationalizes its assessment and evaluation system by starting with the coherent connection of its programs to the three major unit outcomes:

1. Being a steward of the discipline ((to acquire content understanding),
2. Being a reflective/inquirer (to be able to demonstrate wisdom in practice), and
3. Being a mindful educator (to exhibit the dispositions (habits of mind consistent with mindfulness and thoughtfulness).

The three major outcomes thus become the lens through which each program organizes learning experiences, and thus contributes to the unit’s achieving its vision, and its aim.

The candidate proficiencies in the conceptual framework, therefore, become a critical component of the unit’s assessment system.

According to the NCATE document “Program Assessments in the Unit System” (available at <http://www.ncate.org/documents/articles/unitandprogramreview.pdf>) program assessments are the catalysts for the unit’s assessment system. The structure and kinds of programs in units sometimes preclude the unit having common assessments across programs. In such instances, the unit, in order to report unit data must report data program by program. On the other hand, having common assessments across programs and common scoring guides make data collection, aggregation, and analysis, quite straightforward. The College of Education at FIU values the latter process with flexibility to address the former process as necessary.

The unit, therefore, looks for assessments across and in:

- Initial preparation programs (secondary education programs, elementary, early childhood, and special Education)
- Initial preparation programs (Master of Arts in Teaching)
- Advanced preparation programs (for continuing preparation of teachers at the master’s level)
- Advanced preparation programs (for other school personnel, e.g., reading, educational leadership, school psychology, school counseling, etc.)
- Advanced preparation programs (for continuing preparation of teachers at the doctoral level).

The unit’s assessment system is intended to provide the unit with an overall view of answers to the following:

- What is assessed across and in the programs (outcomes/proficiencies)?
- How is candidate learning assessed across and in the programs (artifacts)?
- Who does the assessment?
- When is candidate learning assessed (at what points in the delivery system – pre-entry/admissions, program, field/clinical settings, the impact on P-12 learning or creating positive learning environments for P-12 learners).
- Are rubrics used? Are they checked for fairness and accuracy?
- How are data sampled, analyzed and summarized?
- How are results used for program and unit improvement?

The assessment system therefore delineates: when these candidate proficiencies are assessed [program entry, in the program, exit, on the job]; the types of assessments used to assess the proficiencies; how the unit assures that assessments of the proficiencies are accurate and consistent; and, the consequences for candidates performing at different levels.

PROGRAM  
Internal Candidate Performance Data

UNIT  
Resource Data  
Productivity Data  
Faculty Data  
Title II Data

External	Candidate Performance Data on State and National Licensing Exams	Graduate Survey Data Clinical Faculty Survey Data Employer Survey Data Alumni Data Hiring Data
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The College of Education uses an assessment system that provides internal and external program and unit operational data. Internal program data emerge from candidates' performance in the programs and from their performance on external examinations. The assessment of candidate learning thus frames the internal and external dimensions of the program assessment system.

The unit's assessment system also addresses internal and external unit operations. For example, the unit's internal operational data include resources, productivity, and personnel data (e.g., headcounts, degrees awarded, graduation, etc.). The unit's external data come from the following: (1) surveys administered to graduates of the programs, (2) surveys administered to employers of graduates, (3) surveys administered to school personnel to assess the performance of program graduates, and (4) surveys administered to cooperating teachers to assess the performance of interns and the unit's programs, and hiring data.

#### DATA COLLECTION/ANALYSIS

Data collection and analysis in the unit begin, at the initial level, with the unit using admission predictive measures (basic skills, GPA, prior academic ability, general education knowledge, and state licensing exams) to determine candidates' potential for success in the initial preparation programs. At the advanced level, data collection and analysis begin with the unit using admission predictive measures (advanced basic skills, GPA, prior academic ability, and letters of recommendation (feedback from relevant professionals) to determine candidates' potential for success in the advanced preparation programs.

Data collection and analysis continue for candidates in initial level and advanced level programs during their respective programs. Candidates' performance is assessed using the institutional standards which are aligned with state and national standards

Data collection and analysis is also done during field/clinical experiences for candidates in initial and advanced level programs; at exit from the programs and during their first year on the job (for candidates in initial level programs).

Unit performance internal data for initial and advanced level programs are collected and aggregated vis-à-vis: (a) Headcounts (b) Degrees awarded (c) Graduation Retention (in the past) (d) Faculty productivity data (publications, presentations, funded research, teaching, service, membership in professional organizations, awards, honors received) (e) Title II Data (# of students enrolled in teacher preparation, all specializations, # of students in approved programs that student taught, # of full-time faculty who supervised student teachers, # of part-time faculty who supervised student teachers, institutional

faculty/student supervision ratio, institutional clock hours required in student teaching, entrance requirements to teacher education programs, exit requirements for teacher education programs.

Unit performance external data for initial programs are collected and aggregated vis-à-vis: (a) Candidates' student teaching evaluation by semester (b) Supervisor's student teaching evaluation by semester (c) Cooperating teacher's student teaching evaluation by semester (d) Cooperating teacher's evaluation of candidate's professional dispositions by semester (e) Program completers' satisfaction with COE's teacher preparation (f) Employers' satisfaction with COE's teacher preparation (initial preparation) (g) Hire rates in Florida public schools (initial preparation) (h) Rehire rates in Florida public schools (second year of employment) (initial preparation) (i) Employment retention in Florida public schools (three year period) (initial preparation).

The unit's assessment system at the initial preparation level is facilitated by an e-Folio system that was replaced by a commercial folio assessment program, Taskstream in 2008. The e-Folio electronic system was originally developed to accommodate State Program Approval requirements for candidates to demonstrate the 12 Florida Educator Accomplished Practices (FEAP's). This e-Folio Information Systems in Professional Education was an in-house grown assessment system, and has an electronic portfolio system that documents the candidates' accomplishment vis-à-vis institutional, state, and professional standards. The new Taskstream provides a more robust management of the unit's comprehensive assessment system that documents candidates' learning achievement and unit and program(s) continuous improvement.

### **Using Data for Improvement**

The unit's continuous improvement is tied to the use of the foregoing data to improve program and unit performance.

### **Strategic Planning**

The needs index for change in the unit is linked to long-term goals and objectives that guide the unit's development and academic pursuits. Goals in this context are mechanisms for planning for change. The short- and long-term goals become the steps through which evidence to demonstrate progress in the unit's aim is manifested through plans, goals, objectives, timelines, and use of results for change and improvement.

The following unit goals are thus an extension of the unit's aim to enhance the "continued capacity for growth" of candidates, faculty, and staff. The goals are framed by the performance outcomes in the NCATE Standards: candidate, faculty, and leadership performance:

#### **Enhancing Candidate Performance**

Goal 1: Programs with curricula that reflect sound theory and best practice and enhance learning.

- To develop a generic syllabus that reflects sound theory and best practice for all courses in all programs by the end of spring 2009 semester.
  - To integrate theory and practice in the secondary education content areas with pedagogy in collaboration with the Colleges of Arts and Sciences and Fine Arts and Architecture by the end of the spring 2009 semester
- Goal 2: Highly qualified students and graduates who represent the diversity of the community.
- To form a college wide culturally responsive task force that reports directly to the dean to address issues of faculty and student diversity. Task Force reports will be shared with the Administrative Action Council, Faculty Assembly, and PEPC (Professional Education Partnership Council).
  - To solicit input from PEPC on ways the college can recruit and retain highly qualified diverse students.
  - To review annually the diversity of our student population and report to PEPC and the College community.

### **Enhancing Faculty Performance**

Goal 3: Highly qualified faculty who represent the diversity of the faculty.

- To form a college wide culturally responsive task force that reports directly to the dean to address issues of faculty and student diversity. Task Force reports will be shared with the Administrative Action Council, Faculty Assembly, and PEPC.
- To provide professional development to faculty who teach in TESOL infused programs.
- To continue to hire highly qualified faculty, including adjuncts, instructors, and graduate assistants, who have the requisite credentials.
- To provide a minimum of one professional development workshop per semester to address the needs of faculty.

### **Enhancing Leadership Performance**

Goal 4: Effective and ethical governance and organizational structure within an environment of open communication among faculty, administrators, staff, students, and community.

- To have a minimum of 6 faculty assembly meetings per year for discussion of effective and ethical governance and organizational structure with an environment of open communication.
- To publish a minimum of one monthly Dean's Newsletter.
- To update regularly the Dean's showcase bulletin to provide information on events and college activities.
- To conduct an open forum for faculty and staff (Coffee with the Dean) a minimum of 3 times during the semester.
- To create a secure college web site for faculty information, college calendar, and posting of minutes of committee meetings and other college documents.
- To ensure that faculty collegiality (e.g., professional participation in program, departmental and college meetings) is reflected in the Faculty Annual Evaluations.

- To provide budget updates to Faculty Assembly upon request
- Goal 5: Expand and reinforce existing collaborative and mutually beneficial partnerships and create new ones
- To develop and strengthen the alumni association.
  - Strengthen and evaluate the member composition of PEPC and increase frequency of meetings as needed.
  - To adopt an MDCP school.
  - Strengthen program community advisory boards as appropriate.
  - Strengthen our relationship with Carlos J. Finlay and Tamiami Park.
- Goal 6: Enhance impact at the local, state, national, and international levels
- To collaborate with FACTE partners to improve teacher quality and advocate to legislators to improve teacher retention-salaries.
  - To increase collaborative work with local universities (e.g., UM, Barry, Nova, FAU).
  - To increase the z score on the Academic Impact Index.
  - To strengthen our relations and participation in SACS QEP.
  - To continue to investigate offering international programs.
  - To support Fulbright and other exchange programs.
- Goal 7: Continuous improvement of the college.
- To upload onto Taskstream critical tasks and rubrics for all graduate programs.
  - To continue to make informed decisions regarding college and program improvements based on aggregated assessment data.
  - To obtain reaffirmation of our NCATE and FDOE accreditation.
  - To support programs in seeking and maintaining specialized program accreditation.
  - To conduct a college wide accreditation assessment meeting in the spring 2009 semester.
- GOAL 8: Increase financial support for the college.
- To work closely with the University Office of Development.
  - To increase external funding by strengthening support to faculty for grant submission and implementation.
  - To increase support for developing auxiliary accounts.
  - To develop an alumni funding campaign.
  - To explore funding opportunities with the Medical School and the College of Health.

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