



**The Conceptual Framework for Professional Educators
Preparing Reflective Practitioners for Community-Responsive Education
Written and Adopted by the Faculty of the School of Education
Revised: September 2011**



With the advent of democracy and modern industrial conditions, it is impossible to foretell definitely just what civilization will be twenty years from now. Hence it is impossible to prepare the child for any precise set of conditions. To prepare him for the future life means to give him command of himself; it means so to train him that he will have the full and ready use of all his capacities . . . John Dewey (1897)

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements: Contributors to the Conceptual Framework	2
I. Vision and Mission of Monmouth University and the School of Education	5
A. The Vision and Mission of Monmouth University	
B. The Vision and Mission of the School of Education	
II. Philosophy, Purposes, and Goals of the Education Unit	7
A. Reflective Educators For Community-Responsive Education	8
III. The Knowledge Bases: Theories, Research, the Wisdom of Practice, and Educational Policies	12
IV. Aligning of Candidate Learning Outcomes and Standards	18
V. The Unit's Assessment System	27
VI. References	28

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Since our NCATE visit in 2007, our Conceptual Framework has been reviewed and revised to reflect changes in the School of Education and the greater educational arena. The document has been discussed at School of Education and department meetings, field office and program faculty meetings, and by the members of the Dean's Advisory Council. Changes were discussed at the committee level and then by the faculty and administrators in the School of Education. Faculty from other schools in the university was also invited to provide input and comments. School partners and members of our academies reviewed the document and provided insight. This conceptual framework is communicated to candidates, reflected in programs and courses, and exemplified in our professional practices. All School of Education faculty received a copy of the framework. The following contributors, who participated more actively, are recognized below. We thank them for their insight and input.

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I. The Vision and Mission of Monmouth University and the School of Education

A. The Vision and Mission of Monmouth University

Founded in 1933 as a junior college and accredited by the state in 1956 to offer four-year programs, Monmouth University is a comprehensive institution with approximately 6,000 undergraduate and graduate students. There are thirty-three undergraduate and twenty-two graduate programs that are offered through eight schools. The university is located in West Long Branch, New Jersey, approximately one mile from the Jersey shore.

The university's core values, which are included in the strategic plan, include excellence in teaching and learning, a caring campus characterized by mutual respect, personal and professional integrity, diversity, service, and empowerment of the university community.

Mission Statement of Monmouth University

Monmouth University is an independent, comprehensive institution of higher education committed to excellence and integrity in teaching, scholarship, and service. Through its offerings in liberal arts, science, and professional programs, Monmouth University educates and prepares students to realize their potential as leaders and to become engaged citizens in a diverse and increasingly interdependent world.

B. The Vision and Mission of the School of Education

Our unifying vision is to prepare reflective educators for community-responsive education in a 21st-century global economy. This conceptualization is grounded in Dewey's (1933) democratic pragmatism, whereby personal and professional beliefs, decisions, and actions become tested against social consequences that shape subsequent conceptions and practices. It requires thoughtful and skilled professionals to monitor, analyze, and modify their philosophies and practices in an ongoing process of reflection and action that effectively integrates both theory and practice in ways that remain responsive to individual and community learning needs.

Since its formation as the School of Education in 1995, the faculty has engaged in regular dialogue regarding its mission, vision, and conceptual foundations that guide all of the professional education credentials programs. The present framework reflects a strong consensus that has emerged since 2006 and provides a theoretical and conceptual map that orients our initial and advanced programs for training exemplary teachers, administrators, school counselors, and other educational professionals.

Mission Statement of the School of Education

The School of Education's mission is to be a leader in the preparation of highly competent, reflective teachers, and other professional educators (e.g., administrators, counselors, and reading specialists) who have the knowledge, 21st-Century skills, and dispositions required to improve the teaching and learning of students in a highly pluralistic democratic society. Toward this end,

our candidates are prepared to serve all students from diverse backgrounds in terms of abilities, age, culture, race, ethnicity, family, lifestyle, and socioeconomic status.

Through clinically based field experiences in a wide range of local school and community settings, our candidates practice and demonstrate the utilization of 21st-century skills in their work with students, teachers, and school leaders. Our goal is that candidates use their research-based knowledge of learners and learning to promote positive student outcomes and achievement. Our programs link theory and practice and are designed to instill a commitment to lifelong learning and reflection.

II. Philosophy, Purpose, and Goals of the Education Unit

Education in America's public schools is shaped by changes that are subject to social, cultural, political, and economic priorities. Thus, the practices, beliefs, knowledge, and dispositions generated and shared in schools become reflections of the larger society. Even so, schools have the potential to exert a positive shaping influence for democratic living (Dewey, as cited in Boydston, 1972; Dewey 1916). Education for democratic living is possible when dedicated professionals work to preserve the cultural and intellectual diversity that our shared political identity under a just Constitution has enabled to survive and sometimes flourish.

Educational excellence in a democratic society depends on a school's ability to provide all students with the disciplinary knowledge, skills, and dispositions that enable competent participation in our modern, pluralistic society. Preserving the democratic role for schools also requires a rigorous, continuing reflection on our assumptions, aims, and practices as teacher educators who, in turn, must develop this same reflective and purposeful disposition in our candidates who will teach the next generation of knowledgeable, democratic-minded, and responsible citizens.

We are charged, then, to prepare future educators to be reflective practitioners who continue throughout life to learn in ways that remain connected to and focused on student learning as well as the many public issues within the schools and communities they serve. Our goals are conveyed in our framework, Reflective Educators for Community-Responsive Education. We seek to develop competent educators who:

- have an in-depth knowledge of their discipline or field of study and understand, value, and apply it in their teaching and learning;
- possess professional knowledge of human development and learning necessary to provide a wide range of strategies, techniques and differentiated instruction that positively affect student learning;
- accept that all students can learn, and that learning is an active and reciprocal process;
- recognize and embrace the educational importance of a commitment to diversity, equity, and social justice within the context of a democratic society;
- understand that all education is rooted in local communities;
- are reflective practitioners who are committed to the need for life-long learning.

Taken together, these goals provide a foundation for designing programs to educate competent teachers and other educational professionals. Our framework was adopted by the faculty in 2006 and was integrated into the curriculum. At the same time, we developed and introduced the Teacher Work Sample into our methods courses and student teaching. Since that time, we have revised and modified our framework, based on changes in the educational field and greater community. We have also focused much more on candidate and P-12 student learning as well as the 21st century skills necessary for success in the global economy.

A. Reflective Educators For Community-Responsive Education

Disciplinary Knowledge

First, competent educators must have in-depth knowledge of their discipline(s) or the foundations of their field of study (e.g., Counseling, Educational Leadership, Literacy Education, and Special Education). Disciplinary knowledge is more than a collection of facts, concepts, and generalizations (Bruner, 1960; Schwab, 1968). The disciplines provide both a record of how human knowledge has been organized and our various “ways of knowing,” (e.g., aesthetics, history, mathematics, philosophy, science). One cannot be considered well educated absent a grounding in disciplinary knowledge (Darling-Hammond, 2000), and one cannot be an effective counselor, educational administrator, or reading specialist absent a firm grasp of the foundational knowledge of the professional field (Hoy & Miskel, 2005; Norton, 2005). Since both disciplinary and professional knowledge bases continue to expand, the competent educator has a professional responsibility to be a life-long learner. As Dewey (1938) noted, “The most important attitude that can be formed is that of a desire to go on learning” (p. 49).

Professional Knowledge

Competent education professionals understand that all students can learn in some meaningful way and assume the professional responsibility to utilize multiple strategies, methods, and techniques to provide the environment necessary to maximize the learning potential of all students (Freiberg & Driscoll, 2000; Murray, 1996). They also understand learning as a dynamic process wherein students bring their own knowledge to school and are active participants in the construction of new knowledge (DeVries & Zan, 1995; Moon & Schulman, 1995; Murray, 1996; Weimer, 2002; Resnick, 2010). This conception of education rejects the view that teaching and learning are mainly a matter of transmitting a fixed body of knowledge to passive students. Rather, knowledge is socially constructed, and our students come to school with their own prior knowledge that shapes how they think and learn.

Professional competence also entails a thorough grasp of research related to human development as it relates to teaching and learning. Of particular importance is the need to provide learning opportunities that are developmentally appropriate (Danielson, 2007; Freiberg & Driscoll, 2000). Students learn best when an educational experience is well-related to the learner’s “zone of proximal development (Vgotsky, 1997). Effective educators are able to apply this knowledge in their professional work to provide learning environments to enable all students to learn in some meaningful way.

In addition, effective teachers and other professionals working in education are able to apply relevant technologies to create environments that enhance and support student learning. In our view, the increasing availability of new technologies opens new possibilities for learners, parents, and educational professionals alike to broaden and deepen the conversations that enable and sustain new learning (Jonassen, Peck, & Wilson, 1999; Mills, 2010).

Finally, the internalization of professional knowledge requires the opportunity for candidates to

apply, practice, and reflect on what they have learned in real-world educational settings (Schlechty, 1997). Consequently, all of our programs provide extensive field and internship experiences in local schools. Again, since the professional knowledge base for teaching and learning expands over time, this is another reason why the competent educator must be committed to life-long learning.

Cultural Context and Individual Differences

Cultural and individual differences play a large component in any education program today. Educators have long recognized the need to increase students' multicultural competencies in an effort to improve services for an increasingly diverse student population (Arredondo & Toporek, 2004; Abreu, Chung, & Atkinson, 2000; D'Andrea & Daniels, 1991; Ponterotto & Casas, 1987). However, among educators, there is a lack of consensus concerning the most effective practices in multicultural training. For instance, the time frame for instruction can span a continuum, from several hours (e.g., a brief workshop) to infusion of multiculturalism throughout an entire program. Infusion across a program has been cited as a preferred training model, due to the belief that it can make the largest impact (Abreu et al., 2000; Ridley, Mendoza, & Kanitz, 1994).

It is necessary to understand the importance of using a mixture of strategies in an effort to respond to a variety of student learning styles (Alvarez & Miville, 2003). For instance, experiential activities could be combined with didactic activities, such as lecture and readings that include cross-disciplinary readings in history, political science, ethnic studies, and so forth (Alvarez & Miville, 2003; Kim & Lyons, 2003; Tromski & Dotson, 2003). Those suggestions have evolved over time as the definition of multicultural competence has evolved. For instance, core objectives of increasing student knowledge, awareness, and skills have expanded (Fuentes, Bartolomeo & Nicols, 2001) to include recognition of the need to increase student empathy, cultural responsiveness, and ethical behaviors with diverse students (Ridley, Mendoza, & Kanitz, 1994).

Additionally, student self-awareness is necessary when working with students and families who are different from them. Self-awareness could be facilitated through use of introspection, in conjunction with writing and reading assignments. Modeling and observational learning have also particularly been encouraged for use as a precursor to the practicing of skills (McRae & Johnson, 1991). Utilizing existing community resources, students can engage in numerous opportunities to advance their diversity to exposure.

Community Knowledge

The most effective education programs are community-responsive; they are shaped by a deep knowledge of the community in which teaching and learning will take place. As noted above, effective educational programs emphasize the knowledge students bring to the classroom and how students are active participants in the construction of new knowledge. The nature of such knowledge is derived from family and peers, which provides the students' ethnicity, culture, linguistic orientation, religious views, socioeconomic status, and lifestyle. The knowledge base each student brings to school is a significant component of attending to learning styles and designing developmentally appropriate learning environments for all students (Banks & Banks,

2001, Bredekamp & Copple, 1997; Levine, 2002a; 2002b).

It is also the case that a professional educator's background (culture, ethnicity, language competence, socioeconomic status, race, religion, and lifestyle) can have a powerful impact on how one approaches work (Castro, 2010). We also recognize that experience in diverse settings is insufficient for promoting multicultural competence. Therefore, candidates must dialogue and reflect about these experiences (Castro, 2010). Since both educator and student characteristics can have a powerful influence on a student's ability to learn, any "one-size-fits-all" approach to teaching, counseling, or educational leadership will fail to meet the needs of many, if not most, students (McEwen, 2002; Murray, 1996).

A second and critical component of community-responsive education is the importance of public education to the preservation of democracy in a pluralistic society. Democracy, too, must be learned, and schooling is one of the primary institutions that pass on knowledge of our democratic system and culture. The preservation of democratic culture requires an educational system that is designed to help all students acquire the competencies necessary to become effective citizens. Since democracy helps provide the context for the development of each individual's educational potential, the emphasis on providing high-quality educational programs for all students in a diverse, democratic society is a core professional responsibility (Norton, 2005).

Reflective Practice Knowledge

Educational excellence requires reflective practitioners who are thoughtful and skilled professionals with the ability to monitor, analyze, and modify their assumptions and practices in an ongoing process of reflection and action that effectively integrates both theory and practice in ways that remain responsive to individual and community learning needs (Schoen, 1987). We use reflection here to refer to a complex mode of thinking in which both strategies and goals are reconsidered in the light of new knowledge and practical experience. The complex decisions regarding teaching, learning, and student development require extensive reflection as a core component of professional practice (Wilens, Ishler, Hutchinson, & Kindsvatter, 2000). Teachers and other professional working in education learn and grow in competence by reflecting on their practice in collaboration with students, colleagues, and members of the community (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995). In addition, reflective practice is also an essential component of the competencies for democratic citizenship and the commitment to lifelong learning.

Dispositional Knowledge

Being a knowledgeable, reflective, community-responsive educator requires strong, positive dispositions. They should be an important component of all teacher education programs since they affect a candidate's commitment to education in general and students in particular (Sockett, 2009). Dispositions are not a separate entity and should be integrated with both the knowledge base and development of skills (Diez, 2007; Schussler, Stooksberry, & Bercaw, 2010). Dispositions change as candidates progress through their various programs (Rinaldo, Denig, Sherman, Cramer-Benjamin, Vermette, Foote, & Smith, 2009). It is imperative that dispositions be introduced, addressed, and assessed from the beginning of the candidates' programs (Shiveley

& Misco, 2010; Jung & Rhodes, 2008). Reflection is an important component of dispositional acquisition and should include frequent self-reflection and collaborative discussion with faculty and peers (Diaz, 2007). For example, candidates may be asked to reflect on a topic, cite dispositions that were addressed, and indicate which disposition needs to be focused on as a result to the reflection and new information.

III. The Knowledge Bases: Theories, Research, the Wisdom of Practice, and Educational Policies

Our programs draw upon knowledge that is both experiential and based upon substantive research. Consequently, we encourage the development of theories and practices that are both contextual and principled. The knowledge bases relate directly to our goals and include disciplinary and field content knowledge, professional knowledge, knowledge of reflective practice, and community-based knowledge.

Disciplinary and Professional Content Knowledge

Educational professionals who are confident in their understanding of the subjects they teach and the services they provide most often bring a contagious enthusiasm to the school and classroom that improves student well-being, student learning, and teaching (Hoy & Miskel, 2005). Consistent with Federal guidelines, New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards, the Common Core State Standards, 21st-Century Skills, and NCATE/SPA standards, our initial teacher education programs candidates must possess a solid disciplinary content knowledge base, which they acquire through: 1.) broad general education requirements; 2.) a major (or equivalent) in one of the arts and sciences disciplines; and 3.) an emphasis on pedagogical content knowledge. Candidates admitted to advanced programs must hold an undergraduate degree with a strong general education background and disciplinary major. In addition, their program requirements, aligned with SPA or CACREP standards, provide a strong knowledge base in the professional field (e.g., educational leadership, reading, school counseling, or special education) necessary for competent performance in P-12 educational settings (Norton, 2005).

New Jersey, like other states, has developed disciplinary content standards for the P-12 curriculum. Since one can't teach what he or she does not understand, adequate disciplinary knowledge is fundamental to effective teaching and learning (Bruner, 1960; 1971; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Gardner, 1991; 1999; Hoy & Miskel, 2005; Wilson, 2001; Wineberg, 2000). As noted above, disciplinary knowledge is more than a collection of facts, concepts, and generalizations. Adequate disciplinary knowledge requires an understanding of how the discipline provides a way of knowing the world (Bruner, 1960, DeVries & Zan, 1995; Moon & Schulman, 1995; Murray, 1996; Schwab, 1968; Weimer, 2002). In addition, teachers and other educational professionals must develop a sense of how the various disciplines are related or what we refer to as interdisciplinary knowledge (Bruner, 1986; Gardner, 1999). We will say more about this in the section on reflection below.

It is also important to emphasize that the disciplines are social constructions that have developed over time and are conditioned by historical circumstances and events. In other words, while the disciplines are undoubtedly invaluable ways of knowing, they are simultaneously a constraint on how we know (Bruner, 1986; DeVries & Zan, 1995; Kuhn, T. Moon, & Schulman, 1995; Murray, 1996; Schwab, 1968; Stanley, 1992; Weimer 2002). The radical changes throughout the history of scientific knowledge are a case in point (Kuhn, 1970). On numerous occasions throughout history, the contemporary structure of disciplinary knowledge has actually limited the growth of knowledge. It has taken what Kuhn (1970) called a "paradigm shift" or fundamental change in how we think about disciplinary knowledge to enable human knowledge to develop

and expand.

This complex conception of disciplinary knowledge argues against a view of teaching and learning as primarily a matter of transmitting a fixed body of knowledge to passive students. Rather, disciplinary knowledge is itself socially constructed, and our students come to school with their own prior knowledge that shapes how they think and learn the disciplines.

As Gardner (1999) argues, P-12 students need a curriculum and teachers who will help them to think like a historian, mathematician, and scientist. This goal requires an in depth knowledge of at least one discipline and an interdisciplinary perspective (Wiske, 1998). The educational point of acquiring this knowledge is never merely to improve student scores on standardized tests (Murray 1996). Rather, we seek to provide programs to educate our candidates to enable P-12 students to apply this knowledge effectively in real world situations.

Toward this end, we must do more than provide current and historical knowledge of the relevant discipline(s). Effective educators must also understand which examples of disciplinary content knowledge work best to teach P-12 students to understand a discipline. This form of understanding is what Shulman (1986; 1987) calls pedagogical content knowledge which is an understanding of how to make a specific subject comprehensible to others. Indeed, a key difference between expert and novice teachers is the understanding of pedagogical content knowledge of the former (Shulman 1986; Shulman, 1987; Wineberg, 2000). Our initial teacher education programs provide individual disciplinary content methods courses with application in P-12 settings, in which pedagogical content knowledge is a central focus.

Professional Knowledge

Content and pedagogical content knowledge alone are not enough to yield an effective educator who can create learning environments in which disciplinary content is presented in meaningful and engaging ways for learners (Borko & Putnam, 1996; Bredekamp & Copple, 1997; Danielson 2007; Darling-Hammond, 1997; Felman-Nemser, 2001; Freiberg & Driscoll, 2000; Murray, 1996). To develop the pedagogical understanding, skills, and dispositions needed to share their knowledge with students in beneficial ways, our candidates complete rigorous programs that layer educational principles and practices in ways that develop skillful, reflective practitioners who can understand and assess learner needs, offer engaging instruction and interventions, and use multiple tools to assess the results of their efforts in ways that measure students' understanding, knowledge acquisition, and achievement.

Ensuring thorough, fair, and comprehensive introduction and application of appropriate principles and strategies remains a central focus for the New Jersey Professional Standards and Dispositions for Teachers and School Leaders and those guidelines and tenets are embedded within our professional programs, serving as the kernel from which candidates' knowledge, skills, and dispositions are built. As part of each course syllabus, for example, specific candidate outcomes and methods of assessment are linked to relevant standards within the NJPST framework. In addition, education course syllabi require knowledge of the relevant SPA (Specialty Professional Association), state, and national standards for effective practice that is a significant component of candidate preparation. The adoption of teacher work samples (Schallock

& Myton, 2002) as a core assessment in all initial preparation programs and several advanced programs is directly related to application of the most recent research related to teaching and learning (Murray, 1996; Peterson, 2001).

Through a variety of foundations and methods courses, candidates in our initial teacher preparation programs gain extensive exposure to research-based strategies and tactics to improve learning, while acknowledging the diversity of learner needs within a wide range of socioeconomic environments and community contexts (Banks, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Sleeter, 2011). Elementary education candidates are required to take individual content methods courses in the disciplines they will teach (Foreign Language, Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies), and secondary candidates take six hours of special content methods for teaching the relevant discipline.

Candidates in initial programs are assigned to numerous P-12 field experiences (e.g., early field, internships, and student teaching), beginning in their second year which offer our candidates opportunities to apply what they have learned, evaluate, and reflect upon their effectiveness in using a variety of pedagogical techniques (Pugach & Johnson, 1995; Silva & Dana, 2001). We ensure that each candidate has the opportunity to work with diverse student populations, including students with special needs. Field experiences are monitored closely by university supervisors, faculty, and cooperating teachers in collaboration with university professors, administrators, and school district personnel. This clinical fieldwork is embedded within the entire curriculum, beginning early in the program with opportunities for candidates to work in partnership schools under the tutelage of expert cooperating teachers and principals. Our cooperating teachers are evaluated and retained based upon critical student and supervisor feedback, thus ensuring that our candidates have valuable productive clinical experiences that have a positive effect on P-12 learning.

In our advanced professional programs, too, candidates come to fully appreciate that the choices of content knowledge and the principles and methods used to make that knowledge accessible to students will help to shape the future boundaries for human knowledge and understanding (Shulman, 1997). Candidates explore the significance of professional knowledge and skills to their individual missions and professional goals within the larger societal aspiration for skilled, knowledgeable, and ethical learners who are eager to contribute to and to benefit from life in a free and just society. Individual programs are aligned with the SPA standards for the professional credential, and the links among knowledge, skills, and understanding remain active throughout each program. Toward this end, candidates in advanced programs are required to take a wide range of coursework designed to provide foundational knowledge, skills, dispositions, and opportunities for reflection on learning (Schon, 1987). In addition, each candidate is assigned to a supervised internship in a P-12 setting with faculty supervision.

Throughout initial and advanced programs, theory and practice are subject to constant modification, while consistently informed by principles and empirical evidence that our candidates, themselves, help to construct and modify over time. To be a reflective practitioner within the context of community-responsive education, relationships of respect and care become the necessary foundation for intellectual and social interactions, thus creating an educational

process in which the needs of all constituents are acknowledged and respected (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Schon, 1987).

Our faculty recognizes and embraces the continuously changing landscape of the learning process and our program requires candidates to demonstrate and teach the 21st century skills needed to be successful in a global economy: effective oral and written communication skills, problem solving, creativity, and collaboration. The candidates are required to promote and teach these skills to P-12 learners during field experiences.

Our programs and courses also blend traditional and newer digital technologies to prepare our candidates to understand and use a variety of media and media formats for designing, manipulating, and delivering content and instruction, for promoting new knowledge creation through a variety of traditional and electronic media, and for the sharing and assessing of learning in more transparent and public ways (Jonassen, Peck, & Wilson, 1999). Since our school of education offers many online courses, we continuously evaluate our online course delivery to ensure that we use research-based practices that improve the performance of our teacher candidates and model instruction that can be used to engage and motivate P-12 students and positively affect their achievement (Duncan & Arnet, 2009).

Our adoption of teacher work samples (Schalock & Myton, 2002) and the use of electronic portfolios (Rogers, 2003) represent a commitment to recent research related to information and media literacy as significant areas of learning that will find a place alongside our current focus on literacy and numeracy. The expanding understanding of what constitutes literacy, then, will require our candidates to view their own development and expertise as contingent upon a continuing reflective awareness and an unceasing renewal that extends beyond their initial preparation. This requires our program to emphasize current awareness programs, professional associations, and research into practices that will expand professional competence in locating, using, and evaluating emerging information and communication technologies.

We realize, too, that disparities exist in districts and in homes in terms of expertise and availability of the new technologies. It is imperative, then, that we provide our candidates with the adaptive capacity and necessary skills to shift their practices and modes of communication in ways that maximize teaching effectiveness, their students' learning, and their own lifelong development, regardless of the communications infrastructures they encounter. Likewise, we provide our candidates with the knowledge and skills to enable them to utilize any available resources to minimize the digital divide that limits the realization of equal learning opportunities among all citizens.

Finally, the enhancement of P-12 student performance on teacher-made and state tests related to the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards and Common Core State Standards is a critical component for evaluating candidate performance in all programs. The knowledge, skills, and dispositions embodied in the State and NCATE/SPA standards, then, remain fundamental to our goal of producing connected and caring learners whose knowledge, understanding, and cultivated curiosities will sustain a lifetime of learning and commitment to the human potential for intellectual and ethical development within a democratic society.

Cultural Context and Individual Differences

Recognizing that many of our candidates have had limited exposure to diversity and social justice issues in schools, we provide supervised programs, opportunities for community service, and other fieldwork components that offer experiences in a variety of cultural and socio-economic settings. Drawing upon the work of Sleeter, and Cornbleth (2011; 2001) and Helms (1995) candidates in our programs are encouraged, supported, and challenged to examine their own cultural backgrounds and experiences to uncover and understand the values, biases, and thinking that come to influence, impede, or support effective, equitable teaching, and other professional practices (Howard, 2010). Candidates demonstrate through their practice an understanding of, and appreciation for, the inherent worth of all students and a belief in that schools have the potential to exert a positive shaping influence (Dewey, as cited in Boydston, 1972) for democratic living through the work of dedicated professionals who help to preserve our shared political identity and cultural diversity guaranteed under our Constitution.

All of our candidates have field experiences or internships in diverse settings. In addition, many of our faculty require their students to develop strategies, modifications, and accommodations for diverse students and use them in the field or their own classrooms. Diversity is also a focus during student teaching.

Community

Candidates must also acquire the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to have full and ready use of all their intellectual capacities necessary to develop themselves and to shape and adapt to the social, economic, and technological changes that they will encounter in our pluralistic, democratic society (Cochran-Smith, 2001; Dewey, 1897/1972), including knowledge of how schooling reflects the larger society (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1992; Giroux, 1986; Giroux, 1988; Giroux & Purpel, 1983; Livingstone, 1987).

At the heart of our education programs is the belief that all constituents within the community may act as integral players in the development of high-quality education programs. Community-responsive education is grounded in the principles of democracy (Glasser, 1992) based on equality, equity, citizenship, and thoughtful choices that lead to lifelong learners (Hargreaves & Fullan, 1998). Community-based knowledge is focused on problem solving and critical thinking by challenging candidates to grapple with diverse community issues and to acknowledge the need to link educational practices with the communities served (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Wolpert, 1999). In doing so, education becomes a process through which all community constituents may engage in an interactive, reciprocal learning. Schooling, then, becomes the collaborative effort of educators, parents, schools, and communities (Comer, 1997; Cunningham & Cordeiro, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 1995).

The creation of collaborative communities begins early in our programs. Our freshmen can participate in PAM, a SOE peer mentoring program that provides upper classmen mentors under the supervision of faculty. Class discussions and one-on-one dialogue are common tools that faculty members use to initiate the building of interactive communities. Cooperative projects and presentations are prevalent in our courses and require collaboration among students and between

faculty and students. We view the learning community as bounded only by our ability to establish collaborative relations (Silva & Dana, 2001). Thus, learning environments may extend from our classrooms into the neighborhoods and to the wider communities with which our faculty and candidates have opportunities to interact collaboratively. We convey to our candidates by word and deed that learning institutions are never isolated from their community contexts and the diverse constituencies therein. As teachers and other educational professionals, our contacts with parents, community members, and other professionals are necessary to understand our students and the worlds they bring to the school. The increasing complexity of life and the rising expectations for schools make it essential that our programs model the kinds of interactive outreach that we believe essential.

Toward this end, we have established P-12 partnerships with local school districts in which school and university personnel collaborate and exchange ideas regarding the content, delivery, and assessment of the teacher preparation program. Many of our courses are taught in partnership schools and at the Middle Road Professional Development School.

P-12 university-school partnerships also provide important mentoring opportunities as our candidates enter the profession. In some of the partnerships our faculty deliver three-year mentoring programs for novice teachers. The mentoring relationship is a process in which reflection, open communication, trust, and reciprocal learning occur (Beyene, Anglin, Sanchez, & Ballou, 2002; Palmer, 1998; Weasmer & Woods, 2003). More specifically, mentors “interact with novices in ways that foster an inquiring stance. They cultivate skills and habits that enable novices to learn in and from their practice” (Felmen-Nemser, 2001, p. 18). Effective monitoring, listening, and coaching among new teachers, P-12 professionals, and university faculty are enhanced by ongoing relations that the professional development school and the partnerships promote, often resulting in the open sharing of ideas that link theory and practice in the reflective process of active and thoughtful engagement (Silva & Dana, 2001). Thus, collaborative interactions are nourished by mentoring relationships that foster reflection, diversity of views, mutual respect, and opportunities for shared growth among community-responsive educators and the communities they serve.

We are just beginning a three-year novice teacher mentoring program for recent graduates of our pre-service programs. Our mission is to provide opportunities for dialogue, the exchange of ideas, and professional growth sessions.

Many graduates from our advanced programs have remained in the area and have leadership positions in the schools. To assist them and others in the schools to increase their effectiveness and affect student learning, we have created three academies for professional development: the Superintendents’ Academy, the Principals’ Academy, and the Special Services Academy (Directors of Special Services, Learning Consultants, School Social Workers, and Speech Specialists).

Our programs focus on the empathic understanding of learners and cultures. This integrative process begins with rigorous coursework infused with clinical field experiences in a variety of community settings that include partnerships with local school districts. Depending on the program, our candidates engage in classroom activities, dialogue, and assessments that blend

theory and practice toward critical evaluations of ideas and strategies for learning, teaching, counseling, or leadership.

Reflective Practice

Reflection, as used here, is more than merely thinking about one's practice. Reflective practice is also not to be confused with or limited to what is called discovery learning, inquiry, or the scientific method. The conception of reflection presented here is directly connected to Dewey's (1916) educational philosophy. However, it has deeper roots that can be traced to Aristotle's conception of *practical reasoning* (Schwab, 1970; Stanley, 1992, Whitson & Stanley, 1996). Practical reasoning is the form of knowledge humans must use in problematic situations for which there are no technical or algorithmic solutions. Aristotle considered political decision-making as a fundamental example of this form of knowledge. The professions also require practical reasoning and reflective practice (Beyer, Feinberg, Pagano & Whitson, 1989).

Teachers and other educational professionals work in complex contexts in which they must continually make decisions that involve the required curriculum, individual student cultures, and the impact of local, state, and national politics (Beyer, Feinberg, Pagano, & Whitson, 1989; Schon, 1983; Schon, 1987; Wilen, Ishler, Hutchinson, & Kindsvatter, 2000). The most important educational decisions are rarely axiomatic. Rather, such decisions require a continual reevaluation of the application of means and ends. This conceptualization of educational practice is grounded in Dewey's (1916; 1933) democratic pragmatism, whereby personal and professional beliefs, decisions, and actions become tested against social consequences that shape subsequent conceptions and practices (Whitson & Stanley 1996).

Reflective practice has also become a focus of research in cognitive psychology (Bruner, 1986; Gardner, 1991; Gardner, 1999; Sternberg & Wagner, 1986). Human cognition is always situated; we often think differently in different situations (Gee, 1992). Since reflective practice can never be reduced to a set of fixed knowledge and technical skills, the competent educator must develop a form of knowledge that enables the professional to know when it is appropriate to abandon conventional practice in the face of new circumstances (Beyer, Feinberg, Pagano, & Whitson, 1989; Gee, 1990; Gee, 1992; Schon, 1987).

The reflective practitioner also understands knowledge as socially constructed and subject to revision in the light of new information (as described above in the section on disciplinary knowledge). The extent to which new information will be considered depends on the learners' prior knowledge and openness to consideration of alternative perspectives. The fact that both educators and students bring prior knowledge, assumptions, and dispositions to every potential learning situation gives some indication of how complex the teaching/learning process is. Thus, reflective practice requires professional educators to acquire the disposition and habit of openness to new information and perspectives to enable them to reflect upon their actions and assumptions and make necessary adjustments as they go about their work in schools (Beyer, Feinberg, Pagano, & Whitson, 1989; Weasmer & Woods, 2003). Finally, the application of practical wisdom is (as noted earlier) critical to competent participation in a democratic society (Whitson & Stanley, 1996).

Candidates can only acquire this form of knowledge for reflective practice when given the opportunity to make professional decisions in real world situations. Consequently, all of our programs place a strong emphasis on reflection in our required courses and, most importantly, in the extensive supervised P-12 field experiences required in all credential programs. During these field experiences, candidates are required to successfully complete complex assessments that demonstrate their competence to function as effective professionals and reflect on their experiences to ascertain their effect on student learning and to decide what changes should be made to increase their teaching and learning. For example, all teacher education candidates must develop and execute a Teacher Work Sample during student teaching and reflect upon their practice upon the completion of this field experience assignment (Schalock & Myton, 2002). Analogous assignments are embedded in our advanced programs.

Dispositions

The discussion and use of dispositions in education date back to the mid-eighties (Diez, 2007; Sockett, 2009). Our concept of dispositions clearly mirrors the work of the faculty at Alverno College and includes the beliefs and values that are needed for success in working with P-12 students, colleagues, and the community (Diez, 2007). They are aligned with the dispositions in the New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers and School Administrators which are integrated with knowledge and performance indicators in each of the eleven standards.

The faculty created a dispositional self-assessment that is aligned with the New Jersey standards. The assessment has been given to student teachers at that beginning and end of their student teaching experience. Recently, candidates have been assessed in an initial course as well. In student teaching, there has been a change in dispositions from the beginning to the end of the experience. When student teachers are observed by faculty and university clinical supervisors, they complete a professionalism section of the evaluation form. Professionalism is also assessed at the mid-term evaluation. Cooperating teachers respond to statements on professionalism during week five and week twelve of student teaching.

The faculty uses reflection extensively and candidates must address modifications and accommodations for diverse learners as well as dispositions. In some programs, such as the masters in reading specialist, candidates must reflect on readings, assess their dispositions and choose dispositions that they feel need to be addressed for future work with students and colleagues that will improve learning (Schussler, Stooksberry, & Bercaw, 2010; Misco & Shiveley, 2010).

IV. Aligning of Candidate Learning Outcomes and Standards

Candidates Proficiencies Aligned with 21st Century Skills, New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers and SPA Standards.

	1	2	3	4
Candidates Proficiency	Demonstrate an understanding of the foundational knowledge of their discipline/ professional field and apply this knowledge in their professional practice to enhance student performance.	Make connections among and across various disciplinary perspectives and integrate knowledge of other disciplines into specific instructional/ professional practice.	Demonstrate an understanding of principles of human development and the importance of individual differences in learning at various developmental stages and use this knowledge to create a supportive learning environment.	Develop a variety of instructional/ professional strategies that are based on research-based best practices and promote student learning.
21 st Century Skills	Critical Thinking & Problem Solving	Critical Thinking & Problem Solving	Critical Thinking & Problem Solving	Critical Thinking & Problem Solving; Creativity & Innovation
NJPST	1.Subject matter knowledge	1. Subject matter knowledge	2, 3, 6, 7, 11 Human growth and development; diverse learners; learning environment; special needs; professional responsibility.	4. Planning and strategies
CACREP	II. G.1a-j	II.G.1a-j	II.G.3a-h	II. G. a-f
IRA	1.1, 1.3	1.2, 1.3	4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 5.2, 5.4	2.1, 2.2, 2.3
NAEYC	5a, 5c	5a, 5c	1a, 1b, 1c 4c	4b, 4c, 4d, 5b,5c,6a, 6b
ELCC	2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 7.1, 7.4	2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 7.1, 7.4	2.2, 2.3	2.1, 2.2, 4.1, 4.2, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3
CEC	1, 7, 8	1, 7, 8	4, 6, 7, 8, 2	1, 9
NCTM	9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 8, 4	9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 8, 4	5, 7, 8	7, 8
NCSS	1.1, 1.10, 3.1	1.1, 1.10, 3.1	3.1	3.1
NSTA	3a, 2a, 2b, 2c	3a, 2a, 2b, 2c	3a, 3b, 5e	9a, 6a, 6b, 9b, 9c
ACTFL	1.a, 1.b, 1.c, 2.a, 2.b, 2.c	1.a, 1.b, 1.c, 2.a, 2.b, 2.c	3.a, 3.b	6.a, 6.b
NCTE	3.1, 3.2, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7	3.1, 3.2, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7	4.4	1.0, 2.3
ACEI	3.1	3.1	3.2	1, 2.1 to 2.7, 3.1, 3.3, 3.4
aMLE	3,4	3, 4	5, 4	7
TESOL	1,2	1, 2	3	3
AAHE	I.A, I.B, I.C, I.D, I.E, I.F	III.A	III.D, IV.C	III.B, III.E
NASPE	1.1-1.5, 2.1, -2.3	3.1	4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6	3.1, 3.6

	5	6	7	8
Candidates Proficiency	Understand how various factors (e.g., social, political, economic, cultural, ethnic, linguistic, etc.) impact education, and use this knowledge to develop strategies to create equitable and inclusive educational learning environments that address the needs of diverse learners and promote educational equity.	Demonstrate an understanding of the general goals and professional standards of one's professional field (e.g., counseling, educational leadership, teaching) and integrate these frameworks into planning and professional practice.	Use professional standards and goals to evaluate, select, design, and adapt resources including, but not limited to print, non print, and technological tools, to promote student learning	Utilize effective communication skills in the classroom/professional practice including verbal and nonverbal techniques, technology, and the media.
21 st Century Skills	Critical Thinking & Problem Solving; Creativity & Innovation	Critical Thinking & Problem Solving; Creativity & Innovation	Technology; Critical Thinking & Problem Solving; Creativity & Innovation	Technology; Communication & Collaboration
NJPST	3, 4, 6, 7, 11 Diverse learners; planning and strategies; learning environment; special needs; professional responsibility	4, 11 Planning and strategies; professional responsibility.	6 Learning Environment	8 Communication
CACREP	II.G.2a-f, II.G.3d, II.G.7f, II.G.8f	II.G.1a-j	II.G.7f, II.G.7g	II.G.5a-g, II.G.6a-d
IRA	4.1, 4.2	2.1, 2.2, 2.3	5.1, 5.2	6.2
NAEYC	4c	6.1, 6.2	1b, 1c	2a, 4a, 4b
ELCC	1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 2.1, 2.2	2.1, 2.2, 4.1, 4.2, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3	6.1, 6.2, 6.3	4.1, 4.2, 5.1, 5.2
CEC	7, 9	1, 9	1, 3, 5, 6	5, 9, 10
NCTM		7, 8	7	3, 4
NCSS	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1
NSTA	1d, 1e	9a, 6a, 6b, 9b, 9c	7a, 7b, 4a, 4b	10a, 10b, 10c, 10d
ACTFL	6.a, 6.b	6.a, 6.b	3.b	6.a, 6.b
NCTE	2.3, 3.7	1.0, 2.3	2.1, 4.4	2.3
ACEI	1 to 3.2	5.1	3.5	3.5
aMLE	1	7	2	6
TESOL	3	3	3	3
AAHE	II.A, II.B, II.C, VI.B	Vi.A	III.F, IV.A, IV.B	VIII.B
NASPE	3.4	3.2, 4.2	3.5, 3.7, 4.1	4.1, 6.4

	9	10	11	12
Candidates Proficiency	Demonstrate an understanding of assessment as an on-going process and utilize multiple forms of assessment that are age- and level-appropriate by implementing purposeful measures that are aligned with standards and established learner outcomes.	Analyze and reflect on the results of assessments to 1) evaluate students' strengths and weaknesses; 2) make decisions regarding future teaching/ practice; 3) communicate the results of student performance to all stakeholders; and 4) provide opportunity for discussion with the community members, including families and other professionals, to support student learning.	Develop dispositions that demonstrate a commitment to ethical standards and practices of the profession and act as advocates for students, colleagues, and members of the community to promote student learning and educational equity.	Engage in professional development opportunities and collaboration with all available partners that promote content knowledge proficiency, self reflection on instructional/ professional practice, and learning/growth in the people they serve.
21 st Century Skills	Critical Thinking and Problem Solving	Communication & Collaboration; Critical Thinking & Problem Solving; Creativity & Innovation	Critical Thinking & Problem Solving	Communication & Collaboration; Creativity & Innovation
NJPST	2, 5 Human growth and development; Assessment	5, 8 Assessment; Communication	10, 11. Professional development; professional responsibility	9, 10, 11. Collaboration and partnership; professional development; professional responsibility
CACREP	II.G. 7a-g	II.G.7a-g	II.G.1a-j	II.G.1a-j
IRA	2.2	3.2, 3.3, 3.4	4.3, 6.2, 6.4	6.1, 6.2, 6.3
NAEYC	3.1, 3.2, 3.3	3a, 3b, 3c, 3d	6a, 6b, 6c, 6d, 6e	2a, 2b, 2c, 4a
ELCC	2.2, 2.3	2	2.2	4.1, 4.2, 5.1, 5.2
CEC	4, 6, 7, 8, 2	7, 8	4, 5, 7	2, 5, 7, 8, 10
NCTM	5, 7, 8	1, 8	6	3, 8
NCSS	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1
NSTA	3a, 3b, 5e	8a, 8b, 8c	10a, 10b, 10c, 10d	10a, 10b, 10c, 10d
ACTFL	3.a, 3.b	5.a, 5.b, 5.c		6.a, 6.b
NCTE	4.4	4.1	4.1	2.3, 4.10
ACEI	4.0	4	5.2	5.1
aMLE	5, 4	5	7	6
TESOL	1, 2, 4	4	5	5
AAHE	III.C	V.A, V.B, V.C, V.D, V.E	VIII.A, VIII.B, VIII.C, VIII.D	IV.D, VI.C, VII.A, VII.B, VII.C, VII.D, VIII.D
NASPE	5.1, 5.2	5.1, 5.2, 5.3	6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4	6.1-6.4

The Unit's Assessment System

The unit's assessment system includes comprehensive, integrated data sources from both internal and external sources that provide feedback on the overall functioning of the unit (both at the program level and unit overall). Faculty and administrators continuously review data at various levels within the unit.

Unit and program assessment data are presented by the Dean or Assessment Coordinator of the School of Education at School of Education meetings. Program Coordinators share program-specific data with Program Advisory Councils. Data is also discussed and shared with the dean's undergraduate and graduate (student) advisory councils, UTEAC (comprised of SOE faculty and faculty from content departments such as English and history), the Alumni Advisory Council, the University-School Partnership Advisory Council, and the School of Education Advisory Council. In addition, we communicate with the greater constituency of P-12 school personnel regarding data through our academies (Superintendents, Principals, and Special Services). During all meetings, feedback is sought for program and unit improvement. The School of Education Assessment Committee meets approximately every four weeks and discusses all data sources and feedback (from meeting minutes) as they become available.

At the program level, core assessments have been identified for each transition point. Each semester candidates are required to upload their core SPA assessments to Foliotek, our electronic portfolio system, which are then evaluated by faculty. Data tables are then generated for each core assessment and uploaded to ecampus, Monmouth University's course management system. Program Coordinators then compile data summaries for each core assessment and upload these summaries (Section IV of the SPA Program Reports) to ecampus at the end of each semester.

In addition to the core SPA assessments, the unit collects data on candidate dispositions (during designated courses) and performance in early field experiences.

At the unit level, several sources of data are utilized to ensure that the unit is functioning adequately. Each semester, the following data are collected and analyzed:

- Student teachers' evaluation of cooperating teachers,

- Student teachers' evaluation of supervisors,

- Cooperating teachers' evaluation of supervisors,

- Supervisors' evaluation of cooperating teachers,

- Student evaluations of full-time faculty (SIRs),

- Student evaluations of part-time faculty

- Student evaluations of online courses,

- Exit surveys (which are aggregated to provide information about the unit's programs in general and disaggregated to provide program-specific data).

In addition to the data sources noted above, employer survey and alumni survey data are collected on an ongoing basis.

(Please see our Assessment Handbook (exhibit xxx) for more detailed information about the unit's assessment system)

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