

The Conceptual Framework: A Review of the Literature in the Field of Education

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INTRODUCTION

The mission, role, and scope of Wichita State University (WSU) are to provide comprehensive educational opportunities in an urban setting. Through teaching, scholarship, research, and public service, the university seeks “to equip both students and the larger community with the educational and cultural tools they need to thrive in a complex world, and to achieve both individual responsibility in their own lives and effective citizenship in the local, national, and global community” (<http://www.wichita.edu/thisis/aboutus/mission.asp>). Wichita State University is a research institution located in an urban setting.

“The Mission of the College of Education is to prepare education and other professionals to benefit society and its institutions through the understanding, the facilitation, and the illumination of the learning process and the application of knowledge in their disciplines” (<http://webs.wichita.edu/depttools/depttoolsmemberfiles/COEdHome/mission%20statement09.pdf>). The College of Education (COE) is an integrated college with the purpose of human development that has as its emphasis academic innovation in living and learning. Five departments comprise the College of Education: Curriculum and Instruction; Counseling, Education and School Psychology; Educational Leadership; Human Performance Studies; and Sport Management. The COE believes in the power of education to change the world.

WSU’s approximately 15,000 students enjoy a broad scope of academic opportunities including study in the colleges of Education, Engineering, Fine Arts, Health Professions, and (Fairmount) Liberal Arts and Sciences, as well as the Barton School of Business and the Graduate School. The scope of the university also encompasses external funding of more than \$40 million university-wide each year, the discoveries made and contracts performed at the National Institute of Aviation Research, and the largest work-study cooperative education program in the state.

The WSU Professional Education Unit’s Conceptual Framework (CF) for the preparation of educational professionals is built upon the mission statement of the university supported by the missions of the colleges represented in the unit: the College of Education, College of Fine Arts, Fairmount College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and the Graduate School. The CF informs governance, curriculum design, and teaching and learning at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Unit Conceptual Framework

The unit’s Conceptual Framework provides a vision for preparing teachers and other school personnel at Wichita State University who are highly competent, collaborative, and reflective professionals. To fulfill the vision of preparing competent, collaborative, and reflective professionals, the Professional Education Unit produces graduates who know, understand, and demonstrate the following six guiding principles: (1) Professionalism and Reflection on the Vocation (PR); (2) Human Development and Diversity (HDD); (3) Connection of Teaching Experiences and Assessment (CTA); (4) Technology Integration (T); (5) Understanding of Content Knowledge and Pedagogical Content Knowledge and Their Alignment with Standards (CKS); and (6) Collaboration with Stakeholders (C). The competent professional vision is reflected in guiding principles of human development and respect for diversity, the connection of teaching and assessment, technology integration, and understanding of content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge aligned with standards. The vision of a collaborative

professional is reflected in the guiding principle of collaboration with stakeholders. The vision of a reflective professional is shown in the guiding principle of professionalism and reflection on the vocation.

Unit Philosophy

The unit's philosophy for the preparation of education professionals and other school personnel wraps around the core vision of highly competent, collaborative, and reflective professionals, and connects the six guiding principles to bind constituents together. This vision represents a set of commonly agreed upon ideas and commitments and provides direction for individual and corporate efforts. Each strand represents one of the **guiding principles: Professionalism and Reflection on the Vocation, Human Development and Diversity, Connection of Teaching Experiences and Assessment, Technology Integration, Understanding of Content Knowledge and Pedagogical Content Knowledge and Their Alignment with Standards, and Collaboration with Stakeholders**. The circles derive their strength by including the unit vision and the intertwining of the strands, or guiding principles, into one powerful entity.



Unit Vision and Guiding Principles

Vision

Development of Highly Competent, Collaborative, and Reflective Professionals

Guiding Principles

Professionalism and Reflection on the Vocation (PR)

Human Development and Diversity (HDD)

Connection of Teaching and Assessment (CTA)

Technology Integration (T)

Content Knowledge and Pedagogical Content Knowledge and Their Alignment with Standards (CKS)

Collaboration with Stakeholders (C)

Unit Guiding Principles Defined

The Professional Education Unit at Wichita State University focuses on preparing candidates who identify, understand, and practice the six guiding principles, which, in turn, lead to internalization of the core values of highly competent, collaborative, and reflective professionals, thus fulfilling the unit's vision. The guiding principles include the following proficiencies and dispositions (*underlined portions designate dispositions):

(1) Professionalism and Reflection on the Vocation (PR)

The WSU teacher preparation program uses a reflective model to develop professional dispositions in candidates for the improvement of professional practice. Candidates are expected to value knowledge and continuous learning to improve professional practice.^{*} Candidates understand and implement the legal and ethical practices of the profession. Candidates are familiar with major learning theories and strategies to enhance educational knowledge and are able to evaluate instructional decisions for their impact on students/clients.

(2) Human Development and Diversity (HDD)

Candidates demonstrate a commitment to the basic principles and theories of human development, learning, and diversity and apply this knowledge to their own learning, teaching, guiding, and clinical situations, which includes a commitment to "fairness" in all aspects of their work and the expectation that all students/clients can learn.^{*} Candidates consider family, community, and school in advocating for students and clients^{*} and have knowledge of relevant historical, philosophical, social, and cultural factors.

(3) The Connection of Teaching and Assessment (CTA)

Candidates know and understand current theory, research and practice that inform the cyclical and interactive processes of good teaching (e.g., analysis, preparation, instruction, assessment [qualitative and quantitative], and decision-making based on assessment results). Candidates apply this knowledge across all facets of their work. Candidates develop skills to plan, implement, and evaluate developmental, cultural, and ethically appropriate techniques and strategies for addressing student and client needs. Candidates respect and hold high expectations and fairness for all learners.^{*}

(4) Technology Integration (T)

Candidates can demonstrate skills in the use of technology that is appropriate to the respective disciplines. Technology is used to enhance professional productivity in planning, teaching, student learning, and assessment. Candidates seek opportunities to continually learn and improve professional practice.^{*}

(5) Understanding of Content Knowledge and Pedagogical Content Knowledge and Their Alignment with Standards (CKS)

Candidates identify, understand, use, and continue to build knowledge in the disciplinary field(s). Candidates apply this knowledge to teaching within the structure of the standards and seek opportunities to continually learn and improve professional practice.*

(6) Collaboration with Stakeholders (C)

Candidates identify, understand, and use processes to work and advocate cooperatively and professionally with students/clients, colleagues, parents, and the community to move toward mutual goals. Candidates collectively plan, gather, and build resources to create innovative solutions to existing problems. Candidates demonstrate effective communication and interpersonal skills and attitudes. The candidates plan, implement and sustain an appropriate environment that promotes effective professional practices. Candidates value working cooperatively with colleagues and others to advance best interest of students and clients.*

Unit Purpose

The purpose of the Professional Education Unit is to prepare professionals for an increasingly complex, accountability-focused society and to advocate responsibly for the profession and the education of all learners.

Unit Goals

1. Professional preparation programs that are experiential, collaborative, problem-based, and reflection-oriented; designed around specified outcomes; guided by research and best practice; and based upon appropriate discipline knowledge.
2. Institutional culture that is technology-rich, seeks a highly qualified and diverse faculty, and encourages creative and innovative solutions to opportunities and challenges.
3. Graduates who have the interpersonal skills, as well as the professional knowledge, skills and dispositions, necessary to become effective practitioners in a variety of settings and are informed critics and risk-tolerant leaders capable of advancing professional practice.
4. A dynamic organizational structure that promotes participatory decision-making and responsible citizenship among all stakeholders, and is capable of responding rapidly to emerging opportunities and challenges; and promotes systematic inquiry designed to answer fundamental and compelling questions that inform both theory and professional practice.
5. A reward structure that reinforces the unit's vision and encourages innovation, collaboration and cross-disciplinary work as well as individual accomplishment.

6. An assessment system that provides timely feedback to candidates on their professional progress as well as informs the unit and its faculty about the effectiveness of programs.
7. Partnerships that advance the profession, professional preparation, and practice.
8. Professional leadership at local, state, national, and international levels.

Unit Knowledge Base

The knowledge base that drives the work of the Professional Education Unit encompasses the following: the vision is directly connected to the research-based guiding principles, i.e., the “highly competent professional” is reflected through guiding principles 2 through 5: Human Development and Diversity, Connection of Teaching Experiences and Assessment, Technology Integration, and Understanding of Content Knowledge and Pedagogical Content Knowledge and Their Alignment with Standards. The vision of a “collaborative professional” is reflected in the guiding principle 6: Collaboration with Stakeholders. The vision of a “reflective professional” is shown in guiding principle 1: Professionalism and Reflection on the Vocation. Research that supports each guiding principle is shown in the sections below.

PROFESSIONALISM AND REFLECTION ON THE VOCATION (PR)

The ideals of professionalism and reflection on the vocation are central to and guide WSU’s teacher preparation program. This is the belief that good teaching is a result of a strong commitment to continual improvement and adherence to professional ethics. Reflection and professionalism are developed over time in the WSU teacher preparation program where candidates engage in self reflection (Dewey, 1897; Dewey, 1998, Schon, 1983; Schon, 1990).

Teacher Training

Teacher training that embeds professionalism and reflection on the vocation is essential (Goodlad, 2008; Rotherman and Mead, 2004; Darling-Hammond, 2008). *A Qualified Teacher in Every Classroom: Appraising Old Answers and New Ideas*, by David L. Leal (2004), states that the most important influence on a child’s educational success, after family background and involvement, is the teacher (Darling-Hammond, 1996). Darling-Hammond has continued to expand on this view and, in the Report by the National Commission for Teaching and America’s Future and subsequent publications and research, calls for a variety of approaches to foster teacher development. These include laboratory experiences, case methods, video and hypermedia, portfolios, and practitioner research (Darling-Hammond, 1996; Darling-Hammond et al., 2005).

WSU teaches candidates multiple methods and strategies to improve their professional practice during field experiences and classroom teaching. Good teaching has been characterized in many ways: emphasis on the academic (the liberal arts paradigm); execution of effective teaching skills and professional standards (behavioristic/technical); expression of psychological maturity and openness to growth with students’ perceived needs as the core of good practice (personalistic); assimilation of the craft knowledge of wise practitioners (tradition/craft); and

continual weaving of the effects of reflection on ethics, politics, and pedagogy into everyday practice (the inquiry-oriented paradigm) (Zeichner, 1983). When paired together, teacher inquiry and mentoring are key facets to teacher development. Cochran-Smith and Zeichner (2005) suggest alleviating the cognitive demands of teacher inquiry while student teaching by putting emphasis on developing strong mentoring relationships. Candidates at WSU are knowledgeable of major learning theories and strategies to enhance educational knowledge and are able to evaluate instructional decisions for their part in students/clients (DuFour et al., 2004, Ladson-Billings, 2001; Goodlad, Mantle-Bromley, & Goodlad, 2004).

Ethics and Education

WSU believes that candidates should know and implement legal and ethical practices in the profession. The code of standards for the ethical behavior of teachers includes a commitment to students, the district, and the profession (Kansas State Department of Education, 2008, p. 63). Professional educators demonstrate such commitment through their creation of learning environments that support and develop students. To a larger extent, commitment to the profession is demonstrated through an orientation to lifelong learning and a desire to contribute to the field in a professional manner (National Education Association, 2008).

This attention to public education demands a clear understanding of what constitutes quality education—beginning with teacher preparation. In fact, teacher training, teaching in urban settings, educational evaluation, and ethics in education are all important components of good education for aspiring teachers and leaders (Imig & Imig, 2006; Irvine, 2003; Rothstein-Fisch & Trumbell, 2008; Staratt, 2004).

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND DIVERSITY (HDD)

Human Growth and Development

Human growth and development are all the physical and psychological changes that a human undergoes in a lifetime. Consequently, human development is a study of change (Arnett, 2000; Berliner & Calfee, 1996; Overton, 1998; Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000; Horowitz, 2003). Candidates at WSU must demonstrate a commitment to conscious learning and basic principles and theories of human development, learning, and diversity, and apply this knowledge to learning, teaching, and guiding clinical situations. When considering the development of children and helping them become competent, responsible adults, it is widely believed that common sense will provide us with answers. While common sense may be a legitimate approach, it sometimes leads into error (Bukatko & Daehler, 2003; Kassow & Dunst, 2004). For example, common sense might indicate that prenatal development is an automatic process and that the fetus is nourished through the mother. However, we now know that those first nine months are the most crucial to an individual's well-being and that environmental trauma can impede or stop development. For instance, exposure to alcohol, drugs, and radiation during early prenatal stages interfere with the growth of the brain (Berndt, 1997; Baer & Kaufman, 2008). The study of human growth and development is built on a century of research and study. Educators, like parents, benefit from the knowledge of child development by identifying things that children need to grow up healthy and “point us toward ways to intervene in the lives of

children who need assistance” (Steinberg & Meyer, 1995; Bardy, 2005). WSU bases the Human Development and Diversity curriculum on current research in the field.

Historically, educators turn to Piaget for information on human development. Piaget identifies four stages of development (Piaget, 1952; Piaget, 1960; Piaget, 1976; Wadsworth, 1978; Ginsburg & Opper, 1988; Flavell, Miller, & Miller, 2002; Tokoro & Steels, 2003): sensorimotor (moving from knowing the world through our actions on it), preoperational (more or less static representations of the world with symbols), concrete operational (mental operations [actions] on present objects), and formal operational (mental operations on operations) (Flavell et al., 2002).

The study of child development provides normative descriptions of children and adolescent growth and development (Pellegrini & Bjorklund, 1998). Such knowledge is useful in education for developing instruction that is developmentally appropriate for students.

Developing Through Different Stages of Adulthood

For emerging adults, attending college can profoundly impact their life course and quality of life. Astin (1993) uses the “input-environment-outcome” model as a conceptual guide for studying college student development. Environmental differences include programs, policies, faculty, peers, and educational experiences to which students are exposed (Astin, 1993). The preparation of teachers and other school personnel also take into account the developmental levels and experiences of the candidates (Pascarella and Terenzini, 1991). The teacher preparation program at Wichita State University utilizes this body of knowledge by engaging teacher candidates in a variety of courses and field experiences that are intended to shape their understanding of teaching and learning. The study of development also considers diversity as an aspect of growth and cultural maturation.

Cultural Differences

Harvey and Ventura (1996) illustrate the complexity of diversity through the quote, “I am woman and I am man. I’m every color and every belief, and every size. I’m old, young and everything in between. I’ve worked here longer than you and not as long as you. I am a son. I am a daughter. I’m married and single, a parent and without children. I’m alone and I’m surrounded by people I care about deeply.” Respect and appreciation of diversity begins with the ability to look beyond oneself and consider the perspectives that can emerge from interactions with others.

Bray, Brown, and Green (2004) eloquently point out that “We are all different. Like snowflakes, no two human beings are exactly alike. How we recognize and relate to those differences depends on the prevailing culture, how individuals choose to make their needs known, and the technologies available to accommodate differences.” Cultural differences, gender, differing abilities, and exceptional children are all aspects of diversity that contribute to teacher candidates’ knowledge, skills, and dispositions (Hale, 2004, Mason et al, 2004). Candidates explore diverse field placement environments at the beginning of their coursework and throughout the program. All candidates are expected to embrace diversity through their coursework and placements.

WSU agrees that all educational institutions are charged with the creation and maintenance of a multicultural environment (Grant & Sleeter, 1986; Goodwin, 1997;

Hodgkinson, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 2001; Lindsey, Roberts & Campbell Jones, 2005; Martin, 1995; Rothstein-Fisch & Trumbull, 2008).

In his book *Democracy and Education*, philosopher educator John Dewey (1897) recognizes the need to balance stratification of separate classes with an emphasis on what binds people together in cooperative pursuits and results. The implication of cooperation is equal involvement and shared participation. Paulo Freire (1993) cautions that “any situation that prevents others from engaging in the process of inquiry is one of violence.” Educators who are aware of and comfortable with their own cultural backgrounds may be better prepared to facilitate that awareness in their students.

WSU supports the concept that multicultural education aims to encourage the appreciation of others and the development of skills needed to work collaboratively. This is necessary to support a democratic nation in an increasingly interconnected world. Multicultural education as a strategy involving multiple approaches to learning and teaching enables educators to use students’ cultural backgrounds to develop effective classroom instruction and school environments that are responsive to multiple and continuously interacting microcultures including race, ethnicity, gender, language, religion, exceptionality/ability, age, geography, and class (Gollnick & Chinn, 2009).

CONNECTION OF TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT (CTA)

At WSU, candidates are taught that the cyclical and interactive processes of good teaching include preparing teacher candidates in the areas of curriculum, instruction, and assessment, and providing opportunities for them to apply this understanding to learning, teaching, guiding, and clinical situations. “Curriculum is the stuff of everyday teaching, where the teacher’s love of learning and ability to make mysterious, such as a math proof or a passage in Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart*, understandable to students” (Dougherty, 2001). Curriculum is a vehicle through which educators must manifest their goals for student learning. It consists of the knowledge and skills that students learn through their study, which are then assessed (Danielson, 2003; DuFour & Eaker, 1998; DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Karhanek, 2004). WSU candidates apply their knowledge and understanding to learning, teaching, guiding, and clinical/field experience situations.

There is no shortage of knowledge about what high-quality curriculum and instruction should look like (Tomlinson, 2005). “A primary goal of effective curriculum and instruction is propelling learners along a continuum of expertise—that is, ensuring that students become ever more expert like in what they learn, how they learn, and what they do with what they learn” (National Research Council, 2000). At WSU, candidates develop skills to plan, implement, and evaluate developmentally, culturally, and ethically appropriate techniques and strategies for addressing student/client needs (Mitchell et al., 1995; Reeves, 2004; Schlechty, 2001; Schmoker, 2006; Stiggins, 2004).

WSU candidates study research such as Marzano (2003), who offers principles based in cognitive philosophy, which can be used to implement effective classroom curriculum design. The first principle is that learning is enhanced when a teacher identifies specific types of knowledge that are the focus of a unit or lesson. Identifying specific information allows students to grasp the same concepts in a timely fashion. Nuthall (1999) states that to be effective, teachers must identify specific content to address and plan the learning experience accordingly (see also,

Nuthall & Alton-Lee, 1993; Nuthall & Alton-Lee, 1995). Marzano's (2003) third principle is that learning requires multiple exposures to and complex interactions with knowledge.

Piaget (1971) talks about two different types of knowledge. The first is assimilation, where new knowledge is integrated into one's existing knowledge base. The second is accommodation. In accommodation, existing knowledge structures are changed. New knowledge is accumulated, which results in new insights. Multiple exposures to new information are necessary for retention. The curriculum at WSU allows candidates to both learn and have multiple opportunities to practice new knowledge, skills, and strategies.

All programs at WSU are based on the adopted Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) Standards. Standards and curriculum are not the same thing, yet the two work together to form a fuller picture of "what students should know and be able to do. Standards are guideposts that provide the supports in a curriculum by stating the most important ideas, concepts, and skills. Lessons—the everyday stuff of teaching—deliver the curriculum" (Dougherty, 2001).

Assessment

All programs at WSU have required assessments embedded with the required coursework, which assess the program standards. Education that is a liberating, transformative process inherently represents assessment as ongoing, recursive, and intended to inform the process (Freire, 1993). Alternate models of teaching, rubrics, authentic assessment, and evaluation of portfolios yield successive indications of accomplishment that inform candidates and teachers who provide feedback on and set the guidelines for the learning process (Joyce & Weil, 1996; Glasser, 1993). The assessments within each program at WSU are rubric-based and aligned each semester to determine areas for assisting candidates and for program improvement.

Standards might be the best way to ensure high expectations and informative assessment practices (Crawford & Dougherty, 2003; Schmoker, 2006; Stiggins, 2004). If teachers can design a set of standards and "guarantee (more or less) that these standards actually get taught, we can raise levels of achievement immensely" (Schmoker, 2006, p. 36).

Marzano (2003) states that researchers find that in effective schools, each of the teachers has a clear understanding of what the essential learner objectives are in every grade and course. He refers to this clarity of focus as a "guaranteed and viable curriculum" (Marzano, 2003). Reeves (2004) describes the concept as power standards. Regardless of the terminology, the premise of learning for all demands that each teacher knows exactly what every student should accomplish as a result of each unit of instruction. Candidates are informed of required standards of assessment through course syllabi. If a candidate does not meet assessment criteria, then remediation is provided.

Clinical Settings

WSU resides within the boundaries of the Wichita Public School (WPS). WPS is a majority minority school district of almost 50,000 students who have high priority and other large urban district characteristics. Candidates are exposed to the district and the unique characteristics and needs. According to Villegas and Lucas (2002), authors of *Educating Culturally Responsive Teachers: A Coherent Approach*, the changing student population is one of the most critical factors in American education today. Currently, more than one of every three

students enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools is of a racial or ethnic minority background, and by the year 2035, this group is expected to constitute a numerical majority of the K–12 student population (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1996).

Teacher turnover in urban settings is one of the biggest challenges facing urban school districts today (Oakes, Franke, Quartz, & Rogers, 2002). This problem is exacerbated by the retirement of the boomer generation. Preparing candidates to teach in inner-city schools is a major charge of teacher preparation programs (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). This preparation must take into consideration the unique qualities of an urban setting (Oakes et al., 2002). WSU takes seriously the preparation of highly competent, collaborative, and reflective professionals who can work in urban, suburban, or rural school districts.

Accountability

Candidates at WSU must apply their knowledge to teaching within the structures of standards and seek opportunities to continually learn and improve professional practice. Grant Wiggins (1998) calls effective educational assessment the foundation of accountability. Similarly, Stiggins (2002) points out that in order to maximize student achievement, we must pay far greater attention to the improvement of classroom assessment. Standards-based assessment needs to be implemented to answer the question about how one's child is doing in school.

To know the best way to help students learn, we need to know which programs have succeeded and which ones have failed. “An accountability system that shows policy makers how intervention strategies correlate with student results can go a long way toward providing such essential program evaluation information” (Reeves, 2000). WSU uses assessments to inform changes for both candidates and program improvement.

Comprehensive evaluation must include more than just test scores and interpretation of results. It should take into account analyses of multiple indicators of performance over an extended period of time of students and policy makers. Decisions about resources, teaching methods, and student support must be taken into account (Reeves, 2000). Each year every program writes a yearly report that discusses how the data is collected, analyzed, and applied to drive changes. WSU uses formative assessments in the coursework.

Popham (2008) identifies four levels of formative assessment. Level 1 calls for teachers to use formative assessment to collect evidence so they can adjust their current and future instructional levels. Level 2 deals with students' use of formative assessment evidence to adjust their own learning tactics. Level 3 represents a complete change in the culture of a classroom by shifting the purpose of classroom assessment from comparing students with one another for grade assignments, to generating evidence so that teachers and students can adjust what they do, to advance student learning. Level 4 is the school-wide adoption of one or more levels of formative assessments, chiefly through the use of professional development and teacher learning communities (Popham, 2008).

The WSU teacher preparation program strives to advance candidates' knowledge and skill at both the assessment of learning as well as the assessment for learning. At WSU, candidates must know, understand, and use processes to work and advocate cooperatively and professionally with students, colleagues, parents, and communities to move toward mutual goals.

TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION (T)

The teacher preparation program at WSU supports the belief that students and teachers must use technology effectively to live, learn, and work successfully in an increasingly complex and information-rich society (International Society for Technology in Education, 2009). The dynamic array of technological tools found in homes, schools, universities and workplaces provide valuable mechanisms for communication, research, problem solving and decision making, which are all tied to the vision and mission of education. When integrated into the teaching and learning process, technology allows students to learn content and technology skills simultaneously (Carroll & Witherspoon, 2002; National Telecommunications and Information Administration, 2002; Romano, 2003).

The challenge for higher education is not only to keep up but to stay at the forefront of information use and development. Computer technology has come a long way since it was first used in education. The trend started with a limited number of desktops in labs and moved to laptop computers in classrooms. Today, lectures are available through podcasts, and students can take courses online and earn a degree through the Internet (Friedman, 2006; Carnevale, 2008; Roblyer, Edwards, & Havriluk, 2007). The College of Education at WSU has made major purchases in the last few years to provide candidates with technology equal to or greater than what is available in the public sector. The educational environment is enriched by the Internet, which provides access to information on a scale unheard of ten years ago. Candidates can demonstrate skills in the use of technology appropriate to their respective disciplines.

Today, libraries at most colleges and universities provide student access to journals, databases, indices, reference materials, and books through intranets. This is true at WSU, and there is a rich connection between the College of Education faculty and University Libraries personnel, which results in a wealth of resources and support for faculty research and instruction (Efaw, Hampton, Martinez, & Smith, 2008).

Teacher candidates benefit from a growing amount of course content and access to library materials via the Internet, thus enhancing teaching and learning. Internet coursework seems to produce a positive effect (Carnevale, 2008). Some courses at WSU are available online or through distance learning technology. WSU is aware that it is important, however, to recognize that to ensure student success in Internet-based courses, it requires the same careful attention to instructional design, the same level of diligence on the part of the instructor, and the same opportunity for meaningful communication that traditional in-class models require (Plotnik, 1995).

Technology does not guarantee academic success, but it does not have a significant negative impact (Wright, 2008).

UNDERSTANDING CONTENT KNOWLEDGE AND PEDAGOGICAL CONTENT KNOWLEDGE AND THEIR ALIGNMENT WITH STANDARDS (CKS)

The idea that a good education requires that every student receive a rigorous academic core experience is not a new one. In 1894, The Committee of Ten, an illustrious group of scholars, published a report that forcefully called for the creation of a uniform curriculum for all high school students, whether or not they were going to college (Jones, 1996). Today, standards-based reform departs radically from tracking and instead “aims to hold high expectations and

provide high levels of support for all students, teachers, and educational leaders” (Thompson, 2001).

WSU programs are done by standard, and they believe candidates must know, understand, and use the content and continue to build knowledge in the disciplinary fields. The use of standards requires collaboration among those who have a shared understanding of common educational goals while responding to the demands for public accountability. In Freire’s (1993) pedagogy, knowledge emerges only through participatory, critical, values-oriented, multicultural, student-centered, liberating, experiential, research-minded, and interdisciplinary education. Thus, problem-posing education rejects the banking model of indoctrination to embrace communication between learners and educators engaged in the process as co-learners (Freire, 1993). Reflective, critical inquiry supports curriculum making and the learning that it engenders. It also increases awareness that these are complex political, social, intellectual, and academic processes that continually evolve to remain relevant in an ever-changing world (Schön, 1983, 1990).

COLLABORATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS (C)

Collaborative work is important. According to Garmston and Wellman (1999), in order for schools to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow, they must be adaptive. This is best achieved through collaborative efforts that take advantage of the collective wisdom of the group.

Collaboration can be defined in several ways. Friend and Cook (2000, 2003) indicate that collaboration may be among professionals such as in a school setting where the school faculty, a group of individuals each with their own unique skills and perspectives, work and interact directly to accomplish a common goal of enhancing educational opportunities for students. Collaboration is not limited to interactions among school faculties and can include interactions with any educational stakeholders (Auton, Browne, & Futrell, 1998; DuFour and Eaker, 1998; Barth, 1999). What is important is that collaboration is seen as a skill that can enhance lifelong learning. Critical components of collaboration are the following: (a) it is voluntary, (b) it requires parity among participants, (c) it is based on mutual goals, (d) it depends on shared responsibility and decision-making, and (e) resources are shared. Collaboration works best if all team members are accountable (Bernhardt, 2002; Friend & Cook, 2003; Turnbull & Turnbull, 2006). Candidates at WSU collectively plan, build, and gather resources to create innovative solutions to existing problems.

Blankstein (2004) suggests collaboration can be fostered through professional practice forums, classroom observation, curriculum planning, professional study groups, grade level or subject-area teams, interdisciplinary teams, task forces, and teaching-strategy or professional-interest teams. In addition, collaboration can be enhanced by using communication techniques such as pausing, paraphrasing, probing, putting ideas on the table, paying attention to self and others, presuming positive intentions, and pursuing a balance between advocacy and inquiry. Pursuing and maintaining a balance between advocating a position and inquiring about one’s own and others’ positions helps the group become a learning organization (Elliot, 2003; Garmston & Wellman, 1999, 2002). As such, collaboration is a key principle of the conceptual framework guiding WSU’s teacher preparation program (Kennedy, 2006).

WSU candidates demonstrate effective communication and institutional skills and attitudes. They also must plan, implement, and sustain an appropriate environment that promotes effective, professional practice such as implementing learning content (Marzano, 2007). DuFour,

DuFour, Eaker, & Many (2006) suggest enhancing collaboration by developing a Professional Learning Community (PLC). Popular in today’s schools, PLC’s encompass the essence of a learning community where there is a clear commitment to collaboration for the improvement of education. A professional learning community has the following elements: (1) a shared mission, vision, and values; (2) collective inquiry; (3) collaborative teams; (4) action orientation and experimentation; (5) continuous improvement; and (6) results orientation.

Performance Proficiencies Aligned with Expectations in Professional, State,
and Institutional Standards

The Professional Education Unit’s vision calls for candidates who are highly competent, collaborative, and reflective professionals. Such a vision highlights the importance of standards set by the state (Kansas State Department of Education) and professional organizations. Several programs in the unit also seek external accreditation through the standards set by their professional societies, for instance, the Council for Exceptional Children, the National Association of School Psychologists, and the National Association of Schools of Music.

Programs in the unit seek to attain the following general proficiencies and demonstrate dispositions connected to the guiding principles, which are consistent with KSDE program standards, professional and institutional standards, and the unit’s vision.

Guiding Principles Connected to Proficiencies, Dispositions, and KSDE Professional Education Standards for the Preparation of Teachers

Guiding principles	KSDE professional education standards	Proficiencies	Dispositions
Professionalism and Reflection on the Vocation (PR)	Standard #13: The educator is a reflective practitioner who uses an understanding of historical, philosophical, and social foundations of education to guide educational practices.	Knows, understands, and implements the legal and ethical practices of the profession. (PR1)	Values knowledge and continuous learning to improve professional practice. (PR4)
	Standard #9: The educator is a reflective practitioner who continually evaluates the effects of his/her choices and actions on others (students, parents, and other professionals in the learning community), actively seeks out opportunities to grow professionally, and participates in the school improvement process (Kansas Quality Performance Accreditation [QPA]).	Knows the major learning theories and strategies to enhance educational knowledge and to evaluate instructional decisions for their impact on students/clients. (PR2) Has the skills to demonstrate approaches to continuous learning that support improved professional practice. (PR3)	
Human Development and Diversity (HDD)	Standard #2: The educator demonstrates an understanding of how individuals learn and develop intellectually, socially, and personally, and provides learning opportunities that support this development.	Knows and applies major developmental principles and theories of human development, learning, and diversity. (HDD1)	Respects and holds high expectations and fairness for all learners (all students can learn). (HDD3)

Guiding principles	KSDE professional education standards	Proficiencies	Dispositions
Connection of Teaching and Assessment (CTA)	<p>Standard #7: The educator plans effective instruction based upon the knowledge of all students, community, subject matter, curriculum outcomes, and current methods of teaching reading.</p> <p>Standard #5: The educator uses an understanding of individual and group motivation and behavior to create a learning environment that encourages positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.</p> <p>Standard #13: The educator is a reflective practitioner who uses an understanding of historical, philosophical, and social foundations of education to guide educational practices.</p> <p>Standard #8: The educator understands and uses formal and informal assessment strategies to evaluate and ensure the continual intellectual, social, and other aspects of personal development of all learners.</p> <p>Standard #3: The educator demonstrates the ability to provide different approaches to learning and creates instructional opportunities that are equitable, that are based on developmental levels, and that are adapted to diverse learners, including those with exceptionalities.</p>	<p>Knows relevant historical, philosophical, social, and cultural factors. (HDD2)</p> <p>Applies current theory, research, and practice to learning, teaching, guiding, and clinical situations to address student/client needs including diverse students/clients. (CTA1)</p> <p>Knows and understands current theory, research, practice, and assessment tools and strategies that inform good teaching and decision-making based on assessment results. (CTA2)</p> <p>Develops skills to plan, implement, and evaluate developmental, cultural, and ethically appropriate techniques and strategies for addressing student/client needs, including relevant technologies. (CTA3)</p>	<p>Considers family, community, and school in advocating for students/clients. (HDD4)</p> <p>Respects and holds high expectations and fairness for all learners. (CTA4)</p>
Technology Integration (T)	<p>Standard #12: The educator understands the role of technology in society and demonstrates skills using instructional tools and technology to gather, analyze, and present information, enhance instructional practices, facilitate professional productivity and communication, and help all students use instructional technology effectively.</p>	<p>Demonstrates skills in the use of technology to enhance professional productivity in planning, teaching, student learning, and assessment. (T1)</p>	<p>Values knowledge and continuous learning to improve professional practice.(T2)</p>

Guiding principles	KSDE professional education standards	Proficiencies	Dispositions
Content Knowledge and Pedagogical Content Knowledge and Their Alignment with Standards (CKS)	Standard # 1: The educator demonstrates the ability to use the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of each discipline he/she teaches and can create opportunities that make these aspects of subject matter meaningful for all students.	Knows, understands, and uses the content and knowledge in the disciplinary field and applies this to teaching through standards to learn and improve professional practice. (CKS1)	Values knowledge and continuous learning to improve professional practice. (CKS2)
	Standard #11: The educator demonstrates the ability to integrate across and within content fields to enrich the curriculum, develop reading and thinking skills, and facilitate all students' abilities to understand relationships between subject areas.		
Collaboration with Stakeholders (C)	Standard #6: The educator uses a variety of effective verbal and non-verbal communication techniques to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction in the classroom.	Demonstrates effective communication, interpersonal skills, and attitudes to promote professional practices. (C1)	Values working cooperatively with colleagues and others to advance the best interests of students/clients (C3)
	Standard #10: The educator fosters collegial relationships with school personnel, parents, and agencies in the larger community to support all students' learning and well-being.	Knows, understands, and uses the processes to work and advocate cooperatively and professionally to move toward mutual goals. (C2)	

System by Which Candidate Performance is Regularly Assessed

Assessment is an integral part of the vision of the Professional Education Unit at WSU. It is the mechanism for informing candidates of their progress and monitoring the unit and its programs. As a guiding principle, assessment is an integral part of the conceptual framework. Within each of the above proficiencies are multiple assessments that include a variety of strategies to document the accomplishment of program goals. These strategies include more traditional teacher-made exams and assignments, performance-based assessments in some coursework and in clinical and field settings, reflective responses and/or journals, and program portfolios. Individual Program Committees review the aggregated information from the results of these assessments to determine the competence of the student(s) and the effectiveness of the program, and recommend or implement the necessary changes. The results of Program Committee reviews, cross-program candidate assessment data, and other reviews are examined by a Unit Assessment Committee for recommendations to improve unit effectiveness.

In examining guiding principles, assessment ends and begins a connection cycle. Assessment is imperative to align content with professional and state standards. Professionalism and reflection on the vocation depend on assessment for success. In instruction, this cycle includes assessing learner knowledge, skills, and dispositions; making curricular decisions; teaching; assessing; examining the data; and making further decisions. In program decisions, this cycle includes an examination of the Conceptual Framework, standards, delivery, assessment, an

examination of the data, and making informed changes in the Conceptual Framework and the programs. The Unit Assessment System is important for accomplishing the unit's vision.

Each program has determined critical assessments that demonstrate competence in the state of Kansas. Candidate assessments are designed to examine the success of the curriculum, instruction, and field experiences for candidates. Candidate performance at critical junctures in the program (e.g., from admission to practicum) and performance related to specific program standards and proficiencies are assessed against a priori rubrics. Assessments occur at multiple points across programs and include a variety of strategies (e.g., teacher-made exams and assignments, performance-based assessments within coursework and in clinical and field settings, reflective responses and/or journals, and program portfolios). Individual program committees and advisory committees review the aggregated information from the results of these assessments to determine the competence of students and the effectiveness of programs, take relevant student actions, and recommend program changes.

The unit assessment system and program assessments are guided by the following goals:

1. To assess the success of the curriculum, instruction and field/clinical experience.
2. To utilize assessments to revise curriculum, instruction and field/clinical experiences.
3. To document impact on learners participating in program.
4. To determine the quality of alignment of content with the professional and state standards applicable to the program.

CLOSING

The vision for preparing highly competent, collaborative, and reflective professionals and other school personnel at Wichita State University aims to develop reflective professionals who are competent and collaborative and have high expectations for themselves and those with whom they work. Such individuals understand relevant technologies and are prepared to practice in diverse settings. This vision provides a touchstone for ensuring connections among curriculum, instruction, field experiences, and assessment, as well as for outcomes and content proficiencies aligned with professional and state standards across all programs. The following guiding principles, as the overarching conceptual framework for professional education programs at Wichita State University, provide direction for the WSU Teacher Education Unit: (a) Professionalism and Reflection on the Vocation, (b) Human Development and Diversity, (c) Connection of Teaching and Assessment, (d) Technology Integration, (e) Understanding Content Knowledge and Pedagogical Content Knowledge and Their Alignment with Standards, and (f) Collaboration with Stakeholders.

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