

**Muskingum College
Education Department
Conceptual Framework
2005**

Vision and Mission of the Institution and Unit

The mission of the college is “to offer quality academic programs in the liberal arts and sciences in the setting of a residential, coeducational, church-related college and in the context of a caring community where individual fulfillment is encouraged and human dignity is respected. Its primary purpose is to develop—intellectually, spiritually, socially, and physically—whole persons, by fostering critical thinking, positive action, ethical sensitivity, and spiritual growth, so that they may lead vocationally productive, personally satisfying, and socially responsible lives” (Muskingum College Catalog, 2004-2005).

Muskingum College has a long tradition in the preparation of teachers. When Franklin College, an important educational institution of the Presbyterian Church closed in 1927, its alumni rolls came to Muskingum. Typically, a third of each graduating class major in education and/or completes requirements for licensure as a teacher in the State of Ohio. At this time, all students in the graduate program are in teacher education programs.

The mission statement of the teacher education program is consistent with that of the institution: The mission of teacher education at Muskingum College is to prepare beginning teachers and to enhance the abilities of experienced teachers and aspiring administrators to encourage, equip, and empower all students to gain the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that will enable them to lead productive, satisfying, and socially responsible lives. Faculty in the unit seek to achieve this goal by teaching, pursuing

scholarship, and providing service to candidates, the College, and the larger community.

The theme “Developing teacher-leaders who encourage, equip, and empower all students” summarizes the vision of the department: To encourage, equip, and empower future educators—both teachers and administrators—in a community of learners to encourage, equip, and empower *their* students to achieve their fullest potentials, both personally and professionally.

The mission statements of the College and the professional unit are aligned. Both statements strongly address the development of students as whole persons and as professionals. Both affirm the importance of encouragement and respect for human dignity. Both seek to ensure that graduates of the college and the teacher education programs act in ways that demonstrate social responsibility and that result in social justice for all. The standards and professional dispositions we have developed to operationalize our conceptual framework directly address the missions of both the college and the professional teacher unit. An alignment matrix is attached to this document.

The Education Department’s Philosophy, Purposes, and Goals

At Muskingum College, we are committed to “Developing teacher-leaders who encourage, equip, and empower all students.” Each of the components of this theme is a cornerstone on which we build our programs.

Development

The concept of development is integral to the mission of Muskingum College, the Education Department, and the professional associations that guide our work in teacher education. As a college and a department, we are committed to developing “whole persons—intellectually, spiritually, socially, and physically.” As a professional teacher

education unit, we are committed to developing our candidates as teacher-leaders who in turn, develop their students to the fullest potential by 1) encouraging their efforts, providing motivation, and creating opportunities for developing self-motivation; 2) equipping them with the knowledge they need to know and the skills they must be able to perform; and 3) empowering them as active participants in their own professions, families, and communities.

As we seek to develop whole persons within our college and department, it is important that we recognize the culture of our students and the region from which they come. Most of our students are from the Appalachian counties of Ohio, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania. Most are from working-class families. Many are first-generation college students. Most will take positions as teachers and administrators in districts that have large percentages of students whose family incomes are below the poverty level. Some have themselves been children of poverty. In order to serve these candidates and to help them develop as whole persons, we provide support grounded in literature as necessary for addressing the needs of children of poverty: educational opportunities, an understanding of education as a social and political force, instruction in literacy and numeracy as agents of power, role models and advocates, and financial, intellectual, and social support.

Candidates know that development is a continuing process. Through reflection, they analyze the past to improve the future. As lifelong learners, they actively seek to continually grow as professionals and as persons.

Teacher-Leaders

We are committed to helping our students develop not only as teachers but as teacher-leaders. The model of leadership we have chosen is that of “servant-leaders” who put the needs of their people above their own needs. Our vision of leadership is based on collaboration, participative democracy, and the sharing of power and information. The teacher-leader provides leadership in many arenas: the classroom, the school, the district, the region, the nation, and the world.

Encouraging All Students to Succeed

Our candidates are grounded in the theory and practice of human development and motivation. They demonstrate the ability to create learning environments that are fair and respectful of all students. They encourage their students to reach achievable yet challenging goals, providing opportunities for them to become more intrinsically motivated and to develop self-efficacy. Our candidates know that interactions with students, their families, and their communities are necessary for promoting student success, and they recognize and appreciate the diverse backgrounds of their students. They provide learning activities that engage learners, are relevant, and provide choice. They differentiate instruction to ensure that every student is both successful and challenged.

Equipping Candidates with the Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions to Help All Students Succeed

The teacher education programs at Muskingum College are designed to prepare students to demonstrate their ability to meet the standards of the various specific professional associations and the conceptual framework of the unit, ensuring that all

candidates are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to promote the success of all students in the grade levels and content areas of their licensure specializations. In an era of high-stakes accountability, candidates must also be prepared to successfully master and demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for achieving licensure. To this end, we have designed all lesson plans, field experience evaluations prior to and during student teaching and clinical practice, cooperating teacher evaluations, and college supervisor evaluations to prepare students for PRAXIS III, the performance assessment required of all entry-year teachers in the state of Ohio. In this assessment system, candidates demonstrate ability to meet 19 criteria in the four domains of planning, creating an environment for student learning, teaching, and professionalism. We have also structured our coursework and assessments to support students in achieving passing scores on the required PRAXIS II: Principles of Learning and Teaching exams, which are aligned with INTASC standards.

As required by the state of Ohio, all initial licensure programs also reflect the INTASC standards and address the Ohio Academic Content Standards in reading/language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. The Ohio State Board of Education has recently appointed an Educator Standards Board, commissioned to develop a new set of standards for beginning and accomplished teachers and administrators. When these standards are adopted, they will replace the INTASC standards for beginning teachers in Ohio.

Empowering

Our candidates empower their students by involving them in creating learning activities and environments that encourage students to find their own voices to express

their learning needs. They also provide students with opportunities to become "powerfully" literate and to use data to inform and persuade. They serve as role models for change, ensuring that classrooms and schools serve as protectors and promoters of positive and equitable social interaction, democratic decision-making, and social justice.

All Students

The last part of our vision is based on our most overarching beliefs: Everyone can learn. Each person has the potential to grow—intellectually, spiritually, socially, and physically. Each person has the right to achieve to his or her own potential. Experiences in classrooms must be designed to address—and celebrate—the diverse cultures, knowledge, experience, skills, abilities, disabilities, and learning styles of all students.

Knowledge Bases that Inform the Conceptual Framework

Development

Our focus on development is grounded in constructivism—the theory that learning takes place when learners add to or revise their own knowledge based on the connections they make between what is already known or believed and the learning activities they experience within a social context.

Individuals learn best when they are both successful and challenged. In developmentally appropriate practice—for learners of all ages and abilities—learning activities are chosen to provide opportunities for success *and* growth. Developmentally appropriate practice is rooted in cognitive development theory, which states that children move through an ordered set of developmental stages (Piaget, 1954). According to Vygotsky (1978), optimal learning takes place in the “zone of proximal development,” in which learners can function through “scaffolding” by teachers or more accomplished

learners at a higher level than they are able to function on their own, neither repeating what they already know nor struggling with what they are not yet ready for.

Learning takes place when individuals connect what they're learning to what they already know. According to Ausubel (1968), the most important factor influencing learning is what the learner already knows. In a constructivist classroom, a teacher begins with what the learner knows, then provides authentic learning tasks that allow the learner to alter his view of the world to more nearly match reality by adding new knowledge or rethinking misconceptions (Dewey, 1916; Piaget, 1954; Vygotsky, 1978).

An important way in which teachers connect learning is through curriculum integration, the bringing together of concepts and skills from different areas to answer guiding questions developed jointly by teacher and students (Jacobs, 1989). Through curriculum integration, learners are given the opportunity to make connections, find patterns, and organize knowledge in meaningful ways (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1996; National Middle School Association, 1995).

Construction of knowledge is a social endeavor, and collaborative partnerships—from cooperative learning groups in early childhood settings to teacher education advisory boards at the graduate level—increase the ability of the group to define, research, and gather resources to solve problems (Johnson & Johnson, 1984; Slick, 1995). And in working cooperatively in groups, each individual grows as well, expanding his or her abilities to teach and learn, lead and follow.

Candidates promote their own development through study of educational research and active reflection of their own beliefs and actions. Educational research is a powerful resource for improving education (Shulman, 1999). Only by examining teaching and

learning in a systematic and thoughtful way can we determine “best practice” for educating our students. And it is not just experience but experience with reflection that promotes development of the candidate as teacher and leader. Reflective teachers are “students of learning,” learning all they can about teaching and monitoring their own performance in order to improve it (Cruikshank, 1987). Through study, reflection, and interaction with colleagues in professional settings, including conferences and workshops, they become lifelong learners.

Teacher-Leaders

According to Robert K. Greenleaf, the way some people serve is to lead (1991). A servant-leader is a servant first. Above all, the leader wants to serve. The effectiveness of the servant-leader is gauged by the answer to this question: Do those who are served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become “healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants”? We have adopted this view of leadership as consistent with our mission and with the regional culture in which our candidates work and live.

Early in their professional careers, teachers focus on nurturing the development of the students in their classrooms. As they gain experience and knowledge, they expand their service through becoming mentors, master teachers, department heads, team leaders, curriculum developers, and staff developers. While some continue to serve as teachers, others become administrators. At all levels, Muskingum College educators serve those they lead. This leadership, which is also grounded in theories of development and empowerment, is based on collaboration, participative democracy, and the sharing of power and information (Darling-Hammond, 1998).

Service to the region is an important component of the Muskingum College

mission.

Encouraging All Students to Succeed

In order to encourage all students to succeed, teachers must have an-depth knowledge of learners and the processes of learning and motivation. Candidates need to understand and skillfully use principles of positive reinforcement (Alberto & Troutman, 2003; Skinner, 1953) as they encourage students to reach achievable yet challenging goals. They must be able to recognize how students vary widely in their need for intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation and then develop learning opportunities that address their students' current motivational needs (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Just as we expect our candidates to become more intrinsically motivated as they experience success in our program, we expect them to develop the knowledge and skills needed to enable their students to become more intrinsically motivated as they, too, experience academic success.

Finally, to provide personalized encouragement to diverse students, our candidates must understand the varied contexts and cultures in which students live and learn (Golnick & Chinn, 1994). Many of our candidates and the students our candidates will someday be teaching have been reared in environments where intrinsic motivation, an appreciation for challenge, and an excitement for learning "for learning's sake" are not valued. They have been reared in environments where punishment is more prevalent than encouragement and material rewards are more valued than social or intrinsic rewards (Payne, 2003). We have to recognize and appreciate the behaviors and values that have been reinforced in our candidates' early years and work to develop "habits of mind" that

are associated with life-long learning. Likewise, we have to enable our candidates to recognize the behaviors and attitudes that have been reinforced in their students' early years and to develop the knowledge and skills needed to enable learners to attribute their success to their efforts (Weiner, 1986) and, over time, develop self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997).

Equipping Candidates with the Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions to Help All Students Succeed

Being a subject matter expert is a necessary but insufficient requirement for teaching. Teachers must also possess general pedagogical knowledge, knowledge of the pedagogy specific to the subject matter they teach, and knowledge of the context of education—districts, schools, communities and students (Grossman, 1990; INTASC, 1999; Shulman, 1986, 1987). It is particularly important that teachers be accomplished in the pedagogy specific to their particular content area, or pedagogical content knowledge. Grossman (1990) includes the following in her description of pedagogical content knowledge: 1) knowledge and beliefs about the purposes of teaching specific content at specific grade levels, 2) knowledge of students' understanding, misunderstanding, and misconceptions in a particular content area, 3) knowledge of curriculum materials, as well as the scope and sequence of a content area, and 4) knowledge of instructional strategies for teaching in a particular content area.

Appropriate use of technology, including assistive technology, is an important component of the learning process in both instruction and assessment. Our candidates must have the experience to use technology to promote learning for themselves and for their students.

Muskingum College candidates know that assessment is an ongoing process aimed at understanding and improving student learning. Assessment should be both formative and summative and should include multiple measures over time, relying heavily on authentic assessment through products and performances. Assessments are most powerful when they are closely aligned with learning objectives, typified in Ohio by the indicators and benchmarks of the Ohio Academic Content Standards, reliable, and free from sources of bias. Students learn more in environments in which the relationship between learning and assessment is clear and consistent (Crooks, 1988).

Empowering All Students to Succeed

We teach our candidates to provide the environment for their students that we provide for them—one in which individuals are empowered through knowledge, experience, and critical inquiry to make choices, decisions, and actions that are in their own and their families' best interests. These environments include the following: 1) knowledge of education as a social and political process (Freire, 1972); 2) understanding the relationship of culture and behavior (Payne, 2003); 3) the use of "powerful literacy" to make one's voice heard (Finn, 1999); 4) the recognition of the use of critical inquiry, formal and informal discourse in spoken and written language; 5) the use of data to inform and persuade (Batelle, 2003); 6) promotion of positive and democratic social interaction between individuals and in groups; 7) promotion and modeling of democratic decision-making in classrooms, schools, and districts (Dewey, 1916); 8) promotion of equity and social justice at all levels and in all organizations through strategies of critical pedagogy which examine the relationships between teachers and students, knowledge and

power, language and experience, student activism, and social transformation (Giroux & McLaren, 1996.)

All Students

The most important belief underlying our conceptual framework is the belief that everyone can learn. Each person has the potential to grow—intellectually, spiritually, socially, and physically, and students achieve more when their teachers have high expectations for their achievement (Council for Exceptional Children, 1997; Dewey, 1916; Gibson & Ogbu, 1991; National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1996; National Middle School Association, 1995).

Believing this, we also believe that learning experiences in inclusive classrooms must be designed to address diverse cultures, knowledge, experience, skills, interests, abilities, disabilities, and learning styles. Diversity strengthens society (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1995), and teachers must *use*—indeed, celebrate—the unique background and contribution of each learner to the learning community (Dunn, R., & Dunn, K., 1978; Gardner, H., 1983; Golnick, D. M., & Chinn, P. C., 2002; Tomlinson, 1999; Wood, J. W., 2002).

Candidate Proficiencies

In order to operationalize the lofty goals of our conceptual framework, in the spring of 2005 we developed the following standards that are assessed for all candidates:

1. *Growth and Development.* The teacher candidate sees students as whole persons and seeks to help them develop intellectually, ethically, socially, and physically.

2. *Instruction and Assessment.* The teacher candidate sets learning goals and plans and implements learning activities and assessments that ensure that all learners are both successful and challenged.
3. *Learning Environment.* The teacher candidate creates a learning environment that empowers students by encouraging positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, self-motivation, democratic decision-making, equity, and social justice.
4. *Reflection.* The teacher candidate reflects on instruction and assessment in order to improve student learning.
5. *Professional Growth.* The teacher candidate actively seeks opportunities to grow professionally.
6. *Leadership.* The teacher candidate serves and leads in communities of learners, including classrooms, schools, and the wider communities.
7. *Collaboration with Partners Outside the School Setting.* The teacher candidate uses knowledge of individuals, families, communities, and cultures to create a community of learners.
8. *Collaboration with Partners Within the School Setting.* The teacher candidate recognizes the importance of working cooperatively with teachers, staff, and administrators to create a positive school culture.

In order to more clearly define the unique requirements of Early Childhood and Middle Childhood candidates, as outlined by the National Association for the Education of Young Children and the National Middle School Association, additional standards have been included for those programs.

All undergraduate programs are aligned with the standards of the conceptual framework and professional dispositions, as well as with those of INTASC. Undergraduate programs in Early Childhood, Middle Childhood, and Special Education are also aligned with their respective specialized professional associations—NAEYC, NMSA, and CEC.

The graduate programs, both licensure and non-licensure, are aligned with the conceptual framework and professional dispositions. Programs leading to licensure are aligned with their specialized professional associations as well, including NAEYC, NMSA, and CEC. The educational leadership program leading to principal licensure follows a slightly modified set of standards that is closely related to the conceptual framework but focuses on the success of the organization as well as on that of individual students; this set is aligned with ELCC. The non-licensure graduate program—under the umbrella of “Teacher-Leader”—follows the standards of the conceptual framework and the professional dispositions but is aligned with the standards of the National Board for Professional Teachers.

Assessment System

Muskingum College’s teacher education program has designed a comprehensive system for assessing qualifications of applicants to programs and performance of candidates as they proceed through their programs of study leading to teacher licensure. In general, entry into the programs relies on grade point averages, results of standardized testing, and demonstration of professional dispositions as approved by the Education Department. Performance-based assessments on program-level performance outcomes provide a second and more comprehensive assessment of candidate performance;

successful completion of this stage, including passing of the content component of PRAXIS II for post-baccalaureate students and content and pedagogy components of PRAXIS II for Master of Arts in Teaching candidates, permits entry into the student teaching (undergraduate) or clinical practice (graduate) component of the programs. Successful completion of all required standardized tests, required departmental assessments, and student teaching or clinical practice results in application to the State of Ohio for teacher licensure. For MAE students, the first Gateway is entrance into the program, the second is entrance to the capstone experience, and the third is recommendation for a degree and/or licensure. A matrix showing each of the program areas and specific criteria for passing through its Gateways is appended to this document.

Each program has 12-20 specific assessments, including GPA, standardized testing, professional dispositions, and required assessments tied to particular courses. These assessments ensure that the standards of the conceptual framework, as well as those of the specialized professional associations, are met by each candidate. The course-specific assessments are developed by faculty in those courses and evaluated with a 4-point rubric. Data are compiled for each assessment and used both to evaluate individual candidates and to improve performance of the unit. The assessment matrix for undergraduate Early Childhood is appended as an example of the assessment plans developed for each program.

The Education Department faculty meet periodically to consider performance information to make decisions about applicant admission to programs, candidate permission to student teach or enter clinical practice, and successful completion of the capstone field experience. A “red flag” system has been instituted to notify students and

their academic advisors that particular professional dispositions have not been demonstrated or required assessments have not been successfully completed; a copy is also included in the candidate's assessment file. Red flags are cues for more intensive reviews of the candidate's records and considered deliberation of the applicant's admission to the program, the candidate's continuance in the program, placement on a one-term probation, and/or the candidate's recommendation for student teaching/clinical practice or licensure. A more detailed outline of the consequences, along with support provided by the unit, is included in the Gateways matrix.

Every effort is made to assure fairness and consistency in assessments. Assessments are required of everyone in a given cohort. In order to enhance validity and reliability, assessments are standardized (PRAXIS I, II, and III) or modified forms of standardized assessments (for example, required PRAXIS observations prior to and during student teaching or clinical practice). To further enhance reliability, rubrics are developed for department-specific assessments (e.g., assessments that are included in the student teaching or clinical practice portfolio), forms and instructions are standardized, assessors are trained (as in PRAXIS observations), and candidates are prepared for assessments through instruction, classroom simulations, field experiences, and practice with specific forms and procedures. Remediation plans, with support from faculty and the College's Center for the Advancement of Learning, as well as a formal appeal process help ensure fairness in actions following unsatisfactory assessments.

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