EDUCATORS FOR A GLOBAL FUTURE

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2007 – Summer 2014

College of Education, Athens State University

The faculty of the COE at ASU has established a conceptual framework for the preparation of teachers based upon a shared view of the role of education in preparing for the future. Understanding that rethinking the education of students is a major undertaking that requires the development of a common vision. Understanding that programs with a unified mission are more able to transmit a shared vision to pre-service teachers (Wideen, Mayer-Smith, & Moon, 1998), the faculty has selected the theme Teachers for A Global Future to represent viewpoints which are more fully articulated in a shared philosophy. The faculty has also decided to move toward a more clinical approach, and is implementing this philosophy.

PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

Education is the cord that binds the past to the present and provides insight to mark the path into the future. Education is not a class taken, a book read, or a place visited. It is all of these and more than these. Education is the common denominator for all of us as we search for answers to questions about the meaning of life and our purpose in the universe.

The COE is dedicated to the preparation of candidates for the world of tomorrow. The Unit recognizes the ever changing diversity taking place in communities and school populations for which our candidates will serve. Every citizen of the United States is entitled to educational opportunity, opportunity to know self, others, and the environment. Education is a means of making positive changes in the lives of individuals so that each may lead a

purposeful life and become a contributing member of society. Education is the vehicle that helps people, both singly and collectively, reach goals they might never otherwise obtain.

Students need to feel valued and to be encouraged to gain a realistic and healthy respect for themselves and others. The affective domain requires special emphasis in today's world since many people believe that our youth are in serious trouble emotionally. Evidence lies in the amount of violence and drug involvement at an increasingly early age. Much time and attention must be given to the skills of interpersonal relations and conflict resolution.

Young people need to gain an appreciation of persons from various cultures and an understanding of global interdependence. Education is essential for the survival of individuals in a democratic society. Students need to develop and maintain their physical and intellectual health. They need to acquire motor skills and information to live in an active society, maintain a healthy lifestyle, and enjoy leisure pursuits. They should develop an appreciation of the fine arts while being encouraged to express their own uniqueness and creativity.

Students have a right to acquire a strong undergirding of knowledge as foundation for life choices. However, there is a vast amount to learn: our senses are continually bombarded with information. Students can easily become superficially aware of much without developing real understanding, drawing appropriate conclusions, or posing workable solutions. Ideally, formal education should prepare students to continue to think and learn throughout their lives. They will need to be able to select and acquire the information they need. Once the information has been gathered, they will need to evaluate it critically, make decisions based on the evaluations, and create solutions for problems that do not currently exist.

Every student has the right to be taught by a qualified teacher. The word qualified implies more than certification. To be qualified, a teacher must be enthusiastic and friendly, dedicated and fair. Teachers must sincerely care for the students with whom they work. They must be aware of the needs of children and adolescents who represent our multicultural society, and they must be able to communicate effectively with students' parents and with administrators and fellow teachers.

Teachers must have intellectual vitality and a thirst for knowledge which will last a lifetime. A teacher should be a model of the personal satisfaction gained from learning.

The teachers of tomorrow will be those who are able to meet the challenges of a changing and increasingly diverse society. They will be decision makers who will be able to respond to questions about what to teach, what to leave out, and what technology to use. Tomorrow's teachers will have to model the learning behaviors of problem solving and critical and creative thinking. An excellent teacher must be a reflective one who pursues excellence through the exploration of his or her effectiveness.

A Teacher Education Program which allows college students to use technology, successfully gather and analyze data, make translations and appraisals, formulate hypotheses and predictions, and interpret and assess outcomes is necessary. The program should also foster an environment in which the pre-service teacher is required to develop those personal qualities associated with effective teaching such as flexibility, cooperation, appreciation of diversity, and responsibility. Such experiences and qualities will enable future teachers to think reflectively and solve problems in order to continually develop and improve as a professional.

Teacher education has the responsibility to help prospective teachers acquire the knowledge and competence needed to function successfully in a school setting. They should know subject matter, learning theory, pedagogy,

and the developmental characteristics of those they teach. Knowledge of a broad range of instructional methods and materials is critical.

Providing college students with a variety of preservice teaching opportunities will develop instructional ability and a positive acceptance of the uniqueness of individuals. Potential graduates of the program should be able to demonstrate readiness for assuming the challenge of the classroom.

The crux of the problem for teacher education is transforming people who often have been educated in a system relying heavily on the passage of a fixed body of knowledge from one generation to the next into professionals who understand and, more importantly, can impart the ability to think rather than to memorize, to create rather than to copy. This is our immediate challenge.

PURPOSES OF THE PROGRAM

The purpose of the program is, therefore, to prepare teachers who will make thoughtful and effective choices when confronted with instructional decisions in today's and tomorrow's classrooms. These decisions will help prepare children and youth to meet the demands of the future.

To support the general purpose, four specific purposes or emphases of the TEP have been determined. The four emphases are:

- Candidates and professional education faculty show evidence of superior teaching ability through classroom performance.

- Candidates and professional education faculty model effective teaching strategies and approaches, classroom management techniques, and other skills, in order to increase the understanding of all students.

- Candidates and professional education faculty are reflective thinkers who review and analyze their teaching performance in order to grow and improve as teachers.

- Candidates and professional education faculty use and model critical and creative thinking, decision making, and other skills relative to solving problems.

Each of the emphases is founded in the philosophy and is considered to be an important part of preparing teachers for tomorrow's schools. Each is further defined and clarified in the paragraphs below as it is practiced in the program at ASU.

PERFORMANCE-BASED FOR ABILITY

Performance implies action. Learning is caused by action the learner takes; learning occurs as the learner tries to perform to a standard (Zemelman, Daniels & Hyde, 2005). Teaching is an active profession. A candidate may remember the steps in a lesson plan or be able to discuss a variety of classroom management techniques, but the same candidate may not be successful in a classroom full of students. Of all the factors that promote students' successful learning, the professional skills of the teacher are the most powerful (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). Successful candidates must be able to translate many kinds of knowledge into appropriate and effective teacher behavior. Practice in performing the tasks of a teacher must begin early in the professional program and continue through the internship. Evaluation of candidates in the professional program at ASU is based on both knowledge and performance. This is the only true determination of the success of the candidate and the program.

Modeling for understanding

Effective teachers must do more than lecture or explain; a much more powerful method of instruction is to model or demonstrate a new idea or skill first and then give students an opportunity to practice the learning themselves (Eby & Kujawa, 1994). Students of all ages learn by observing other people (Bandura, 1977, 1986; Zimmerman, 1989). Learning may take place by directly imitating a model such as a teacher or by inferring the reasons for the model's behavior (Borich, 1996). Teachers who are taught how to model are more effective than teachers who are not (Zemelman, Daniels, & Hyde, 2005). For candidates to learn to model for their future students, they must see professors and practicing teachers model, and they must be required to plan, rehearse, and use modeling as they prepare to become teachers. This is an essential and pervasive component of the program at ASU.

Reflective thinking for improvement

Dewey (1933) defined reflection as a process of active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or thought in light of the grounds that support it. More recently, the term "reflection" has been used to describe teachers' consideration of the act of teaching and what they can do or could have done to reach their goal (Eby, Herrell & Jordon, 2005). Teachers must make many decisions about students and instruction that cannot be reduced to simple formulas or rules. Making such decisions requires that candidates become reflective teachers (Borich, 1996). Schon (1983) used the term "reflective practitioners" to refer to skilled professionals who solve problems in the course of their work. The essential difference between good teachers and average-to-poor teachers may be that good teachers are reflective ones who teach differently each year because they are always thinking, learning, and getting better (Myers & Myers, 1995). Reflection requires that teachers be thoughtful and be able to evaluate themselves. In order for candidates to become reflective thinkers, they must learn the value of the process to their success and to the success of their students. Recognizing the value of reflection begins when candidates reflect on their performance during each of their professional courses at ASU.

Problem solving for progress

Problem solving is a term that describes a kind of thinking people use when they are faced with a situation or information that they have not previously encountered (Myers & Myers, 1995). Dewey (1933) wrote that problem solving is a matter of systematic inquiry in order to decide on a course of action. All teachers, whether they are beginners or experts, engage in problem solving (Wakefield, 1996). Veteran teachers are often faced with problems they have not seen before; beginning teachers are almost always encountering problems they have not seen before (Ducharme & Ducharme, 1996). As teachers and students move into the next century, new situations will occur and new problems will need to be faced and solved to an even greater degree. Employers for the jobs of tomorrow will need employees who use good judgment, solve problems creatively, and make decisions rationally (Rose & Nicoll, 1997). Schon (1983) encouraged professionals to think and reflect about past, present, and future actions as a way of designing problem-solving strategies that will be effective in finding solutions. A teacher who can solve problems in novel situations is one who can grow with the changes in schools and in society. That teacher is one who can teach students to do the same.

Summary and interconnections

The faculty of the COE considers the four specific purposes or emphases to be interconnected and essential when preparing Teachers for a Global future. Modeling and performance go hand in hand. Teaching is an active profession. A teacher's effectiveness is proven in performance in the classroom. Modeling is a performance-based

activity. Teachers who model for students are providing an example of behavior to be learned whether intentional or not.

Reflection is essential to performance in the classroom. When teachers reflect on their performance, they are able to make thoughtful personal evaluations. Reflection leads to the identification of and solution to problems when they arise. According to Yost, Sentner, and Forlenza-Bailey (2000), critical reflection is a problem-solving tool that enables teachers to find solutions to issues in schools. For a teacher in a classroom, the proof of the solution is to act upon it, that is, to perform, and then to reflect again.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The faculty of the COE has established nine expected outcomes that describe the teacher candidate who completes the program at ASU. The outcomes are based on the purposes of the program and are accomplished through the sequence of courses and field experiences required of the students. The outcomes are in accordance with the report of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (1994), the INTASC Standards (2000), the Alabama Quality Teaching Standards (AQTS, 2007), and Goodlad's postulates (1990). Each outcome is further clarified by a series of descriptive phrases listed below.

The TEP at ASU will prepare teachers who are:

effective communicators who

- recognize the importance of verbal and nonverbal communication

- demonstrate the communication skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing

- model effective communication skills and strategies

- use effective questioning and responding skills

- communicate in ways that demonstrate sensitivity to the individuality of students including cultural and gender differences

- communicate with parents, teachers, and administrators in a professional, collaborative manner;

knowledgeable scholars who

- have a wide base of knowledge with regard to content and pedagogy

- are competent in the subjects they will teach

- understand major concepts, processes of inquiry, and ways of knowing that are central to the subjects being taught

- relate the knowledge of one discipline to other subject matter areas;

positive, supportive professionals who

- genuinely like young people, act as their advocates, and help them succeed

- model effective human relations skills with people of all cultures

- make students feel valued for their potential as people and help them learn to value each other

- understand how factors in the students' environment outside of school may influence students' lives and learning

- talk with and listen to students and are sensitive to signs of stress

- assume responsibility for their own physical and psychological health;

resourceful curriculum planners who

- understand and value long-term and short-term planning

- understand and comply with professional standards in various disciplines

- evaluate teaching resources, curriculum materials, and instructional technology

- select essential subject matter content to be learned by all students

- integrate knowledge of subjects, students, and the community

- select and create learning experiences that are appropriate to curriculum goals;

skilled facilitators of developmental growth who

- understand how learning occurs in children and can identify developmental levels

- are aware of expected developmental progressions and ranges of individual variation

- support all areas of development in each student

- plan instruction that accommodates the needs of learners of diverse cultures and abilities

- are disposed to use students' strengths and differences as a basis for growth and their errors as opportunities for learning;

student-centered, reflective instructors who

- understand principles and techniques along with advantages and limitations of various instructional theories and methods

- design lessons according to appropriate instructional models

- know how to enhance learning through the use of a variety of materials, resources, and technology

- actively engage students in their own learning

- use a variety of strategies to encourage students' development of critical thinking and problem solving

- plan instruction to increase multicultural awareness

- think systematically about their teaching and analyze and revise it appropriately

- adjust lessons and instruction to accommodate diversity among students;

capable classroom managers who

- create a classroom climate that is conducive to learning

- organize and manage the resources of time, space, materials, and technology, and maximize the amount spent on learning

- use a range of strategies to promote positive relationships, cooperation, and purposeful learning

- create a classroom in which students assume responsibility for themselves and for one another

- use management models and strategies as appropriate to individual situations;

competent evaluators who

- understand the characteristics, uses, advantages, and limitations of formal, informal, and alternative assessment strategies

- know how to select, construct, and use appropriate assessment strategies and instruments

- use assessment results appropriately to promote student growth

- maintain useful records of student work and performance

- can communicate student progress knowledgeably and responsibly;

lifelong learners who

- keep abreast of new ideas and understandings in the field

- value and support professional organizations

- possess research skills adequate to acquire knowledge to improve teaching

- establish personal and professional goals.

PROFESSIONAL DISPOSITIONS

The faculty of the COE has established seven professional dispositions, which are observed, developed, and evaluated in candidates during the entire program at ASU. These were summarized and derived from the previous eleven dispositions of 2002. The dispositions were developed in collaboration with area public school administrators and are in accordance with the Alabama Quality Teaching Standards (AQTS, 2007).

The following candidate behaviors are considered to be requisite for an effective teacher:

1. Participate in positive interactions,

2. Show respect for self and others,

3. Assume responsibility,

4. Exhibit interest in the learner and the learning process,

5. Exhibit stewardship of diversity,

6. Advocate the use of technology, and

7. Exhibits fairness and the belief that all students can learn.

COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY

The Unit is dedicated to enhancing the diversity of the faculty, candidates, and programs. Over the past decade, the Unit has increasingly made solid strides toward preparing candidates to effectively teach every student in an ever-changing population. One major focus of the Unit has been to recruit and retain candidates from a variety of cultures. Another has been to recruit, hire, and retain a diverse faculty. These recruiting efforts have been a cornerstone in the foundation for a more diverse educational setting.

Efforts such as engaging in professional development activities, conducting research, and participating in service projects continue to be mainstays in assisting Unit faculty in understanding, appreciating, and positively communicating to candidates the diversity that exists in society. Unit faculty have incorporated appropriate diversity information and instructional strategies into courses. They expect candidates to demonstrate not only a knowledge base in issues related to diversity, but the skills and dispositions that enable them to create appropriate learning environments in which all students will thrive.

Beyond curricular implementations and modifications to instructional practices, evidence of the Unit's growth in its commitment to diversity can be observed in the expansion of candidates' learning opportunities in field experiences. Faculty assess candidates with regard to diversity through professional dispositions during all courses, field experiences, and during the internship. Candidates gain insightful and practical experiences necessary to establish a strong acceptance of and appreciation for the similarities and differences that exist among students and communities. The Unit is committed to fostering the appropriate dispositions in candidates and assisting candidates in acquiring the evolving body of knowledge they must apply in order to meet the needs of all students.

TECHNOLOGY PLAN

GOAL: To provide an environment that supports ASU COE faculty, staff, and candidates as they incorporate available technologies into teaching and learning in the P-12 environment.

Objectives:

- To provide access to technology for faculty, staff, and candidates

- To create an environment that utilizes technology to expand teaching and learning

- To promote continuous improvement that will enhance professional development

The first objective focuses on providing faculty members with adequate access to technology for instructional and administrative tasks, and on supporting technology application by candidates. This objective is being met in many ways.

The university houses an Instructional Technology (IT) Department that supports the needs and demands of the Unit faculty, staff, and candidates as well as all campus personnel and students. It provides leadership in technology decisions to the university. The IT Department provides a Help Line for candidates. The Help Line provides technical support for candidates utilizing Blackboard, Tegrity, Novell and Respondus. The IT Department also assists faculty and staff with technology questions and concerns, maintains technology equipment located in classrooms, labs, and the library, and offers professional development sessions for faculty, staff, COE candidates, and students in all university programs.

Access to presentation technology for faculty and COE candidates continues to enhance the delivery of instruction in the Classroom Building. Ninety nine percent of the classrooms are smart rooms that include an Elmo, LCD projector, computer connection to the campus network, and a video/DVD player. The instructors and/or candidates have immediate access to the Internet and information in the campus library.

In addition to presentation technology, candidates at the main campus have computer lab access in Chasteen Hall, the Student Union, and the library. The Wallace-Hanceville campus has a lab dedicated to COE candidates. A rolling lab (with 25 Mac iBooks in each lab) is also available for faculty and candidate use at both campuses.

The university has plans in place to maintain the equipment and upgrade it on a regular basis. For example, faculty, staff, and computer labs receive the latest versions of Microsoft software so that they are compatible with students in all campus programs. A four-year plan is in place to upgrade the technology for faculty, staff, classrooms, and labs. In addition, an upgrade inventory is being implemented so that accurate and timely upgrades will be provided.

The university has increased its bandwidth for Internet access services to campus-wide faculty and students. In addition, the institution has expanded its infrastructure for distance delivery of courses via the Blackboard Academic Suite, which includes the Blackboard Learning System, the Blackboard Community System, and the Blackboard Content System. The Academic Suite offers a myriad of instructional & educational functions for all users.

Currently plans are in place for candidates to receive an upgrade to email service, network access, and limited storage space on the network. Future plans are in place to provide students with the latest version of Microsoft software at no cost to them.

The second objective focuses on creating an environment that uses technology to expand teaching and learning. This objective is being met through the adoption of Tegrity campus wide and through the Model Classroom Project in the COE. Tegrity technology offers faculty and students an invaluable approach to teaching and learning. Tegrity enables faculty to record lecture sessions, including PowerPoint and other supplemental materials (videos, CDs, and DVDs), and make these available for students to view and/or listen to while off campus. The other approach is the creation of the Model Classroom Project located in the basement of McCain Hall. This classroom is a dedicated COE Technology Lab with 10 computers, a smart board, Elmo, and Tablet monitors. In addition plans are under way to have the McCain Hall classroom equipped as a Horizon Wimba Live Classroom that will replace teleconferences. Although this addition is much like a teleconference, it allows students and instructors the opportunity for further

interaction. Candidates can ask questions (in private or to the group) and make comments as they view the instructor's presentation.

The third objective focuses on promoting continuous improvement through professional development. The IT Department provides regular seminars, webinars, and inservice presentations each semester to ensure that faculty and staff understand and are able to effectively utilize all technologies available to them. It also provides sessions for COE candidates during the new student orientation and internship seminars. The university plans to utilize Tegrity for orientation and training of all campus faculty, staff, and students. Currently there are examples of Tegrity training sessions on the COE website titled Creating Your Portfolio and Blackboard Help. These are brief tutorials used to assist candidates.

ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

Unit faculty of the COE have established a systematic assessment system with four benchmarks of candidate assessment as well as program and Unit assessment. The assessment system is based on the conceptual framework and has been implemented.

You may view presentation of the conceptual framework at:
    http://www.athens.edu/college_edu/powerpoint/PPCFramework-2012.pdf