

NORTHERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



Committed to the Development of All Learners is the theme that undergirds the Conceptual Framework for all professional programs in the College of Education and Human Services (COEHS) at Northern Kentucky University. The Conceptual Framework is supported by the missions of the university and the college and used by faculty to continuously assess and update the curricula of the initial and advanced programs. The COEHS created its Conceptual Framework after input from its constituents: education and arts and science faculty, candidates, staff, and community members. The graphic depicts a framework of continuously assessing the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that classroom teachers, instructional leaders, and school counselors must have to facilitate student learning and academic achievement.

NORTHERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY'S MISSION

The mission of Northern Kentucky University is to educate students to succeed in their chosen life roles; be informed, contributing members of their communities - regionally, nationally and internationally; and pursue satisfying and fulfilling lives. The university will offer a comprehensive array of baccalaureate and master's programs as well as law and other selected doctoral programs that meet regional needs.

The university supports multi-dimensional excellence across the full breadth of its work: teaching and learning, research and creative activity, and outreach and public engagement. Northern Kentucky University fosters a community that values openness, inclusion and respect. The university is committed to intellectual and creative freedom and to the open expression of ideas in ways that support scholarship and advance the learning process. The university embraces its regional stewardship role as reflected in its significant contribution to the intellectual, social, economic, cultural and civic vitality of the region and the commonwealth.

Northern Kentucky University achieves its mission through outstanding faculty, state-of-the-art programs and community partnerships. The university prides itself on its learner

focus, entrepreneurial spirit, global perspective, innovative programs, small classes, technology-enhanced academic programs, co-curricular learning opportunities, and emphasis on active learning, including student research, internships, co-op programs and service learning.

Northern Kentucky University is the commonwealth's only regional university located in a major metropolitan area. The university values its role as an integral part of the metropolitan region and recognizes the region as a powerful source of knowledge and experience that can strengthen, enhance and enrich every aspect of the university. Regional stewardship informs every dimension of the university's mission.

NORTHERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY'S VISION

Northern Kentucky University will be nationally recognized as the premier comprehensive, metropolitan university that prepares students for life and work in a global society and provides leadership to advance the intellectual, social, economic, cultural, and civic vitality of its region and of the commonwealth.

NKU is committed to:

- Placing learners and their learning at the center of all that we do.
- The highest standards of excellence in every dimension of our work.
- Access to education that holds high expectations for all students and provides support for their success.
- Public engagement that advances the progress of the region and commonwealth.
- Intellectual and creative freedom and the free expression of ideas.
- A culture of openness and inclusion that values diversity in people and ideas.
- A work environment that encourages and rewards innovation and creativity.
- A campus climate that supports collegiality, collaboration and civility.

THE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SERVICES' VISION AND MISSION STATEMENT

The vision of the College of Education and Human Services (Unit) is to prepare exemplary helping professionals who demonstrate the personal and professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to provide for the learning, growth, and developmental needs of individuals in an increasingly diverse, complex, and technological society.

The mission of the College, in alignment with the university's core values, is to realize our vision through collaboration and mutual support among the programs' students, faculty, staff, and communities.

COLLEGE GOALS

The goals of the teacher education, instructional leadership, and school counselor programs are to:

- Attract, retain, and graduate students of diverse backgrounds;

- Recruit and retain outstanding, committed, collegial, and diverse faculty and staff;
- Monitor progress of, provide feedback to, and evaluate performances of students, faculty, and staff;
- Promote faculty professional development and scholarship;
- Encourage and model practices based on high standards and expectations, as defined by professional associations;
- Demonstrate a commitment to ethical and professional standards;
- Provide diverse and inclusive teaching and learning experiences;
- Use creative and effective teaching enhanced with the application of current technology;
- Provide a variety of meaningful field and clinical experiences that include working with diverse populations;
- Seek external funding for innovative programs that enhance learning, growth, and development to meet the needs of the community;
- Engage in continuous assessment that ensures program effectiveness;
- Provide timely and accurate communication and information to internal and external constituencies;
- Engage with P-12 schools, university colleagues, community agencies, and other professional communities to achieve our mutual goals and interests.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the teacher education, instructional leadership, and school counseling programs is to develop effective professionals who embody the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to teach, lead, and counsel all learners. This commitment is reflected in the Conceptual Framework through cohesive and coordinated experiences that stimulate inquiry and develop candidates into successful helping professionals. Candidates are expected to collaborate with peers, education and other university faculty, and practitioners in active pursuit of theoretical, disciplinary and pedagogical understanding. The intention is to provide an experience through which candidates develop the knowledge, skills and dispositions to function as informed and ethical professionals. Candidates are disposed to think critically, respect cultural differences, recognize the worth of all individuals, practice with competence and appreciate the value of continued personal and intellectual growth.

PHILOSOPHY

The Conceptual Framework emphasizes the importance of preparing candidates to support the learning, growth and development of all students. Faculty are engaged with candidates in classroom coursework and field experiences, continuously assessing the candidates' knowledge, skills, and dispositions as they participate in their various program experiences. We believe the educator's role is to facilitate learning, which is accomplished by creating opportunities for all students to actively participate in their program experiences through methods appropriate to their individual learning styles. Our model is based to a great extent on the Constructivist Model, borrowing from the tenets of Piaget and Vygotsky and the Social Cognitive Theory of Learning. However, to increase the appreciation of diverse and expansive thinking among our students, we

encourage the introduction of modern theoretical perspectives (e.g. race theory, feminist theory, disability studies, etc.).

The theory of Lev Vygotsky (Vygotsky, 1978) extends Piaget's ideas and states that interaction with other people and the real world environment is critical for learning and development of children and adults. Vygotsky emphasized using:

- Explicit instruction to promote learning;
- Collaboration and challenging tasks within a problem solving approach; and
- Group activities to internalize learning processes.

Vygotsky outlined a theory of cognitive development based on the premise that there is a mutual interaction between children and people with whom they have regular social contact. The child's intellectual development is based on social interactions or cooperative dialogues with other members of society. As adults or more competent peers help children to master meaningful activities, the communication between these entities becomes part of the children's thinking. Once the essential features of this dialogue are internalized, children can use the language to guide them in activities. A central idea of Vygotsky's theory is that cognition is always situated in activity and that people learn best when they are working with others while actively engaged in a problem solving situation.

Social interaction is a major vehicle of learning – whether it is formalized cooperative learning in the classroom or the natural interactions of children on the playground or in family gatherings. All social interaction contributes to learning. However in classroom learning the nature of the teacher-student interaction is paramount. Teacher-student interaction should be collaborative and include teacher modeling, explaining and questioning. Students should, in turn, be expected to self-question in ways that enable them to accurately verbalize the concepts being learned (Vygotsky, 1987).

The education, instructional leadership, and school counseling programs implement Vygotsky's ideas through the candidates' active participation in content and pedagogy classes as well as appropriate field experiences, i.e. practicum, internship, and/or student teaching. During these experiences candidates construct their knowledge by engaging in a variety of activities, such as developing and teaching lesson plans, assessing P-12 students, and collaborating with their peers, university supervisors, and cooperating teachers in the P-12 school.

The Unit's programs foster learning environments that invite collaboration and cooperation among learners and instructors and provide opportunities for candidates to be reflective about many issues related to their future profession as a teacher, instructional leader, or school counselor. Within this context, candidates are asked to continually reflect and examine their knowledge, skills, and dispositions with the ultimate goal of becoming a highly qualified practitioner.

KNOWLEDGE BASE

The educational programs of the Unit are based on the philosophies of Vygotsky and other Constructivist theorists. According to Vygotsky (1978), learning should be a social activity in which students work together by talking with each other, exchanging ideas, and providing feedback. Teachers who encourage students to work together are creating learning communities (Hansen & Stephens, 2000; Stroh & Sink, 2002) that provide ongoing support to all students. This type of support provides the security students need to be academically motivated. Vygotsky described two levels of development. The first level is actual development of a skill/ability, which is attained when a learner can apply it to new content without requiring assistance. The other level of development encompasses those skills/abilities that one can accomplish with the assistance of other(s) who are more advanced. Together they establish the “zone of proximal development” (ZPD) which is based on factors related to both maturation and acquisition of knowledge/skill (Gardner, 2005).

Constructivist practices provide a seamless match with the Unit’s philosophy. We believe, with Dewey (1938) and others (Gardner, 1991; Lambert, 1995; Mansilla & Gardner, 1998; Perkins, 1998) that learning is active and that it is constructed from experiences and reflection of those experiences. When Constructivists state that learners construct knowledge out of their own past experiences and current situation they acknowledge that learning is contextual and individually constructed.

The Unit prepares candidates who see learning as a lifelong process and understand that knowledge is constructed when meaningful connections are made through and among their experiences (Lambert, 1995). The Unit’s programs provide support for the construction of multiple domains of knowledge which may be broadly defined as knowledge of content, knowledge of the learner, and knowledge of pedagogy, referred to as “powerful teaching” by Darling-Hammond (2006). Candidates are asked to reflect on their own experiences as learners and the implications of those experiences for their growth as future educational professionals.

Through reflection on their experiences as learners, candidates are helped to establish connections among the role the student plays in learning, the environments in which learning occurs, and the knowledge bases that help support learning (Wang & Palincsar, 1989). Specifically, the Unit works to enable the development of candidates who:

- Are committed to the continuing process of learning with an emphasis on learning pedagogy skills;
- Take an active role in promoting the learning of all students;
- Embrace diversity and support pluralistic views; and
- Examine the role of technology and apply it effectively to advance their students’ knowledge.

The Unit’s education, instructional leadership, and school counseling programs promote the development of professionals who consider and act on these ideals. This is evident in the programs through traditional classroom experiences, school partnerships, and field experiences, which compel attention to diversity, authentic learning opportunities, and

performance-based assessment. The faculty carefully design courses and select resources that develop candidate knowledge and skills while emphasizing reflection on and articulation of the purposes and goals of learning. Candidates are guided through the processes of respecting diversity and culturally diverse qualities of learning. They are asked to recognize and appreciate the rich fabric of our society even when diversity in our predominantly mono-cultural area might not be immediately evident. Candidates, through readings and discussion in on-campus courses and field-based experiences, come to see individual differences along lines of gender, language, abilities, learning interests, and styles. Moreover, in those situations where economics and race make diversity more visible, candidates need to be aware of and responsive to difference, but may also need help to see commonalities among the diversity.

According to Gardner (2000) formal and informal processes must be used to gather as much information as possible about the student and the learning context. Darling-Hammond (1999) and Wiggins (1998) state that students should be continuously assessed at multiple levels and using a variety of methods. Candidates in the COEHS programs are exposed to a range of assessment techniques both in theory and practice throughout their programs. As Lambert et al. (1995), Gardner (2000), and Wiggins (1998), have stated, authentic assessment can evoke meaning making in students, and support the Constructivist perspectives on learning. All candidates in the initial programs are required to take an assessment course, as well as having assessment methodology infused in their pedagogy, practica, and student teaching courses. Candidates are taught to use a variety of assessments, with an emphasis on authentic assessment, as part of formative and summative assessment of P-12 students. Candidates in advanced level programs also have assessment concepts integrated throughout their programs, in addition to assessment courses they can take as part of their coursework.

The Unit programs foster evaluation practices that raise meaningful questions and are integrated as much as possible with the ongoing experiences of candidates (Haney, 1985; Hanhan, 1988; King & Franklin, 1989; Zidon, 1996; Wiggins, 1998). Authentic assessment plays a critical role in the evaluation of candidates. By experiencing these varied assessment activities on a personal level candidates are provided with a foundation on which to develop their own assessment strategies. The field experiences provide multiple opportunities to apply theory to practice as candidates evaluate their effectiveness and their students' learning in classroom settings.

Though differences exist among individual faculty members' philosophical belief systems they share the core belief that knowledge in all content fields is ever-changing and expanding. Faculty further believe they and their students must keep abreast of these changes. Consequently, faculty lead candidates to construct and reflect on their own knowledge and understanding which is then measured through various assessment techniques. Faculty serve as models in the classes they teach and the procedures they use to evaluate candidates' knowledge, skills, and dispositions. Candidates in turn demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and dispositions during course and field experiences, always with the intent of positively impacting P-12 student learning.

Research has consistently indicated that content knowledge, communication skills, and intelligence, as measured by traditional tests, are not sufficient characteristics of professional educators. Rather, research has conclusively demonstrated that professional and pedagogical knowledge, skills, and dispositions are essential characteristics needed by educators to positively impact learners in diverse learning communities. (Borko & Putnam, 1996; Darling-Hammond, 2002; Ferguson & Womack, 1993; Wilson, Floden, & Ferrini-Mundy, 2001). These professional and pedagogical knowledge, skills, and dispositions are benchmarked in each program of the Unit through the appropriate specialized professional associations (SPA) standards as well as the applicable state and national standards.

As noted by Stronge (2002), effective teachers truly believe that all students can learn. These teachers also believe that they must know their students, their subject, and themselves, while continuing to account for the fact that students learn differently. Through differentiation of instruction, effective teachers reach their students and together they enjoy their successes. Current theory and wisdom of practice suggest that students are not “blank slates” to be written upon but rather are individuals who bring diverse backgrounds and experiences to the learning community that affect what is learned and how it is learned (Borko & Putnam, 1996; Danielson, 1996; Stronge, 2002).

The Unit faculty believe that candidates should understand they are part of a larger learning community involving parents, the school community, business community, and so forth. Further, it is essential that candidates continue to improve their ability to purposefully reflect upon student learning by considering various attributes, such as student diversity, technology use, assessment results, informal feedback, curriculum and instruction, and meeting standards (Cruikshank, 1987; Danielson, 1996; Schon, 1983). This purposeful reflection is essential to the continuous improvement of professional educators (Danielson, 1996; INTASC, 1992). Stronge (2002) suggests an important facet of professionalism and of effectiveness in the classroom is a teacher’s dedication to students and the job of teaching. Through examination of several sources of evidence, a dual commitment to student learning and to personal learning has been found repeatedly in effective teachers. A common belief among effective teachers, which reveals their dual commitment, is that it is up to them to use a multitude of strategies to reach students. In essence, effective teachers view themselves as responsible for the success of their students.

In order to impact P-12 learners it is essential for candidates to demonstrate systemic and developmentally appropriate practices. Consequently, each program in the Unit has developed a planned sequence of experiences in content specialization, professional studies, and integrated field-based experiences for the purpose of positively impacting P-12 student learning. The ultimate goal is to prepare teachers, instructional leaders, and school counselors who effectively demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of highly qualified certified professionals.

DISPOSITIONS

There are dispositions and professional behaviors recognized as essential by the profession that must be practiced by all educators. These essential dispositions and behaviors are articulated in the Code of Ethics established by the Kentucky Educational Standards Board and the Code of Ethics developed by the Unit. Candidates must read, understand and abide by both sets of ethics standards throughout the program and in their professional experiences. Candidates will acknowledge their responsibilities to follow these standards by signing copies of each of the codes at the beginning of their initial and advanced teacher preparation programs.

There is a significant body of research indicating that candidates' dispositions/perceptions about students, about teaching, and about themselves, strongly influence the impact they will have on student learning and development. From this perspective, the primary goal of the preparation programs is to facilitate the amalgamation of candidates' dispositions, knowledge, and skills in such a way that completers become effective and integrated teaching intermediaries carrying out the purposes of schools and society. The aspiring educator enrolled in these programs would exhibit increased integration (indicating a more thorough amalgamation) as she/he moves toward completion of the program.

The Perceptual Dispositions Model (Wasicsko, 2003) is based on the perceptual psychological theory and subsequent research of Arthur W. Combs (1949). Over the course of 40 years, Combs explored the implications of a perceptual psychology for understanding and improving the education professions. Most of his studies investigated the perceptual characteristics of transformative educators who were able to significantly and positively affect others' lives. In these studies, effectiveness was determined using various methods, i.e. evaluation of teachers by pupils, peers, and administrators; qualification for national honors for outstanding teaching; and assessment of student product outcomes (e.g., test scores on achievement tests). Results of these studies point to at least four general areas of perceptions that can serve to differentiate effective from ineffective teachers. These are: (a) perceptions about self, (b) perceptions about other people, (c) perceptions about the teaching task, and (d) general frame of reference. The implication for teacher preparation is clear: there are identifiable perceptual characteristics associated with teacher effectiveness.

The Perceptual Dispositions Model is used by university faculty and cooperating teachers to assess and evaluate candidates' dispositions (see Dispositions and Professional Behaviors Checklist). The model identifies four core beliefs as described below.

Perceptions of self - A person's self-perceptions are probably the most important factor relating to educator effectiveness. Simply stated, effective educators are confident in their ability to help people learn and they believe they have "what it takes" to handle the problems they confront. Another self-perception of effective teachers is the ability to *identify* with diverse individuals and groups. The best educators proactively find ways of individualizing learning environments to take into account individual, racial, cultural, generational, and other differences.

Perceptions of others - Effective educators see people in essentially realistic and positive ways. They see students as generally dependable, able, and worthy. Effective educators believe that when students are provided with the opportunity, they will more frequently than not do what's right, that students usually have the ability to cope and deal with their own problems and can be trusted. Simply stated, they believe that all children can learn.

Perceptions of purpose - The best educators see their job in a larger context as one of releasing students' inner potential to become whatever their talents and interests might permit. They are concerned with how students will develop and behave, not only in class today or this year, but tens of years from now. They see their jobs as helping students grow into good world citizens and the kinds of neighbors we all want to live near.

Frame of reference - All educational situations involve both people and things. The best educators know that to make learning meaningful and useful, they must deal with the human aspects - the feeling, beliefs, and attitudes of students. Good teachers listen to students' problems, try to make their classes challenging and non-threatening, display a sense of humor and realize that good teaching means that students grow not only in the quantity of knowledge but in their mental health as well.

The table below lists the twenty dispositions/ professional behaviors used to assess all candidates during their initial and advanced education programs at Northern Kentucky University.

Table 1.

DISPOSITION AND PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR CHECKLIST
A. Perception of Self
A1. Identifies positively with others
A2. Is dependable/ punctual
A3. Exhibits ethical behavior
A4. Displays positive attitude and enthusiasm
A5. Has a professional appearance w/in school guidelines
A6. Demonstrates leadership
A7. Is open to constructive criticism
B. Perception of Others
B1. Views all students as able to succeed
B2. Collaborates positively with others
B3. Shows respect for others
B4. Respects cultural diversity and individual differences
C. Perception of Purpose
C1. Understands the long term goals of teaching and learning
C2. Creates a climate that promotes fairness and equity
C3. Committed to ongoing professional development
C4. Demonstrates commitment to developing the "whole" student
D. Frame of Reference
D1. Primary focus on student learning
D2. Reflects on one's performance
D3. Modifies instruction to increase student learning
D4. Builds and maintains positive professional relationships with students.
D5. Builds and maintains positive professional relationships with colleagues.

CANDIDATE PROFICIENCIES

The Unit's theme "Committed to the Development of All Learners" is derived from candidate proficiencies and outcomes pertaining to the standards governing initial and advanced programs. The Conceptual Framework and its alignment with appropriate national, state, and SPA standards ensures that candidates demonstrate the knowledge, skills and dispositions needed to positively impact P-12 student learning. In addition, the Conceptual Framework guides faculty to make data driven decisions when evaluating the effectiveness of candidates and/or programs.

The Unit prepares candidates who are advocates for all learners and are proficient as:

- Knowledgeable scholars (which includes content, professional, pedagogical, diversity and technical knowledge). Candidates are well-grounded in theory and equipped with a strong knowledge base to provide learning environments that value diversity, collaboration, and promote a high level of achievement and quality for all learners.
- Skilled scholars (which includes lesson and unit planning, classroom management, classroom teaching, communication, reflection, assessment, accountability for student learning, and technology skills). The effective use of pedagogical skills is essential in building a community of learners to ensure a positive impact on P-12 learning.
- Collaborative scholars (which includes the ability to collaborate with students, parents, and colleagues; interpersonal skills; dispositions; professionalism; and self-evaluation). Candidates contemplate the appropriateness and possible long-term consequences of their professional dispositions and actions on student performance and all aspects of their teaching and instruction.

COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY

Consistent with the Unit's theme, vision, mission, and philosophy there is a commitment to and value of diversity. The Unit is committed to attracting and retaining candidates and faculty with diverse backgrounds and providing diverse and inclusive teaching and learning experiences. The Unit's theme, "Committed to the Development of All Learners" further emphasizes an essential belief that all students can learn at a high level. Faculty members of the COEHS intentionally teach that learning is not predicated upon gender, race, disability, ethnicity, and/or socio-economic status.

The importance of recognizing the racial, behavioral, and cultural diversity of students has inspired much recent discussion and research in higher education. Racially diverse environments, when properly nurtured, lead to gains in educational outcomes for all students. Diversity extends beyond student demographics. Cultural, philosophical, ideological, language, and intellectual diversity are among the many forms of diversity which are recognized by the Conceptual Framework and are integrated into the principles and practices of each program.

At the initial level, all teacher education candidates in the College of Education and Human Services are required to complete a diversity course as part of the university's general education requirements, as well as two special education classes that focus on

teaching students with disabilities. In addition, all candidates at the initial level are required to consider diverse groups of students when developing and implementing lesson and unit plans in their methods and practicum courses. Faculty in turn evaluate each candidate's ability to plan and work with students of diverse backgrounds. Candidates at the initial level are also required to have experiences working with diverse P-12 students during their practicum and student teaching experiences. Candidates at the advanced level are required to complete a course in diversity as well as document working with P-12 students of diverse backgrounds, which include students with disabilities and Limited English Proficiency, as well as students who are racially and socio-economically diverse.

Education in a democracy requires a commitment to affirming diversity and meeting the challenges presented by a wide range of constituents and communities. The Unit prepares candidates who are equipped with knowledge, competency, and dispositions required to provide equitable educational experiences for all students within a diverse P-12 population. The Unit envisions that its candidates emerge as knowledgeable, skilled, and collaborative scholars who are effective communicators and reflective decision-makers, accountable for the learning of all students.

COMMITMENT TO TECHNOLOGY

The International Society for Technology in Education (2008) states that through the ongoing use of technology in the schooling process, students are empowered to achieve important technology capabilities. A key individual in helping students develop those capabilities is the classroom teacher. The teacher is responsible for establishing the classroom environment and preparing the learning opportunities that facilitate students' use of technology to learn, communicate, and develop knowledge products. Consequently, the Unit faculty believe it is critical that all candidates are prepared to provide their students with opportunities to develop their technological knowledge and skills.

The Unit is committed to the integration, infusion, and application of technology to enhance instruction and advance student learning. Each initial certification education candidate must successfully complete an educational technology class, EDU 313, Technology Applications for Teachers as well as technology assignments in various content and pedagogy courses. In addition, before taking the EDU 313 class candidates for initial certification must demonstrate computer proficiency either through completion of a pre-requisite computer course or through a computer competency test. Candidates must complete both technology courses with a C or better to continue progressing in their teacher education program. The Unit's advanced programs either require candidates to complete a technology course or offer technology courses as electives in those programs.

All candidates, except those in the school counseling and instructional leadership programs, are required to develop and maintain an electronic portfolio (ePortfolio) during their professional semesters. The ePortfolio requires candidates to use technology to document their knowledge, skills, and dispositions as outlined in the ePortfolio rubric and aligned with the appropriate standards.

In addition, through various forms of instructional technology, candidates learn how to create meaningful experiences and personalized learning for P-12 students. Computers and information technologies offer candidates a myriad of possibilities to bring the digital world into the classroom. Education faculty are also committed to modeling positive technology usage by seamlessly infusing technology into their lessons. One example of this infusion is the use of Blackboard for blended and online course delivery. Blackboard allows educators to provide collaborative activities, critical reflection, and instructional resources to candidates in both online and face-to-face courses. In addition, faculty have the opportunity to attend on-campus technology seminars and workshops to enhance their technological skills. Faculty and candidates also receive technology support as needed from the university's Informational Technology Department

ALIGNMENT WITH STANDARDS

Each program in the Unit has defined the essential knowledge, skills, and dispositions that its candidates must possess to successfully complete the program. These program requirements and experiences are consistent with the essential knowledge of the profession as defined by the appropriate SPA guidelines. For example, the elementary program requirements and experiences are designed to meet the standards of the Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI) while the physical education program is designed to meet the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) standards. (Refer to the appropriate program submission for details on how each program meets its SPA standards).

All candidates, except school counselors, completing a program at Northern Kentucky University prepare a portfolio (electronic or paper) to demonstrate that he/she is proficient in meeting the state standards for that program. The portfolio is assessed at each transition point to provide candidates with appropriate feedback regarding their progress toward meeting standards. Prior to the completion of their programs candidates must submit a satisfactory portfolio as determined by one or more professional educators who evaluate the portfolio using a rubric. In addition, candidates are regularly evaluated on their dispositions through the Disposition and Professional Behaviors Checklist used in each education program.

The faculty further believes there are specific dispositions that our candidates must possess if they are to become exemplary educators. These dispositions are contained in the Kentucky Education Professional Standards Board Code of Ethics and the COEHS Code of Ethics. Each candidate must sign both Codes of Ethics and demonstrate their principles throughout their preparation program.

The Unit's learning outcomes are aligned with the appropriate program standards as defined by the Kentucky Education Professional Standards Board and SPA standards approved by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education. Each set of program review documents contains matrices demonstrating the program's alignment with the appropriate state standards and with those of the specialized professional associations. Table 2 lists each of the Kentucky teacher/ other school personnel standards which govern the COEHS programs.

Table 2
Alignment with Required Kentucky Standards for Initial & Advanced Programs

Candidate Proficiencies	KY Teacher Standards	IECE KY Standards	Instructional Leadership	ISTE	Counseling
Knowledgeable Scholar	1, 2, 5, 6	1, 4, 8, 9	1,2,3	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	1, 2, 3, 4
Skilled Scholar	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9	1, 2, 3	2, 3, 4	1, 2, 3, 4
Collaborative Scholar	7, 8, 9, 10	5, 6, 7, 10	1, 2, 3, 4, 6	5, 6	1, 2, 3, 4
Commitment to Diversity	2, 3, 4, 7	1, 2, 3, 5	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	2, 3, 6	1, 2, 3, 4
Commitment to Technology	4, 5, 6, 7	3, 4, 5, 6,	1, 2, 3, 5	1, 4, 7	1, 2, 3, 4

ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

Constructivist beliefs also inform the evaluation processes. Participation in continuous assessment of candidates offers faculty members numerous opportunities for formative and summative evaluation of candidates and programs. Each program’s assessment plan is tied to the Conceptual Framework and reflects the continuous processes of reflection on and renewal of programs through a triangulation of self-study, candidate evaluations, and feedback from the field. The following tables illustrate the transition points for each of the Unit’s programs.

Table 3. Undergraduate Programs

<p>Transition Point I – Full Admission</p>	<p><u>Knowledge</u> Required Standardized Test Score Course Success with a C or better 64 hours of coursework Overall GPA of 2.5 Professional GPA of 2.5 Speech 101 B or better/ pass proficiency exam Writing: ENG 291 B or better/ pass proficiency exam</p> <p><u>Dispositions</u> Dispositions/ Professional Behaviors Checklist</p> <p><u>ePortfolio</u></p>
<p>Transition Point II – Admission to Student Teaching</p>	<p><u>Knowledge</u> Course Success with a C or better Overall GPA of 2.5 Professional GPA of 2.5 Content GPA 2.5</p> <p><u>Skills</u> University Supervisor Lesson Evaluation Cooperating Teacher Lesson Evaluation</p> <p><u>Dispositions</u> Dispositions/ Professional Behaviors Checklist</p> <p><u>ePortfolio</u></p>
<p>Transition Point III – Program Completion</p>	<p><u>Knowledge</u> Course Success with a C or better Degree Course Requirements Completed Overall GPA 2.5 Professional GPA of 2.5 Content GPA of 2.5</p> <p><u>Skills</u> University Supervisor Lesson Evaluation Cooperating Teacher Lesson Evaluation</p> <p><u>Dispositions</u> Dispositions/ Professional Behaviors Checklist</p> <p><u>ePortfolio</u></p> <p><u>Teacher Work Sample</u></p>

Table 4. Master of Arts in Teaching

<p>Transition Point I – Full Admission</p>	<p><u>Knowledge</u> Bachelor’s Degree Undergraduate GPA 2.5 Ky Passing PRAXIS II Content Score <u>Dispositions</u> Interview by Faculty Committee</p>
<p>Transition Point II – Completion of 18-24 Program hours</p>	<p><u>Knowledge</u> Overall 3.0 GPA or higher KY Passing PLT Score <u>Skills</u> University Supervisor Lesson Evaluation <u>Dispositions</u> Dispositions/ Professional Behaviors Checklist <u>ePortfolio</u></p>
<p>Transition Point III – Graduation from Program</p>	<p><u>Knowledge</u> Final GPA of 3.0 or higher <u>Skills</u> University Supervisor Lesson Evaluation <u>Dispositions</u> Dispositions/ Professional Behaviors Checklist <u>ePortfolio</u> <u>Teacher Work Sample</u></p>

Table 5. Special Education Alternative Certification Programs

<p>Transition Point I – Completion of Admissions Semester</p>	<p><u>Knowledge</u> UG GPA 2.5 GRE/GPA Formula College level math with grade of C or better Successful completion of 9 hours initial coursework <u>Dispositions</u> Interview</p>
<p>Transition Point II – Completion of 1st year, 21 hours</p>	<p><u>Knowledge</u> Overall GPA of 3.0 or higher <u>Dispositions</u> Dispositions/ Professional Behaviors Checklist <u>ePortfolio</u></p>
<p>Transition Point III – Program Completion – 36 hours</p>	<p><u>Knowledge</u> Overall GPA of 3.0 or higher KY Passing Praxis Scores <u>Dispositions</u> Dispositions/ Professional Behaviors Checklist <u>ePortfolio</u></p>

Table 6. MA.Ed.: Teacher as Leader

<p>Transition Point I – Admission To Program</p>	<p><u>Knowledge</u> GPA <u>Professional Growth Plan</u> Evaluation with rubric <u>Dispositions</u> Interview</p>
<p>Transition Point II – Completion of 15 – 18 hours</p>	<p><u>Knowledge</u> 3.0 GPA maintained <u>Dispositions</u> Dispositions/ Professional Behaviors Checklist <u>Action Research Proposal</u> EDG 605 evaluation with Rubric</p>
<p>Transition Point III – Program Exit</p>	<p><u>Knowledge</u> 3.0 GPA maintained <u>Dispositions</u> Dispositions/ Professional Behaviors Checklist t <u>Action Research Project</u> EDG 605 evaluation with Rubric</p>

Table 7. Rank 1

<p>Transition Point I – Full Admission</p>	<p><u>Knowledge</u> 3.0 GPA in Graduate Work</p>
<p>Transition Point II – Completion 15 – 18 hours</p>	<p><u>Knowledge</u> Overall 3.0 GPA or higher <u>Dispositions</u> Dispositions/ Professional Behaviors Checklist <u>ePortfolio</u></p>
<p>Transition Point III – Rank 1 Attained</p>	<p><u>Knowledge</u> Overall 3.0 GPA or higher <u>Dispositions</u> Dispositions/ Professional Behaviors Checklist <u>ePortfolio</u></p>

Table 8. Instructional Leadership- Principal

<p>Transition Point I – Full Admission</p>	<p><u>Knowledge</u> GRE/GPA Formula</p> <p><u>Dispositions</u> Interview by Faculty Committee Essays</p>
<p>Transition Point II – Completion of 15 – 18 hours</p>	<p><u>Knowledge</u> 3.0 GPA maintained</p> <p><u>Dispositions</u> Dispositions and Professional Behaviors Checklists</p> <p><u>Portfolio</u></p>
<p>Transition Point III – Program Completion</p>	<p><u>Knowledge</u> Overall 3.0 GPA or higher</p> <p><u>Dispositions</u> Dispositions and Professional Behaviors Checklists</p> <p><u>Portfolio</u></p>

Table 9. Instructional Leadership- Supervisor

<p>Transition Point I – Full Admission</p>	<p><u>Knowledge</u> Masters</p> <p><u>Dispositions</u> Interview by Faculty Committee Essays</p>
<p>Transition Point II – Completion of 15 – 18 hours</p>	<p><u>Knowledge</u> 3.0 GPA maintained</p> <p><u>Dispositions</u> Dispositions and Professional Behaviors Checklists</p> <p><u>Portfolio</u></p>
<p>Transition Point III – Program Completion</p>	<p><u>Knowledge</u> Overall 3.0 GPA or higher</p> <p><u>Dispositions</u> Dispositions and Professional Behaviors Checklists</p> <p><u>Portfolio</u></p>

Table 10. School Counseling

<p>Transition Point I – Admission status: Regular (meet requirements) Conditional (must meet 3.0 GPA for first 12 hours) Provisional (1 semester)</p>	<p><u>Knowledge</u> Official transcripts (undergraduate & graduate work) Undergrad. GPA (min 2.75) GRE Scores Criminal Background Check 3.0 GPA or better in COU 640, 641, & 602</p> <p><u>Dispositions</u> Interview w/school counseling dept. Essay 3 Letters of recommendation</p>
<p>Transition Point II – Admission to Practicum</p>	<p><u>Knowledge</u> 3.0 GPA University Supervision Mastery of skills by University supervisor/ On site supervisor</p> <p><u>Skills</u> Peer assisted learning Self reflection</p> <p><u>Dispositions</u> On-site supervision Advising session</p>
<p>Transition Point III – Admission to Internship</p>	<p><u>Knowledge</u> 3.0 GPA Demonstration/Application of skills in a school setting: University supervisor On site supervisor</p> <p><u>Skills</u> Peer assisted learning Self reflection</p> <p><u>Dispositions</u> On site supervision Advising session</p>
<p>Transition Point IV – Program Completion</p>	<p><u>Knowledge</u> Completion of : School counseling courses Internship requirements</p> <p><u>Dispositions</u> Advising session</p>

KEY ASSESSMENTS

Candidate performance, program assessment and Unit effectiveness are judged by a variety of assessment and evaluation procedures. Assessment data are collected and maintained via several methods: an Access education database, an ePortfolio data base and electronic surveys though *Survey Monkey*. Collectively they document the candidates’ knowledge, skills, and dispositions as specified in the candidate proficiencies.

Faculty in the Unit are committed to performance-based learning and assessment. Numerous college wide and program specific assessments are regularly used to evaluate each candidate's knowledge, skills, and dispositions. These assessments in turn are used to further discussion among faculty in each program and across the Unit to improve overall academic preparation. The list below outlines the main assessments used by Unit faculty to review and evaluate each program.

Assessment of Candidates

Transcript Review: Candidates' transcripts are reviewed before and after they are fully admitted to one of the Unit's programs to determine if the candidate meets the stated transition point criteria, such as overall GPA, professional GPA, or hours of completed coursework.

Entrance Essays and Interviews: Applicants for several of the Unit's graduate programs are required to complete an essay and/or interview with a faculty committee to evaluate the applicant's dispositions. A rubric is used to determine which applicants meet the entrance requirements and are admitted to the program.

Lesson Evaluations: All undergraduate candidates are observed teaching one or more lessons during their Professional Semester I, II, and III (where appropriate) practica and student teaching experiences. They are observed by their university professors and cooperating teachers who complete a teaching evaluation form based on the Kentucky Teacher Standards. The form is then used as the basis for giving candidates feedback on their teaching skills. Candidates in some graduate programs are also observed by university professors, cooperating teachers, or other school personnel during appropriate points in their programs.

Candidate portfolios: All candidates enrolled in initial and advanced programs, except School Counseling, complete a portfolio that is aligned to the appropriate Kentucky State Standards. Candidate portfolios are evaluated by faculty using a rubric. Concerns in the portfolios are reviewed by program faculty for curriculum and instructional changes and where appropriate, program changes are recommended.

Dispositions of Candidates: Undergraduate candidates are initially assessed during the Admissions Semester practicum by the respective professors and cooperating teachers. The professors review each student with the dispositions checklist (Refer to Table 1) and then recommend students for full admissions into the Unit. During each succeeding semester students continue to be assessed with the same dispositions checklist by the professors and cooperating teachers of their practica. Finally, during the student teaching semester each student has his/her dispositions assessed with the dispositions checklist by the university supervisor and cooperating teacher. During each review professors and cooperating teachers discuss their assessments with the candidates as part of their practicum/ student teaching evaluation. Depending on the program they are in, graduate candidates either self-assess and/or have their dispositions assessed at least once during their program experiences, using the same dispositions checklist as the undergraduate

candidates. The dispositions data is aggregated and shared with program faculty for review and discussion on implications for the program, such as additional training for university professors or cooperating teachers.

Teacher Work Sample: Undergraduate candidates evaluate the impact of their instruction on P-12 students through the Teacher Work Sample, which is developed in collaboration with the cooperating teacher and completed during the student teaching experience. A main component of the Teacher Work Sample is the analysis of the pre- and post-assessment data of the P-12 students' work from an instructional unit. Student teachers analyze and reflect on the data to determine the impact their instruction had on the P-12 students' achievement. The Teacher Work Sample is evaluated by the university professor and feedback is given to the student teacher based on their analysis of and reflection on the data. In addition, graduate candidates in various programs reflect on their impact on P-12 student learning through portfolio reflections and course projects.

Action Research Project: Candidates in the MA.Ed.: Teacher as Leader program complete an action research project as part of the program's culminating experience. Program faculty use a rubric to evaluate the action research project and candidates must receive an acceptable evaluation to successfully complete the program. The action research project data is aggregated, analyzed, and then discussed by program faculty to determine what, if any, program changes need to be made.

Program/ Unit Assessments

PRAXIS Exams: Candidates who are earning a new or additional license take the required PRAXIS Exams. An analysis is made each year of the PRAXIS scores of the Unit's candidates, for all appropriate undergraduate and graduate programs, from the previous academic year. A summary of the scores is sent to each program, academic department offering content courses for teacher education, the Teacher Education Committee, and the Continuous Assessment Committee. Faculty make recommendations for program changes as appropriate.

Student Teacher Surveys: Candidates complete several surveys during their student teaching semester, which includes feedback on their cooperating teacher(s), university supervisor, and education program. The program feedback is aligned with the Kentucky Teacher Standards and allows candidates to assess how well they were prepared in each standard during their education program. The data is aggregated by programs and shared with faculty for review and discussion.

Employment Survey: One year after graduation a survey is sent to candidates who completed one of the initial education programs to determine their employment status. In addition, those graduates are asked to evaluate their teacher education program. An annual report is made to the Continuous Assessment Committee and recommendations are made by faculty for possible change.

Principal Evaluation of Graduates: Every third year a survey is sent to each principal in the Northern Kentucky University Service region to secure evaluation information on the Unit's graduates and programs. A report is presented to the Continuous Assessment Committee and appropriate recommendations are made for possible program changes.

Student Teaching and Practica Cooperating Teacher Evaluation of Programs: Each semester cooperating teachers of practicum candidates and student teachers provide input to the faculty regarding strengths and areas for improvement in the undergraduate programs. The surveys are aligned to the Kentucky Teacher Standards and ask the cooperating teachers to evaluate how well the Unit's candidates are prepared in each standard. A summary report is made to the Continuous Assessment Committee and, if appropriate, recommendations are made by faculty for possible program changes.

Advising Center Survey: Each year a survey is sent to all currently enrolled undergraduate candidates asking them to evaluate the effectiveness of the advising they receive as they move through their education programs. The data is aggregated and shared with the Advising Center faculty/staff as well as the Continuous Assessment Team for review, discussion, and decision making.

The Unit compiles, summarizes, and analyzes data from the various assessments for the purpose of improving candidate performance and program quality. Data is shared on a regular basis with candidates and faculty to help them reflect on and improve their performances. Faculty receive a Data Book at the beginning of each academic year which includes the program and unit data as described above. Faculty then review and discuss the aggregated candidate and program data to make decisions about their program effectiveness. Those decisions are then reported to the Continuous Assessment Committee by their faculty representative and appropriate actions are taken, such as initiating curriculum changes or implementing additional cooperating teacher training.

To ensure that assessments are accurate and consistent, each undergraduate and graduate program has developed rubrics for various program and/or course assessments, such as portfolios and teaching observations. In addition, several of the assessments use two assessors to establish reliability. For example, all undergraduate candidates have their dispositions assessed by their university professor and cooperating teacher, which are then compared to determine the percent of agreement between the two. Those results are then reviewed and discussed among program faculty to determine if there are any inconsistent results. If there are, faculty further review and decide what, if any, action needs to be taken to improve program effectiveness.

As outlined in the transition point tables, programs have established performance criteria each candidate must meet before continuing to the next transition point in the selected education program. When candidates do not meet a stated program outcome they are not eligible to continue in the program until the criterion is successfully met. Instead those candidates repeat the criterion, such as retaking a class or resubmitting their portfolio, until they successfully complete it. When a candidate successfully completes all stated transition point criteria, he/she moves to the next transition point.

Conclusion

The Conceptual Framework incorporates a shared view of how to best prepare Northern Kentucky University College of Education and Human Services candidates to deliver educational services to children and youth, schools, families, and communities. This framework embodies the essential elements of the Unit's programs and provides a blueprint for ensuring coherence among curriculum, instruction, field experiences, clinical practice, and assessment of candidates. It is a guide for the systematic experiences required of candidates in each program and provides the basis for the continuous assessment and improvement of candidates and programs. The goals of this collaborative process are to continuously evolve and improve each program while developing candidates who effectively demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and dispositions required of highly qualified teachers, instructional leaders, and school counselors.

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