

II. Conceptual Framework

Development and History

Beginning in 1989, the College faculty convened weekly over two years to develop a knowledge base to under gird a conceptual framework for the unit. Their efforts resulted in the development of a knowledge base and the creation of a conceptual framework based on *The Teacher is a Facilitator* – a model that served the unit for the NCATE on-site reviews in 1991 and 1996.

In 1997, the College of Education explored possible ways of reorganizing the College. Throughout the discussions, faculty reexamined beliefs and practices in all licensure programs. While the College decided to keep the structure of the College as it was, faculty were eager to update the conceptual framework to incorporate practices recommended by specialty organizations in order to reflect more fully current practices within the unit.

In part, proposed changes in the conceptual framework were driven by the nature of the experiences entry students were bringing to professional education due to the admission standards employed in January 1997 and by the recognition and acceptance of the INTASC Principles (later embedded in the WTS) which under gird all licensure programs. In addition, faculty were examining Dewey's concept of reflection (Dewey, 1916, 1938), widely discussed as a basis of curricula in professional schools and colleges. The development of reflective judgment in individuals involves habits and tendencies in action and, for Dewey, reflection requires individuals to be open-minded, to take responsibility for the consequences of their decisions, and to be wholehearted in giving their attention to the dilemma at hand. These qualities were essential aspects of the kind of teacher we envisioned as a program completer.

Faculty began improving syllabi and revising assessment instruments by incorporating new requirements, e.g. additional artifacts and reflective narratives. In an effort to extend opportunities for students in diversity, international activities were expanded at this time as well. By December 2000, the faculty approved the adoption of the revised conceptual framework based on the theme, "*The Teacher is a Reflective Facilitator.*" This conceptual framework embodies the beliefs and practices of the unit and serves as the foundation upon which the unit assessment plan is based. The conceptual framework also provides direction and vision for the unit.

1. Briefly summarize the following elements of the unit's conceptual framework:

a. The vision and mission of the unit

The preparation of teachers has been a major part of the mission of UW-Whitewater since its inception on April 21st, 1868 as a normal school, and through its subsequent evolution

as a teachers college, a state college and a state university. For more than a century, the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater has offered programs leading to the certification of teachers.

Mission Statement: The College of Education is committed to the principles of excellence in teacher education and leadership in maintaining and extending an effective system of schools for a free society. This commitment motivates the faculty to develop programs of teacher education designed to meet the wide and varied educational needs of society. In fulfilling its mission, the College of Education has emphasized quality and excellence and has dedicated itself to the study and analysis of educational trends, innovation and leadership.

The essential mission of the teacher education program is the preparation of effective teachers and other school personnel in order to meet the needs of diverse student populations in the public schools and other educational settings throughout the state of Wisconsin. In addition to providing an array of programs leading to initial licensure, the unit provides programs for advanced licensure, for advanced degrees, for license renewal, and for personal and professional enrichment.

b. philosophy, purposes, goals, and institutional standards of the unit

In fulfilling this mission, the College of Education emphasizes quality and excellence and embraces the [Wisconsin Standards for Teacher Development and Licensure](#) (WTS), the [five concept assessments](#) associated with the WTS (communicative skills, human relations, professional dispositions, content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge), and a knowledge base on the development of reflective judgment in adults.

The unit has adopted the WTS which incorporate the [Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium](#) (INTASC) principles. These standards under-gird all curricula leading to licensure in Wisconsin. To receive a license to teach in Wisconsin, an applicant must complete an approved program and demonstrate proficient performance in the knowledge, skills, and dispositions under each of the following standards:

1. **Teachers know the subjects they are teaching.** The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the disciplines she or he teaches and can create learning experiences that make these aspects of subject matter meaningful for pupils.
2. **Teachers know how children grow.** The teacher understands how children with broad ranges of ability learn and provides instruction that supports their intellectual, social, and personal development.
3. **Teachers understand that children learn differently.** The teacher understands how pupils differ in their approaches to learning and the barriers that impede learning and can adapt instruction to meet the diverse needs of pupils, including those with disabilities and exceptionalities.
4. **Teachers know how to teach.** The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies, including the use of technology, to encourage children's development of critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills.

5. **Teachers know how to manage a classroom.** The teacher uses an understanding of individual and group motivation and behavior to create a learning environment that encourages positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.
6. **Teachers communicate well.** The teacher uses effective verbal and nonverbal communication techniques as well as instructional media and technology to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction in the classroom.
7. **Teachers are able to plan different kinds of lessons.** The teacher organizes and plans systematic instruction based upon knowledge of subject matter, pupils, the community, and curriculum goals.
8. **Teachers know how to test for student progress.** The teacher understands and uses formal and informal assessment strategies to evaluate and ensure the continuous intellectual, social, and physical development of the pupil.
9. **Teachers are able to evaluate themselves.** The teacher is a reflective practitioner who continually evaluates the effects of his or her choices and actions on pupils, parents, professionals in the learning community and others and who actively seeks out opportunities to grow professionally.
10. **Teachers are connected with other teachers and the community.** The teacher fosters relationships with school colleagues, parents, and agencies in the larger community to support pupil learning and well-being and acts with integrity, fairness and in an ethical manner.

c. knowledge bases, including theories, research, the wisdom of practice, and educational policies that drive the work of the unit

The unit's conceptual framework is based upon a knowledge base with six key elements: 1) reflection, 2) facilitation, 3) constructivism, 4) information technology and literacy, 5) diversity, and 6) inquiry and assessment. These areas are detailed below:

1. Reflection:

Teachers need to be able to reflect upon their practice. Reflection is a post-teaching act intended to provide evaluation of the teaching/learning process (Bright, 1996; Clark, 1995; Dewey, 1916, 1938; Jervis & Montag, 1991; Kilpatrick, 1927; Schön, 1983, 1987). Reflection, in part, evolved out of the pragmatists' view of the nature of man and how individuals learn. Reflection is part of the continuous and self-evaluation which provides an understanding of the process of teaching and reshapes it based upon an inquiry approach. Reflectivity represents a cognitive style that is characterized by responding more slowly and accurately with attention to subtle details (Kogan, 1983; Smith & Caplan, 1988). Reflection is evidenced by a number of behaviors including: journaling, committing to continuous learning, engaging in professional discourse, linking new knowledge to students' prior understandings, evaluating teaching resources, capturing experiences in writing and verbalizing, and transforming reflections into actions and further reflections.

2. Facilitation:

To facilitate is to provide a creative learning experience for students. The emphasis is upon students creating their own knowledge from the artifacts of cultures (Dewey, 1916,

1938). To accomplish this outcome, teachers must be able to transfer and relate knowledge in cross-disciplinary modalities that enhance students' understandings. Facilitation is evidenced by a number of behaviors including: using multiple representations and explanations of concepts, engaging students' knowledge generating and hypothesis testing strategies, creating interdisciplinary learning experiences, designing instruction capitalizing on students' strengths, active student advocacy, modeling effective communication, monitoring and adjusting strategies and responding to learner feedback.

3. Constructivism:

Central to the constructivists' view of learning is the emphasis upon students taking an active role in their own learning in order to build understanding and creating meaning from information (Fosnot, 1996; Marshall, 1992; Von Glaserfeld, 1995, 1996). Some of the elements of constructivists' views are first, learning environments using authentic tasks which challenge all students, not just a few. Second, there is shared responsibility for learning, and that all learning is accomplished in a social setting where negotiation is part of the learning process. Third, there are multiple representations of the content including the perspectives of the students. Fourth, knowledge is constructed (Cunningham, 1992). That is, students use the full-range of experiences (personal, cultural, social, etc.) to create their own understandings and interpretations of their world, not just the teacher's or other outside experts. Students are directly taught the role of the constructivist's pedagogy in order to play an active role in learning; not just passive observers. Finally, instruction is student-centered (Driscoll, 1994; Marshall, 1992). Reflection and facilitation are key aspects of the constructivists' approach. Some evidence of the constructivist approach could include: directing student activity in the learning enterprise, using multiple representations and explanations of concepts, creating interdisciplinary learning experiences, identifying differences in approaches to learning and performance, supporting development of cultural awareness and knowledge bases.

4. Information and Technology Literacy:

The conceptual framework reflects the unit's commitment to preparing candidates who are able to use technology to help students learn. Technology is a tool for collaboration, communication, thinking, analysis and interpretation of experience, and presentation of multiple-representations of knowledge. When implemented systemically, technology can enhance student achievement as measured in a variety of ways (Valdez, 2000). The [Wisconsin Model Academic Standards for Information & Technology Literacy](#) provide a framework of knowledge and skills essential for all Wisconsin students in grades K-12 to access, evaluate, and use information and technology and College of Education students should have mastered these 12th grade level skills prior to entering the university. Technology can assist teachers in applied strategies for problem solving and increasing collaboration and communication in the learning environment. There have been several changes over the past several decades including a shift from discrete faculty attempts at including technology to an infused seamless integration across the curriculum to support student learning (Glenn & Carrier, 1989; International Society for Technology in Education, 2001, 2003).

5. Diversity:

Diversity is more than a slogan, it is a way of accurately reflecting the existing world-reality: the world is dynamic and diverse and becoming more so every year (Darling-Hammond, 1998; Lara-Alecio & Rendon, 1995; Smith & Caplan, 1988). The legacy of discrimination has prevented some cultures from fully participating in education and reaping its benefits (Calmore, 1986; Kantor & Lowe, 1995; Pine & Hilliard, 1990; Schofield, 1995; Wells & Crain, 1994). The University and the College, supported by considerable research, have made the acceptance of diversity as one of the multiple representations of content (Bruner, 1966; Needles & Knapp, 1994; Resnick, 1987; Spiro, Feltovich, Jacobson, & Coulson, 1991). Diversity, or cultural pluralism, creates a sense of unity resulting in a cohesive society enriched by divergent ethnic experiences. The unit, as part of a broader university and Wisconsin state educational system, provides direction to these goals and outcomes through its units, curricula, programs and individual initiative stemming from our multiple mission statements. Some evidence of diversity can be found in activities and programs that: integrate content, construct knowledge processes, reduce prejudice, create empowering school culture, eliminate the negative effects of tracking, establish home environments that support student learning, include families in school decisions, work to eliminate stereotype threats and bias in the classroom, support bilingualism and biculturalism, integrate gifted and talented students, support inclusive practices for students with special needs, facilitate intercultural sensitivity activities and support and challenge students in developing adaptation competence.

6. Inquiry (Research/Scholarship) & Assessment

Educational decisions are based upon research (scholarship) based evidence (Boyer, 1990). The role of the teacher is to actively engage in the reading and employing of scholarship in their acts of teaching, facilitation and reflection upon their practice. Scholarship is not only a tool for faculty and teachers, it is a fundamental source of information driving the practice of teaching and taught directly to students who are engaged in scholarship (inquiry) as part of the constructivist's approach to teaching/learning. Some of our students are also actively engaged in undergraduate research and are supported by the College of Education and the University. The University has an active [Undergraduate Research Program](#) organized by a faculty-run Undergraduate Research Council. Students from UW-Whitewater frequently participate in the [National Council for Undergraduate Research](#) annual conference. At the graduate level, all students are required to take a course in research. The unit's Gibb-Harris fund, supported by an endowment, helps pay for undergraduate and graduate research travel.

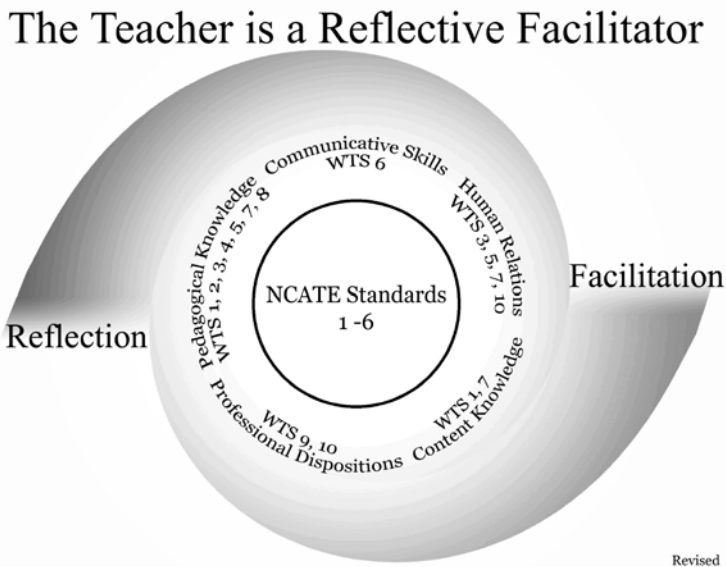
d. candidate proficiencies related to expected knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions, including proficiencies associated with diversity and technology, that are aligned with the expectations in professional, state, and institutional standards

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) has outlined [specific knowledge, skills and dispositions](#) for each of the ten standards. In addition, DPI has highlighted five assessment concepts, emerging from the WTS that must be reflected in all licensure programs. The College of Education incorporates these five concepts in its mission statement and also in its unit assessment plan. These concepts include communicative

skills, human relations, professional dispositions, content knowledge, and pedagogical knowledge. The unit assessment plan details how these concepts are assessed throughout the licensure programs in accordance with requirements set forth by DPI.

The WTS and NCATE Standards, the matrices reflecting the DPI Content Standards and the WMAS issued by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction are interwoven throughout practice and expected proficiencies. The conceptual framework theme, “The Teacher is a Reflective Facilitator,” under-girds all of the initial teacher education programs. Knowledge, skills and dispositions are woven into coursework, field experiences and assessments and provides continuity to all programs. This theme also supports the values that scaffold the advanced programs. School professionals within the advanced programs are grounded in the commitment to knowledge, teaching, professional competence and ethical practice, and student learning. In addition, reflection and self-assessment are necessary components of the clinical and field experiences in each advanced program that are designed to provide program candidates with an understanding of the actual practice of that unique profession.

This graphic shows the relationship between the NCATE standards, Wisconsin Teacher Standards, Five Assessment Concepts and our beliefs of Reflection and Facilitation:



e. summarized description of the unit’s assessment system

The unit’s conceptual framework provides the context for developing and assessing candidate proficiencies based on state and national standards. The unit’s continuous assessment system is standards-based and performance based. Rubrics issued by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction are used in evaluating program delivery and candidate performance. Decision points have been delineated in the unit assessment plan for each phase of the teacher preparation program. The unit assessment plan also specifies the standards for assessing the programs.

The teacher education curriculum requires all candidates to complete a general education program, a major in the content area as appropriate, and a professional education component. There are four phases for students to move through in order to complete the teacher education program. All programs utilize the NCATE Standards, the WTS and the appropriate specialty organization standards. These standards inform the instructional objectives for each course. Performance/learning outcomes have been identified for each objective. Assessments have been designed to evaluate learning outcomes. Artifacts are maintained in a candidate portfolio. For most programs, each candidate portfolio is examined at three summative points: at the end of the foundations block (Phase 2), at the end of the methods block (Phase 3), and at the end of directed teaching (Phase 4).

Guidelines have been developed to facilitate individual candidate assessment and aggregate program evaluation. The NCATE Standards, the WTS, the DPI Content Standards and the WMAS are the basis for candidate and program assessment. A five-point scale has been created to allow faculty to document that candidates have met or exceeded the standards.

Candidate assessment is an integrative, continuous process that uses both summative and formative tools. Each candidate develops a portfolio to be submitted for review at regular intervals during the teacher education program. Candidates make entries to address specific standards at each phase. All portfolio artifacts must address the knowledge, skills and dispositions present in the standards. If the portfolio fails to meet a passing score in any area being assessed, the candidate is given an opportunity to remediate before he or she is allowed to progress to the next phase.

Formative assessment tools include a written statement of a candidate's personal philosophy of education; written exams; applications of teaching strategies; reflective journals; field experiences; lesson and unit plans; and video and written assessments by candidate and supervisors. Summative assessment tools include a portfolio containing the formative assessment, interview and oral defense of portfolio, written assessment by supervisors and successful completion of required testing as identified above.

Summative decisions are made at each of the four phases. Data are collected in each phase. Evidence is reviewed for each of the summative decision points. Unit and content area faculty have identified course-specific performances and artifacts as parts of the assessment process. Artifacts are linked to specific standards. Continuous assessment connects all elements of the conceptual framework as each program has developed a matrix to show the relationship between course content and the standards and to provide a basis for program improvement.

For the advanced programs, the assessment plan deviates from the initial assessment plan in two ways: First, since each program has unique curricular progression, each program has identified at specific points in their program for portfolio submission, review, and data collection. Second, each program has a different specialty organization. The competencies assessed vary from program to program as the specialty organization's competencies are added to the NCATE and DPI competencies. These variations

notwithstanding, the assessment process for the advanced programs parallels that of the initial teacher licensure programs.

The advanced programs also answer to specialty organizations that mandate additional professional-specific competencies. These additional competencies are reflected in the assessment plan for each advanced program. The conceptual framework is published in student handbooks, shared with schools and agencies, particularly with those who partner with the unit in field experiences, and used in workshops with students, cooperating teachers, members of advisory boards, and with faculty who teach courses applicable to licensure outside of the unit. The members of the College Curriculum Committee and the Teacher Education Committee follow the conceptual framework in making decisions about new courses, program changes, and in making recommendations for updating courses.

2. (Continuing visits Only) What changes have been made to the conceptual framework since the previous visit?

There have been no significant changes in the conceptual framework since the last review five years ago. Programs have continued to refine and examine assessment practices, collected data has been aggregated and examined, and the College of Education Program Review and Assessment Committee (CoPRA) has meet regularly to discuss issues surrounding the program at large.