UNCW University of North Carolina Wilmington

DIVERSITY

ADVOCACY

NURTURING

ETHICS

Developing knowledgeable and proficient education professionals dedicated to improving schools and society

INNOVATION

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

INQUIRY

REFLECTION

LEARNLEADCREATEINSPIRE

Watson College of Education

Conceptual Framework 2013

Watson College of Education Conceptual Framework

The Watson College of Education (WCE) Conceptual Framework has at its center the mission of *developing knowledgeable and proficient education professionals dedicated to improving schools and society—professionals who learn, lead, create, and inspire*. This mission is supported by professional dispositions and values categorized as *advocacy*, *diversity*, *ethics*, *global perspectives*, *innovation*, *inquiry*, *nurturing*, and *reflection*. The WCE Conceptual Framework represents the unit's shared vision of teaching and learning, and the importance the WCE places on contributing to schools, the profession, and society. It guides the work of all WCE departments, programs, and offices.

Summary of WCE Conceptual Framework and Knowledge Base

Learn, Lead, Create, Inspire

There are four themes that capture the spirit of the WCE Conceptual Framework and the work of the WCE: Learn, Lead, Create, and Inspire. These four themes emerged from focused and ongoing WCE faculty discussions and work group deliberations regarding WCE mission and values and from input of WCE staff, candidates, B-12 partners, and community partners. They provide an overarching vision for WCE faculty, staff, candidates, and graduates and an integrating link for the components of the WCE Conceptual Framework.

Knowledgeable and Proficient Education Professionals Dedicated to Improving Schools and Society

The WCE mission is to develop knowledgeable and proficient education professionals dedicated to improving schools and society. This requires that WCE graduates are knowledgeable in their content area, are highly skilled and proficient in their practice, and embrace and enact professional dispositions that support their role as a professional and the ultimate goal of improving schools and society. The WCE facilitates this development through:

- Academically rigorous programs that are aligned with North Carolina State Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) standards, national association standards (e.g. AECT, CAS, IRA,

ISLLC), National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) standards, and the University of North Carolina Wilmington Learning and Strategic Goals.

- Producing and using meaningful scholarship as part of a culture that values inquiry, creation of new ideas and innovations, and research-based practice.
- Partnering with schools, organizations and diverse communities as a collaborative effort in the development and implementation of programs, and to provide candidates rich opportunities for application and professional practice.
- Advancing the profession through teaching, scholarship, and service.

Further, to improve schools and society, candidates must make positive contributions to their field. For candidates in initial teacher preparation programs and advanced programs that prepare candidates to work in B-12 educational settings, positive impacts on B-12 student learning is central to improving schools and society. For other educational professionals, such as those in Instructional Technology or Higher Education programs, contributions often include positive impacts on adult learning.

Finally, the WCE subscribes to the belief that WCE faculty must be knowledgeable and proficient education professionals dedicated to improving schools and society in order to develop the necessary knowledge, proficiencies, and dispositions in candidates. WCE faculty and staff are committed to modeling what is expected of our candidates and graduates.

Core Descriptors

The core descriptors included in the WCE Conceptual Framework outline the professional dispositions and values needed to carry out the mission of the WCE. The core descriptors are presented below as values statements followed by a description and research basis.

Advocacy

Advocacy to improve schools and society is an obligation of education professionals.
Advocacy requires us to act on behalf of individuals and groups and to address social concerns. To do this work, we use professional knowledge and skills and exercise value judgments to determine what we should advocate. Advocacy is dependent on our communicative methods; it

is tied to relevant life experiences; and it often forces us to work "outside of our comfort zones" (Newman & Bauer, 2005). Advocacy is active; it connects thought to action. It implies that we operate with certain beliefs and attitudes that will influence social and educational change (Mundy & Murphy, 2001).

Diversity

Recognizing and utilizing the value of difference is a requisite to maximize human development. Our society is diverse in culture, language, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, social class, sexual identity, ability, age, and ideology. Diversity strongly influences who we are, how we learn, and how we teach. Freire (1997) argues that teachers are cultural workers, with a responsibility to identify their own socio-cultural positions and to recognize those of their students. He adds that responsibility should be conceived of as our "ability to respond." We strive to respond appropriately to difference, to recognize how socio-cultural positions affect teaching, and to draw upon the value of difference to create meaningful learning experiences.

Ethics

Education professionals must uphold ethical standards to ensure just and respectful educational practices.

High quality education, that is, education that positively nurtures intellectual, emotional and social growth, must also include a consideration of what is right and wrong and the influence of time and context on such conceptions. Ethical attitudes and dispositions are shaped by moral perspectives and those perspectives help to determine ethical behaviors (Como, 2011; Purtillo, 2005). We find two ethical theories particularly relevant: an ethic of justice (which represents egalitarian beliefs and behaviors) and an ethic of care (which represents being responsive and trusting). Both of these theories allow us to connect personal issues with larger structural ones such that we can examine the system of education with respect to individual rights, collective responsibility, and institutional governance (Noddings, 2010).

Global Perspectives

Understanding global perspectives and practices inspires connections to erase the boundaries that divide us.

Education must be viewed as global in nature, grounded in an understanding of teaching and learning as interdependent, tied to issues of human rights and global citizenship, and that works toward creating sustainable processes that govern what we do (Peters, 2009). Global education is not just about examining people, cultures, and technologies. It is fundamentally about looking inward to study ourselves, our interactions, our systems, and our products. In this way, it allows for deep and broad reflection in intrapersonal and interpersonal ways.

Innovation

Generating and adopting innovations is imperative to meet the changing needs of society.

In education, the mark of innovation is its ability to transform (Giannakaki, 2005). This process usually involves five steps: to consider the innovation; to develop an opinion about its possibilities; to decide to use or not; to employ the new idea; and to determine that the innovation was indeed an appropriate one (Rogers, 1984). Innovation needs to be viewed as a continual process of creativity and regeneration in light of the rapidly changing nature of the world in which we live.

Inquiry

A lifelong attitude of inquiry is at the core of transformative education.

Inquiry is grounded in our ability to question, to investigate, to explore, and to problem-solve. It requires an ability to reflect and can lead us to innovate. Johnston (2009) applied Dewey's theory of inquiry to education and argued that inquiry is context-bound, problem-driven, and self-correcting. In short, inquiry can operate differently depending on the context or discipline; it depends on the study of a particular problem or question; and it unifies, that is, it moves from a focus on discriminate parts to a reconstituted whole. Johnston (2009) points out that "all inquiry is transformative" (p. 8), which suggests that inquiry can serve as a catalyst for personal and social change.

Nurturing

Development of nurturing environments is essential for growth, positive relationships and new ideas.

When we nurture, we care for, attend to, and believe in an individual, group, organization, idea, or process. Nurturing depends on the establishment of relationships of trust and facilitates social, emotional and intellectual growth (Binnie & Allen, 2008). It is organic, contingent upon context and invariably different when shaped by those contexts. Nurturing environments are vital for academic learning, personal growth, positive relationships and reimagined practices and structures.

Reflection

Continual reflection is critical for learning, growth and change.

Reflecting represents thoughtful consideration, an attunement to a moment, idea, interaction, circumstance, and/or process. Dewey (1910) described reflection as a condition that involves "mental unrest" (p. 13). It allows us to re-constitute information such that we reconstruct or reinterpret the meaning of an experience (Clark, 2009; Rodgers, 2002; Schon, 1986). In the act of reflecting, we become better practitioners, able to identify what we do well and what needs improvement and, from there, to make appropriate change.

WCE Assessment System Alignment

The WCE Assessment System and procedures are aligned with and guided by the WCE Conceptual Framework and provide evidence of candidate performance in relation to the framework. Specifically, the system provides information about the effectiveness of the WCE in achieving its mission, including data useful for making needed changes to programs and the unit. Assessment is critical to monitoring candidate progress in achieving proficiencies identified in the conceptual framework and to the success of the WCE. The WCE Assessment System is described in detail in the WCE Assessment System Handbook.

WCE Conceptual Framework Development

The evolution of the current conceptual framework has occurred over the past three years, along with a revised WCE Mission Statement and newly developed Values Statements. This evolution is briefly described in the following sections.

Previous WCE Conceptual Framework (adopted Fall 2005)

The previous WCE Conceptual Framework had at its core the theme of *educator as decision maker and reflective practitioner* and an outcome of *the development of highly competent professionals to serve in teaching and other educational leadership roles*. Core descriptors included: informed data driven decision making, reflective practice, commitment to ethical and professional standards, knowledgeable in academic content and pedagogy, technologically competent, ability to meet the needs of diverse learners, and knowledge and use of appropriate communication strategies.

Revised WCE Mission Statement (adopted January 2011)

The process of revising the WCE Mission Statement began in fall 2009. A WCE college-wide meeting was focused on small group discussion of three questions and sharing of responses with the larger group. The questions were (1) Who are we? (2) What do we value? (3) Who do we want to be? Although the purpose of this session was not to gather input for a revised mission statement, it laid the foundation for the ongoing work that followed. At the beginning of spring semester 2010, the Organizational Context Committee was established by Interim Dean Karen Wetherill, and was charged with analyzing the responses gathered in the fall 2009 meeting.

Organizational Context Committee:
Mary Ann Davies, Committee Chair (Elementary, Middle Level, and Literacy Education)
Donyell Roseboro (Instructional Technology, Foundations, and Secondary Education)
Robert Smith (Instructional Technology, Foundations, and Secondary Education)
Jeanne Swafford (Elementary, Middle Level, and Literacy Education)
Tamara Walser (Educational Leadership)

The results of the analysis conducted by the committee were used in a follow-up session at the February, 2010 college-wide meeting. In this session, small groups reviewed and made edits to the analysis summary. This feedback was incorporated into a new version of WCE values and goals. During fall 2010, the Organizational Context Committee's charge was extended to leading a review and revision process of the WCE Mission Statement based on the information collected and additional input from WCE faculty and staff. After several iterations, a new mission statement was voted on by WCE faculty and staff and approved in January 2011.

Revised WCE Mission Statement, Values Statements, and Conceptual Framework (adopted October 2012)

In fall semester 2011, discussion began about the need to revisit and revise the WCE Conceptual Framework. A newly revised mission statement had been adopted and the WCE had undergone growth and changes in programs since the fall 2005 adoption of the previous framework. There were also questions about whether the recently adopted mission statement adequately addressed the work of the WCE. At the end of fall semester 2011, Dean Kenneth Teitelbaum established the WCE Taskforce on Mission Statement, Vision Statement, and Conceptual Framework. For continuity, three members of the taskforce had previously served on the Organizational Context Committee.

Taskforce on Mission Statement, Vision Statement, and Conceptual Framework:
Tamara Walser, Taskforce Chair (Dean's Office and Educational Leadership)
Amy Garrett Dikkers (Educational Leadership)
Heidi Higgins (Elementary, Middle Level, and Literacy Education)
Scott Imig (Dean's Office and Educational Leadership)
Hengameh Kermani (Early Childhood and Special Education)
Florence Martin (Instructional Technology, Foundations, and Secondary Education)
Deborah Powell (Elementary, Middle Level, and Literacy Education)
Kathleen Roney (Elementary, Middle Level, and Literacy Education)
Donyell Roseboro (Dean's Office and Instructional Technology, Foundations, and Secondary Education)
Robert Smith (Instructional Technology, Foundations, and Secondary Education)

The charge of the taskforce was to:

- Restructure and operationalize the WCE Mission Statement (adopted January 2011); specifically, to make sure it:
  - o Is inclusive of faculty and all WCE programs.
  - o Includes research and scholarly contributions to the field.
  - o Includes the impacts of our service.
- Review and revise the WCE Conceptual Framework as needed.
- Potentially develop a WCE Vision Statement.

Using the current mission statement and all information collected in the creation of the current mission statement (e.g., notes from college-wide meetings, WCE values and goals summary) as a starting point, the taskforce met weekly during spring semester 2012, sought and incorporated input from the WCE professional community, and worked with UNCW's Office of University Relations to develop several iterations of a revised WCE Mission Statement, newly developed Values Statements, and a WCE Conceptual Framework to represent the mission and values of the College. The following is a list of activities used to gather input from the WCE professional community once an initial draft was developed by the taskforce.

February 22, 2012

- Taskforce presented initial draft at WCE college-wide meeting.
- Departmental representatives on the Taskforce shared the draft at subsequent department meetings and asked for feedback.

April 19 and May 3, 2012

- Shared with partnership teachers at Professional Development System Partnership meetings and gathered feedback.

April 25, 2012

- Presented revised version at WCE college-wide meeting.
- Shared revised version through SharePoint site and asked for feedback.

April 25, 2012

- Administered an online survey to WCE candidates to collect feedback.

May 1, 2012

- Shared with WCE staff and gathered feedback.

May 2, 2012

- Shared with Dean's Advisory Board of community representatives and gathered feedback.

Fall Semester 2012

- After revising based on feedback collected, the WCE Mission and Values Statements were submitted to WCE faculty and staff for a vote.
- The WCE Mission Statement and Values Statements were adopted in October, 2012. The WCE Conceptual Framework was finalized as a representation of the mission and values.

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