



CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK Image Of The CoE



The Conceptual Framework image of the College of Education has five key components. The base of the image is its foundation. This foundation represents the University's Colleges (Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters, Charles E. Schmidt College of Science) in which students take content courses, the College of Education, and their program elements (knowledge, skills, and dispositions) that are essential for professional practice. The second component of the image shows two people representing our graduates. The third component is a map that represents the diverse settings in which our graduates work and have influence. The fourth component is a circle in which the words "reflective decision-makers" occurs. Reflective decision-making underpins the choices our graduates make as they meet the needs of students and clients in diverse settings. And, fifth, the words informed, ethical, and capable appear with arrows among them. This represents the interactions among knowledge, skills, and dispositions as our graduates engage in reflective decision-making.

Informed reflective decision-makers have mastered the subject matter needed for the profession and understand the need for lifelong learning to remain a viable professional. Ethical reflective decision-makers understand why they are given discretion in their roles and use that ability only for the student's or client's benefit. Capable reflective decision-makers have the means to teach students or service clients effectively and understand the responsibilities involved in the role. Graduates of programs in the College of Education at Florida Atlantic University are informed, ethical, and capable reflective decision-makers.

This image also represents the decision-making processes within the College of Education. Reflective decision-making is utilized in an informed, ethical, and capable manner in program development and evaluation, governance, identification and use of resources, and in faculty recruitment, selection, retention and promotion. Faculty and administrators in the College of Education are informed, ethical, and capable reflective decision-makers as they prepare professionals to practice in diverse settings and meet the strategic imperatives of the College.

The conceptual framework of the College of Education at Florida Atlantic University reflects the beliefs, assumptions and underlying principles that guide the delivery of our programs. This framework also guides the student performance outcomes of the undergraduate and graduate programs. Simply stated, our candidates are a reflection of their professional preparation.

This conceptual framework is guided by the following assumptions:

- Technology will continue to be an evolving, pervasive presence in all our activity, and will change how we work substantially, particularly as reflected in the Dearing Report's (1997) four areas of collaborative activity: teaching, research, systems support and administration. Technology will result in significant changes to the curriculum, instruction and assessment tools. New hardware and software emphasizing collaborative work, both *synchronous* and *asynchronous*, will enhance cooperation and collegiality among students and between students and faculty.
- Society will become more diverse. The modification of worldwide economic, cultural and social conditions and contexts is changing the demographic composition of our society, bringing with it changing qualitative demands for the education of teachers and other educational leaders.
- Society will continue to change, which will require lifelong learning and re-adjustment to evolving conditions for our graduates. The learning society will also place new demands on our capacity to provide on-going professional development opportunities at all levels of the education system. Increasingly, global issues, trends and opportunities will become an integral aspect of our professional lives.
- Competition will continue to increase, and we must be willing to develop dynamic, creative and proactive responses to the needs of our constituency. In the current context of market driven systems, public education will need to establish a highly differentiated, powerful vision in order to continue to attract funding and students.
- Accountability is here to stay, and will foster a culture of continuous assessment in schools and universities. Continuous improvement will become a research-based, data driven process involving faculty and staff in collaborative and reflective decision making.

As a result of these assumptions, our purposes are further guided by the following beliefs:

- Reflection is integral to the concept of continuous improvement. This is true for individuals, groups and organizations.
- Excellence in teaching, counseling and educational leadership is a process involving continuous personal and professional growth. This is true at the pre-service and in-service level, as well as with our own faculty.
- Professional educators must have a strong background in content and pedagogical knowledge in order to be able to make informed reflection possible.

- Professional coursework should be integrated to the greatest degree possible into a real world situation, to facilitate practical, informed and reflective decision-making.

These beliefs reflect the principles expressed in Florida Atlantic University's mission statement, which states the following:

Florida Atlantic University is a public research university with multiple campuses along the southeast Florida coast serving a uniquely diverse community. It promotes academic and personal development, discovery, and lifelong learning. FAU fulfills its mission through excellence and innovation in teaching, outstanding research and creative activities, public engagement and distinctive scientific and cultural alliances, all within an environment that fosters inclusiveness.

The College of Education's conceptual framework is closely aligned with these beliefs, which are expressed in its own mission statement:

The mission of the College of Education is to serve the community of Florida Atlantic University by providing effective leadership in areas of research, service and teaching at the local, state, national and international levels, through the initial and advanced preparation of informed, capable, ethical and reflective decision making professionals. Our faculty and students seek to promote and sustain authentic change, excellence and equity in their respective fields, and in the organizations and systems with which they are associated. The College's programs reflect changing societal needs and incorporate web-supported delivery systems, current methodologies and research, which bring faculty and students together to improve the quality of education for all in an increasingly diverse, technological, inclusive and global society.

Discussion of the Conceptual Framework

Reflective decision-making is essentially a proactive approach to practice. The increasing complexity and pace of change in society presents a challenge to educators to devise new ways to respond to the needs of the education system. They must learn not only to reflect, but to reflect and respond creatively, actively and effectively to unfamiliar situations and demands, while ensuring that educational excellence continues to be the major focus of their work. Reflection-in-action involves 'on-the-spot surfacing, criticizing, re-structuring and testing of intuitive understandings of experienced phenomenon; often, it takes the form of a reflective conversation with the situation' (Schön, 1984, p. 42). This affects all levels of the system. Educators cannot rely on tried and tested models, as in the actual world of education their task is "to make sense of messy situations by increasing understanding and discovering and communicating meanings" (Sergiovanni, 1991, p. 5).

In higher education, collaborative decision making, which has traditionally been an integral part of universities' administrative framework, will take on new meanings as educators take on new professional roles and responsibilities requiring an ever more dynamic, reflective mindset. In the College of Education, this is applied by evaluating long-term consequences of professional action, and maintaining an informed, current perspective on education philosophy, pedagogy and research.

Ethics

Ethical principles are consistently addressed in the areas of teaching, research and service, identified by the College of Education as the three principal domains of its activity.

Ethics has attracted more attention in education in recent times, due to the growing complexity of some of the dilemmas faced by educators. In response to this, the College of Education is committed to ensuring all students are competent in ethical reasoning, so that they may comprehend and act appropriately when faced by conflicting value-laden dilemmas. When addressing these issues in our programs, we seek to incorporate the four paradigms of ethics identified by Poliner Shapiro and Stefkovich as justice, critique, care and the profession, which provide a framework for resolving the "real-life, complex dilemmas that ...[educators]... frequently face in their schools and in their communities" (Poliner Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2001, p. 5).

In keeping with the Code of Ethics and the Principles of Professional Conduct as established by The Florida Education Standards Commission, educators and students value:

- the worth and dignity of every person
- the pursuit of truth
- devotion to excellence
- acquisition of knowledge
- the nurture of democratic citizenship

The educator's primary professional concern will always be for the student and the development of the student's potential. The educator strives to achieve and sustain the highest degree of ethical conduct.

It should be noted that many of our programs possess ethics codes that relate to their specialist fields, as established by the pertinent professional associations. For example, the Department of Communication Science and Disorders applies the ethical principles of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA). The Department of Counselor Education incorporates the code of ethics of the American Counseling Association (ACA), and subsidiary associations such as the American Mental Health Counselors Association, the American School Counselors Association and the American Rehabilitation School Counselors Association.

The College of Education is thereby committed to offering comprehensive professional preparation programs so that faculty and students may establish authentic communities of practice, where all, including minority and disadvantaged students, are included in such a way that they may achieve their fullest potential.

Diversity in local, national and international contexts

Among the increasingly complex situations affecting society, diversity presents a major challenge to education. In the 21st century, as society becomes even more demographically diverse, educators will, more than ever, need to be able to develop, foster, and lead tolerant and democratic schools. Through the study of ethics professional educators “will be better prepared to recognize, reflect on, and appreciate differences” (Poliner Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2001).

This has implications for the ethnic and cultural composition of faculty, for the College’s philosophy of education, for the cultural content of the curricula in every department, and calls on faculty and staff to sustain a critical perspective of the values and assumptions that underpin all collegial and professional activity. They must “cultivate a shared vision, meaningful and coherent professional and personal experiences, and a sense of membership in a community of learning with persons who may have some profound differences in living conditions, values, and beliefs” (Beck & Murphy, 1994, p. 3).

In an increasingly diverse society, this is also a call for faculty to be exemplary models of openness, empathy and respect for differences, be they based on gender, race, ethnicity, culture, exceptionality, sexual orientation or religion. It also means that programs should include culturally relevant content and pedagogy.

Outcomes: Knowledge Base

Candidate Proficiencies

Graduates of programs in the College of Education at Florida Atlantic University are informed, ethical, and capable reflective decision-makers.

Informed reflective decision-makers possess a sophisticated grounding in the subjects they teach and appreciate how knowledge in their subject is created, organized, linked to other disciplines and applied to real-world settings. They also understand the limitations implicit today in the accumulation of knowledge and acknowledge the need for life-long learning to remain a viable professional. They therefore foster a learning environment where all are learners. Though they are concerned with transferring core knowledge, they provide opportunities for students to develop critical, analytical and problem solving skills. Accomplished educators also know their students, their background, their past successes and failures, and can provide a learning environment that provides quality learning experiences for all.

Ethical reflective decision-makers are able to apply a systematic, rational approach to dilemmas offering difficult choices between competing values. In their professional preparation they have been provided with learning experiences that have enabled them to develop not only their intellectual abilities, but also their “perceptions, beliefs, assumptions, emotions, and commitments” (Beck & Murphy, 1994, p. 2). If they are to have a real, lasting impact in their professional environments, they “need to be deeply reflective, actively thoughtful and dramatically explicit about their core values and beliefs” (Bolman & Deal, 1991, p. 449).

“One of the challenges of moral leadership ... is to engage oneself and others in the process of decision making without thought to self-interest” (Sergiovanni, 1991, p. 331). Accomplished educators are committed to an elevated ethical standard for its own sake, and also as an example of an educated person who is in daily contact with students and colleagues.

Capable reflective decision-makers have developed a wide range of skills and competencies that enable them to teach students or service clients effectively and understand the responsibilities involved in the role they will assume as accomplished professionals. They “practice reflection in action, on action and about action” (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996, p. 64). They are highly skilled in assessing where students are, in evaluating their learning styles, and in adapting their teaching methods accordingly. They are therefore able to provide diverse learning paths to accommodate diverse student levels and personalities.

Educators accomplished in this area contribute to the effectiveness and collegiality of the educational environment by working collaboratively with other professionals on policy matters, curriculum development and professional preparation.

Further Evaluation of the Conceptual Framework

Commitment to Diversity

The College of Education at Florida Atlantic University sustains a proactive commitment to recruiting and retaining faculty and students that come from diverse backgrounds. This commitment acknowledges that the modification of worldwide economic, cultural and social conditions and contexts is changing the demographic composition of our society, bringing with it changing needs for the professional development of educators and educational leaders. South Florida is a clear example of how shifting demographics are making a profound impact on the profile of educational institutions and their communities, and placing challenging new demands on the professions that serve them.

Commitment to Technology

The College is also committed to developing and sustaining state of the art technology to support the work of students, faculty and staff. This is grounded in the awareness that teaching and learning processes and effective research are increasingly dependent on electronically generated data, and that technology plays a powerful role in the process of making sense of the complexity of current educational realities. The universal adoption of electronic communication systems, assistive technology and the need to provide equitable access to information systems in the knowledge society have made it essential for the College to put in place a comprehensive Technology Plan that includes a perpetual renewal cycle.

Alignment of Candidate Proficiencies with State Professional Standards

FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS

The College of Education has selected the following Educator Accomplished Practices, as developed in the Competencies for Teachers of the 21st Century by the Florida Education Standards Commission, in order to establish the manner through which graduates may demonstrate that they are informed, ethical, capable and reflective decision-makers.

1. Assessment

The preprofessional teacher collects and uses data gathered from a variety of sources. These sources include both traditional and alternate assessment strategies. Furthermore, the teacher can identify and match the students' instructional plans with their cognitive, social, linguistic, emotional, and physical needs.

Indicators:

- 1.1. Employs traditional and alternative assessment strategies and uses the data to modify interventions.*
- 1.2. Interprets data from various informal and standardized assessment procedures.*

2. Communication

The preprofessional teacher recognizes the need for effective communication in the classroom and is in the process of acquiring techniques which s/he will use in the classroom.

Indicators:

- 2.1. Communicates high expectations in a positive and supportive manner.*
- 2.2. Demonstrates the ability to communicate effectively verbally and in writing.*

3. Continuous Improvement

The preprofessional teacher realizes that s/he is in the initial stages of a life-long learning process and that self-reflection is one of the key components of that process. While her/his concentration is, of necessity, inward and personal, the role of colleagues and school-based improvement activities increases as time passes. The teacher's continued professional improvement is characterized by self-reflection,

working with immediate colleagues and teammates, and meeting the goals of a personal professional development plan.

Indicators:

- 3.1. *Uses data and reflects on data to improve professional practice.*
- 3.2. *Participates in professional development and other learning activities to increase his or her own professional development.*

4. Critical and Creative Thinking

The preprofessional teacher is acquiring performance assessment techniques and strategies that measure higher order thinking skills in students and is building a repertoire of realistic projects and problem-solving activities designed to assist all students in demonstrating their ability to think creatively.

Indicators:

- 4.1. *Identifies strategies, materials, and technologies that expand critical thinking.*
- 4.2. *Demonstrates and models the use of higher-order thinking skills.*

5. Diversity

The preprofessional teacher establishes a comfortable environment which accepts and fosters diversity. The teacher must demonstrate knowledge and awareness of varied cultures and linguistic backgrounds. The teacher creates a climate of openness, inquiry, and support by practicing strategies such as acceptance, tolerance, resolution and mediation.

Indicators:

- 5.1. *Provides a range of activities that accommodate learning styles, abilities, cultural, and linguistic diversity.*
- 5.2. *Practice skills and gain knowledge needed in a diverse society.*

6. Ethics and Professionalism

Adheres to the Code of Ethics and Principles of Professional Conduct of the Education Profession in Florida.

Indicators:

- 6.1. *Meets expectations of professional behavior and demeanor.*
- 6.2. *Adheres to relevant and professional Codes of Ethics.*

7. Human Development and Learning

Drawing upon well established human development/learning theories and concepts and a variety of information about students, the preprofessional teacher plans instructional activities.

Indicators:

- 7.1. *Varies activities to accommodate different learning needs, developmental levels, experiential backgrounds, linguistic development and cultural heritage.*
- 7.2. *Shows knowledge of learning and development theories.*

8. Knowledge and Presentation of Subject Matter

The preprofessional teacher has a basic understanding of the subject field and is beginning to understand that the subject is linked to other disciplines and can be

applied to real world integrated settings. The teacher's repertoire of teaching skills includes a variety of means to assist student acquisition of new knowledge and skills using that knowledge.

Indicators:

8.1. Demonstrates subject matter knowledge.

8.2. Communicates knowledge of subject matter by using the materials and technologies of the field.

9. Learning Environment

The preprofessional teacher understands the importance of setting up effective learning environments and has techniques and strategies to use to do so including some that provide opportunities for student input into the processes. The teacher understands that s/he will need a variety of techniques and work to increase his/her knowledge and skills.

Indicators:

9.1. Monitors learning activities by providing feedback and reinforcement.

9.2. Develops an environment conducive to learning.

10. Planning

Recognizing the importance of setting high expectations for all students, the preprofessional teacher works with other professionals to design learning experiences that meet students' needs and interests. The teacher candidate continually seeks advice/information from appropriate resources (including feedback), interprets the information, and modifies his/her plans appropriately. Planned instruction incorporates a creative environment and utilizes varied and motivational strategies and multiple resources for providing comprehensible instruction for all students. Upon reflection, the teacher continuously refines outcome assessment and learning experiences.

Indicators:

10.1. Plans activities with identified performance and learning outcomes.

10.2. Plans activities that help participant develop knowledge through a variety of strategies.

11. Role of the Teacher (Professional)

The preprofessional teacher communicates and works cooperatively with families and colleagues to improve the educational experiences at the school.

Indicators:

11.1. Communicates and cooperates with colleagues and communities.

11.2. Develops short and long-term professional goals.

12. Technology

The preprofessional teacher uses technology as available at the school site and as appropriate to the learner. S/he provides students with opportunities to actively use technology and facilitates access to the use of electronic resources. The teacher also uses technology to manage, evaluate and improve instruction.

Indicators:

- 12.1. *Uses instructional and other electronic tools to gather information.*
 12.2. *Uses technology in a professional role.*

**FLORIDA LEADERSHIP STANDARDS AND INDICATORS
 USED FOR
 SCHOOL LEADERS MASTERS DEGREE PROGRAM**

FAU DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

STANDARD	INDICATOR
<p style="text-align: center;">DECISION MAKING STRATEGIES</p> <p>High Performing Leaders plan effectively, use critical thinking and problem solving techniques, and collect and analyze data for continuous school improvement.</p>	Has a problem-solving model to use when confronted with unsettled questions or undesirable situations.
	Uses others to assist in the accomplishment of organization goals.
<p style="text-align: center;">ETHICAL LEADERSHIP</p> <p>High Performing Leaders act with integrity, fairness, and honesty in an ethical manner.</p>	Apply dimensions of ethical thinking to case study situations related to school leadership.
	Develops a personal code of ethics embracing diversity, integrity, and the dignity of all people.
	Develops a school-based plan that demonstrates an openness of resource distribution
<p style="text-align: center;">HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT</p> <p>High Performing Leaders recruit, select, nurture and, where appropriate, retain effective personnel, develop mentor and partnership programs, and design and implement comprehensive professional growth plans for all staff - paid and volunteer.</p>	Connects professional growth plans and professional development to individual teacher and school learning goals.
	Understands adult learning strategies useful for assisting staff in professional development.
	Understands the processes necessary for use in the hiring and retention of high quality teachers.
<p style="text-align: center;">INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP</p> <p>High Performing Leaders promote a positive learning culture, provide an effective instructional program, and apply best practices to student learning, especially in the area of reading and other foundational skills.</p>	Uses data as a component of planning for instructional improvement
	Has identified skills necessary for the planning and implementation of improvements of student learning.
<p style="text-align: center;">LEARNING, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND ASSESSMENT</p> <p>High Performing Leaders monitor the success of all students in the learning environment, align the curriculum, instruction, and assessment processes to promote effective student performance, and use a variety of benchmarks, learning expectations, and feedback measures to ensure accountability for all participants engaged in the educational process</p>	Demonstrates an understanding of the methods and principles of program evaluation.
	Uses multiple sources of data to inform decisions and improvement processes.
<p style="text-align: center;">MANAGING THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT</p>	Conforms to legal and ethical standards in the

STANDARD	INDICATOR
High Performing Leaders manage the organization, operations, facilities and resources in ways that maximize the use of resources in an instructional organization and promote a safe, efficient, legal, and effective learning environment.	management of the learning environment.
	Manages school fiscal as specified by district, state and federal fiscal management guidelines
	Understands techniques and organizational useful in leading and managing a complex and diverse organization.
<p style="text-align: center;">TECHNOLOGY</p> High Performing Leaders plan and implement the integration of technological and electronic tools in teaching, learning, management, research, and communication responsibilities.	Develops an effective teacher professional development plan to increase technology usage.
	Has a plan for the provision of support to increase the use of technology already in the school/classrooms.
<p style="text-align: center;">VISION</p> High Performing leaders have a personal vision for their school and the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to develop, articulate and implement a shared vision that is supported by the larger organization and the school community.	Communicates the school's vision, mission and priorities to the community
	Describes how instructional objectives, curricular goals and the shared vision relate to each other.
	Prepare a personal vision statement and articulate this vision in both oral and written settings.
<p style="text-align: center;">DIVERSITY</p> High performing leaders understand, respond to, and influence the personal, political, social, economic, legal, and cultural relationships in the classroom, the school and the local community.	Understands how multicultural awareness, gender sensitivity, and racial and ethnic appreciation affect an educational organization.

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