

II. Conceptual Framework

Our present conceptual framework was revised after the NCATE 2000 standards were approved and adopted. Being an NCATE-approved institution in continuing accreditation standing, our former conceptual framework was approved during our last visit in the fall of 1996 but would need to be revisited to ensure the alignment with the newer professional standards. Having recently begun implementation of our new Ohio licensure programs the timing seemed very appropriate to now do so.

The process began with the distribution of the new NCATE 2000 standards to all faculty. Concurrent to this, the licensure program coordinators began meeting and discussing how to best address the new NCATE standards and in several cases the newly adopted Learned Society standards for each licensure area we offer. Focused dialogue occurred during program and department level meetings and the need to focus more intensely on addressing the new standards yielded the development of a new divisional position of NCATE Coordinator in January 2001.

Early in 2001, the NCATE Divisional Committee was formed. Members were appointed by Interim Dean Ellison or by the Chair of each department (1-3 faculty members/department) within the School of Education and Allied Professions, as well as members from the Dean's Executive Council (formerly known as Dean's Staff). Representatives from programs housed within other divisions such as Art and Music Education, Speech Pathology and Audiology, School Nursing Program, and the Associate Dean from the College of Arts and Science also serve on this committee. Additionally, five local school districts representing urban, suburban, and rural partner schools serve on the committee.

The purpose of the NCATE Divisional Committee was first to address the realignment our Conceptual Framework to meet the new standards. Second, to develop an assessment system for systemic development, implementation, and assessment of performance and other outcome measures to effectively ensure the quality of our candidates while within our programs and post graduation from our teacher preparation and other school personnel programs.

The process began with our mission and vision. We began reflecting on what we hope our candidates take with them at the completion of a teacher preparation or other school personnel program, other than having a Miami University diploma in hand. After careful examination of our former conceptual framework and recommendations for closer alignment our shared principles led to the development of our institutional standards. This evolved after a smaller, representative group was established from this larger committee of 30. The smaller group became the Writing/Assessment Committee.

The Writing/Assessment Committee's charge was to take the individual ideas generated from all the programs and departments represented within the larger group then compile and share proposed next steps representative of the group as a whole. The larger group would fine-tune this work and then share the outcomes with each of their respective programs or departments for an additional opportunity for modification, if deemed necessary. This process was used for the alignment of our institutional standards to national and state standards as well as for the development of the assessment plan and system for implementing and assessing the meeting of our institutional standards.

The revised document was written to include background information about who we are, our mission as both a university and a school of education, our school's vision, and our institutional standards and expectations for our candidates. The document follows.

Conceptual Framework: Miami University School of Education and Allied Professions

Miami University is a state-assisted university in Ohio. The central campus is located in Oxford just 35 miles north of Cincinnati and 45 miles southwest of Dayton. Preservation of nature throughout the campus and community coupled with architectural continuity – modified Georgian design – explains why Miami is regarded as one of the most beautiful campuses in the Midwest.

Approximately 15,000 undergraduates and 1,800 graduate students are enrolled at the Oxford campus. About 225 of the undergraduates attend one or two semesters at the John E. Dolibois European Center in Differdange, Luxembourg. Two branch campuses in nearby cities, Hamilton and Middletown, each enroll more than 2,600 additional students.

Mission of Miami University

A state-assisted university, Miami's mission is to preserve, add to, evaluate, and transmit the accumulated knowledge of the centuries; to develop critical thinking, extend the frontiers of knowledge and serve society; and to provide an environment conducive to effective and inspired teaching and learning, promote professional development of faculty, and encourage scholarly research and creativity of faculty and students.

Miami's primary concern is its students. This concern is reflected in a broad array of efforts to develop the potential of each student. The university endeavors to individualize the educational experience. It provides personal and

professional guidance; and offers opportunities for students to achieve understanding and appreciation not only of their own culture but of the cultures of others as well. Selected undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs of quality are offered with the expectation of students achieving a high level of competence and developing a personal value system.

Miami is committed to the idea of liberal education for undergraduate students. The Miami Plan for Liberal Education, the most recent manifestation of this commitment to liberal education, was adopted in 1988, with implementation beginning in 1992. It is consciously constructed to secure a continuous curricular framework that carries through each year of all baccalaureate programs. Even as the university prepares many students for professional careers in the areas of law, medicine, education, and business, it ensures that all students have grounding in the humanities, social, and natural sciences. Students learn through this new curriculum to better understand the problems and possibilities of the contemporary world. This liberal education approach is predicted on the principles of:

- Thinking critically;
- Understanding contexts;
- Engaging with other learners; and
- Reflecting and acting upon the issues raised.

In all areas, Miami University's mission involves synthesizing liberal and professional education. It is the liberal underpinnings to our professional programs that is a hallmark of a degree from Miami University. This synthesis results in a unique blend of strengths in our programs for the education of educators.

Closely tied to Miami's mission is a high quality faculty and staff. The university is committed to maintaining faculty strength as a prerequisite for success in its most creative programs. Miami recruits from the best universities throughout the nation. Its student-faculty ratio of 16:1 is excellent. Faculty members at Miami recognize the inseparability of teaching and scholarship while acknowledging teaching as their primary occupation. Significantly, overwhelming proportions of Miami University's faculty members, including the most senior and distinguished among them, are involved with undergraduate instruction, including introductory courses.

Vision of the School of Education and Allied Professions

- Our students (candidates) are our first priority.

- We are stewards of our public responsibility for human development, working collaboratively with our students, schools, families, and community, health and social service agencies to create knowledge and strategies to improve our complex global society.
- We are a collegial community of learners, committed to the goals of Miami University, specifically focused on the development of leaders for education, families, health and social service agencies and local communities.
- We strive to be exemplars of practices that are democratic, nurturing, moral, ethical and respectful.
- We are responsive to our past and responsible for our collective futures.

Mission of the School of Education and Allied Professions

The EAP community of collaborative practitioners (the Unit), while committed to fulfilling Miami University's mission, endeavors to prepare **caring, competent, and transformative educators**. Knowledge, skills, and dispositions will be infused to promote the highest quality teacher education & allied professions' programs, professional development opportunities for educators, and exemplary graduate degree programs.

As a unit, we adopted 14 Principles Guiding the Development of Curricula for Educators and Health/Social Service Professionals in 1994. These principles were based on 2 years of work of various committees and several Faculty and Partner School Retreats, the draft standards for teacher licensure in Ohio, standards of professional societies, NCATE standards, and the original 16 Statements of Professional Development that undergirded the development of professional education programs in 1987. The 14 principles include: addressing the knowledge base, praxis, coherence, inquiry, decision-making, learner focus, equity, diversity, family and community, collaboration, lifelong-learning in an educative community, enculturation and global awareness. These 14 principles set the foundation for our five institutional standards that are at the heart of our conceptual framework and our philosophical beliefs that describe our definition of a **caring, competent, and transformative educator**.

What does it mean to be a **caring, competent, and transformative educator**? This educator is one who holds the unique responsibility of preparing young people for their responsibilities in a democracy. The educator's role and relationships with students are ever changing and evolving and transforming.

A **caring** educator is one who understands the perspective of others. A **caring** relationship is one in which teachers can convey loving support to students by listening to students and validating their feelings, and by demonstrating kindness, compassion, and respect (Higgins, 1994; Meier, 1995).

A **competent** educator is one knowledgeable within the content area(s) in which he/she teaches. “Without the essential base of subject matter knowledge, teachers are simply unable to produce effective instruction” (Lee, 1995, p. 424; Hashweh, 1987).

A **transformative** educator is one who is engaged within critical reflection on present practices informed by theoretical knowledge (Cambron-McCabe & Foster, 1994). The educator becomes a transformative agent in schools and communities. This involves reflecting upon practice and creating learning environments – both in the classroom and community – which promote trust, justice, and hope.

A **caring, competent, and transformative educator** has the preparation and disposition to prepare the student for “political and social responsibility as a citizen” and for “maximum individual development, for full participation in the human conversation. (Goodlad, 1996). Hence, a person completing Miami’s programs in the School of Education and Allied Professions should be one who is well grounded in general studies (Miami Plan) or graduate core courses and content knowledge; appreciates and understands diverse learners, mentors, peers, and learning processes; demonstrates sensitivities to learning contexts and environments; engages in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of varied instructional strategies; demonstrates professional commitments and dispositions.

The meaning of the five institutional standards will now be delineated in greater detail:

Standard 1 - Is Well-Grounded in General Studies and Content Knowledge means:

- ◆ Evidences depth of academic knowledge and skills
- ◆ Demonstrates an understanding of the connections between content previously learned, current content, and the disposition to integrate future content
- ◆ Makes content knowledge comprehensible to students
- ◆ Demonstrates strong written and oral communication skills (e.g. correct grammar, legible writing, clear speech)

Standard 2 - Appreciates and Understands Diverse Learners, Mentors, Peers, and Learning Processes means:

- ◆ Shows a sensitivity to cultural and individual differences
- ◆ Demonstrates an appreciation and understanding of exceptionalities
- ◆ Utilizes multiple instructional strategies that are appropriate to students' needs
- ◆ Demonstrates familiarity with relevant aspects of students' background knowledge and experiences and varies instruction based on students' interests, aspirations, personal and cultural dispositions, and needs

Standard 3 - Demonstrates Sensitivities to Learning Contexts and Environments means:

- ◆ Creates a climate that promotes fairness
- ◆ Establishes and maintains rapport with students
- ◆ Communicates challenging learning expectations to each student
- ◆ Establishes and maintains consistent standards of classroom behavior
- ◆ Makes the physical environment safe and conducive to learning
- ◆ Facilitates students' integration of understanding, competence, confidence, and emerging self efficacy

Standard 4 - Demonstrates Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation by Utilizing Varied Instructional Strategies means:

Planning

- ◆ Articulates clear learning goals for the lesson that are appropriate for the students
- ◆ Creates or selects teaching methods, learning activities, and instructional materials, technological resources that are appropriate for the students and are aligned with the goals of the lesson

Implementation

- ◆ Clearly communicates challenging learning expectations and procedures to the students
- ◆ Encourages students to extend their thinking
- ◆ Monitors students' understanding of content through a variety of means, providing feedback to students to assist learning and adjusting activities as the situation merits
- ◆ Uses instructional time effectively

Evaluation

- ◆ Creates or selects evaluation strategies that are appropriate for the students and that are aligned with the goals of the lesson

- ◆ Demonstrates a sense of efficacy by modifying instruction in response to student feedback and performance
- ◆ Monitors and assesses learning in using a variety of means (e.g. observation, questioning techniques, tests, demonstrations, etc.)

Standard 5 - Demonstrates Professional Commitments and Dispositions means:

- ◆ Participates in professional and school-sponsored activities
- ◆ Observes school policies and procedures
- ◆ Demonstrates proper conduct as a professional (well groomed, properly dressed, courteous, punctual, etc.)
- ◆ Meets all requirements for professional development within the specific licensure program
- ◆ Reflects on the extent to which learning goals were met
- ◆ Builds professional relationships with colleagues to share learning insights and to coordinate learning activities for students in relation to both the public and private purposes of education
- ◆ Communicates with parents, guardians, and other colleagues about student learning

The conceptual framework of the School of Education and Allied Professions (SEAP) at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio places **caring, competent, transformative** education at the heart of all that we do. We believe that success for all students – be they university teacher candidates, school personnel candidates, or the students they are being prepared to teach and lead – should be the central and fundamental goal of education.

The faculty and staff of SEAP are themselves **caring, competent** and **transformative** teacher **educators**. They model the aforementioned standards within their work and teaching. They are true professionals dedicated to the preparation of educators for our nation’s schools and agencies.

Our vision is aligned with both national and state standards for Ohio for the preparation of educators. It is a shared vision that has been collaboratively developed over a number of years through the efforts of both university and school faculty as well as community members.

As stated in our vision, our candidates are our first priority. We are committed to the preparation of **caring, competent, transformative educators** who will impact student learning in schools of today and tomorrow.

References

Cambron-McCabe, N. & Foster, W. (1994). A paradigm shift: Implications for the preparation of school leaders. In Mulkee, T., Cambron-McCabe, N., & Anderson, B. Democratic leadership: The change context of administrative preparation. New Jersey: Ablex Publishing.

Educational Testing Service (1994). Teacher Performance Assessments: Assessment Criteria. NJ: ETS.

Hashweh, M.Z. (1987). Effects of subject-matter knowledge in the teaching of biology and physics. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 3 (2), 109-120.

Higgins, G. (1994). Resilient adults: Overcoming a cruel past. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Goodlad, J. (1996). Democracy, Education, and Community. In R. Soder (Ed.) *Democracy, Education, and the Schools*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. p 112.

Lee, O. (1995). Subject matter knowledge, classroom management, and instructional practices in middle school science classrooms. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*, 32 (4), 423-440.

Meier, D. (1995). *The power of their ideas: Lessons for American from a small school in Harlem*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Noddings, N. (1984). *Caring: A feminine approach to ethics and moral education*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Conceptual Framework Indicators

Indicators such as a shared vision, coherence, professional commitments and dispositions, commitment to diversity, commitment to technology and candidate proficiencies aligned with professional and state standards have been addressed with the further development of our Conceptual Framework. Each has been an integral part of the process and will be described in further detail.

Shared Vision

Both Miami's and the School of Education and Allied Professions' Missions are embedded within our Conceptual Framework. Our collective charge is to produce caring, competent, and transformative educators. This is accomplished through content, professional and pedagogical knowledge and skills, and learned professional dispositions. The knowledge, skills, and dispositions are learned within our candidates' Miami Plan as well as within their specialized program's offerings. It is a vision transmitted through faculty and staff (university and school) and the varied site and clinical experiences provided.

Coherence

Our system is coherent in that our institutional standards are infused within our curriculum, instruction, site experiences, clinical practices, and is assessed across our candidates' programs. When our licensure programs were written in 1997, we made a conscious effort to address the implementation of the nineteen criteria of Praxis III (now a part of the 31 criteria within our 5 institutional standards) and the guided effort toward the development of candidate portfolios in a deliberate way. It was stated within each licensure program submitted and approved by the Ohio Department of Education that we would infuse both into each teacher preparation program. This was in addition to the correlation of each program meeting both NCATE and ODE/INTASC standards.

Professional Commitments and Dispositions

Our professional commitment to knowledge, teaching competence and student learning is exemplary. "Students are our first priority" is not just expounded but is visible daily. Our faculty are highly qualified and model best practices consistently. Over 800 clinical faculty (school and university) have been trained as mentors or assessors in Pathwise™/ Praxis III™ for systematic observation techniques focused on providing non-judgmental feedback regarding teaching performance for both preservice and first year teachers. This has occurred since 1997. Our institutional standards are now assessed throughout a candidate's field and clinical experiences by trained supervisors and cooperating teachers speaking the common vocabulary of effective teaching practices which has enriched the experiences for both school and university faculty and students.

Commitment to Diversity

The commitment to diversity and our active recruitment in recent years has enriched the campus as a whole and each school and college within the university. Within our institutional standards diversity is addressed. For example, Standard 2 states that our candidates will Appreciate and Understand Diverse Learners, Mentors, and Learning Processes. Our programs emphasize “one size will not fit all” and learning must be supported for all students from the most gifted to the most challenged (mentally or physically) and everyone in between. This is also addressed in our third standard Demonstrates Sensitivities to Learning Contexts and Environments, our fourth standard being able to Demonstrate Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation by Utilizing Varied Instructional Strategies as well as is to be demonstrated as a professional in Standard 5.

Commitment to Technology

Similarly to diversity, technology should be infused within our curriculum, instruction, site experiences, clinical practice, assessments and evaluations and not viewed in isolation as found within one or two courses within a program. If we profess to produce caring, competent, and transformative educators we must provide our candidates the knowledge, skills and dispositions necessary to be technologically astute. Beyond the knowledge base, candidates must be able to use the educational technology to help all students learn. This can be accomplished during planning by articulating clear learning goals for the lesson that are appropriate for the students (understanding one’s students’ capabilities and knowledge base) and then Creating or selecting teaching methods, learning activities, and instructional materials, technological resources that are appropriate for the students and are aligned with the goals of the lesson (Standard 4P1 & 2).

Candidate Proficiencies Aligned with Professional and State Standards

The context has been provided within our Conceptual Framework for developing and assessing our candidates’ proficiencies based upon professional, state, and institutional standards. All of our licensure programs have been approved by the state of Ohio and have either received national recognition by a specialized professional association (SPA) or are awaiting confirmation having recently addressed clarifications during the rejoinder process. Our institutional standards are addressed throughout our candidates’ program both during field and clinical experiences as well as within course assignments. We have designated benchmarks where the institutional standards (31 criteria) will be assessed as artifacts within a portfolio review process. For instance in an undergraduate a review would occur before entrance into a program, before methods, before student teaching, and before graduation. The review process would involve a variety of faculty (e.g. course instructors, advisors, cooperating teachers, student teaching

supervisors, department chair, or program coordinator) being involved during different stages of the process to ensure a fair, consistent, accurate, and to avoid bias. Finally, a rubric scoring system has been designed and is to be piloted and fine-tuned throughout the coming year.