

Communities of Learners

Millersville University
Professional Education Unit
Conceptual Framework

Acknowledgements

This Conceptual Framework was written by the Professional Education Unit of Millersville University. It was begun during the Spring of 2002 at a one day workshop led by Dr. Erskin Dottin and has progressed to its current state through the input of its members as well as local educational partners. The information presented in this framework has been gleaned from these participants during round table discussions, focus reading groups, and through open calls for faculty, department, and partner feedback from the Summer 2002 through the Fall 2003 semester. The request for feedback will remain ongoing. This conceptual framework is a working document that reflects the varying programs which comprise the unit and our overarching vision, philosophies and mission. As a result, this Conceptual Framework reflects the work that we do and the candidates that we prepare. In Fall 2005, the Professional Education Unit faculty proposed the title, **Communities of Learners**, for the conceptual framework.

Fall 2005

Millersville University

Professional Education Unit Conceptual Framework

The decisions made by professional educators are always situated in a specific set of circumstances. When taking actions, professional educators respond to all of the factors of the educational situation, including the context, curriculum, abilities and backgrounds of the students, and appropriate pedagogical issues. These responses are grounded in the educator's maturity, knowledge base, understanding of the goals of education, and ability to reflect on and assess the situation. Professional educators at Millersville University possess a broad set of skills and dispositions and a knowledge base that they are able to apply flexibly in response to new problems, drawing upon the appropriate strategies. In addition to specific skills and outcomes, they demonstrate a broad background in both content and pedagogy, and the ability to integrate the two. They also have completed a series of supervised field experiences and a clinical practicum that have provided the opportunities for them to apply their knowledge, skills, and dispositions in appropriate settings with diverse students.

The conceptual framework, **Communities of Learners**, for the Professional Education Unit is comprised of a vision; a mission; philosophy, purposes, and goals; and knowledge bases that are evidenced through outcomes and specific indicators in identified areas of candidate proficiency. The Professional Education Unit has identified a number of skills and competencies that the candidates must possess in order to become proficient, effective, and motivating educators. These skills and competencies are learned traits and identified in terms of learning outcomes. These learning outcomes reflect the three themes of this conceptual framework which are: (1) Learning Communities of Inquiry and Action, (2) Focus on Students, and (3) Exemplary Professional Practices. These three themes are articulated in the philosophy, purposes, and goals and support the mission of the Professional Education Unit and the mission of Millersville University. Each learning outcome may be reflected in more than one of the three identified themes.

VISION STATEMENT

We envision the Professional Education Unit (PEU) at Millersville University to be exemplary in the preparation of education professionals who recognize, respect, and respond to the promise of every child, seek to better the lives of individuals in a diverse, changing and complex society, and improve society through the education process. We envision generations of learners within the community, where PEU faculty and school partners support and guide future education professionals; where new education professionals support and guide their P-12 students and become partners in the preparation of future educators; and where subsequently, their students become responsible, valued, and giving members of the community.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Professional Education Unit (PEU) is committed to the preparation and continuing development of education professionals (e.g. teachers, school leaders, and professional support personnel). The core of basic preparation includes a steadfast commitment to a liberal-arts based education, a strong knowledge of pedagogy and content, provision of ample field experiences, and the development of dispositions befitting an education professional. The PEU is committed to providing the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and its students with professionals who are able to assume their roles and responsibilities as educators in a diverse and technologically complex society; who are able to understand and appreciate all students as individuals; who develop habits of mind that support inquiry, reflection, and collaboration; and who demonstrate professional standards of conduct including a strong sense of ethics and the motivation to seek opportunities that foster professional and personal growth. The PEU is committed to serve as a resource for the communities in the region through the application of scholarship efforts and service.

PHILOSOPHY, PURPOSES, and GOALS

The philosophy of the Professional Education Unit at Millersville University is reflected and embedded throughout the conceptual framework, **Communities of Learners**. Its purpose is the preparation of education professionals who will create learning communities of inquiry and action, will focus on students, and will demonstrate exemplary professional practices. This philosophy includes all faculty preparing professional educators, as well as graduate and undergraduate students seeking certification in the professional education areas.

Three themes or principles guide our philosophy, purpose, and goals:

1. Learning Communities of Inquiry and Action

Members of the Professional Education Unit engage in learning communities in which reflection, collaboration, lifelong learning, and habits of mind are developed and nurtured.

Reflection includes carefully considering one's actions in response to student learning within the context of school, family, and community and actively looking for ways to improve one's actions in moral ways.

Collaboration integrates other perspectives into reflection, and enables educators to move away from solitary practices by considering the points of view of colleagues, parents, and community members.

Lifelong learning recognizes that learning is a process that involves the integration of prior knowledge and experience with new concepts, and the connection of classroom learning with real-life experiences.

Habits of mind include the development of individual skills, including reading, writing, creativity, analysis, and mathematical reasoning, and the ability to connect and apply those skills in solving problems and making decisions.

Candidates in learning communities of inquiry and action use current research to inform their practices by asking questions and by gathering and analyzing data; they are encouraged to consider the school, family, and community contexts in which they work; develop meaningful learning experiences and positive environments based on their developmental levels and prior experiences; and facilitate learning communities in their practices.

2. Focus on Students

Candidates and faculty in the Professional Education Unit balance content knowledge with an appreciation of students' individuality and culture. We know our fields and the subject matter we teach and be able to explain the important principles and concepts delineated in professional and state standards. This knowledge must be combined with our ability to understand and appreciate all students as individuals and to consider the various implications of contextual factors in our work. Contextual factors may include culture, diversity, environment and learning styles.

Candidates and faculty are able to apply cognitive and learning theories to facilitate the learning of all students.

Candidates and faculty balance knowledge and the principles and concepts delineated in professional and state standards with an appreciation of all students' individuality, diversity, and cultures.

3. Exemplary Professional Practices

Members of the Professional Education Unit demonstrate the knowledge, skills and dispositions of exemplary professionals. We have strong competence in our content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge and skills, and in the professional knowledge expected in our fields and delineated in professional, state, and institutional standards.

Professional Education Unit members must demonstrate professional dispositions or standards of conduct including a commitment to service, a strong sense of ethics with an appreciation of the moral enterprise of education, the willingness to be seen as role models, and the motivation to constantly seek opportunities for professional development that fosters scholarship and understanding.

Members of the Professional Education Unit are supportive of all students, their families, and the school and community and serve as catalysts for positive and responsible change.

KNOWLEDGE BASES

The three themes of our conceptual framework, **Communities of Learners**, are situated in current research and strong, relevant knowledge bases:

1. Learning Communities of Inquiry and Action

The ideals of reflection, collaboration, lifelong learning, and habits of mind support and nurture this Professional Education Unit's learning community of inquiry and action.

The modern conception of reflection as “thought bound up in action or about action” originated with Dewey (Freese, 1999) and is clear in Dewey’s statement, “By putting the consequences of different ways and lines of action before the mind, it enables us to know what we are about when we act” (Dewey, 1933, p. 17). Schön (1983) expanded Dewey’s concept of reflection by differentiating reflection-in-action from technical rationality or the application of scientific principles to practice. Both may involve reflecting before and after acting, as well as making decisions during action. However, for Schön, reflection is integrally connected with practice; teachers and other professionals understand and act on their situations in ways that cannot be reduced to rules or described fully by educational theory. This intersection of thought and action is best achieved in an act undertaken with others, not in isolation (Buchman, 1990). Reflection involves articulating and seeking feedback about one’s actions; actively looking for ways to continuously improve one’s actions in moral ways that are guided by constructs such as justice, equity, fairness, and diversity; and considering the school, family, and community contexts.

One of the core ideals of the Professional Education Unit is collaboration. Candidates and faculty within the unit collaborate with one another, between and among schools at the university, with our students (P-16+), and with local schools and other educational units. All aspects of our practice can be enhanced by collaborating with others, ranging from school-university collaborations (see Darling-Hammond, 1994) to in-class cooperative grouping (e.g. Johnson & Johnson, 1990; Slavin, 1983) to seeking the intersections of content and pedagogy for the benefit of learners (Shulman, 1986). This ongoing collaboration is the bases for a series of supervised field experiences and clinical practices at the initial and advanced levels.

The ideals of reflection and collaboration are viewed as ongoing processes and are integral to the ideal of lifelong learning. Faculty members model this ideal through our commitment to professional development in programs, courses, and educational workshops and in faculty scholarship. Learning occurring over a lifespan is supported by Erikson’s psychosocial stages of identity development; as adults, we seek ways to generate new knowledge and remain productive with new challenges (1963). Learning as an on-going process is also supported by Piaget’s concept of accommodation (1952), whereby learners build schemas that change over time to accommodate new ideas. Through our encouragement of the ideal of lifelong learning, the

Professional Education Unit provides opportunities for frequent and deliberate lifelong learning, and helps learners at all levels to grow and develop over time.

In all learning experiences, we strive to cultivate habits of mind in all students. These habits encompass the development of individual skills, including reading, writing, creativity, analysis and mathematical reasoning, and the ability to connect and apply those skills in solving problems and making decisions. Candidates and faculty in the Professional Education Unit value creativity as an academic skill; learning to see things in different ways and from different points of view brings new light to prior knowledge (e.g., Eisner, 1985; Greene, 1995). Analytical and mathematical reasoning are critical, as is the ability to apply those skills in solving problems and making decisions about real world applications (Dewey, 1938).

Learning communities of inquiry and action provide meaningful learning experiences for learners based on their developmental levels and prior experiences. Members of the Professional Education Unit recognize the value of primary research in acquiring knowledge; we strive to support our candidates in learning about their profession and the world through asking questions, gathering data, and through the use of appropriate technology. Designing inquiry-based classrooms (Brooks, 2002) with the integration of appropriate technology and cultivating and supporting teacher research (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1996) are examples of how we can help engage our candidates in cycles of inquiry and action.

Fostering communities of inquiry and action requires awareness of learners' social and psychological needs and presenting developmentally appropriate and challenging opportunities to work in collaborative settings. Vygotsky's concept of the "zone of proximal development" suggests that learners will achieve more challenging tasks when they are coached by teachers, parents, or more able peers (1962). Similarly, mentoring by master teachers is essential in guiding and inspiring the professional development of novice educators.

2. Focus on Students

In order to educate students effectively, candidates and faculty in the Professional Education Unit recognizes that students, with their own individual strengths and diverse needs, influence and are influenced within an environmental context. Ecological theory addresses the impact of multiple influences on the developing student and recognizes the student's reciprocal impact on the environment. Urie Bronfenbrenner's (1989) model describing a series of ecological systems, suggests immediate influences (e.g. family, school, neighborhood) as well as more distal ones (e.g., community, mass media, and cultural attitudes). Consistent with the ecological model, faculty and candidates are knowledgeable of the diverse needs of all learners and their reciprocal impact on the environmental systems and is able to work with and to adapt instruction to meet these diverse needs.

The degree to which an individual student affects and is affected by the environment is dependent in part on that student's characteristics. Developmental psychologists have provided guidelines for expected behavioral, cognitive, social, and physical characteristics at different age levels, and recognize a range of acceptable characteristics among individuals. Candidates and faculty in the Professional Education Unit differentiate between normal variations and those characteristics that indicate atypical

student development. In addition to assessing the impact of age on performance, candidates and faculty recognize that students have differing thinking dispositions such as their levels of curiosity, flexibility, precision, organization, and patience (Tishman, Perkins, & Jay, 1995) and learning styles such as impulsive/reflective (Jonassen & Grabowski, 1993) and deep/surface (Morton, Hounsell, & Entwistle, 1984).

The Professional Education Unit member acknowledges the diverse cultural frames of reference of all learners (Ogbu, 1988) and works to bridge the gap between student culture and school culture (Nieto, 1992). Because steps in successful learning involve maintaining one's cultural identity while understanding the traditional culture in which learning takes place (Delpit, 1995), we recognize and accept that cultural understanding is key to providing appropriate and meaningful learning experiences for all students.

Along with student characteristics, candidates and faculty in the Professional Education Unit recognize the impact of the instructional environment in student learning. Walberg (1984) described three causal influences on student learning: aptitude, instruction, and environment. Lentz and Shapiro (1986) described how the "academic ecology," a relationship between the student and classroom environmental variables, affects the acquisition of new skills. A sample of classroom environmental variables that affect student learning include time allotted for academic work, instructions, and peer attention as well as teacher behaviors such as goal setting, assessment of student learning, feedback, and appropriate instructional pacing. Effective educators recognize that these variables can be adjusted to promote optimal learning and that instructional approaches may need to be individualized depending on the learner (Ysseldyke & Christenson, 2002). We believe that all students are capable of learning and that all candidates should be able to create meaningful instruction that is adapted to students' developmental levels and skills. We believe we can enhance student motivation by developing meaningful and interesting learning opportunities, promoting positive teacher-student relations, and recognizing student efforts (Weimer, 2002).

Candidates and faculty in the Professional Education Unit acknowledge the role of cognitive and learning theories in planning instruction and curriculum and in responding appropriately to students and are flexible in applying the theory that best meets the diverse needs of the student. For example, constructivist views emphasize the active role of the learner in constructing his or her own knowledge with the educator as the facilitator. Other cognitive explanations of learning such as information-processing theories recognize the role of individual differences related to innate abilities as well as background experiences that impact the level at which the student interacts with information. Behavioral explanations of learning theory support reinforcing appropriate behaviors (Skinner, 1957), while social learning theory contributes understanding about the important role of modeling (Bandura, 1989).

Professional educators understand the complexity of instructional design and respond to the range of the diversity of student needs and abilities as is professionally appropriate (Wiggins & McTighe, 1998). Candidates and faculty in the Professional Education Unit communicate clear goals and learning expectations, use assessments in instruction, provide numerous

feedback opportunities, and use assessment outcomes to revise curriculum and instruction. Assessments that inform educators about the nature of student learning can help them provide better feedback to students, which in turn can enhance learning (Black & Wiliam, 1998).

3. Exemplary Professional Practices

Living and working as a professional educator is a highly complex endeavor. Educators must master and demonstrate varied (and sometimes conflicting) knowledge, skills and dispositions. We believe that the Professional Education Unit is responsible for preparing educators for the ever-increasing expectations of the work place and sets goals for professionalism for all programs for initial or advanced preparation of teachers, teachers continuing their professional development, or other professional school personnel.

We believe, as faculty and candidates in the Professional Education Unit, that we must assume the responsibilities for understanding the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structure of their subject matter, must appreciate students' individuality and cultural diversity, and must be able to create learning experiences that make aspects of subject matter meaningful for all students. We must have a strong command of our subject matter and be able to apply professional and pedagogical knowledge and skills delineated in professional, state, and institutional standards. We must be able to use knowledge of effective verbal, nonverbal and media communication techniques supported by appropriate technology. We must be able to make informed decisions about appropriate instructional techniques, strategies, and curricula to facilitate the learning of all students through active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction (Danielson, 1996).

Professional educators demonstrate both breadth and depth in their content knowledge, in their professional and pedagogical knowledge and skills (Wiggins & McTighe, 1998), and be able to apply this knowledge and skills in a variety of field experiences. This knowledge enables professional educators not only to identify the resources, ideas, and practices which will best support student learning, but also encourages students' development of critical thinking, problem solving and performance skills. As members of the Professional Education Unit, we will facilitate student learning through the communication of the subject matter in clear and meaningful ways, through the integration of appropriate technology, and through the use of assessment instruments. We use a variety of instructional strategies to create meaningful learning experiences for students based on their developmental levels and prior experience.

The dispositions of professional educators are critical to fostering the teaching and learning process of all students. Professional educators must accept, understand, and appreciate diverse students while conveying an appropriate sense of

caring if they are to be effective (Ornstein, 1993). The qualities of caring may include listening, patience, understanding, fairness and respect. Two key elements in creating a professional and effective teaching environment are fairness and respect (Stronge, 2002). Good and Brophy (1984, 1986) also report that positive relationships within the learning community are critical in achieving overall success. As members of the Professional Education Unit, we will create a climate of respect and support where everyone is treated with dignity. In a respectful environment all people feel safe and are recognized as individuals within a larger community (Maslow, 1964).

We will demonstrate professional standards of conduct that include a commitment to service, a strong sense of ethics, and an appreciation of the moral enterprise of education. Faculty in the Professional Education Unit must be willing to be seen as role models, and have the motivation to seek continuous opportunities for professional development. We must be supportive of students and families, of school and community and serve as catalysts for positive and responsible change.

The work of candidates and faculty in the Professional Education Unit is based in the social, emotional, and moral development of their students. Students' understanding of honesty, fair play, consideration for others, tolerance and sharing are often learned by their observing, imitating, and discussing the actions of others; thus, the professional educator is a model for students (Goodlad, Soder & Sirotnik, 1990). Being an ethical role model is a core expectation for each member of the Professional Education Unit.

Professional educators continue to develop their knowledge through professional activities that foster scholarship and understanding (Danielson, 1996). Professional educators support school and community by volunteering to participate and by supporting activities that foster school and community partnerships (Danielson, 1996).

As members of the Professional Education Unit, we will demonstrate a commitment to professional standards, will be current in our fields of expertise, will interact with other professionals, and will seek opportunities to serve in leadership capacities within professional organizations and community groups.

OUTCOMES and INDICATORS

The conceptual framework elements of mission, vision, philosophy and knowledge base provide a framework for assuring conceptual coherence among curriculum, instruction, field experiences, clinical practice, and assessment across a candidate's program. The seven learning outcomes listed below have these elements as their basis. The holistic nature of our themes means that each learning outcome may reflect more than one theme. However, each learning outcome is primarily founded in a particular theme. The outcomes, I. Knowledge of Content, I.I Pedagogical Content Knowledge, and III. Application of Theory and Professional knowledge to Practice are founded in the ***Exemplary Practices*** theme. The outcomes, IV. Understanding of Students and V. Assessment of Student learning are founded in the theme ***Focus on Students***. The outcomes, VI. Professional and Personal dispositions and VII. Learning Communities of Inquiry and Action arise from the theme ***Learning Communities of Inquiry and Action***.

The Initial Certification refers to candidates receiving their first certification to teach. Initial Certification Indicators describe skills that may be demonstrated by these candidates in each of the seven outcomes. Individual programs for initial certification may not require all listed indicators and may identify additional indicators specific to their disciplines. The Advanced Professional refers to candidates continuing their education beyond their initial preparation. The Advanced Professional Indicators identify skills that may be demonstrated by these advanced Professionals in each of the seven outcomes. Individual programs for advanced professionals may not require all listed indicators and may identify additional indicators specific to their disciplines as covered under these outcomes.

The seven learning outcomes are presented in the conceptual framework, ***Communities of Learners***, with the understanding that candidates must possess necessary prerequisite skills and knowledge to be successful in them. Foundational skills and knowledge are developed within the candidates' general education curricula, and include, but are not limited to, appropriate written and oral communication, mathematical ability, and competence in the areas of humanities, fine arts, science, wellness and social sciences. Professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions are developed through professional education coursework and supervised field experiences and clinical practices.

Area of Proficiency I: Knowledge of Content		
Outcome	Initial Certification Indicators	Advanced Professional Indicators
Candidates will display knowledge of the content of their discipline and apply the important principles and concepts delineated in professional, state, and institutional standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Demonstrate competency in their chosen content area. ❖ Engage in inquiry in their content area that develops their ability to extend student understanding beyond surface information. ❖ Understand, explain, and apply knowledge of the contextual issues (e.g., political, social, cultural, ethnicity, disability, and gender) that influence their content area. ❖ Recognize various theories and points of view within their field. ❖ Develop curricula in a variety of instructional formats reflective of state, national, and local standards. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Demonstrate expertise in their chosen discipline. ❖ Engage in inquiry in their content area that develops their ability to extend student understanding beyond surface information. ❖ Understand and respond to the contextual issues (e.g., political, social, cultural, ethnicity, disability, and gender) that influence their discipline. ❖ Explain various theories and points of view within their field. ❖ Develop appropriate educational programs in a variety of formats and reflective of national, state, and local standards.

Area of Proficiency II: Pedagogical Content Knowledge		
Outcome	Initial Certification Indicators	Advanced Professional Indicators
Candidates will demonstrate knowledge of educational strategies within their discipline and present it in clear and meaningful ways.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Develop curricular goals that make it possible for students to have distinctive, informed, and enriching experiences. ❖ Make thoughtful choices about the organization, structure, and pacing of in-depth learning experiences. ❖ Develop short- and long-term instructional units as components of a comprehensive, sequential curriculum. ❖ Understand and incorporate the essential interrelatedness of curriculum, instruction, and assessment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Incorporate the essential interrelatedness of curriculum, instruction, educational-support services, and assessment. ❖ Identify and articulate resources needed to meet educational goals.

Area of Proficiency III: Application of Theory and Professional Knowledge to Practice		
Outcome	Initial Certification Indicators	Advanced Professional Indicators
Candidates will apply current theory and research and their professional and pedagogical knowledge and skills to professional practices, and integrate appropriate technology to create meaningful learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Demonstrate an understanding of the multiple approaches to teaching and the historical precedents to the approaches. ❖ Express the rationale of a personal philosophical statement about education. ❖ Implement current teaching and learning methods, materials, and resources appropriate for various educational settings and levels of education. ❖ Demonstrate the importance of creating classroom environments in which effective instruction can take place. ❖ Develop programs reflective of understanding of the breadth, depth, and purposes of education. ❖ Engage in the study of theories of curriculum and instruction that make it possible to reflect and refine their educational practice. ❖ Incorporate learning experiences, which require higher order thinking. ❖ Use traditional and new technologies in education. ❖ Develop personal expertise. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Design and apply multiple approaches appropriate to the successful accomplishment of assigned duties. ❖ Implement current and appropriate methods and resources in various school settings and educational levels. ❖ Create environments conducive to the commission of effective educational practices. ❖ Reflect upon and refine advanced professional practices. ❖ Develop, support, and implement programs reflective of an understanding of the breadth, depth, and purposes of education. ❖ Develop professional expertise in yourself and others.

Area of Proficiency IV: Understanding of Students

Outcome	Initial Certification Indicators	Advanced Professional Indicators
<p>Candidates will demonstrate knowledge of how students differ in their ability, individuality, diversity, approaches to learning, and will differentiate educational strategies accordingly.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Apply knowledge of physical, cognitive, social, emotional, and creative development of children to instructional decisions. ❖ Recognize and use established stages of development for individual student learning. ❖ Demonstrate an understanding that students learn in different ways and at different paces. ❖ Institute a repertoire of teaching strategies appropriate to the needs of all students. ❖ Demonstrate the respect for and value of diversity, including the unique backgrounds, abilities, and interests of all students. ❖ Apply specific knowledge of special populations by adapting teaching and learning to their needs. ❖ Provide opportunities for students to work cooperatively as well as individually. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Make professional decisions reflective of their students' physical, cognitive, emotional, social, and creative stages of development. ❖ Demonstrate and provide educational environments to accommodate students who learn in different ways and at different paces. ❖ Demonstrate respect for and value of diversity, including the unique backgrounds, abilities, and interests of all students. ❖ Program to meet the needs of students from diverse and special populations.

Area of Proficiency V: Assessment of Student Learning

Outcome	Initial Certification Indicators	Advanced Professional Indicators
<p>Candidates will use assessment to improve student learning to create meaningful learning experiences for all students based on their developmental levels and prior experiences, and to inform educational decision-making.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Institute assessment methods appropriate to the evaluation of student work, their own teaching, and the curriculum. ❖ Use assessment data to inform instructional decision-making. ❖ Demonstrate a regard for assessment as a joint venture between student and teacher. ❖ Use multiple methods of assessment appropriate to the student and the task. ❖ Ensure that all students have the opportunity to display what they know. ❖ Provide specific information explaining assessment criteria. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Institute multiple methods of assessment to inform their professional practices, programs, and effective decision-making. ❖ Modify educational practices and programs as appropriate according to evaluative data. ❖ Use self-evaluation and reflection as a means to professional growth.

Area of Proficiency VI: Professional and Personal Dispositions		
Outcome	Initial Certification Indicators	Advanced Professional Indicators
Candidates will engage in activities to insure the development of the dispositions expected of professionals and consistent with the Pennsylvania Code of Professional Practice and Conduct for Educators.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Demonstrate enthusiasm for children and subject matter. ❖ Stimulate interest in subject matter. ❖ Demonstrate the recognition of the importance of lifelong learning in content and pedagogy. ❖ Engage in continuing inquiry about their educational practices and the nature of teaching. ❖ Identify self-evaluation of content and methods as a means of professional growth. ❖ Demonstrate familiarity with the processes, resources, and legalities necessary to serve as a personal advocate for students, seeking out services as needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Present a positive professional disposition to the educational community. ❖ Practice lifelong learning in content and pedagogy. ❖ Self-evaluate their methods and discipline content as a means of professional growth. ❖ Implement the processes, resources, and legalities necessary to serve as a personal advocate for students, seeking out services as needed. ❖ Participate in and support activities that foster school and community partnerships.

Area of Proficiency VII: Learning Communities of Inquiry and Action		
Outcomes	Initial Certification Indicators	Advanced Professional Indicators
Candidates will use inquiry and current research in their subject areas and in education to inform and reflect on professional practices; will consider the school, family and community contexts in which they work; and will facilitate collaboration in their professional practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Exhibit positive attitudes about classroom, family, school, and community settings. ❖ Demonstrate reflection that focuses on student learning, incorporates inquiry about the teaching and learning process, and indicates the willingness to change in response to data. ❖ Collaborate with other educators and families to plan for the success of students with diverse and special needs. ❖ Collaborate with other educators to integrate the curriculum within and across disciplines. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Act as leaders in learning communities. ❖ Collaborate with other educators, families, and outside agencies to meet successfully the needs of students with diverse and special needs. ❖ Collaborate with other educators to integrate the curriculum within and across disciplines. ❖ Demonstrate reflection that focuses on student learning, incorporates inquiry about the teaching and learning process, and indicates the willingness to change in response to data

Assessment System

Overview

The purpose of the Professional Education Unit assessment system is to provide a continuous assessment and improvement system for candidates, programs, and the unit centered on the Vision, Mission, and themes of the Communities of Learners conceptual framework. These elements are operationally expressed within our assessment system through the seven outcomes of the Communities of Learners conceptual framework. There is a clear alignment between the themes of the conceptual framework and the seven outcomes. Additionally, the outcomes align with institutional, state, and national standards.

The assessment system is built around transition points at both the initial and advanced levels. These transition points are used to assess candidate quality and are used to determine whether candidates will continue in their programs, and for candidates in certification programs, whether they are eventually recommended for certification. The assessment system also includes Major Assessments in every program. Major Assessments are aligned with Specialty Program Standards and with conceptual framework outcomes. Major Assessments are used to help make decisions about candidates at Transition points, and for systematic evaluation and improvement of programs and the unit. Finally, the Professional Education Unit uses multiple forms of internal and external assessments including, but not limited to, surveys of graduates, surveys of cooperating teachers and school partners, student evaluations of faculty, for systematic evaluation and improvement of programs and the unit.

Data collection is supported through the use of a locally developed add-on to our Student Information System (Banner). Use of data for systematic evaluation and improvement is supported by the Professional Education Unit Assessment Committee, the Assessment Coordinator, and various administrative and faculty groups including the Dean's office, the Teacher Education Council, the NCATE Coordinating Council, department chairs, and program coordinators. Department chairs use data for annual evaluation of program effectiveness using assessment data and for planning future program improvements. The Professional Education Unit holds regular "Data Day" meetings open to all faculty. These meetings focus on data collected regarding the unit as a whole and areas of needed focus and improvement.

Alignment

The Communities of Learners conceptual framework is designed to provide coherence among curricula, instruction, field experiences, clinical practice, and assessment. At the same time the themes, knowledge base, and outcomes of the framework were developed within a context of institutional, state, and national standards. In particular, the conceptual framework aligns with the Millersville University Mission and Strategic plan, the Pennsylvania Department of Education standards, the INTASC standards, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, and the NCATE standards.

The three themes of the conceptual framework align with the 7 outcomes expected of all candidates.

Relationship between Themes and Outcomes of the Conceptual Framework

Learning Communities of Inquiry and Action	<p>Outcome 6. Candidates will engage in activities to insure the development of the dispositions expected of professionals and consistent with the Pennsylvania Code of Professional Practice and Conduct for Educators.</p> <p>Outcome 7. Candidates will use inquiry and current research in their subject areas and in education to inform and reflect on professional practices; will consider the school, family and community contexts in which they work; and will facilitate collaboration in their professional practices.</p>
Focus on Student Learning	<p>Outcome 4. Candidates will demonstrate knowledge of how students differ in their ability, individuality, diversity, approaches to learning, and will differentiate educational strategies accordingly.</p> <p>Outcome 5. Candidates will use assessment to improve student learning to create meaningful learning experiences for all students based on their developmental levels and prior experiences, and to inform educational decision-making.</p>
Exemplary Professional Practice	<p>Outcome 1. Candidates will display knowledge of the content of their discipline and apply the important principles and concepts delineated in professional, state, and institutional standards.</p> <p>Outcome 2. Candidates will demonstrate knowledge of educational strategies within their discipline and present it in clear and meaningful ways.</p> <p>Outcome 3. Candidates will apply current theory and research and their professional and pedagogical knowledge and skills to professional practices, and integrate appropriate technology to create meaningful learning.</p>

Relationship between CF Outcomes and Institutional Goals

Communities of Learners: CF Outcomes	Link to Millersville Mission and Strategic Goals
1. Candidates will display knowledge of the content of their discipline and apply the important principles and concepts delineated in professional, state, and institutional standards.	Mission: The primary mission of Millersville University is to promote intellectual development through an exemplary liberal arts-based education....It resolutely embraces the conviction that all of its degree programs must maintain a strong liberal arts component while preparing students to engage in productive and contributive lives as professionals.
2. Candidates will demonstrate knowledge of educational strategies within their discipline and present it in clear and meaningful ways.	Strategic Goal 3. Utilize a Student-Centered Environment to Improve Student Retention and Student Graduation Rates
3. Candidates will apply current theory and research and their professional and pedagogical knowledge and skills to professional practices, and integrate appropriate technology to create meaningful learning.	Strategic Goal 3. Utilize a Student-Centered Environment to Improve Student Retention and Student Graduation Rates
4. Candidates will demonstrate knowledge of how students differ in their ability, individuality, diversity, approaches to learning, and will differentiate educational strategies accordingly.	Strategic Goal 2. Intensify and convert our ongoing commitment to social equity, diversity and globalization into deliberate progressive action
5. Candidates will use assessment to improve student learning to create meaningful learning experiences for all students based on their developmental levels and prior experiences, and to inform educational decision-making.	Strategic Goal 5. Transform the curriculum and educational programs to respond to the changing needs of a dynamic society
6. Candidates will engage in activities to insure the development of the dispositions expected of professionals and consistent with the Pennsylvania Code of Professional Practice and Conduct for Educators.	Strategic Goal 2. Intensify and convert our ongoing commitment to social equity, diversity and globalization into deliberate progressive action
7. Candidates will use inquiry and current research in their subject areas and in education to inform and reflect on professional practices; will consider the school, family and community contexts in which they work; and will facilitate collaboration in their professional practices.	Strategic Goals 2. Intensify and convert our ongoing commitment to social equity, diversity and globalization into deliberate progressive action; 3. Utilize a Student-Centered Environment to Improve Student Retention and Student Graduation Rates; 4. Advance civic engagement through the American Democracy Project, expanded partnerships and community outreach

Relationship between CF Outcomes and Pennsylvania Department of Education Standards, and INTASC Principles

Communities of Learners: CF Outcomes	Link to PDE Standards	Link to INTASC Principles
1. Candidates will display knowledge of the content of their discipline and apply the important principles and concepts delineated in professional, state, and institutional standards.	1. Knows discipline	1. Knowledge of Subject Matter
2. Candidates will demonstrate knowledge of educational strategies within their discipline and present it in clear and meaningful ways.	4. Strategies; 7 Planning	4. Instructional Strategies; 7 Instructional Planning
3. Candidates will apply current theory and research and their professional and pedagogical knowledge and skills to professional practices, and integrate appropriate technology to create meaningful learning.	5. Learning Environment	5. Motivation / Learning Environment
4. Candidates will demonstrate knowledge of how students differ in their ability, individuality, diversity, approaches to learning, and will differentiate educational strategies accordingly.	2. Understands children; 3. Individual Differences	2. Knowledge of Human Development; Learning Styles / Diversity
5. Candidates will use assessment to improve student learning to create meaningful learning experiences for all students based on their developmental levels and prior experiences, and to inform educational decision-making.	8. Assessment	8. Assessment
6. Candidates will engage in activities to insure the development of the dispositions expected of professionals and consistent with the Pennsylvania Code of Professional Practice and Conduct for Educators.	9. Professional Growth; 6. Communication	9. Professional Growth; 6. Communication
7. Candidates will use inquiry and current research in their subject areas and in education to inform and reflect on professional practices; will consider the school, family and community contexts in which they work; and will facilitate collaboration in their professional practices.	10. Collaboration	10. Fosters Relationships

Relationship between CF Outcomes, NCATE Elements, and National Board for Professional Teaching Standards

Communities of Learners: CF Outcomes	<i>Link to NCATE Elements</i>	Link to NBPTS Propositions
1. Candidates will display knowledge of the content of their discipline and apply the important principles and concepts delineated in professional, state, and institutional standards.	Element 1: Content Knowledge for Teacher Candidates; Element 2: Content Knowledge for other Professional School Personnel	2. Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.
2. Candidates will demonstrate knowledge of educational strategies within their discipline and present it in clear and meaningful ways.	Element 3: Pedagogical Content Knowledge for Teacher Candidates	1. Teachers are committed to students and their learning.; 2. Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.
3. Candidates will apply current theory and research and their professional and pedagogical knowledge and skills to professional practices, and integrate appropriate technology to create meaningful learning.	Element 4: Professional and Pedagogical Knowledge and Skills for Teacher Candidates; Element 5: Professional Knowledge and Skills for Other School Personnel	1. Teachers are committed to students and their learning.; 2. Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.
4. Candidates will demonstrate knowledge of how students differ in their ability, individuality, diversity, approaches to learning, and will differentiate educational strategies accordingly.	Element 4: Professional and Pedagogical Knowledge and Skills for Teacher Candidates; Element 5: Professional Knowledge and Skills for Other School Personnel	1. Teachers are committed to students and their learning.
5. Candidates will use assessment to improve student learning to create meaningful learning experiences for all students based on their developmental levels and prior experiences, and to inform educational decision-making.	Element 7: Student Learning; Element 8: Student Learning for Other Professional School Personnel	1. Teachers are committed to students and their learning.3. Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.; 4. Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.

Communities of Learners: CF Outcomes	<i>Link to NCATE Elements</i>	Link to NBPTS Propositions
6. Candidates will engage in activities to insure the development of the dispositions expected of professionals and consistent with the Pennsylvania Code of Professional Practice and Conduct for Educators.	Element 6: Dispositions	4. Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.
7. Candidates will use inquiry and current research in their subject areas and in education to inform and reflect on professional practices; will consider the school, family and community contexts in which they work; and will facilitate collaboration in their professional practices.	Element 6: Dispositions	5. Teachers are members of learning communities.

In addition to these general standards for teaching, Specialty Program Standards were used in the development of Major Assessments for each program. The following Speciality Program Standards were used in the development of major assessments.

Transition Points and Major Assessments

Decisions about candidate performance are based on multiple assessments at transition points. Transition points are defined for both Initial and Advanced programs.

Initial Program Transition Points

Transition Point	Assessment
Level 1 – Prior to Entry in Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Admission to the University (GPA, SAT or ACT). ❑ Some departments have additional Level 1 assessments (example – music requires auditions).
Entry to Program (APS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Minimum of 60 credits ❑ Required completion of 1 literature, 1 writing course, 2 math courses ❑ Minimum 3.0 GPA ❑ Candidates must Pass Foundations field experience in a diverse placement ❑ Candidates must receive the recommendation of Foundations Block Faculty ❑ Candidates must meet the state mandated minimum passing scores for Praxis I exams.
Entry to Clinical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Candidates must maintain 3.0 GPA ❑ Pass Professional Block Classes. Multiple Major Assessments aligned with the conceptual framework outcomes are conducted in Professional Block classes. ❑ Candidates must successfully complete a Professional Block Field Experience.
Exit from Clinical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Candidates must pass student teaching course. ❑ Candidates must earn a score of “Satisfactory” in the four domains of the PDE 430. This is a state department of education instrument aligned with the Danielson framework. ❑ Student must earn at minimum “competent” ratings on the Millersville Student teaching Instrument. This instrument is aligned with national teaching standards and includes specific items representing Specialty Program Standards for each program. ❑ All Student Teachers must complete an Impact on Student learning assessment. Elementary Education, Special Education, and Art majors complete the Teacher Work Sample. Secondary Education Majors complete a locally developed assessment of Impact on Student learning called CIRQL (Collaborative Inquiry: Reflection, Questions, about Learning).
Exit From Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Candidates must complete all major and university requirements (secondary majors must complete a full major in their discipline. <p>In addition, to be recommended for certification by Millersville University, candidates must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Maintain 3.0 GPA ❑ Pass content praxis within their discipline
Continuing Assessment of	The Professional Education Unit has adopted an ongoing system for assessing candidate

Transition Point	Assessment
Dispositions	dispositions. The system includes unit criteria for dispositions aligned to the conceptual framework, a process for identification of candidates for which there are concerns, a process for involving all appropriate faculty and school partners in the evaluation, an appeals process, and a process for remediation. All candidates must maintain a “Proficient” rating at all times. Candidates who earn a Partially Proficient rating receive remediation and may be removed from the program.

Advanced Program Transition Points

Most assessments at the advanced level are specific to each program. The following table lists unit assessments that are common across programs.

Transition Point	Assessment
Level 1 – Prior to Entry in Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Standardized test scores (GRE, Analogies Test). <input type="checkbox"/> Minimum 2.75 undergraduate GPA. <input type="checkbox"/> Letters of Recommendation <input type="checkbox"/> Statement of Purpose
Entry to Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Candidates must maintain 3.0 GPA <input type="checkbox"/> Each program includes Major Assessments for Content Knowledge & Professional Planning <input type="checkbox"/> Content Knowledge – list assessments <input type="checkbox"/> All student complete a Research methods action research project <input type="checkbox"/> All Students complete EDFN 545 Educational Psychology case study
Entry to Clinical	<input type="checkbox"/> Each program includes an assessment associated with a clinical experience
Exit from Clinical	
Exit From Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Candidates must complete all program and university requirements. <input type="checkbox"/> Candidates must Maintain 3.0 GPA <p>In addition, for advanced programs that result in recommendation for certification by Millersville University, candidates must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Pass content praxis within their discipline
Continuing Assessment of Dispositions	The Professional Education Unit has adopted an ongoing system for assessing candidate dispositions. The system includes unit criteria for dispositions aligned to the conceptual framework, a process for identification of candidates for which there are concerns, a process for involving all appropriate faculty and school partners in the evaluation, an appeals process, and a process for remediation. All candidates must maintain a “Proficient” rating at all times. Candidates who earn a Partially Proficient rating receive remediation and may be removed from the program.

The assessment system also includes Major Assessments in every program. Major Assessments are aligned with Specialty Program Association (SPA) Standards and with conceptual framework outcomes. Major Assessments are used to help make decisions about candidates at Transition points, and for systematic evaluation and improvement of programs and

the unit. Each program listed below has Major Assessments of content, planning, clinical experience, impact on student learning, and dispositions aligned with both the conceptual framework and SPA standards.

Specialty Program Association Standards	Program(s)
Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI)	Elementary Education (Initial)
Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)	Special Education (Initial & Advanced Supervisory)
Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC)	Leadership program; K-12 Supervision, Supervision in Math, English, Foreign Language, Science, & Social Studies
International Technology Education Association/Council on Technology Teacher Education (ITEA/CTTE)	Technology Education Program (Initial)
International Reading Association (IRA)	Reading Specialist & Reading Supervisor (Advanced)
National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC – Initial and Advanced)	Early Childhood (Initial & Advanced)
National Association of School Psychologists (NASP)	School Psychology (Advanced)
National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS)	BSE Social Studies (Initial)
National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE)	BSE English (Initial)
American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL)	BSE Foreign Language (Initial)
National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM)	BSE Mathematics (Initial)
National Science Teachers Association (NSTA)	BSE Biology, Chemistry, Earth Science, & Physics (Initial)

The following programs also develop Major Assessments aligned with the outcomes of the conceptual framework, but are not evaluated according to SPA standards.

Initial

- BSE Music
- BSE Art

Advanced

- MED in Elementary Education
- MED in English
- MED in Mathematics
- MS in School Counseling
- MED in Special Education
- MED in Technology Education

Data Collection and Analysis for Systematic Evaluation and Improvement

Data collection is supported through the use of a locally developed add-on to our Student Information System (Banner). Data for all Major Assessments connected with courses are input into this system by faculty teaching the courses. Data for assessments not associated with a course are input by department chairs or their designee. The Banner system allows department chairs, program coordinators, the Dean of the School of Education, and the Assessment Coordinator to access reports for all Major Assessments for individual students, programs, and for the Unit.

Use of data for systematic evaluation and improvement is supported by the Professional Education Unit Assessment Committee, the Assessment Coordinator, and various administrative and faculty groups including the Dean's office, the Teacher Education Council, the NCATE Coordinating Council, department chairs, and program coordinators. Department chairs use data for annual evaluation of program effectiveness using assessment data and for planning future program improvements. The Professional Education Unit holds regular "Data Day" meetings open to all faculty. These meetings focus on data collected regarding the unit as a whole and areas of needed focus and improvement.

Conclusion

The Communities of Learners conceptual framework is designed to provide coherence among curricula, instruction, field experiences, clinical practice, and assessment. At the same time the three themes, the knowledge base supporting those themes, and the outcomes of the framework were developed within a context of institutional, state, and national standards thereby providing a system that is both internally and externally coherent for all Communities of Learners at Millersville University. The Assessment System assures continual evaluation of the success of our candidates, programs, and the Unit in meeting these outcomes and in “Living” the vision of the conceptual framework. The Assessment System includes tools and systematic processes for all Communities of Learners to contribute to ongoing improvement and alignment with the Vision of this framework.

References

- Bandura, A. (1989). Social cognitive theory. In R. Vasta (Ed.), *Annals of child development* (vol.6, pp1-60). Greenwich, CN: JAI Press.
- Black, P. J. & Wiliam, D. (1998). *Inside the black box*. London: King's College.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1989). Ecological systems theory. In R. Vasta (Ed.), *Annals of child development* (vol.6, pp.187-251). Greenwich, CN: JAI Press.
- Brooks, J. G. (2002). *Schooling for life: Reclaiming the essence of learning*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Buchman, M. (1990). Beyond the lonely, choosing will: Professional development in teacher thinking. *Teacher's College Record*, 91, 481-506.
- Cochran-Smith, M., & Lytle, S. L. (1996). Communities for teacher research: Fringe or forefront? In M. W. McLaughlin & I. Oberman (Eds.), *Teacher learning: New policies, new practices*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Danielson, C. (1996). *Enhancing professional practice: A framework for teaching*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curricular Development.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (Ed.). (1994). *Professional development schools: Schools for developing a profession*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Delpit, L. D. (1995). *Other people's children: Cultural conflict in the classroom*. New York: New Press.
- Dewey, J. (1933). *How we think: A restatement of the relation of reflective thinking to the educative process*. Boston: Heath.
- Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and education*. New York: Kappa Delta Pi.
- Eisner, E. W. (1985). *The educational imagination: On the design and evaluation of school programs* (2nd ed.). New York: Macmillan.
- Erikson, E. H. (1963). *Childhood and society* (2nd ed.). New York: Norton.
- Freese, A. R. (1999). The role or reflection on preservice teachers' development in the context of a professional development school. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 15, 895-909.

- Good, R. & Brophy, J. E. (1986). *Educational psychology: A realistic approach*. New York: Longman.
- Good, R. & Brophy, J. E. (1984). *Looking in classrooms* (3rd ed.). London: Harper and Row.
- Goodlad, J. I., Soder, R., & Sirotnik, K. (1990) *The moral dimensions of teaching*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Greene, M. (1995). *Releasing the imagination*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Johnson, D. W. & Johnson, R. T. (1990). *Cooperation and competition: Theory and research*. Edina, MN: Interaction Book Company.
- Jonassen, D. M. & Grabowski, B. L. (1993). *Handbook of individual differences: Learning and instruction*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Lentz, F. E., & Shapiro, E. S. (1986). Functional assessment of the academic environment. *School Psychology Review*, 15, 346-357.
- Maslow, A. (1964). *Religions, values, and peak-experiences*. Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press.
- Morton, F., Hounsell, D., & Entwistle, N. (1984). *The experience of learning*. Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press.
- Nieto, S. (1992). *Affirming diversity: The sociopolitical context of multicultural education*. New York: Longman.
- Ogbu, J. U. (1988). Diversity and equity in public education: Community forces and minority school adjustment and performance. In R. Haskins & D. MacRae (Eds.), *Policies for America's public schools: Teachers, equity, and indicators*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- Ornstein, A. C. (1993). How to recognize good teaching. *The American School Board Journal*, 180, 24-27.
- Piaget, J. (1952). *Child's conception of number*. London: Humanities Press.
- Schön, D.A. (1983). *Reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action*. New York: Basic Books.**
- Shulman, L. S. (1986). Those who understand: Knowledge growth in teaching. *Educational Researcher*, 15, 4-14.
- Slavin, R. E. (1983). *Cooperative learning*. New York: Longman.
- Skinner, B. F. (1957). *Verbal behavior*. Acton, MA: Copley.

Stronge, J. H. (2002). *Qualities of effective teachers*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Tishman, S., Perkins, D., & Jay, E. (1995). *The thinking classroom: Learning and teaching in a culture of thinking*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Vygotsky, L. (1962). *Thought and language*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Walberg, H.J. (1984). Improving the productivity of America's schools. *Educational Leadership*, 41, 19-27.

Weimer, M. (2002). *Learner-centered teaching: Five key changes to practice*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Wiggins, G. and McTighe, J. (1998) *Understanding by design*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Ysseldyke, J. E. & Christenson, S. L. (2002). *Functional assessment of academic behavior: Creating successful learning environments*. Longmont, CO: Sopris West.

Conceptual Framework Writing Group

The following faculty compiled and edited the information provided by the members and school partners of the Professional Education Unit. Their work was begun during the Summer of 2002 and continued through the Conceptual Framework's drafts and revisions.

Christine Anthony
Cheryl Desmond
Marianne Kerlavage
Suzanne McCotter
Linda McDowell
Lucinda Ridley
Helena Tuleya-Payne
David Zegers