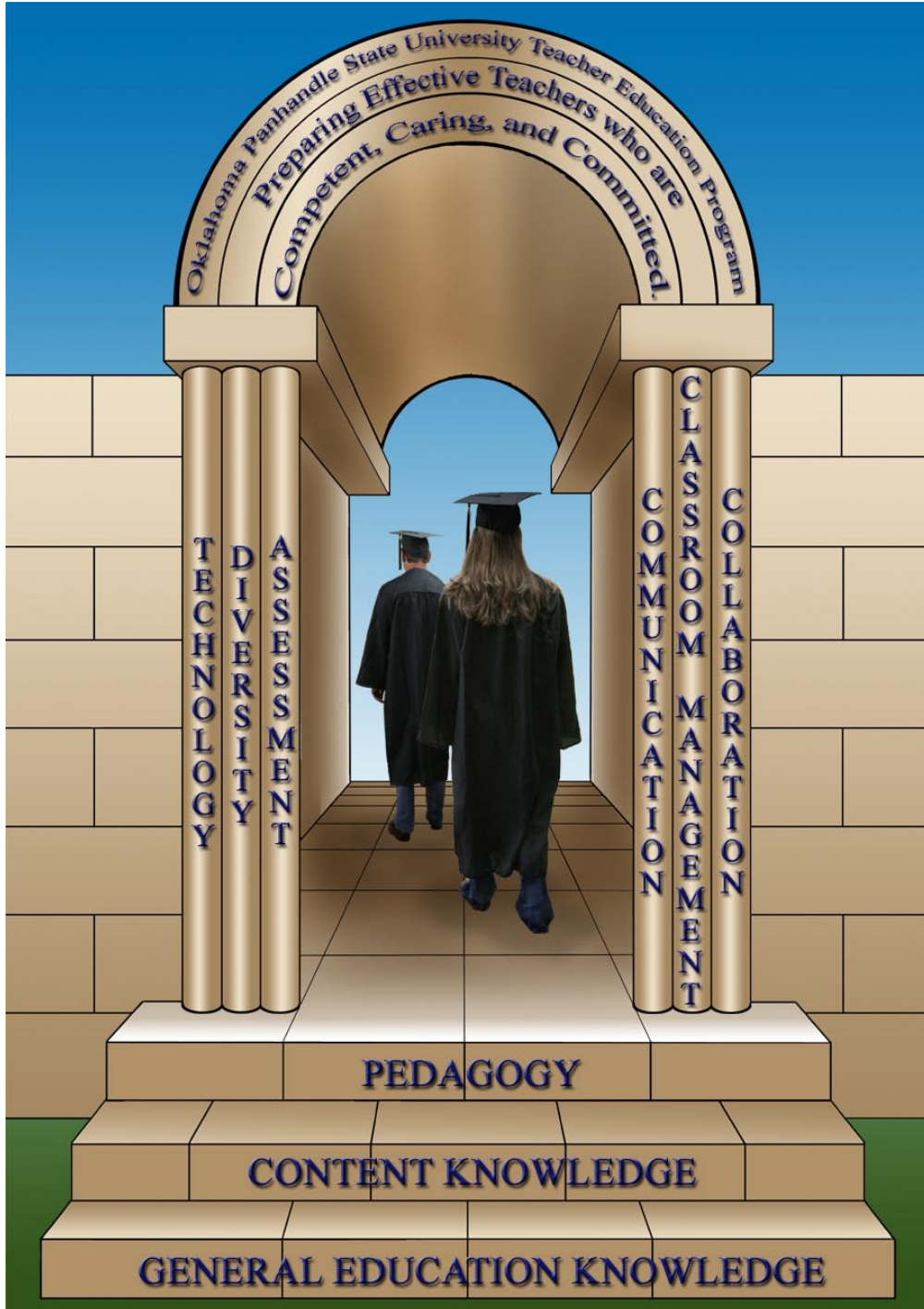


OPSU Teacher Education Program Conceptual Framework



Gateway to the Future

*Preparing Effective Teachers who are
Competent, Caring, and Committed!*

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The Conceptual Framework, *Gateway to the Future*, was initially designed in 1991 and has undergone many modifications since that time. In 2000, the unit determined that the existing conceptual framework was an “input” model, rather than an “output” model, and a major revision was undertaken. This revision represented a significant paradigm shift from a focus on program inputs to a focus on program outputs, or a change from what we teach to what our candidates learn. This change to the conceptual framework resulted in many changes throughout the program, especially in the way assessment was viewed and conducted.

A Conceptual Framework committee made up of four Teacher Education Council (TEC) members (two School of Education members and two secondary area members) began research and revision. Members researched contemporary education philosophies as well as the views of their peers and the educational community. At least weekly, members brought their findings to committee meetings. On September 26, 2001, the committee presented the first draft to the TEC for initial approval. During the fall 2006 semester, a committee was established to ensure that the Conceptual Framework correctly reflects the philosophy of the unit, the institution, and the community, and that it portrays an “output” model of education. As a result, many revisions and updates have been made to the Conceptual Framework. While some of the changes to the conceptual framework made during the fall 2006/spring 2007 revision reflect refinements of unit values and beliefs, some reflect changes in the University’s service area. Other changes reflect the unit’s commitment to adopting the most current and appropriate research and educational theory. While there have been no substantive changes to the conceptual framework since the previous visit, there have been some changes to the graphical representation of it. The previous graphic was perceived to be more of an input model and not as much of an output model as we wanted. We still believe, as evidenced in our conceptual framework, that there is a great deal of input involved in the preparation of future teachers, but our conceptual framework centers on the graduate (now graduates--another major change) leaving our programs. Therefore, modifications were made in the graphical representation to better reflect the skills expected of the candidates rather than the components of the program (field experiences, research, etc.). It is now believed that the unit’s revised graphical representation better reflects the importance placed on the skills developed by the candidates going through our programs and therefore better represents our conceptual framework.

Table One presents the indicators for the OPSU Conceptual Framework.

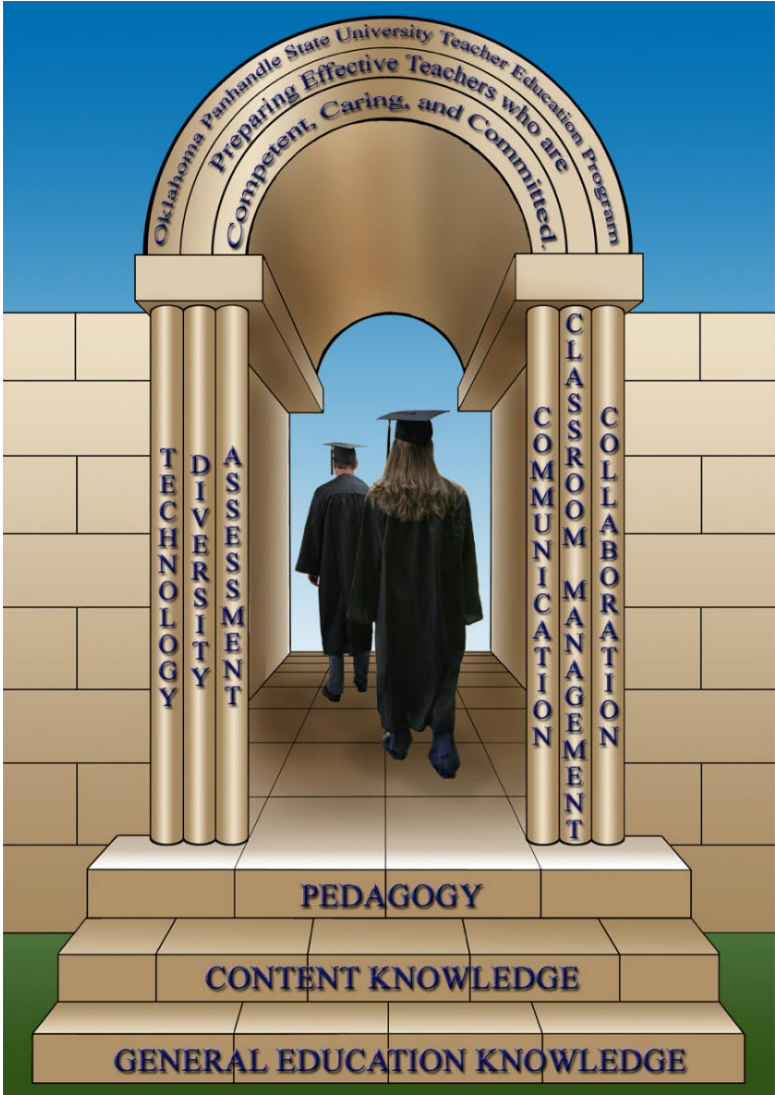
Table One: Conceptual Framework Indicators

Indicators for Conceptual Framework	
Shared Vision	The vision of the unit, to become the preferred source of PK-12 teachers in the five state service area, is the driving force for the Conceptual Framework of the unit, the <i>Gateway to the Future</i> .
Coherence	All aspects of a teacher candidate’s program are monitored, assessed, and evaluated by the OPSU Teacher Education Council comprised of representatives from each of the program areas.
Professional Commitments and Dispositions	All faculty and teacher candidates are committed to the profession of teaching and complete various activities that

	enhance their professionalism and strengthen their commitments to the goals, objectives, and dispositions of the unit.
Commitment to Diversity	Diversity is a part of every teacher education degree program and is reflected in both course content and field experiences.
Commitment to Technology	All OPSU teacher programs include the integration and use of technology by both instructor and teacher candidate.
Candidate Proficiencies Aligned with Professional and State Standards	All OPSU teacher programs are aligned with national and/or state competencies as documented in the program reviews.

Gateway Arch: Symbol of OPSU Teacher Education Program

The unit employs the gateway arch to symbolize its shared philosophy and vision (presented on the following page). Traditionally the arch stands for stability and strength; thus, it is used to represent the power of our program. Just as traditional architecture continues to change, educational philosophies alter as educators discover new theories about learning, and as society itself changes. The OPSU unit evolves as educational philosophies change.



The base, columns, and three-tiered dome of the arch portray the unit program. The gateway arch stands upon a solid base of educational principles firmly grounded not only on traditional philosophies, but also on contemporary research. Candidates proceed through their programs in a sequenced study that develops from general education classes to specialized fields of study and progresses to introduction to educational principles and methods courses in their specific areas.

The mid level of the foundation and program represents knowledge that teachers must possess. It begins with a sound general liberal arts and sciences base and progresses to specific courses in the candidates' fields. Each of the degree areas is aligned with its own Specialized Professional Association (SPA) or, if no SPA is available, with the proficiencies presented by the State of Oklahoma. This mid-level of the gateway helps support the next level of pedagogy and characterizes our belief in the equal importance of conceptual knowledge and teaching skills. While all candidates have a minimum of 40 hours in general education, secondary candidates complete 50+ hours of field experience, and elementary candidates complete two practicums for a total of 60+ hours of field experience beyond the secondary candidates. While OPSU education candidates have a minimum 40-hour general education requirement in addition to their subject area courses, they also complete 30+ hours of pedagogy.

Two parallel columns, divided into three sections each, representing technology, diversity, assessment, communication, classroom management, and collaboration, link the base with the dome representing the proficiencies our candidates gain throughout their studies. The six columns represent the identified skills that every professional teacher must have: the ability to utilize technology; the ability to reach diverse students; the ability to assess student learning; the ability to communicate with students, parents, and administration; the ability to control the classroom; and the ability to collaborate with other professionals in the teaching of students.

The first section symbolizes the importance of candidates' proficiency with technology. We believe that "technology" is best defined as the application of knowledge. Technology is not only represented by the use of new things; computers, digital projectors, the Internet, etc., it is also represented by the application of new theories, methods, and processes. It is represented by the transfer of existing theories, methods, and processes from one discipline to another. Using this definition of technology, we believe that technology is infused into every aspect of the OPSU teacher education program. Specifically, we believe that there are two areas for which we must prepare our candidates. The first is the seamless and transparent application of the most appropriate technology to the task of teaching. We believe that candidates must have the ability to adopt and adapt the latest educational technology as well as recognize and use the most appropriate technology to accomplish classroom goals. The second area for which we must prepare our candidates is in the preparation of their students for life in a world in which technology changes at an ever increasing rate. Students entering the first grade today will be graduating high school into a world that possesses technology that we have yet to imagine. By the same token, candidates graduating from teacher education programs today will, in ten years, find themselves using classroom technology that would boggle the mind today.

The uniqueness of the OPSU service area is both an asset and a liability that the unit has noted and addressed. The small class settings provide candidates with opportunities to engage learners in more intimate one-on-one learning situations. However, small schools do not always possess updated reference materials so the public schools and OPSU frequently utilize technology as a balance for size and distance.

In the 1980s, OPSU and area public schools connected by interactive television (ITV) classrooms to provide college-credit classes to qualifying high school juniors and seniors and to enable school districts to share qualified teachers. OPSU candidates must be familiar with ITV teaching strategies to meet the area public school needs; therefore, they receive this training in their Educational Technology class. Computer education affords teachers of small rural areas opportunity for staying abreast of technology and all content areas. For example, three school districts in the OPSU area provide laptop computers for all of their students (P-12). Collaboration of public schools with OPSU provides technology trainings for their teachers as well as for the unit candidates.

OPUSU candidates, upon completion of their program

- exhibit knowledge in sources and uses of technology.
- are skilled in the use of technology for teaching and learning.
- are able to incorporate new technology as represented by “things” (computers, digital projectors, interactive white boards, the internet, etc.) into the classroom to enhance teaching and learning.
- are able to transfer existing theories, methods, and processes from other disciplines into the classroom to enhance teaching and learning.
- are able to seamlessly and transparently apply the most appropriate technology to accomplish their classroom goals.
- have the technology skills to research and write papers, access information, utilize SmartBoard© technology, evaluate web sites, create web sites, develop and present PowerPoint© presentations, create virtual lessons, utilize grade book programs, create electronic portfolios, and function effectively in an interactive television classroom.

By mandate of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, incoming freshman who did not have computer classes in high school must take or test out of an introduction to computer class, thus helping to ensure that students will have the computer skills needed for classes. From their first general education classes, all students use computers for research and completion of papers. In their education classes, candidates learn to use technology to access information and evaluate websites for the preparation of lessons they will teach. Candidates must take a technology class specifically geared to teaching, EDUC 4333 Educational Technology. In the class, they learn to create websites for later use with their own classrooms, to develop and present PowerPoint© presentations, to create virtual lessons, and to create and utilize grade book programs. Creation of an electronic portfolio is one of the larger projects required during this class. The electronic portfolio is a requirement of all candidates in the program. In addition, they learn to utilize other equipment, such as that required to teach Interactive Television (ITV) classes, which they may need, particularly in the Panhandle.

The second section represents diversity. Historically, many of the candidates have come from communities with little or no diversity. Although this may still be true of some communities in the more remote parts of the service area, expansion of the pork industry has lead to a dramatic shift in the ethnic population. This shift is reflected in the public school systems as well as the population in general. The region has seen dramatic increases in its Hispanic population and has seen a less dramatic but still significant increase in its Asian population. With the possibility of a new 5000 employee beef processing plant, a bio-diesel plant, a rapidly growing ethanol industry, and expansion of the production beef industry, the OPSU service area and the public schools

within our service area will be experiencing another major shift in the ethnic and cultural diversity of the region. Even so, the university and the unit strives to expose its candidates to as many diverse circumstances as possible by including field experiences at schools with large enrollments of a diverse student population. The OPSU Cultural Committee also provides extracurricular presentations by groups from other cultures to enhance the experiences of our students. In the past, groups of Hispanic dancers and musicians and Native American singers and dancers have performed on campus. OPSU also encourages enrollment of students from other countries and cultures. Interaction with these students provides new and diverse experiences both in and out of the classroom.

The unit produces candidates whose knowledge of diversity, ethics, and sensitive issues enables them to react professionally and with empathy. Candidates must take and achieve at least a grade of “C” in all courses regarding diversity and specific educational issues. While all candidates may not have experienced every situation involving diversity or ethics, they understand the theory and are able to adapt it to every situation (Haynes & Avery, 1979). The unit educates all candidates to teach diverse populations. Candidate knowledge is enhanced through a course in diversity that focuses first on the similarities among cultures and moves to the study of differences (Hahn, 1980).

After acceptance into the program, candidates begin their upper level education classes. As a course requirement, candidates then visit classrooms where they observe specific strategies for responding to the needs of learners from diverse cultures or with specific learning needs. After the visits, classes discuss the various strategies used. This combination helps produce the desired sensitivity and empathetic attitude candidates must model (Krathwohl, Bloom, & Masia, 1964). All candidates understand how to design activities to include recognition and appreciation for the diversity of students, for example, students with physical, learning, or emotional disabilities. Diversity in the instructional process has a positive impact on attitudes toward racial issues, opportunities to interact with those who are different, and an overall satisfaction with the educational experience. These benefits are especially important for our candidates, who may have had fewer opportunities for such interaction.

A third section of the columns represents assessment. The unit believes the teacher candidates must be able to develop a variety of assessment tools in order to properly evaluate student success. Faculty members, therefore, provide candidates ample opportunities to study and use portfolio, performance, authentic, and traditional assessment techniques; measurement trends; traditional test building; rubric construction; grading systems; standardized test interpretation; assessment of populations with special needs; and the reflective process involving peers, self, and students (Levine, 2003; Kubiszyn & Borich, 2000; Stripling, 1999; Black, 1995; Goos & Moni, 2001). Candidates learn to incorporate the various assessment strategies into their lessons.

The fourth section presents communication. The unit encourages multiple methods of communication because good teaching includes highly developed skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In addition to these four communication skills, candidates learn to interpret and use body language including teaching signals to promote learning. Communication also occurs through graphs and other visuals and candidates learn to interpret those as well. Candidates learn to use technology to support instruction and thus improve student learning (Van Horn, 2004; and 2006; Bialo & Sivin-Kachala, 1995; Bork, 1991; Casey, 1997; Means, 1997). The education unit provides opportunities for candidates to communicate through the use of

computers, SmartBoards, overhead projectors, video use, audio strategies, visual representations (bulletin boards, posters, etc.), writing, peer teaching of lessons, field teaching experiences, direct / indirect teaching models, grouping and discussion/questioning strategies.

Section five represents classroom management. Studies of teacher, administrator, and teacher educator surveys indicate the importance of classroom management as a top skill of an effective teacher (Wong, 1991; Minor, Onwuegbuzie, & Witcher, 2000; Reynolds, 1995; Danielson, 1996; Orlich, Harder, Callahan, Gibson, 2001; Weinstein, Tonlinson-Clark, & Curran, 2004; Good, McCasline, Tsang, Zhang, Wiley, Bozack, & Hester, 2006). The unit provides pedagogical training in the management of instructional groups, transitions, materials and supplies, and non-instructional duties through various courses and field experiences. In the Elementary/Secondary Classroom Management and Assessment classes, candidates learn skills in classroom management through discussion of case studies, peer teaching, role-playing, and the development of management plans just prior to their teaching internships. When they begin their teaching internship assignments in the following semester, the teaching interns apply their experiences and put these plans into operation. Assessment of candidate skills in classroom management occurs during the classroom management class on campus and through the supervising and cooperating teachers during the candidate's internships.

The last column identifies the proficiency of collaboration. The unit believes in the importance of collaboration among teachers of all levels, and communities. The unit strives for collaboration, not just among unit faculty members, but also with other campus faculty, public school teachers, and administrators; in the development of curriculum and pedagogy. Benefits of collaboration include improvements in student behavior and achievement and increased teacher satisfaction and adaptability (Goodlad, 1987; Dillon, 2001; Inger, 1993; Peters, 2001). The unit stresses collaboration among peers using group projects, teacher experts in field experiences, professional development opportunities, membership in professional and community organizations, leadership in community projects, and committee participation with peers and university faculty. Candidates emerge from their studies, believing in the value of collaboration.

Mastering of these skills and having the general education knowledge, the content knowledge, and the pedagogical tools will create the successful candidates seen going through the Gateway to the Future as Effective Teachers who are Competent, Caring, and Committed! Although chiefly prepared for schools of the Panhandle area, OPSU education graduates possess the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that enable them to teach anywhere when the need or desire arises.

Knowledge Base That Grounds the Conceptual Framework

The unit regards learning as a social, recursive process whereby learners actively engage with their universe, teachers, and peers. Acquiring the body of knowledge needed to teach in today's society requires time to process and reflect upon the information as well as the opportunity to interact with others. The unit program derives a knowledge base from scholarship, review of professional literature, collaboration, and primary field research enacted by individual members. The program focuses upon conceptual knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and reflective knowledge to produce candidates who possess the knowledge, skills, and dispositions required for successful teaching.

Conceptual Knowledge

To develop programs that ensure the utmost candidate knowledge, unit faculty members require a rigorous program of study. Candidates begin their education with a thorough study of the liberal arts and sciences. To meet the needs of today's public school students, departments of education must prepare teachers with deep content knowledge, an understanding of child development and learning, and a wide range of pedagogical repertoires. (Brabek and Shirley, 2003). Upon entering the program, candidates begin the study of pedagogical theory and current educational research as they continue their upper-level courses in their subject areas that are aligned with national and/or state competencies. This combination aligns with Stephens' rhetoric on school/university partnerships to produce quality teachers and successful students. (2004). Hutchings and Shulman's (1999) theory of integrating pedagogy with the target subject matter, running throughout the program, not just supporting it from the base, and helps candidates consider ways of teaching concepts even as they master them. Hackman (1990) promotes a newer model of learning in which constructivism plays an important part. Building upon the work of Jean Piaget and Lev Vigotsky, constructivist theory is based on the premise that individuals must be socially engaged in learning, actively creating knowledge from their existing knowledge base, beliefs, and personal experiences. The programs of study in the unit build upon this framework.

The OPSU unit programs mirror the theories of Shulman, Piaget, Vigotsky, as well as of Dewey through aligning content to pedagogy, sequencing courses, integrating case studies, and encouraging reflection of teaching. Evidence of this alignment appears in course syllabi and pre-requisites in the catalog. More importantly, it also appears in the candidates' portfolios in the form of lesson plans, which the candidates will utilize when teaching. The unit further aligns its program with national, state, Specialized Professional Associations (SPAs), and institutional guidelines, yet maintains its unique Panhandle flavor through small classes, most with a student to teacher ratio of ten to one and individual attention. Although candidates learn and will practice constructivist methods, many will begin teaching in schools resistant to change. Candidates must, therefore, move cautiously and understand the theories behind their practices.

The unit understands the need for candidates to develop concepts basic to their subject area and to pedagogy. The unit realizes the difficulties in requiring candidates to review scholarly philosophies and develop knowledge and skills. Typically, teacher education candidates are practitioners and focus on immediate techniques they believe they will face in the classroom and not upon thoughtful analysis of issues or on inquiry and reflection (Goodlad, 1990). Theorists Hutchings and Shulman redefine scholarship of teaching as a condition in which "faculty frame and systematically investigate questions related to student learning through inquiry and investigation of our own student learning" (1993, p.13). Candidates observe faculty members practicing the desired behaviors of reflection, collaboration, assessment, and accommodation of their own teaching practices. Unit members engage in discussions of teaching methods and frequently alter presentations in an attempt to improve teaching. Members reflect upon their own classrooms and teaching, collaborate with peers about methodology, and assess their successes and failures. At the end of every semester, upon review of candidate achievements, candidate evaluations of faculty, and personal assessment of individual courses, faculty utilize department meetings, TEC meetings and informal gatherings to brainstorm for new ideas to improve classes and frequently implement changes.

Although OPSU is not a research institution, the unit promotes lifelong learning through the study of other research as well as personal classroom observation. Berliner (1987) believes research can help teachers identify and conceptualize problems and activities related to teaching and learning. Scholarly research can also provide a common language for teachers to discuss and analyze student learning. By utilizing MRI information, Jensen (1998) believes students experience cycles during which they are more and less attentive and that educators must learn to utilize these cycles in order for their students to learn more easily. After studying theories of student attentiveness, candidates apply their understanding by creating lessons geared to engage their students in meaningful lessons that motivate them.

Unit members believe knowledge includes a thorough understanding of and ability to use language; thus, all candidates begin their study with nine hours of communication courses. They further refine their communications skills in EDUC 2222 Communications Skills for Educators, a course designed especially for teacher candidates and their language needs in the classroom and with parents and other patrons. Candidates take additional, upper-level liberal arts and science classes, which are typically small having student to teacher ratios of ten to one, thus providing settings conducive to discussion. This practice of discussion provides opportunities for candidates to develop their communication skills. Professional classes guide candidates to create active learning environments for their students that focus on students' lives and enable candidates to create active discussions for their students (Dixon, 1976; Vigotsky, 1986; Bruner, 1966).

Pedagogical Knowledge

Candidates must understand and be able to apply theories of learning based upon research. Most contemporary theories of learning derive from more traditional views, such as Piaget's theory of the stages of cognitive growth by which children develop from birth to adults (Piaget, 1928). As candidates understand the stages and begin to recognize them, they are able to apply specific teaching techniques recommended for each stage of development. More contemporary theories help candidates guide today's students to metacognition.

The unit understands and supports the importance of Constructivist theories or discovery learning, popular since the 1960's (Bruner, 1966). Learners bring their own experiences to the creation of knowledge; they must learn to create their own questions and solve problems, not simply participate in teacher-directed classrooms, and our candidates must be able to create student-centered classrooms. Their students, faced with modern technology's flood of information, must select and interpret information (Shaffer, Squire, Haverson, and Gee, 2005). Candidates experience inquiry learning throughout their programs due to the ease of creating discussion groups in smaller classes and the dedication of methods instructors to guide candidates. (Davis, 2005)

Reflective Knowledge

Members of the unit understand the importance of reflective learning and strive to influence candidates to become reflective teachers. Reflective knowledge derives from individuals giving careful thought to the learning of new subjects before, during, and after contact. An important element of student learning derives from the careful consideration of the problem prior to study and an equally careful analysis of the entire process immediately upon completion of the project. Reflective teachers deliberate on the types of knowledge and skills students in a democratic society need to learn, the kind of classroom atmosphere, and teaching techniques most likely to

produce this learning. These reflective assessments will provide clear evidence that goals are being accomplished. Reflective teachers also engage in thoughtful observation and analysis of their own actions in the classroom before, during, and after interactions with their students to determine their own strengths and areas that need improvement.

As candidates progress in the program, they develop their reflective abilities and acquire an open-minded but questioning attitude about the theories and practices they learn. At the same time, they must learn to take responsibility for their decisions and actions and to use compelling evidence in support of them (Eby, 1994; Rosenblatt 2003).

Candidate Attributes

The OPSU unit produces candidates who possess the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to succeed, primarily in the schools of the unique service area but adaptable to any community where today's mobile society may take them. The candidates become life-long learners within these educational communities. They are also able to reflect upon their teaching and make changes when needed to accommodate today's changing society with its changing needs. OPSU candidates demonstrate their reflective abilities as well as their ability to accommodate all students using a variety of assessment tools, the reflection/accommodation portion of their lesson plans, their teaching internship journals, and their success on professional teaching exams.

Candidate Knowledge

The graduate emerging from the OPSU unit should exhibit knowledge in

- General areas of liberal arts and sciences,
- Target subject area(s),
- Pedagogy,
- The manner in which all students learn and develop,
- Types of diverse learners,
- Developing multiple assessment measures, and
- Sources and uses of technology.

Knowledge serves as the core of the conceptual framework. Candidates demonstrate proficiency in general education, target subject area(s), and professional education courses. They accommodate for diverse learners and learning styles in their instruction. The unit assures the success of its graduates through various assessments. Projects, field experiences, lesson plans, and teaching internships give the candidate knowledge of pedagogy, interaction with diverse learners, employment of multiple assessment methods, and the use of technology to enhance learner outcomes.

Skills (Proficiencies)

The unit believes that Oklahoma Panhandle State University teacher candidates should be skilled in the following areas:

- Classroom and behavior management
- Methods and advantages in collaboration
- Multiple methods of communication;
- Design and use of effective instructional strategies that include all student populations
- The use of technology for teaching and learning

- Assessment designed to evaluate student learning and instructional effectiveness

These six proficiencies, combined with the knowledge and dispositions required of the OPSU candidate, create teachers who are knowledgeable in their discipline, technology, and pedagogy; empathetic to student needs, and dedicated to the concept of life-long learning, or in the words of our unit motto, “Teachers who are competent, caring, and committed”.

Studies of teacher, administrator, and teacher educator surveys indicate the importance of classroom management as a top skill of an effective teacher (Wong, 1991; Minor, Onwuegbuzie, & Witcher, 2000; Reynolds, 1995; Danielson, 1996; Orlich, Harder, Callahan, Gibson, 2001; Weinstein, Tonlinson-Clark, & Curran, 2004; Good, McCasline, Tsang, Zhang, Wiley, Bozack, & Hester, 2006). The unit provides pedagogical training in the management of instructional groups, transitions, materials and supplies, and non-instructional duties through various courses and field experiences. In the block classes, candidates learn skills in classroom management through discussion of case studies, peer teaching, role-playing, and the development of management plans just prior to their teaching internships. When they begin their teaching internship assignments in the following weeks, the teaching interns apply their experiences and put these plans into operation. Assessment of candidate skills in classroom management occurs during the classroom management class on campus and through the supervising and cooperating teachers during their teaching internships.

The unit believes in the importance of collaboration among teachers of all levels, and communities. The unit strives for collaboration, not just among unit faculty members, but also with other campus faculty, public school teachers, and administrators; in the development of curriculum and pedagogy. Benefits of collaboration include improvements in student behavior and achievement and increased teacher satisfaction and adaptability (Goodlad, 1987; Dillon, 2001; Inger, 1993; Peters, 2001). The unit stresses collaboration among peers using group projects, teacher experts in field experiences, professional development opportunities, membership in professional and community organizations, leadership in community projects, and committee participation with peers and university faculty. Candidates emerge from their studies, believing in the value of collaboration.

The unit encourages multiple methods of communication because good teaching includes highly developed skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In addition to these four communication skills, candidates learn to interpret and use body language including teaching signals to promote learning. Communication also occurs through graphs and other visuals and candidates learn to interpret those as well. Candidates learn to use technology to support instruction and thus improve student learning (Van Horn, 2004; and 2006; Bialo & Sivin-Kachala, 1995; Bork, 1991; Casey, 1997; Means, 1997). The education unit provides opportunities for candidates to communicate through the use of computers, overhead projectors, video use, audio strategies, visual representations (bulletin boards, posters, etc.), writing, peer teaching of lessons, field teaching experiences, direct / indirect teaching models, grouping and discussion/questioning strategies.

The design and use of effective teaching strategies that include all student populations is a key to being an effective instructor. Knowledge and use of various instructional strategies and methods combined with knowledge of diverse populations increases student achievement (Truscott & Truscott, 2005; Wong, 1991; Minor, Onwuegbuzie, Witcher, 2000; NCATE (2000); Orlich, Harder, Callahan, Gibson, 2001). Candidates practice designing a variety of lessons,

assignments and projects within their course work and field experiences. Diversity training is integrated throughout the candidates' programs, from general education courses through teaching internship. EDUC 2233 Diversity in Education examines current issues and trends in educational practices through perspectives of history, philosophy, sociology, psychology, anthropology, and the politics of education. Visits to diverse classrooms are a vital part of the course. This course includes specific field placement assignments and detailed record keeping of these field experiences assure candidates' understanding of diversity. Field experiences are designed to ensure candidates have opportunities to work with various grade levels, teachers, cultures, school sizes, religions, special needs, and economic levels.

The uniqueness of the OPSU service area is both an asset and a liability that the unit has noted and addressed. The small class settings provide candidates with opportunities to engage learners in more intimate one-on-one learning situations. However, small schools do not always possess updated reference materials so the public schools and OPSU frequently utilize technology as a balance for size and distance.

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Dispositions

The unit believes candidates should display the following dispositions:

- Good work habits
- A positive attitude and love of learning
- Confidence in their own knowledge and skills
- Honesty and trustworthiness
- Self-reliance and problem-solving behavior
- An appreciation and empathy for the worth and diversity of all humans

- An awareness of ethical, political, social, and environmental issues and obligations.

Unit members agree that dispositions required of teachers encompass a range of attributes that begin with those any employer expects of a successful employee. These include being on the job promptly, doing the work on time, in an exemplary manner, and displaying a friendly personality and cooperative attitude. Teacher candidates must possess an intimate understanding of the feelings, thoughts, and motives of others. They need a keen awareness that allows them to provide what Shulman refers to as nurturing. He believes “good teaching includes nurturing the moral and spiritual development, the civic engagement, and the socialization of students” (Tell, 2001).

The unit believes all candidates should exhibit the above qualities to foster a positive learning environment for every student. To achieve this, they must be empathetic to the feelings, thoughts, and motives of their students. In addition to their positive attitude toward students, candidates must display a positive attitude toward colleagues, administrators, parents, and other members of the community. Assessment of candidate dispositions occurs throughout the program beginning with recommendations from faculty that candidates must have prior to admission to the program. During the admission interview, a panel uses a rubric which includes components that evaluate, among other things, candidates’ dispositions. Rubrics for teaching in education and subject-area classes and during teaching internship also evaluate candidates’ dispositions. The unit has developed a matrix which identifies and correlates dispositional data from the various sources into a single evaluation instrument.

Honesty and trustworthiness are attributes that should be present in individuals seeking to enter the teaching field, but newspaper headlines frequently suggest this is not the case. Through classes, interaction with candidates, both in and out of the classroom, and survey instruments, the unit strives to ensure that the candidates will be honest and trustworthy teachers.

In order for candidates to be self-reliant and productive, they must love learning and knowledge. Shulman believes a good teacher is an “enlightened, passionate individual” (Tell, 2001). If candidates possess these attributes, they will naturally be productive. Throughout the program, candidates learn to assess their own strengths and weaknesses through self-evaluation measures and collaboration with their peers.

In order to convey empathy toward their students, teachers must have confidence in their own knowledge and abilities. Without this confidence, they may be unable to create a comfortable classroom environment for their students. Caine (1998) has used brain readings to determine that “When we encounter high stress in learning, there is a psychophysiological response to the threat, accompanied by a feeling of helplessness or fatigue”. A stressful situation prohibits students from using higher order, more complex thinking skills while low stress encourages analytical thinking. If teachers are unsure of their abilities, their own lack of confidence will be relayed to their students. The unit candidates display confidence in their teaching abilities.

John Dewey (1916) believed that all learning was a product of a learner’s inquiry with the phenomenon studied. Morris and Pai (1976) expanded Dewey’s theory by stating that learning is dynamic and schools should engage students in a problem-solving curriculum rather than a static, content-oriented one, which weakens student achievement. The unit’s conceptual framework is designed to produce problem-solving curriculum rather than a static, content-oriented one, which

weakens student achievement. The unit's conceptual framework is designed to produce problem-solving candidates geared toward creating student-oriented classrooms where they will use multiple assessment tools to measure their students' success, and reflect upon the results to alter teaching when needed.

The unit produces candidates whose knowledge of diversity, ethics, and sensitive issues enables them to react professionally and with empathy. Candidates must take and achieve at least a C in courses regarding diversity and specific educational issues. While all candidates will not have experienced every situation involving diversity or ethics, they understand the theory and are able to adapt it to every situation (Haynes & Avery, 1979). The unit educates all candidates to teach diverse populations. Candidate knowledge is enhanced through a course in diversity that focuses first on the similarities among cultures and moves to the study of differences (Hahn, 1980).

After acceptance into the program, candidates begin their upper level education classes. As a course requirement, candidates then visit classrooms where they observe specific strategies for responding to the needs of learners from diverse cultures or with specific learning needs. After the visits, classes discuss the various strategies used. This combination helps produce the desired sensitivity and empathetic attitude (Krathwohl, Bloom, & Masia, 1964) candidates must model. All candidates understand how to design activities to include recognition and appreciation for the diversity of students, for example, students with physical, learning, or emotional disabilities. Diversity in the instructional process has a positive impact on attitudes toward racial issues, opportunities to interact with those who are different, and an overall satisfaction with the educational experience. These benefits are especially important for our candidates, who may have had fewer opportunities for such interaction.

The unit believes that all OPSU Teacher Education candidates should possess an awareness of ethical, political, social, and environmental issues and obligations. According to the National Education Association's Code of Ethics, educators should strive to help each student realize his or her potential as a worthy and effective member of society (1975). The American Federation of Teachers' Code of Ethics states that each educator should believe that "patriotism in its highest form requires dedication to the principles of our democratic heritage" (1971). The NEA Code of Ethics also agrees in that "the quality of the services of the education profession directly influences the nation and its citizens," and therefore, the unit believes all teacher education candidates must possess the qualities mentioned above.

Although the unit plan strives primarily to produce candidates who will teach in its unique service area, with its common values, we realize they must, nevertheless, incorporate contemporary world views into their teaching to prepare their students for the global world of the twenty-first century. To achieve this, they must be knowledgeable, lifelong learners, attuned to changes in society and the world through study, collaboration, and reflection, and ever alert to and concerned with their students' needs.

Unit Philosophy

The philosophy of the unit draws from the mission, philosophy, and goals of the university. The development of the program in teacher education is based on beliefs about students, the environment, education, and professional teacher education.

- All individuals have the ability to learn.

- Individuals are products of a variety of cultures and diverse school settings.
- It is possible to assist most individuals to complete a degree in teacher education.
- The practical application of theoretical concepts in a school setting is the basis for excellence in teaching.
- Teacher educators are responsible for providing learning experiences that assist candidates in developing attitudes, values, knowledge and skills that form the basis of competent educational practice and leadership.
- Future teachers must be encouraged to think critically and communicate effectively.
- The intelligent use of current and developing technological devices is essential to the practice of teaching in the twenty-first century.

Although the unit believes that most individuals can complete a teaching degree, this should not be interpreted as meaning that we believe that most anyone can or should teach. For this reason, checkpoints exist within the program. Some of these checkpoints cannot be passed without demonstrating the appropriate skills and knowledge. Examples include GPA requirements, portfolio requirements, and OGET and OSAT requirements. The checkpoints represented by the assessment of dispositions are more fluid. While there are specific points at which dispositions are assessed and specific instruments used to assess dispositions, much of the assessment of dispositions occurs in a more informal manner within courses and through the interaction between candidates and faculty. Removal of a candidate due to undesirable dispositions does not always occur through a formal process. It often occurs through a less formal counseling between the candidate and faculty or advisors.

Unit Standards

John Dewey believed and others agree that education should develop a love of active doing and effective capacity. Education should prepare students for an intelligent choice of a calling in which they may be most serviceable to the community.

In addition to the 15 competencies provided by the state, the following OPSU program standards indicate elements from the unit conceptual framework; *Gateway to the Future*.

- The teacher candidate will acquire a comprehensive academic foundation in the liberal arts as provided by the general education curriculum.
- The teacher candidate will master the content knowledge and research base of specialty areas.
- The teacher candidate will display mastery in pedagogy of professional studies by meeting the “Oklahoma General Competencies for Licensure and Certification.”
- The teacher candidate will participate in mentorship opportunities within field studies.
- The teacher candidate will integrate multiple technologies into lesson planning.
- Through lesson plans, the teacher candidate will display an understanding and appreciation of diversity in cultures, learning, and environments.

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