CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

GROUNDED PRACTICES

RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY, SOCIAL JUSTICE, EMPOWERMENT, EQUITY & INCLUSION

EDUCATIONAL PROFESSIONALS COMMITTED TO EXCELLENCE

SUNY ONEONTA
PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION UNIT
Welcome Message from
Dr. Richard E. Lee
Interim Dean of Education and Human Ecology

Professional education programs at SUNY Oneonta prepare people interested in elementary and secondary teaching and school counseling careers. These programs are well-planned and structured for students to complete during their years at Oneonta. The programs are rigorous and result in exceptional professionals whom we are proud to have represent us in schools throughout New York State.

We believe that children and youth learn when they have opportunities to explore their environments, when they are challenged to think about the world and their place in it, when they are provided rich opportunities to develop skills, and when their teachers make learning an exciting and rewarding activity. We believe that children and youth have many different talents, and that they all can learn.

We believe that teachers have tremendous opportunities to shape how their students think and feel about learning. We believe that teachers serve the community: children, youth, families, and institutions. We believe that teachers must take on the role of advocate for all students so that all children and youth can achieve their goals even in the face of adversity.

We believe that school counselors serve both the students and teachers in our schools. School counselors work to assist students achieve academic and social goals. School counselors provide support to teachers through their work with students and their families.

We welcome to our programs all candidates who share our philosophy and whose goal is to develop their own skills and talents to become educational professionals committed to excellence.

In this document you will learn about the conceptual framework model Educational Professionals Committed to Excellence, which guides the programs offered through the Professional Education Unit, which we commonly refer to as the Division of Education, a part of SUNY Oneonta’s School of Education and Human Ecology. Central to this conceptual model are three themes which define the knowledge, skills and dispositions necessary to become excellent teachers and school counselors. These themes are interwoven throughout the candidates’ undergraduate and graduate programs.

The faculty and staff of the Division of Education work on a daily basis to deliver programs which maintain integrity to the beliefs and principles described in the model Educational Professional Committed to Excellence.

The College at Oneonta's long history in teacher education continues through its commitment to preparing teachers and other school professionals for the schools of New York. This commitment was validated in October 2000 when the Division of Education was awarded accreditation by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education. This legacy is strong and equal to its commitment to provide a well-rounded liberal education to its students.

Publication August 2013
# Conceptual Framework
for Professional Education Programs

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Conceptual Framework
for Professional Education Programs

Introduction

Educational Professionals Committed to Excellence undergirds the Conceptual Framework for all professional education programs in the SUNY Oneonta Professional Education Unit, referred to routinely as the Division of Education. The faculty use this Conceptual Framework to design professional education programs at both Initial and Advanced levels, taking into consideration:

- current research on learning and teaching in a dynamic, changing world,
- the multitude of national and New York State reform efforts, and
- the College’s mission statement and commitment to the public of New York State.

During design of the Conceptual Framework, which began more than four years ago, the faculty and staff of the Division of Education explored scholarly and professional source materials, conducted research related to teaching and learning, and considered effective practices observed in PK-12 school settings. These experiences and ongoing professional development activities have enhanced the quality of our faculty members’ teaching and provided them with the necessary knowledge to ensure that prospective teachers, counselors, and other school personnel embrace and implement only the highest professional standards. Faculty and staff members have determined the knowledge, skills, and attitudes essential to the preparation of PK-12 teachers and school counselors, expanded their own knowledge about teaching and learning, and focused on a constructivist philosophy. After four years, in 2003-04, faculty again reviewed the Conceptual Framework and determined that three themes are central to the model of Educational Professionals Committed to Excellence:

- Educational Professionals Committed to Academic Excellence
- Educational Professionals Committed to Teaching and Counseling Practices Grounded in Current Theory and Research
- Educational Professionals Who Respect Diversity and are Committed to Empowerment, Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice

The concept of Educational Professionals Committed to Excellence outlines a professional perspective that is student-oriented and knowledge-based and that influences both campus- and field-based experiences. As certification programs and New York State Education Department regulations change, dialogue occurs among faculty and staff members in higher education and practitioners in PK-12 schools. Thus, the model continues to evolve.
SUNY Oneonta Division of Education
Conceptual Framework: Summary Statement
Educational Professionals Committed to Excellence

THEME 1
Educational Professionals Committed to Academic Excellence
Objective 1.1: Candidates demonstrate liberal arts content knowledge.
Objective 1.2: Candidates demonstrate professional education knowledge.
Objective 1.3: Candidates demonstrate effective communication skills: reading, writing, speaking, listening.
Objective 1.4: Candidates demonstrate the ability to critically analyze, synthesize and apply liberal arts content knowledge, professional education knowledge, and effective communication skills.

THEME 2
Educational Professionals Committed to Teaching and Counseling Practices Grounded in Current Theory and Research
Objective 2.1: Candidates demonstrate the ability to design and implement effective lessons.
Objective 2.2: Candidates demonstrate ability to use various formal and informal assessment strategies and apply the resulting data to inform their professional practice.
Objective 2.3: Candidates demonstrate the ability to use appropriate management techniques in a variety of school settings.
Objective 2.4: Candidates demonstrate the ability to collaborate with staff, parents, and non-school based organizations.
Objective 2.5: Candidates demonstrate the ability to be reflective learners and apply the results to inform their professional practice.
Objective 2.6: Candidates demonstrate knowledge about current educational research to implement appropriate changes based on that research.
Objective 2.7: Candidates demonstrate a personal educational philosophy and are able to develop and express personal opinions on relevant educational and social issues.

THEME 3
Educational Professionals Who Respect Diversity and are Committed to Empowerment, Equity, Inclusion and Social Justice
Objective 3.1: Candidates create empowering educational environments for all learners.
Objective 3.2: Candidates know and adhere to the New York State Code of Ethics for Educators to guide their practice and interactions with students, staff, community, families and peers.
Objective 3.3: Candidates demonstrate the understanding that knowledge and skills are empowering for themselves and their students.
Objective 3.4: Candidates demonstrate knowledge and respect for diversity.
Objective 3.5: Candidates demonstrate abilities to design and/or adapt instructional opportunities to diverse populations of learners.
Objective 3.6: Candidates demonstrate knowledge of social justice issues and advocacy strategies.

Division approval of revisions 2/24/12
### Three Conceptual Framework Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge Objectives</th>
<th>Skill Objectives</th>
<th>Disposition Objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Educational Professionals Committed to Academic Excellence</strong></td>
<td><strong>Candidates demonstrate:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Candidates demonstrate:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal arts content knowledge</td>
<td>Effective communication skills: reading, writing, speaking, listening</td>
<td>Adherence to Professional Ethics e.g., academic honesty, confidentiality</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional education knowledge</td>
<td>The ability to synthesize and apply liberal arts content knowledge, professional education knowledge, and effective communication skills</td>
<td>Collaboration e.g., effectively working with professional colleagues and other adults</td>
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<td>Knowledge about current educational research to implement appropriate changes based on that research</td>
<td>The ability to use various formal and informal assessment strategies and apply the resulting data to inform their professional practice</td>
<td>Commitment to Diversity e.g., respecting children and adults of varied cultural backgrounds, ethnicities, religions sexual orientation, social classes and abilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Knowledge and adherence to the New York State Code of Ethics for Educators to guide their practice and interactions with students, staff, community, families, and peers</td>
<td>The ability to use appropriate management techniques in a variety of school settings</td>
<td>Initiative e.g., dealing appropriately with frustration, having a poised and professional demeanor</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Educational Professionals Committed To Teaching and Counseling Practices Grounded in Current Theory and Research</strong></td>
<td><strong>Candidates demonstrate:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Candidates demonstrate:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidates demonstrate:</td>
<td>The ability to design and implement effective lessons</td>
<td>Commitment to Teaching e.g., valuing the profession, believing that one can make a difference, maintaining an enthusiastic attitude regarding schools, teaching, students, and parents</td>
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<tr>
<td>Knowledge of and respect for diversity Knowledge of social justice issues to become active citizens</td>
<td>The ability to use various formal and informal assessment strategies and apply the resulting data to inform their professional practice</td>
<td>Emotional Maturity e.g., dealing appropriately with frustration, having a poised and professional demeanor</td>
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<td>The ability to collaborate with staff, families, and non-school based organizations</td>
<td>Initiative e.g., thinking independently, going beyond what is given, seeking after knowledge and professional development, actively seeking solutions to problems</td>
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<td>The ability to be reflective learners and apply the results to inform their professional practice</td>
<td>Responsibility e.g., regular attendance, promptness, notification of emergencies, submission of materials on time, reliability when making commitments</td>
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<td></td>
<td>A personal educational philosophy and are able to develop and express personal opinions on relevant educational and social issues</td>
<td>Responsiveness to Professional Feedback e.g., willing and able to make changes in approaches to teaching when advised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Educational Professionals Who Respect Diversity and are Committed to Empowerment, Equity, Inclusion and Social Justice</strong></td>
<td><strong>Candidates demonstrate:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Candidates demonstrate:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A personal educational philosophy and are able to develop and express personal opinions on relevant educational and social issues</td>
<td>The ability to create empowering educational environments for all learners</td>
<td>Self-Reflection e.g., willing and able to reflect on and evaluate one’s work and to recognize and difficulties and deficiencies in one’s teaching</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The ability to adapt instructional opportunities to diverse populations of learners</td>
<td>Student Focused e.g., making professional decisions focused on student needs rather than on personal preference, respecting students as valued human beings</td>
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"Educational Professionals Committed to Excellence"
The Mission, Assumptions, and Principal Characteristics of 
Educational Professionals Committed to Excellence

The College at Oneonta is committed to excellence. The opening paragraph of its mission statement states:

The mission of the College at Oneonta is to foster the individual student’s intellectual, personal, and civic development. The College is dedicated to excellence in teaching, advisement, and scholarly activities; and the cultivation of a campus environment rich in opportunities for participation, personal challenge, and service (College Catalog, 171).

SUNY Oneonta Division of Education faculty and staff members reaffirm, but go beyond, the College’s mission statement, embracing two fundamental assumptions or beliefs that guide the creation of 21st century professional education programs:

- A quality education is the fundamental right of every child.
- Teachers and school personnel are essential in creating an optimal learning environment that ensures that each student learns.

Committed to the College’s mission, and holding to these fundamental beliefs, the faculty and staff in the Division of Education unanimously adopted a mission statement for the Division that affirms a commitment to developing knowledgeable, ethical, and reflective practitioners who are Educational Professionals Committed to Excellence. Faculty and staff members are dedicated to inspiring all learners to reach their greatest potential. This is done by creating a positive environment that enables candidates (future teachers and counselors) to become reflective educational professionals and leaders committed to (1) academic excellence, (2) best professional practices in teaching and counseling, and (3) empowerment, respect for diversity, and social justice.

Reflecting on the mission statements of the College and the Division, on critical assumptions, and on current research, faculty and staff members in the Division defined the following principle characteristics and attributes of Educational Professionals Committed to Excellence.

Educational Professionals Committed to Excellence are global citizens of the 21st century who are:

- lifelong learners who have solid depth and breadth in their content knowledge, as well as a liberal arts background that provides evidence of excellent reading, writing, and communication skills
- knowledgeable of the unique and exceptional qualities of individuals and attentive to their developmental, physiological, and psychological qualities
- skilled at making connections to current “best practice” by being able to understand, apply, synthesize, create, and evaluate content information and learning theories as they develop instructional plans that address each student’s unique needs, abilities, and learning style preferences
• able to use and integrate technology and media effectively to enhance their own learning as well as design and use technology and media in the classroom to enhance each student’s learning

• reflective, critical problem solvers who use appropriate evaluation skills and assessments to enhance individual as well as group learning

• able to understand change and be effective change agents by collaborating effectively with colleagues, caregivers, and members of the community

• able to foster positive learning communities in which the hallmarks are respect for an individual’s characteristics and learning needs and awareness of the stresses of contemporary family life and society

• aware of diversity issues that touch the individual learner as well as educational institutions and able to use that understanding to improve learning

   (“Diversity” refers to ethnicity, race, language, religion, socioeconomic status, gender, sexual orientation, age, regional/geographic background, and physical, mental, and emotional exceptionalities)

• professionally responsible in terms of attendance, promptness, notification of emergencies, handing in materials on time, reliable when making commitments

• able to build self-esteem, positive self-concept, and a sense of self-worth for themselves and their students based on authentic accomplishments in learning

• committed to high learning expectations for themselves and able to communicate these high expectations to other learners as they foster creativity and risk taking

• confident and personable with a keen sense of humor

• passionate about teaching and caring and warm with respect to individual students

• attentive to professional ethics

• committed to educating themselves and students, adhering to professional ethics, and valuing continued growth as a person

• able to take initiative, assume leadership roles, and model emotional maturity

• believe that individuals can solve problems and that all children can learn
Specific knowledge and skill objectives are identified later in this document within each of the themes. Dispositional objectives are identified for teaching programs and the counseling program as supporting each of the themes and are not classified within the themes.

Dispositional objectives for the teaching programs were selected after a review of the dispositions that seemed to be most clearly associated with success in student teaching and first-year teaching positions. These dispositions were first identified by faculty at the University of Eastern Michigan and reviewed and confirmed by the Steering Committee of the Division of Education.

Teacher candidates demonstrate:
- adherence to professional ethics
- collaboration
- commitment to diversity
- commitment to teaching
- emotional maturity
- initiative
- responsibility
- responsiveness to professional feedback
- self-reflection
- student focus

Dispositional objectives for the counseling programs as suggested by the American School Counseling Association are as follows:

School Counselor candidates demonstrate:
- a genuine interest in the welfare of others
- an ability to understand the perspectives of others
- a belief that individuals are capable of solving problems
- an openness to learning
- a willingness to take risks
- a strong sense of self-worth
- that they are not afraid of making mistakes and attempt to learn from them
- that they value continued growth as a person
- that they are caring and warm
- that they possess a keen sense of humor

The Knowledge Base Undergirding the Conceptual Framework

Educational reform has had a tremendous impact on the knowledge base of a professional educator. In April of 1983, the National Commission on Excellence in Education published *A Nation at Risk*. In this document, researchers reported that students’ educational performance was declining, and the Commission recommended that students spend more time learning basic subjects and that teacher preparation programs be improved.
In 1986, the National Governor’s Association noted that there was a need for national standards on teaching and learning. In 1990, the Holmes Group published *Tomorrow’s Schools*, which outlined principles to improve teaching and learning. These principles state that student learning should focus on learning for understanding. Moreover, teacher learning should be continuous, and it should include thoughtful reflection about teaching practices. Clearly, the education reform movement advocated higher standards for students and changes for teachers and teacher education programs.

In his 1990 book, *Teachers for Our Nation’s Schools*, John Goodlad stated that the teaching profession had been undervalued by society and that teaching theory must inform those who use pedagogical practice. In the early 1990's, Ernest Boyer studied the nature of research conducted by education faculty and noted that faculty scholarship must focus more on what is happening in schools. This redirected research, Goodlad argued, would help clarify pedagogical issues and begin to stimulate changes in educational practice.

In 1996, The National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future published *What Matters Most: Teaching for America’s Future*. This document reasserted the need to honor teaching as a profession, and it proposed that, by 2006, “America will provide all students in the country with what should be educational birthright: access to competent, caring, and qualified teachers.” The Commission’s plan was aimed at ensuring that all schools have teachers who have “the knowledge and skills they need to teach so that all children can learn.” With respect to recruitment and school structure, the Commission recommended interlocking changes, stating that standards are important for students and teachers. It further asserted that there is a need to reinvent teacher education preparation and professional development, that teaching must become a true profession concerned with accountability and high standards, and that preparation programs must be systematic, integrated, concept-based, and tied to solid research and best practices.

On July 16, 1998, the New York State Regents passed a far-reaching policy statement entitled, “Teaching to Higher Standards: New York Commitment.” The Regents had already passed new standards for PK-12 schools, including new curriculum learning standards and higher learning outcomes for students. This July 1998 policy statement re-asserted the need for highly qualified teachers and high standards:

> High standards must drive this reform....We must create an educational system in which caring and competent professionals enable all of our students to master the knowledge and skills they need to be successful in the next century.

This policy statement represented a passionate commitment to schools and students in New York State, implying that the very future of both rests on schools having highly qualified *Educational Professionals Committed to Excellence* in their classrooms.

Statewide, pre-K students in New York State must now meet new and higher standards. Assessments have been created, and the Regents and public will review the results. These higher standards and performance-based assessments are the basics of a new agenda for teaching and learning in New York, which parallels efforts in other states throughout the nation.
The agenda defined by the education reform movement in New York and in the nation emphasizes that teacher education is not static and that it does not end upon completion of a preparation program. Rather, it continues for a lifetime, because the teacher education process is developmental. The abilities of novice teachers differ from those of expert teachers (Berliner, 1985; Brophy & Good, 1994; Brown, Schulman, 1986; Cooney & Jones, 1990; Feiman-Nemser & Remillard, 1996; Reynolds, 1995). Novice teachers develop entry-level knowledge bases and pedagogical skills for the classroom. While they need to achieve high standards of excellence in academics for entry into teaching, they also need to develop an understanding of what it means to be a professional.

Compared to novice teachers, expert teachers have refined teaching abilities, including those of empowerment and collaboration in delivering effective education programs and a personalized sense of professionalism. Moreover, expert teachers remain continuously involved in the learning process, as they masterfully apply newly learned knowledge in their disciplines. They adopt effective curriculum frameworks. They reflect on their teaching practices, and they teach for student understanding. In addition, expert teachers value standards, because standards define what students should know and be able to do (Harris & Carr, 1996). Expert teachers are accountable for what students learn in their classrooms.

Furthermore, expert teachers collaborate with colleagues, families, and personnel in other agencies in order to meet the needs of all students in their classrooms. Teachers and school personnel at all stages of development continue to learn in the diverse and changing school context in which they find themselves (Levine, 1996; The National Commission on Teaching & America’s Future, 1996). They fully understand the importance of diversity and use that understanding to enhance learning.

Educational professionals are lifelong learners who are able to shape the school context. Throughout their careers, they seek knowledge and expertise that lead to (1) excellence in academics for themselves and their students, (2) excellence in professionalism for themselves and their colleagues, (3) best practices in learning and teaching, (4) respect for diversity, and (5) empowerment and collaboration. Academic and professional excellence, best teaching practices, empowerment, respect for diversity, and social justice form synergistic relationships. Although each is important to a successful practitioner, all are essential to Educational Professionals Committed to Excellence.

Graduates of the SUNY-Oneonta Division of Education are well grounded in content knowledge and skills, and they demonstrate their knowledge and skills in their use of effective best teaching or counseling practices. They have a passion for teaching and learning. They are empathetic to the needs of students. Their knowledge, skills, and values enable them to take critical action in a diverse, changing world. And, in concert with students, parents, communities, and other social and educational institutions, they are able to function as change agents and leaders, thereby ensuring that quality education and educational services are provided.

The Division’s model of Educational Professionals Committed to Excellence is based on cognitive psychology and constructivist theories of learning. Learners are characterized as active, constructive problem-solvers (Bruner, 1966; Case, 1985; Flavell, 1995; Piaget, 1963).
Learning occurs when learners assimilate incoming information, relate it to prior knowledge, and accommodate mental structures, thus organizing and making meaning of their experiences (Anderson, 1989; Flavell, 1995; Piaget, 1969).

This constructivist paradigm has evolved from the work of many twentieth century research psychologists who have contributed significantly to the development of professional educators. Historically, Gesell (1925) provided insights into the role of maturation in learning. Piaget (1969) introduced the concept of adaptation as central to the learning process. Dewey (1938) explored the concept of active, self-expressive learning, and Erikson (1950) established the importance of social/emotional relationships. Kohlberg (1971) and Gilligan (1983) outlined stages of moral development, and Vygotsky (1978) focused on the development of language and thought and explored the influence of culture on learning and understanding. Gardner (1983; 1993) identified multiple intelligences and argued that each student has his or her own repertoire of strengths. Sternberg (1985) identified the importance of experience and adaptation in intelligence. Furthermore, research on how the human brain learns (D'Arcangelo, 1998; Jensen, 1998; Wolfe & Brandt, 1998) supports constructivist theories, as does the research of Daniel Goleman (1995) on emotional intelligence. Constructivism, as a theory of knowledge and learning (Fosnot, 1996), undergirds the Conceptual Framework for all professional education programs in the SUNY Oneonta Division of Education.

Learning to teach involves integration of appropriate developmental theories and research, teaching methodologies, and field application of these theories and research. To assist learners in the construction of meaning, active learning strategies must be incorporated into the planning and delivery of instruction. An underlying principle is that effective instruction should draw upon an integrated curriculum. Students should be given opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning. They should be treated as active thinkers, and they should be involved in making instructional decisions (Brooks & Brooks, 1993). If innovations and positive changes in education are to occur, teachers should be empowered and granted the flexibility to make decisions about incorporating instructional changes in their classrooms, and they should have time to assess and reflect on these changes and their impact.

The constructivist approach to learning guides educators to develop learning environments that provide opportunities for action and interaction and in which attention is paid to the progress of individual students. In these learning environments, teachers are not primarily individuals who tell and correct, but, rather, they watch and ask, “What happened? What did you notice?” (Wasserman, 1990; Zahorik, 1995). Under certain circumstances, however, students need instruction that is more explicit and teacher-directed. For students who are at-risk, or who may have special needs, instruction should be systematic, proceed in small steps, include corrective feedback and allow for active student responding at high levels of success (Rosenshine, 1986). Careful planning and logical sequences help students to attain significant outcomes (Armbuster, Lehr & Osborn, 2003; Vaughn & Fuchs, 2003). Developing content enhancement routines and instructing students on the use of learning strategies allow children with disabilities to more successfully access and succeed with core curriculum (Bulgren, 2006; Gersten, 1998; Swanson, 2001). In all cases, teachers must know how to support students, identify problems in learning, and capitalize on the strengths of individual students. They are able to make instructional decisions (Berliner, 1986; Darling-Hammond, 1993, Shulman, 1987). Cognitive and constructivist theories stress the importance of student affect in promoting student motivation.
and cognitive engagement. Positive affect toward learning increases students’ motivation to learn, depth of information processing, and use of creative problem solving (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2004). Constructivist teachers are aware of the importance of student affect and utilize a variety of strategies to enhance students’ positive affect.

Professional educators must also engage in self-reflection and self-analysis, while carefully thinking and making decisions about classroom curriculum and instruction. Effective teachers have a clear sense of self and high levels of self-esteem. They are able to articulate implicit theories and beliefs about learning, curriculum, and subject matter (Clark & Petersen, 1986). As a result, professional education programs must provide candidates with multiple opportunities for reflection, self-assessment, and instructional improvement (Darling-Hammond, 1990; National Commission on Teaching & America’s Future, 1996).

Data-informed teaching is a key component of reflective practice, self-assessment, and instruction improvement. The use of formative assessment to inform teaching practices is of particular benefit to teachers and students alike—it “gives information to teachers and students about how students are doing relative to classroom learning goals” (Brookhart 2008, p11). As defined by Popham (2008)

*Formative assessment is a planned process in which assessment-elicited evidence of students’ status is used by teachers to adjust their ongoing instructional procedures or by students to adjust their current learning tactics* (p.6).

It is a planned process, involving the use of assessments and a wide variety of evidence regarding students’ learning. Teachers must not only reflect upon and adjust to assessment data; Hargreaves (2001) argues that they must also be able to”…valid and reliable measures for performance-based assessments in classrooms, which will capture the complexities of student performance” (p.52).

Teachers engage in a recursive relationship with this information, adjusting their practice to better meet the needs of their students; it “…can fundamentally transform the way a teacher teaches” (Popham 2008,p.vii).

Professional education programs in the SUNY Oneonta Division of Education model and develop this constructivist philosophy. Staff and faculty members help emerging professionals construct meaning from a body of specialized knowledge that they can then effectively translate into validated best practices of teaching and counseling. They provide emerging professionals with direction to design and change instructional programs. As these emerging professionals become more knowledgeable about human development, they learn to use more appropriate and effective methodologies with diverse student populations. They use information gained from observing students and reflecting on assessments of student learning to make decisions about instructional strategies. Throughout their courses, candidates increase their ability to define and refine student outcomes and instructional practices.
The Three Central Themes Embedded in the Conceptual Framework

The Division of Education’s Conceptual Framework is constantly under review. Originally, the Conceptual Framework included four themes, but, during Division-wide review in 2002-03, the themes were modified to merge “empowerment” with “respect for diversity” and to add “social justice” as a third element of the third theme. These changes were the result of efforts to define “empowerment” and to identify essential dispositions of effective teachers.

The Division’s current Conceptual Framework now includes three themes that, taken together, are considered to be essential to future teachers and counselors: *Educational Professionals Committed to Excellence* are committed to:

- **Academic Excellence**
- **Best Professional Practices in Teaching and Counseling Practices Grounded in Current Theory and Research**
- **Empowerment, Respect for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Social Justice**

These three themes are consistent with both the standards for beginning teachers defined by the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC), which calls for higher standards in the teaching profession at both state and national levels, and the standards for counselors defined by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Education Programs (CACREP). In addition, they are consistent with the standards for teachers and counselors defined by the New York State Education Department. As a result, the preparation program for each certificate area in SUNY Oneonta’s Division of Education (elementary education, early childhood education, secondary education, reading, and counselor education) is a well-defined program of studies that enables candidates to develop discipline-based content knowledge and related pedagogical and professional knowledge and skills.

There are two purposes for explicitly stating these three themes. First, they form a public statement of intention, subject to ongoing scrutiny and debate, and, second, they guide faculty in their design of courses, field experiences, and programs. The themes do not delineate minimum expectations; rather, they demand the exceptional performance of both faculty and candidates. The aim in stating these themes, their related instructional objectives, and descriptive performance elements is to establish a common base of values and expectations that will permeate all professional education programs in the Division.

Finally, while the instructional objectives related to each theme in the Division’s Conceptual Framework are stated primarily in terms of Initial PK-12 teacher education programs, they also apply to Advanced programs for both prospective teachers and counselors in the Division. The instructional objectives identify the beliefs, values, knowledge, and skills that we expect all our graduates to develop during their programs at SUNY Oneonta. Taken together, the objectives represent a "composite picture" of a skilled beginning professional—the kind of teacher and school counselor that we describe in our mission, philosophy, and principles and that we want to prepare in both our Initial and Advanced preparation programs.
Educational professionals are committed to academic excellence for themselves and their students. Based on a strong liberal arts background acquired through their academic concentration and/or major, they understand and apply specific discipline structures, concepts, and tools of inquiry (Barnes, 1989; Carter, 1990; Dill & Associates, 1990; Murray, 1996; National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future, 1996). They are critical thinkers who are effective communicators in a wide variety of media (Ross, Cornett, & McCutcheon, 1992). They demonstrate excellence in reading, writing, speaking, and listening in both traditional and electronic forms (Applebee, 1996; Danielson, 1998). They inspire their students to maintain high learning standards and help them achieve these standards (Bruner, 1966; Vygotsky, 1978). As professionals, they demonstrate knowledge and application of current research, theory, and practice in their professional education and in their content discipline (e.g., elementary education, mathematics education, counseling psychology). Their knowledge base also includes a clear understanding of the social, historical, ethical, and philosophical foundations of education (McClaren, 1994). They develop and document their progress as learners throughout their collegiate and professional careers. They begin the process of induction into the educational profession through participation in local, state, and national professional organizations (Kagan, 1992). And, because they are committed to academic excellence, they demonstrate liberal arts content knowledge, professional education knowledge, and effective communication skills, and they know how to synthesize this knowledge and skills to create effective learning experiences for students.

The instructional objectives and performance elements related to the theme *Educational Professionals Committed to Academic Excellence* include the following:

**Objective 1.1: Candidates demonstrate liberal arts content knowledge.**

A. Candidates understand and synthesize content areas of a liberal arts education by successfully completing the College's general education requirements, their work in a major, and/or one or more concentrations.

A1: The General Education requirements at Oneonta have been carefully devised to “give students opportunities to enrich their own personal intellectual development and contribute to the quality of life of our larger community.” The 36 credits in General Education include a full range of courses necessary for a quality liberal arts education.

A2: Candidates achieve high standards in overall GPA and content area GPA for admission and retention. They achieve and maintain high academic standards in their coursework, and, in keeping with NCATE Standards, they maintain overall acceptable GPAs in their discipline major/concentration and in their professional education coursework.
A3: Secondary education candidates have a Major (or its equivalent) in their teaching area, related work, or additional expertise, and they complete appropriate certificate coursework. Each certification option has its own credit and course requirements based on accepted guidelines of national specialty professional associations. Mandated content-specific courses vary among disciplines. Prospective teachers obtain knowledge of their chosen disciplines from this core of courses.

A4: Candidates in the Elementary education program have a knowledge base consistent with cutting edge research and the accepted guidelines of national specialty professional associations. Candidates complete the College’s Liberal Arts General Education requirements, and they major in elementary education with appropriate certificate coursework and a 30 semester hour concentration in a content area that is tied to the New York State Learning Standards.

A5: Candidates in all graduate programs meet rigorous admission standards that represent strong undergraduate performance.

Objective 1.2: Candidates demonstrate professional education knowledge.

A. Candidates understand and apply a constructivist approach based on their knowledge of child/adolescent development, principles of learning and motivation, exceptionality, and learning abilities.

A1: Planning for and implementation of all class activities, projects, and lesson plans is based on assessments of students' learning abilities and needs.

A2: Learning strategies and techniques used to design activities and learning outcomes reflect solid, well-researched theories of motivation. This is evident in learning activities, journals, and portfolios.

A3: Class activities, projects, lesson plans, and actual teaching demonstrate the application of developmentally appropriate principles, and they attend to the intellectual, social, emotional, and physical abilities of students. The interactive influence and impact of these principles on student learning are also documented.

A4: Sensitivity and respect for all facets of diversity and exceptionality are evident in candidates’ lesson plans and in candidate/student interactions.

B. Candidates use a thorough knowledge of current research-based education theory and child/adolescent development to construct and demonstrate mastery of multiple teaching strategies and appropriate methods.

B1: The learning strategies outlined in lesson plans and used in classes reflect a learner-centered, constructivist orientation that emphasizes student
engagement in activities that focus on learning outcomes. Knowledge of multiple learning strategies and their appropriate uses to increase learning is evident in teaching activities and portfolios.

B2: Candidates cite and provide research documentation for strategies and methods used in classes, activities, lesson plans, portfolios, and field experiences.

B3: Candidates document activities, planning, and instruction that reflect developmentally-appropriate practices with specific attention to the needs of identified students.

B4: Candidates know how to plan and implement classroom management strategies that result in positive student conduct, cooperation, and interest. This is documented in class projects, portfolios, and student teaching activities.

B5: Candidates reflectively evaluate their inclusion of constructivist teaching strategies in class activities, field experiences, and lesson plans. This is documented throughout their college careers in logs, journals, activities, and portfolios.

B6: Lesson plans document (a) clear alignment with school curriculum and state and national frameworks and standards, (b) integrated use of technology, and (c) adaptations required to teach diverse student populations.

C: Candidates document and demonstrate mastery of multiple techniques of quantitative and qualitative assessment in their content disciplines.

C1: Lesson plans and class activities include authentic assessments (formative and summative) that are directly aligned to the objectives of each lesson and unit. These lesson objectives address content, knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

C2: Lesson plans, teaching logs, portfolios, and student teaching activities document the use of assessment results to increase student learning.

C3: Candidates use the results of assessment to provide corrective assistance to each student. These results are also used to develop plans and activities that maximize learning for all students in a class. Candidates’ knowledge of students is evident in their re-teaching activities and in their reflective journals.
**Objective 1.3: Candidates demonstrate effective communication skills: reading, writing, speaking, listening.**

A: Candidates demonstrate competence in reading, writing, speaking, and listening both in and out of the classroom. This is demonstrated in class activities and assignments, in activities and interactions with faculty, peers and students, and in meeting College writing requirements.

B: Candidates use electronic technology to enhance their communication, and they demonstrate their communication skills in class activities, field experiences, reflective logs, portfolios, lesson and unit plans, and student teaching activities.

**Objective 1.4: Candidates demonstrate the ability to critically analyze, synthesize and apply liberal arts content knowledge, professional education knowledge, and effective communication skills.**

A: Candidates demonstrate knowledge of the current context of education and the current expectations of professional educators.

A1: Candidates demonstrate knowledge of the social and historical foundations of education.

A2: Journals and interviews document candidates’ understanding of (a) current New York State and national standards and assessments, (b) legal and policy-making issues, and (c) the role of faculty members, schools, communities, unions, parent-teacher organizations, and boards of education in making education policy.

A3: Candidates create and maintain current resumes and college placement folders, and they participate in job opportunity networks. They also develop interviewing skills that include effective use of their exit portfolios.

B: Candidates maintain an ever-expanding, dynamic grasp of current research, learning theory, and teaching practice.

B1: Candidates are members of appropriate educational and/or content area professional organizations. In journals and planning materials, they document their use of information and research found in professional publications.

B2: In their reflective journals, lesson plans, and portfolios, candidates include citations of professional conferences and workshops they have attended and descriptions and applications of information they use in their teaching.
Educational Professionals Committed to Teaching and Counseling Practices Grounded in Current Theory and Research

It is our goal to ensure that all SUNY Division of Education candidates demonstrate and document best professional practices, whether as teachers or counselors. As candidates become professionals, they apply their knowledge and understanding of content, research-based theories, pedagogy, assessment, and human development. They create positive learning experiences within and across disciplines (Crocker & Wolfe, 2001). To make informed decisions, they engage in continuous observation, assessment, decision-making, and reflection. They recognize and consider the characteristics of individual students, the standards of national, state, and local associations, appropriate uses of technology, and the many variables that make learning communities unique. They continually evaluate their own beliefs and assumptions and the effects of their choices and actions on learners, lesson and unit plans, and student teaching and counseling practica.

As the Division’s teacher and counselor education candidates become exemplars of best professional practices, they learn to synthesize theory and practice. They become self-directed, lifelong learners. They design and implement effective lessons and group sessions. They use a variety of formal and informal assessment strategies, and they employ the resulting data to inform professional practice. They can apply appropriate management techniques in a variety of school settings. They know how to collaborate with other staff members, families, and personnel in non-school organizations. They are reflective learners who can apply results to inform their professional practice. They are knowledgeable about current educational research, and they implement appropriate changes based on that research. And they can articulate a personal educational philosophy and formulate personal opinions on relevant educational and social issues.

The instructional objectives and performance elements related to the theme Educational Professionals Committed to Teaching and Counseling Practices Grounded in Current Theory and Research include the following:

**Objective 2.1: Candidates demonstrate the ability to design and implement effective lessons.**

A: Candidates create portfolios throughout their college careers that contain evidence of solid understanding and use of a variety of constructivist teaching and learning techniques, including those that address diversity and exceptionality. In assignments, lesson and unit plans, student teaching activities, and counseling practica, candidates document the use of a wide variety of materials, teaching or counseling methods, and instructional or counseling strategies based on constructivist philosophies.

B: Candidates critically reflect on self, learning, classes, planning, and teaching or counseling activities. They provide evidence of that reflective thinking through changes in their professional personal plans, coursework, lesson and unit plans, student teaching, and counseling practica. Their reflections and changes
are tied to new understandings and theories, the characteristics of students, especially those with exceptionalities, assessments of student learning, and integration of technology.

C: Candidates understand and address national and state standards for teachers and counselors. They also use various instructional designs, strategies to integrate higher order thinking skills into the curriculum, methods to integrate curricular areas, and active constructivist approaches to teaching and learning. Class projects, journals, lesson and unit plans, case analyses, student teaching activities, and counseling practica provide evidence of these understandings and abilities among candidates.

D: Candidates demonstrate knowledge of content and general core knowledge (See Theme 1.0), and they have plans, exit portfolios, and GPAs that evidence high standards and movement to mastery of content.

E: Candidates demonstrate knowledge and skills to use information technologies in their own learning and in the learning designed for students. Coursework, lesson and unit plans, student teaching activities, counseling practica logs, and exit portfolios evidence this knowledge and ability.

F: Candidates’ class activities, projects, lesson plans, and field experiences, including student teaching and counseling practica, consistently include activities and reflections on issues of diversity, respect for individual differences, and efforts to enhance learning for diverse students.

**Objective 2.2:** Candidates demonstrate the ability to use various formal and informal assessment strategies and apply the resulting data to inform their professional practice.

A: Candidates are reflective practitioners who use assessment techniques to analyze their own characteristics and needs as learners.

B: Candidates understand and use both formal and informal assessment techniques in their work with students, and this understanding and use is demonstrated in class projects, assignments, lesson and unit plans, teaching and counseling activities, and exit portfolios.

C: Candidates use student assessment data to improve practice.

**Objective 2.3:** Candidates demonstrate the ability to use appropriate management techniques in a variety of school settings.

A: During the 100 hours of early field experiences, undergraduate teacher education candidates observe and reflect on the culture of classrooms, the styles of teachers, and organizational and management systems. Graduate candidates in teacher and counselor education complete clinical and practica
experiences in which they practice managing their own respective programs.

B: Candidates complete courses in child and adolescent development and in learning and cognition, where emphasis is placed on the relationships between individual learners and different learning environments.

C: Candidates demonstrate their ability to use appropriate organizational and management systems in student teaching, counseling practica, and other clinical experiences.

**Objective 2.4: Candidates demonstrate the ability to collaborate with staff, families, and non-school based organizations.**

A: Candidates complete a variety of projects that require them to collaborate with peers and with host teachers and counselors.

B: In individual courses, student teaching, and counseling practica, candidates interview families, teachers, school counselors, principals, and other school employees. In addition, they learn how schools function in a community context by attending school board meetings and participating in other school functions.

**Objective 2.5: Candidates demonstrate the ability to be reflective learners and apply the results to inform their professional practice.**

A: Throughout their early field experiences, candidates reflect on the relationships between their observations and the theories and concepts explored in courses related to these field experiences. These reflections recorded and discussed in portfolios and in candidacy applications.

B: Candidates develop and articulate a personal philosophy of education that demonstrates their understanding of diverse philosophies of education, the history of American education, and current research. The beliefs expressed in these philosophic statements are supported by personal and professional activities, and candidates include a summative description of their personal philosophy in their exit portfolios.

C: During student teaching and counseling practica, candidates reflect on daily practice, and they document their growth in journals and in subsequent lessons and activities.

**Objective 2.6: Candidates demonstrate knowledge about current educational research to implement appropriate changes based on that research.**

A: In their units, lesson plans, journals, projects, and teaching and counseling activities, candidates document their ability to apply knowledge of current educational and psychological theories, research, and practice.
B: Candidates demonstrate familiarity with cutting-edge, sometimes controversial, educational issues and practices. In their coursework, journals, and portfolios, they provide evidence of both their knowledge of current issues and their ability to deal with those issues.

C: In their early field experiences, candidates link content knowledge, constructivist teaching and learning strategies, and the world of practice. These linkages are described and documented in class projects, logs, journals, and exit portfolios.

D: Candidates participate in planned, sequential field experiences that culminate in student teaching or a counseling practicum. There is evidence in their coursework, journals, reflective activities, lesson and unit plans, student teaching, and counseling practica that these field experiences are used to integrate their knowledge of content and theory into their world of practice.

E: Candidates in counselor education clinical courses keep personal insight logs.

F: Candidates in graduate teacher education programs complete and reflect on action research projects that blend professional practice with current research.

Objective 2.7: Candidates demonstrate a personal educational philosophy and are able to develop and express personal opinions on relevant educational and social issues.

A: Candidates develop a personal philosophy of education in their first course, and they revise and finalize this statement of philosophy in their exit portfolio.

B: In a number of courses in their programs, candidates are challenged to take stands on controversial issues in education.

Educational Professionals Who Respect Diversity and are Committed to Empowerment, Equity, Inclusion and Social Justice

Commitment to Empowerment

Effective educational professionals are leaders who create environments of shared responsibility in communities of learners (Chalker, 1998; Larsen, 1998; Sergiovanni, 1996). These communities of learners include students, parents, teachers, administrators, and others, and the entire community of learners is committed to ensuring that all students learn and reach their fullest potential. Effective educational professionals who are committed to such empowerment believe, value, and actively participate in service to both their educational communities and their larger communities (Eisner, 1998; Schlechty, 1997).

Effective educational professionals are also transformative leaders who function as agents of change. They help initiate and sustain progressive decision-making that facilitates necessary organizational changes. For a school to become a center of inquiry, it needs to be a place where teachers are continuously learning through individual and collaborative reflective practice.
Teachers need to believe that they can influence, as well as be influenced by, a school’s professional culture (Henderson, 1996). Teachers who are transformative leaders promote empowerment by establishing social environments that foster principled levels of judgment (Burns, 1978). Such transformative leaders guide others to higher levels of judgment and self-governance; they do not use coercion or control to achieve these goals (Snauwert, 1993).

Effective educational professionals strive to empower each student to become a responsible, self-regulated learner committed to high standards and excellence in learning (Boekaerts, Pintrich & Zeidner, 2000; Pintrich, 2000; Shor, 1996; Zimmerman, 1998). In this context, empowerment is the process by which both candidates and their students become aware of the power dynamics at work in their lives. They develop skills and capacity to gain reasonable control over their own lives, and they exercise this control without infringing upon the rights of others, and support the empowerment of others (McWhirter, 1994). Within a school setting, empowerment occurs when teachers and counselors are facilitators and agents of change who work to create a common vision of excellence in learning (Irwin, 1996).

The instructional objectives and performance elements related to the theme Educational Professionals Committed to Empowerment include the following:

**Objective 3.1: Candidates create empowering educational environments for all learners.**

A: Candidates effectively communicate with various groups of people in a community, and these experiences develop their active listening, negotiation, and conflict resolution skills. These improved skills are documented in reflective activities and reports of service projects.

B: Candidates demonstrate trust, commitment, and the ability to be part of a team that creates and upholds a vision of learning that honors each student and enables him or her to reach high standards.

C: Candidates design classroom management systems, create classroom environments, and develop instructional activities that enhance learning for all students and that enable them to feel safe, take risks, and express opposing ideas. These skills are documented in candidates’ class activities, projects, field experiences, student teaching, and counseling practica.

D: Candidates take risks in their own learning, and they try new styles and methods of teaching that or prior experiences. This experimentation is documented in reflective activities, logs, and portfolios.

E: Candidates demonstrate their ability to use needs assessments when developing instructional plans and activities, and they document how their plans and activities reflect the results of these needs assessments.

F: Candidates design and enhance their own learning through dialogue with instructors, and they base future learning activities on self-assessments and high standards.
G: Candidates design and teach in ways that engage students, enhance learning, and promote accountability for each student's learning.

**Objective 3.2: Candidates know and adhere to the New York State Code of Ethics for educators to guide their practice and interactions with students, staff, community, families and peers.**

A: Candidates know how to use contacts with private and public social and school agencies (e.g. guidance, library, health, welfare, home, nutrition, etc.) to facilitate learning and meet students’ needs. This ability is documented in various ways, including case studies.

B: Candidates demonstrate their ability to listen to students, and this skill is documented in projects, lesson plans, and teaching activities.

C: Candidates play constructive roles in IEP meetings and parent/teacher conferences, and their skills are documented in methods courses and student teaching.

D: In their work with families and community members, candidates establish trust, and they respect confidentiality in their oral and written reports of these activities.

E: Candidates know how to enlist community support to enhance learning activities (e.g., grant writing, donations of technology, gifts for projects, and sharing of expertise).

F: In courses, projects, student teaching, and counseling practica, candidates demonstrate a level of respect for parents and guardians that facilitates full engagement of the parents or guardians in their child’s development.

G: Candidates can articulate how the New York State Code of Ethics impacts the role of a teacher and the preparation of lesson plans.

**Objective 3.3: Candidates demonstrate the understanding that knowledge and skills are empowering for themselves and their students.**

A: Candidates recognize that change (including change in self) is an on-going educational phenomena, and they have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to deal with it. These are documented in candidates’ projects and classes.

B: Candidates are advocates for children and adolescents. This is documented in projects and activities incorporated in service hours, student organizations, and classes.

C: Candidates model levels of self concept, confidence, and integrity rooted in self-knowledge, authentic accomplishments, and actions. These are documented in personal professional plans, interviews, and portfolios.
D: Candidates can identify learning deficiencies and develop specific strategies to address them.

E: Candidates know how to deal with change and achieve standards that promote their own well-being and health. This ability is reflected in their personal professional plans.

F: Candidates understand and know how to communicate effectively with professional agencies that support child/adolescent development, learning, and students' well-being. To develop this knowledge and skill, teacher education candidates attend meetings of school boards, Parent-Teacher Organizations, and other professional groups. School counseling candidates shadow practicing school counselors, and, during their practica, they work closely with non-school agencies, so that they can make appropriate referrals and identify support services for students and families.

Commitment to Respect for Diversity

Diversity in an educational context goes beyond regional, geographic, ethnic, and racial distinctions. It also includes differences in language, religion, socioeconomic status, gender, sexual orientation, and age, as well as differences in physical, mental, and emotional exceptionalities (Fu & Stremmel, 1998). Effective educational professionals in the 21st century are global citizens who understand the strengths and values that bind us together as Americans (King, Hollins, & Hayman, 1997; Vogt, 1997). They know, understand, and respect, not only their own histories, cultures, and backgrounds, but also those of others in their classrooms, schools, and communities. Effective educational professionals communicate with and teach each of their students (Dunn, 1995; Fu & Stremmel, 1998). They create learning environments that respect and reflect different cultures (Delpit, 1995; Gerston & Jimenez, 1998; Hong, Morris, Chiu & Benet-Martinez, 2000), while, at the same time, integrating the resources of their communities into the daily lives of their classrooms (Banks, 1997; Martin, 1995). They understand and use their students' strengths, including the widest definition of diversity, as valuable, positive learning tools to enrich and expand the lives of all students (Lipsky & Gartner, 1997; Sleeter & McLaren, 1995).

The instructional objectives and performance elements related to the theme Educational Professionals Committed to Diversity include the following:

Objective 3.4: Candidates demonstrate knowledge of and respect for diversity.

A: Candidates understand their own history, culture, and background.

A1: In their coursework, activities, and portfolios, candidates demonstrate an understanding of the values and strengths of American culture.

A2: In an autobiographical essay in their portfolios, candidates demonstrate respect for their own families, histories, and cultures.
A3: In personal insight logs, counselor education candidates reflect on the relevance of their own personal histories to counseling practices.

B: Candidates understand diversity.

B1: In their research, class activities, and portfolios, candidates document their understanding and respect for the diverse cultures in a global society.

B2: Candidates are proficient in a language other than English.

B3: In their coursework, class activities, journals, and portfolios, candidates document their understanding of diversity, including ethnicity, race, language, religion, socioeconomic status, gender, sexual orientation, age, regional/geographical background, and exceptionalities.

B4: In their coursework, projects, and portfolios, candidates document both understanding of different cultures (including their ability to compare and contrast those cultures) and experiences in cultures or environments different from their own.

C: In projects and journals, candidates document their ability to anticipate the impact of cultural attitudes, characteristics, and beliefs on learning.

D: In their class work and projects, candidates identify and assess in knowledgeable and empathetic ways the impact of poverty on learning (including rural poverty).

E: In their classroom activities (including the use of video tapes), candidates document their mastery of cross-cultural and interpersonal communication skills.

F: In classroom activities (including simulations and video tapes), candidates demonstrate their knowledge that failure to understand diversity can sometimes lead to conflict, and they also demonstrate effective conflict resolution and listening skills.

**Objective 3.5:** Candidates demonstrate ability to design and/or adapt instructional opportunities to diverse populations of learners.

A: In class activities, lesson plans, and student teaching, candidates document their ability to present multiple interpretations of historical and current events that involve inclusion or exclusion of least-represented groups.

B: In class activities, projects, and portfolios, candidates document both their understanding of how diversity influences families and an ability to communicate effectively with parents and families during home visits,
conferences, and formal and informal dialogue.

C: In class activities, projects, and portfolios, candidates document their understanding of ESL and language acquisition strategies for non-English speaking students in their classes.

D: In class activities, lesson plans, and observations of teaching, candidates document effective classroom management practices, including the use of cooperative learning and peer tutoring strategies that take advantage of the strengths and diversity of students.

Commitment to Social Justice

The concept of social justice mandates that both teacher education and counselor education candidates will provide a foundation from which students “will see themselves as actors in the world, not just things acted upon” (Peters, 1999). To achieve this goal, teacher and counselor education candidates complete a curriculum and develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that will enable their students to become critical observers of the world who can take actions to increase social equity and justice.

The editors of Rethinking Our Classrooms, Teaching for Equity and Justice (Bigelow, B., L. Christensen, S. Karp, B. Miner & B. Peterson (1999) outline a curriculum and identify classroom practices that provide a framework for this social justice perspective on teaching and learning. This framework includes having both candidates and their students “probes the ways their lives connect to the broader society and are often limited by that society,” and the framework poses critical questions like, “Who makes decisions and who is left out? Who benefits and who suffers?” Students come to understand “why some differences translate into access to wealth and power, while others become a source of discrimination and injustice.” In addition, they participate in making real world decisions and changes, and they develop a vision of a “just society.”

Incorporating a social justice perspective in teaching and learning affects both candidates and their students, “enabling students to improve their thinking, value analysis, decision-making, and social action skills, enabling students to improve their data-gathering skills, helping students develop a sense of political efficacy, and helping students improve their skills to work in groups” (Banks, 2003, p. 241).

The instructional objectives and performance elements related to the theme Educational Professionals Committed to Social Justice include the following:

Objective 3.6: Candidates demonstrate knowledge of social justice issues and advocacy strategies

A: In their teaching activities, journals, and portfolios, candidates document their awareness of self (as both a professional educator and a citizen) and their understanding of social justice.
B: Candidates demonstrate their awareness that treating children fairly requires meeting their individual needs.

C: Candidates document their commitment to defend the right of all students to an appropriate education.

D: Candidates demonstrate attitudes toward individuals that are both caring and sensitive to social injustice and its influence on student learning.

E: Candidates understand and can evaluate varied approaches to multicultural reform, and they understand that social action is the most advanced approach to multicultural reform.

F: Candidates demonstrate their understanding that becoming a teacher or school counselor requires them to become advocates for children and their families, both in schools and in communities.

Conclusion

Faculty and candidates in the SUNY Oneonta Division of Education strive to integrate desired candidate knowledge, skills, and dispositions in general courses, content courses, and professional education programs. The beliefs, principles, themes, and objectives defined in this Conceptual Framework define the essential competencies for both prospective and practicing teachers and counselors. They also provide coherence for each program’s courses and experiences, and they ensure that these courses and experiences are clearly articulated, systematically delivered, and consistently assessed.

Taken together, the themes, related instructional objectives, and performance elements defined in the Division’s Conceptual Framework and in the courses and experiences incorporated in programs can be viewed as a tapestry that embraces teaching and counseling, elementary and secondary education, content and pedagogy, research and practice, and both undergraduate and graduate preparation. This tapestry is designed to produce Educational Professionals Committed to Excellence—that is, educational professionals who are committed to:

- **Academic excellence**
- **Best professional practices in teaching and counseling**
- **Empowerment, respect for diversity, and social justice.**

From undergraduate through graduate study, this vision is predicated on the assumption that excellent service from school professionals will prepare future citizens who will serve their communities and themselves most effectively, most honestly, and with the greatest possibilities for sustained growth and prosperity.

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