Shawnee State University

Department of Teacher Education

Conceptual Framework

"Teacher as learner-centered,

inquiring professional"

1.   The Vision of Teacher as Learner-Centered, Inquiring Professional

The Department of Teacher Education holds primary responsibility within

Shawnee State University for the preparation of teachers. In conjunction with other

divisions of the College of Arts and Sciences, the Department offers a slate of licensure

programs to prepare entry-level teacher candidates for teaching students in grades pre-

kindergarten through twelve.   The teacher education faculty and staff share a

commitment to quality programs that will meet the challenges facing educators in the

twenty-first century.   To that end, a vision has been collectively constructed that

Shawnee State University prepares teachers as **learner-centered, inquiring**

professionals.

The notion of **learner-centered** supports a belief that the effectiveness of teacher

preparation should be demonstrated through the capacity outcomes of its graduates, their

knowledge and ability to teach (NCATE, 1998). This effectiveness can be further

translated in P-12 classrooms, demonstrated by the learning outcome of the school-age learners. Good teaching, therefore, should be judged through the perspective of learners engaged in the process of learning. That is, an effective teacher must 1) teach for understanding -- to teach in ways that help learners understand ideas and perform proficiently; and 2) teach for diversity -- to teach in ways that help diverse learners find productive paths to knowledge so they also learn to live constructively together (Darling-Hammond, 1997). This learner-centered notion culminates in the moral purpose of teaching -- that the ultimate commitment of education professionals is to the welfare of all students (Goodlad, Soder & Sirotnik, 1990; Sockett, 1993), in their physical, moral, and intellectual growth.

The notion of teachers as **inquiring professional** underscores the belief of preparing teacher as decision-makers and problem solvers. Thus, learning to teach is approached as a matter of practice-based inquiry. The guiding rationale for the program at Shawnee State University is to dispose the teacher candidate to continually and systematically plan for, inquire into, and reflect upon practice, through all domains of the curriculum, and extend to life-long learning. This is a vision of teaching that assumes teachers continue to develop cognitively, technically, and socially over time. The emphasis is on building the capacity of teacher candidates by providing them the necessary knowledge, skills, and dispositions to critically inquire into their practice, right from the beginning. Teacher candidates can hardly be fully prepared in their initial teacher preparations but much can be done in terms of how they will be disposed to further learning and development.

In order to translate the learner-centered, inquiring professional vision into a workable framework to guide the SSU program curriculum, a model of action research has been employed. This model is characterized by four steps which link action into a cycle and the cycle into a process of reflectivity: planning (to improve practice through action), acting (to implement the plan), observing (to identify the effects of action in the context), and reflecting (to use the effects as a basis for future planning and subsequent action through a succession of cycles).

Planning

Reflecting   **Acting**

Observing
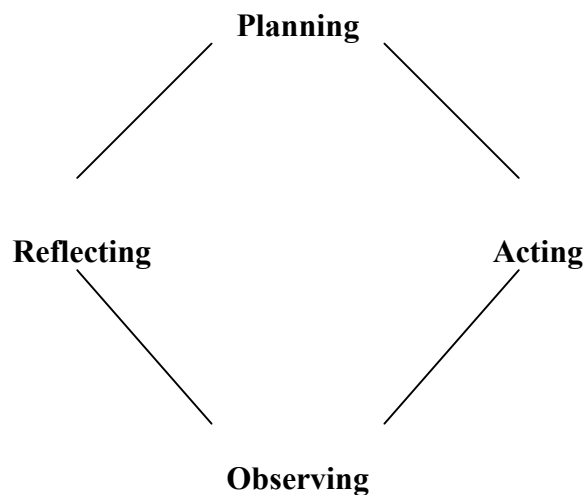
(Figure 1)

The teacher candidates practice the inquiry model during their entire learning experience at Shawnee State University, individually and in collaboration with peers, cooperating teachers, and professors. Through a number of means including written journals, critical observation, clinical teaching, case analysis, and teacher work sample, the teacher candidates examine issues that commonly arise in the authentic classroom settings. The inquiry process strengthens the skills and dispositions needed by the

learner-centered teachers to understand the teaching-learning process, identify what is going on with the learners, and assess the outcome of their learning. More importantly, using the inquiry model to practice early in the program establishes a valuable life-long learning attitude that is modeled, as well as practiced and, therefore, perpetuated by the teacher candidate (Jackson, Boostrom, & Hansen, 1993).

2.   Rationale of the Vision

The vision of "learner-centered, inquiring professional" reflects multiple orientations to both the nature of knowledge and knowing, and to teaching and learning. Prevalent constraints to the full education of teachers have been an over-reliance on one epistemological orientation—namely behavioristic psychology orientation--or an unplanned random and often implicit incorporation of several. The former cannot begin to do justice to the complex, highly social and interpersonal nature of schools, teaching and learning, and the latter usually contributes to confusion on the part of those desiring to become teachers.

The **competency** orientations build on the foundation of a positivistic epistemology and behavioristic psychology. It emphasizes the development of discrete and observable skills of teaching that can be taught and assessed separately, as they are related to student learning. The **personalistic/developmental** orientation is derived from perceptual and developmental psychology. It advocates a teacher education program highly responsive to the self-perceived needs and concerns of prospective teachers. It emphasizes that knowledge is shared and negotiated between parties but ultimately personal. Thus, the curriculum focus is guided by the belief that "We teach who we are," or, "Let personal preferences lead learning." The **academic** orientation traces its

philosophical roots in the origin of the Western intellectual tradition. It emphasizes the knowledge base in the core disciplines of the liberal arts and sciences in teacher education. Teachers are expected to be scholars in their content areas. The **social reconstructionist** orientation is derived from a phenomenological epistemology. It addresses the cultural, social and linguistic dimensions of how one comes to know. Beliefs and intentions of teachers and students are given priority here as the product of constructivist thinking, thus are uncertain and evolving. Knowledge is the result of students' interactions with their peer learners and learning environment, rather than something students passively receive from teachers. Finally, the **critical theory** orientation is derived from those who are concerned with social justice, morality, and ethics. It demands that the teacher attend to the mission of schools in addressing societal-global inequities and injustices and that they continually reflect on the moral and ethical dimensions of their teaching (Crow-Maienza, 1996; Richardson, 1996; Doyle, 1990; Shulman, 1986).

While each of these above orientations to teacher education is provocative, reinforcing, and overlapping, by no means are they mutually exclusive. The vision of learner-centered, inquiring professional allows a synthesis of elements from various orientations in the development of the SSU teacher education programs. The faculty draw strengths from each orientation to determine the key domains of teacher capacity -- knowledge, skills, and dispositions -- that our teacher candidates are expected to possess, and they model the best practices of teaching supported by research in the field of education.

3.   Five Key Domains of Teacher Capacity for the Learner-Centered, Inquiring Professionals

   The knowledge base for all of the SSU teacher education programs is defined as **five** constituent domains of **teacher capacity**, including: 1) domain of general studies and discipline areas; 2) domain of the diverse learner and learning process; 3) domain of learning contexts and environments; 4) domain of effective teaching strategies; and 5) domain of professional development.

   A learner-centered, inquiring teacher must be knowledgeable in the specialized **discipline** area he or she chooses to teach, which is based on a solid grounding of **general studies** expected of an educated person (Shulman, 1987).   That teacher also develops content knowledge pedagogy -- knowledge of how to help others learn the discipline content. Equally importantly, the teacher understands the curriculum alignment within each discipline and the relationships among disciplines. The teacher is capable of connecting, integrating, and synthesizing general knowledge with disciplinary studies to serve the purpose of making the content accessible and meaningful to all students (Crossman, Wilson & Shulman , 1989; Murray & Porter, 1996). That teacher is also capable of integrating subject matter in teaching and using interdisciplinary inquiry as a means to help P-12 students link subject matter knowledge to real world problems.

   The learner-centered, inquiring teacher must be knowledgeable about **diverse learners** and how they engage in the **learning process**, especially if differently from each other. Research in the fields of human brain and intelligence, epistemology, and developmental psychology informs the Shawnee State University programs about how one comes "to know."   The faculty share a belief that learning occurs when students

relate new ideas to their own past experiences or prior knowledge. Learning involves

conceptual change through students' self-instructive and regulative processes (Wang,

1989; Solomon, 1998).   A learner-centered, inquiring teacher reaffirms the place of the

learner as the center of the active-learning process by planning instruction in ways that

enhance this concept of learning (Barnes, 1989; Anderson, 1989). The Shawnee State

University programs stress the ways in which such learning differs within each discipline

area and by each learner. Studies of learning theories and human growth and

development are accompanied by concrete illustrations within each discipline.

The learner-centered, inquiring teacher must welcome and appreciate the

increasing diversity in schools and the society. The teacher understands the impact of

cultural, social, historical, legal, and ethical **contexts** on teaching and learning. The

teacher also understands the relevance of students' family backgrounds and community

influences on learning. Diversity is highly valued, and seen as a strength in fostering a

tolerant and respectful learning community in such contexts. The teacher candidate seeks

communication and collaboration with students, parents, colleagues, and other

professionals, in adapting instruction to meet the learning styles and needs of diverse

learners, inclusive of students with disabilities, cultural and linguistic diverse

backgrounds, gifts and talents, as well as students-at-risk for school success due to other

social factors (Hollins, King & Hayman, 1994).

The learner-centered, inquiring teacher must be knowledgeable and skillful in

teaching strategies, including effective planning, instruction, management, and

assessment and evaluation (Reynolds, 1989; Murray, 1996).   The teacher candidate is

exposed to research findings on effective learning and teaching generated from major

research paradigms which have contributed to the general knowledge in this field. The teacher candidate is encouraged to select from abundant educational resources, including computer technology to enhance learning. Working with the faculty across the university community, the teacher education faculty incorporate communications and technologies throughout the entire teacher education curriculum. The teacher candidate is expected to possess not only "computer literacy," but also the ability to explore the use of modern communications technologies in carrying out their functions and responsibilities as teachers (NCATE Technology Report, 1997).

The learner-centered, inquiring teacher must value and practice reflectivity and inquiry toward the goal of attaining critical competence as a thoughtful professional. The Shawnee State University teacher education programs inculcate a habit of, and develop skills in, life-long learning and **professionalism**. The program promotes thoughtful professionals who are able to analyze their own teaching and use studied and structured forms of reflection to improve their teaching effectiveness. The four-step inquiry model, as elaborated earlier in this document, is used across all the knowledge domains of the curriculum.

4.   Goals for Teacher Candidates at Shawnee State University

Specific goals for teacher candidates are delineated in terms of knowledge, skills, and dispositions within each of the aforesaid capacity domains.

1)   The SSU teacher candidate is well grounded in general studies and the specific discipline area(s).

Knowledge:
- A broad general education essential for an "educated person."
- An in-depth working knowledge in specific discipline area(s).

Skills:
- Enable learners to understand patterns of thinking specific to the discipline(s).

Dispositions:
- Value and practice inclusive orientation to learning.

2)   The SSU teacher candidate understands the nature of human development and learning in working with diverse learners.

Knowledge:
- Principles of human growth and development.
- Epistemological and psychological understanding of human learning.

Skills:
- Communicate challenging expectations according to learner readiness.
- Use multiple instructional strategies responsive to learners' cultural and developmental needs.

Dispositions:
- Demonstrate sensitivity to all learners.
- Support positive learner self-concept by fostering learner success.
- Assist learners in clarifying beliefs, attitudes, and values as well as fostering cognitive development.

3)   The SSU teacher candidate demonstrates sensitivities to learning contexts and environments.

Knowledge:
- Social, political, philosophical, historical, ethical, and legal contexts of teaching and learning in American society.
- Changes in family settings and social contexts and the impact on teaching and learning.

Skills:
- Create and manage safe, fair, and supportive learning environments.
- Communicate and cooperate with parents and other professionals in working with diverse students.

Dispositions:
- Value and advocate communication and collaboration in learning communities.
- Establish empathic, cooperative relationships with and among all learners.

4) The SSU teacher candidate employs effective teaching strategies to ensure the learning outcome.

Knowledge:
- Content pedagogy theories.
- Curriculum alignment within a discipline and across curriculum.

Skills:

Planning
- Develop multiple perspectives by integrating disciplines, learners' interests, and technological resources.
- Select and organize instruction to connect learner experience in and outside the classroom.

Instruction
- Make content comprehensible to learners.
- Guide learners toward constructing knowledge through a variety of experiences.
- Encourage critical and divergent thinking.
- Use instructional time effectively.

Management
- Demonstrate effective classroom management.

Evaluation
- Monitor and evaluate learning through a variety of means.
- Modify instruction based on learning.

Dispositions:
- Be accountable for learning.
- Continuously assess and improve instruction for diverse learners.

5) The SSU teacher candidate practices professionalism.

Knowledge:
- Moral and legal responsibilities of a professional teacher.
- Approaches to reflectivity and inquiry.

Skills:
- Reflect on beliefs and conduct as a professional teacher.
- Participate in professional activities.
- Observe school policies and procedures.

Dispositions:
- Continue to inquire and grow as a professional.
- Model life-long learning.

These goals, derived from the "learner-centered, inquiring professional" vision, serve the University's mission, and are closely correlated to the Ohio Licensure Standards and INTASC Principles for teacher education programs.

Figure 2. Links among the SSU Goals, Ohio 1998 Licensure Standards,

INTASC Principles, and Shawnee State University Mission

Shawnee State Teacher Candidate Goals	Ohio Licensure Standards	INTASC Principles	University Mission
1. The SSU teacher candidate is well grounded in general studies and the specific discipline area(s).	(A) Subject Matter	1. Understand the discipline they teach and how to teach it to students.	A Regional, public Institution Prepare students for the changing needs of business, industry, education, and society through its diversified degree programs
2. The SSU teacher candidate understands the nature of human development and learning in working with diverse learners.	(B) Student Learning (C) Diversity of Learners	2. Know how children learn and develop and can provide learning opportunities that support that development. 3. Understand that students learn differently, and adapt their instruction to diverse learners.	Recognize the importance of knowledge, values, and cultural enrichment
3. The SSU teacher candidate demonstrates sensitivities to learning contexts and environments.	(F) Learning Environment (G) Communication (J) Student Support	5. Create environments that encourage positive social interaction, active learning, and self-motivation. 6. Understand effective communication techniques and use them in the classroom. 10. Foster relationships with colleagues, parents, and community agencies to support students' learning and well-being.	Foster competence in oral and written communication, scientific and quantitative reasoning, and critical analysis/logical thinking
4. The SSU teacher candidate employs effective teaching strategies to ensure the desired learning outcome.	(D) Planning Instruction (E) Instructional Strategies (H) Assessment	4. Use a variety of instructional strategies to encourage critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills. 7. Plan instruction based on knowledge of subject, students, the community and curriculum goals. 8. Use formal and informal assessment strategies to evaluate and insure the continuous development of the learner.	Provide opportunities for continuing personal and professional development, intellectual discovery, and appreciation for the creative and performing arts
5. The SSU teacher candidate practices professionalism.	(I) Professional Development	9. Continually evaluate their own practice and seek opportunities to grow professionally.	

5. <u>Curriculum Structure</u>

In keeping with the Shawnee State University mission as a undergraduate institution, the teacher licensure programs are designed to fit within a four-year time frame. Candidates enrolled in the early childhood, middle childhood, and intervention specialist programs earn a baccalaureate degree in education. Those enrolled in the adolescence to young adult programs, and those in the visual arts program, earn a degree from Arts and Sciences departments.

Each program is composed of four distinctive, yet interrelated, components:

- General Education Program

- Professional Education Core and Related Studies

- Discipline area coursework

- Licensure specific coursework with field/clinical experiences

While each program has its own specific requirements within each curriculum component, all of the programs are designed to operate within this conceptual framework. The program designs comply with the Ohio standards and NCATE approved curriculum guidelines.

It is worth noting here that the development and implementation of education programs at Shawnee State University is ensured by a genuine and continuing **collaboration** among professionals on and beyond the campus. Faculty in Arts and Sciences departments have been involved in designing and reshaping each program from the very beginning. An understanding is shared that the teacher candidate's knowledge in the discipline area is the prime foundation for an effective pedagogy to warrant a positive

impact on student learning. Such an understanding enables each program to maintain a

high intellectual vigor with provision of ample field and clinical experiences, yet is still

manageable for candidates to finish within four years. Collaboration has also been sought

from the teacher candidates, education professionals in the school communities, and outside

professional consultants for program design, implementation, and assessment. Local and

regional partner schools have been identified to provide professional development

experiences for both preservice and inservice teachers.   An advisory council, composed of

the Teacher Education Department faculty and staff, faculty in Arts and Sciences,

practicing teachers, school administrators, and representatives from the local communities,

provides valuable input to the Shawnee State University teacher preparation through regular

meetings and involvement in special program-related activities.

6.   Assessment and Evaluation

The Department of Teacher Education uses multiple measures to systematically assess

and evaluate its candidates, programs, and the Department operations. The emphasis of

assessment of evaluation at the program and Department levels is decidedly on

candidates' performance in the five capacity domains and goals, as clarified in the

previous section. While candidates' performance is continuously monitored and assessed

throughout the program, four main levels of evaluation are identified as:

1.   Admission to the Department of Teacher Education

2.   Admission to the teaching licensure program

3.   Admission to student teaching

4.   Application for initial teaching licensure

At each level of evaluation, the criteria and procedures are identified and communicated clearly to the candidates; specific evaluation areas are identified (What), instruments developed (How), and assessors' responsibilities allocated (Who). The overview of the Candidate assessment is as follows:

Figure 3. Teacher Education Candidate Assessment

What is assessed?	**General studies & Discipline area(s)**	**Diverse learner & learning**	**Learning contexts & environments**	**Effective teaching strategies**	**Professionalism**

How is it assessed?	Course grade
	University
	    placement tests
	Academic Profile
	    tests
	Praxis I, II
	    (Specialty area)
		Reflective writing
		Simulation
		Clinical observation
		Portfolio entry
		Praxis II (PLT)
			Reflective writing
			Simulation
			Clinical observation
			Portfolio entry
			Praxis II (PLT)
				Reflective writing
				Simulation
				Clinical observation
				Lesson plan
				Portfolio entry
				Video of teaching
				Praxis II (PLT)
					Reflective writing
					Clinical observation
					Portfolio entry
					Video of teaching
					Conference
					Lesson plan
					Praxis II (PLT)

When is it assessed?	Level I, II, III*	Level I, II, III	Level I, II, III	Level II, III, IV	Level II, III, IV
Who is responsible?	A & S faculty DTE faculty	A & S faculty DTE faculty	DTE faculty Cooperating teacher	A & S faculty DTE faculty Cooperating teacher	A & S faculty DTE faculty Cooperating teacher

*Level I: Admission to Teacher Education
Level II: Admission to Specific Licensure Program
Level III: Admission to Student Teaching
Level IV: Recommendation for Licensure

In addition to candidates' assessment, the Department collects, compiles, and analyzes data obtained through a number of other **internal** and **external** assessment variables, to systematically evaluate the overall quality of program offerings and the Department overall operations to seek continuous improvement.

Figure 4.   Teacher Education Program and Unit Operation Assessment Variables

Internal Evaluations	External Evaluations
1. Instruction Evaluation -- Quarterly. Students' anonymous evaluation of faculty instruction using an institutional form. 2. Faculty Self-Evaluation and Dean/Chair Evaluation -- Annually. Areas of evaluation including teaching, scholarship, and service. 3. Incoming Student Survey -- Quarterly. A written survey given to all EDUC 115 students at the beginning of each quarter. 4. Student Teaching Experience Survey – Quarterly. A written survey given to all student teachers at the end of their student teaching experience. 5. Teacher Education Portfolio -- Periodically. Required for all students pursuing a license throughout the program. 6. SSU Academic Program Review – Every five to ten years. A comprehensive program review by the University. 7. EPCC Review – As needed. The University Educational Policy and Curriculum Committee authorization of program/course change proposals by departments.	1. Graduate Follow-up Survey -- Annually. A written survey mailed to all graduates of the previous year. 2. Cooperating Teacher Survey – Quarterly. A written survey mailed to cooperating teachers who have supervised student teachers each quarter. 3. Teacher Education Advisory Council Review – Quarterly. Providing different perspectives from the Council's diversified membership. 4. Ohio Department of Education Review – Every five years. Comprehensive program review by a joint team of ODE and NCATE. 5. North Central Review – Up to ten year cycle. Comprehensive review of the University operation. 6. Title II Report – Annually. A report with graduate and program data to ODE according to the federal and ODE guidelines.

7.   <u>Guidelines/Standards Authorities Referenced in the Conceptual Framework:</u>

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8.   <u>Research Referenced for the Conceptual Framework</u>:

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