



UNC CHARLOTTE

CATO COLLEGE *of* EDUCATION

## Professional Educators:

Advancing Educational Equity through Excellence and Engagement

The Conceptual Framework for Professional Education Programs at UNC Charlotte, 4th Edition, 2017



### College Mission and Vision Statement

The mission of the Cato College of Education at UNC Charlotte is to prepare highly effective and ethical professionals who have a positive impact on children, youth, families, communities, and schools and who are successful in urban and other diverse settings. This mission is accomplished through teaching, research, and community engagement that lead to improved practice and by working in partnership with schools, communities, and university colleagues.

The vision of the Cato College of Education is to be a leader in educational equity through excellence and engagement.



**The Conceptual Framework for Professional Education Programs at UNC  
Charlotte**

**4<sup>th</sup> Edition, 2017**

**The 2016-2017 Conceptual Framework Committee**

Dr. Drew Polly, Associate Professor, Elementary Education, co-chair  
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In partnership with the UNC Charlotte Professional Education Council and the P-12 Advisory Board.

# **Professional Educators: Advancing Educational Equity through Excellence and Engagement**

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## **Cato College of Education Conceptual Framework (2017)**

The vision of the Cato College of Education is to be a leader in educational equity through excellence and engagement by a mission of preparing highly effective and ethical professionals who have a positive impact on children, youth, families, communities, and schools and who are successful in urban and other diverse settings. To succeed in this mission, UNC Charlotte professional education programs are designed to prepare candidates who accept professional responsibilities, exhibit sound dispositions, focus on learners and learning, and demonstrate effective pedagogy. Professional education programs at UNC Charlotte include preparation programs for teachers, administrators, counselors, and child and family development professionals at undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral levels. While known as the urban research institution, UNC Charlotte is situated in an expanding community that includes urban, suburban and rural areas.

### **Preface**

#### **The Development of the Conceptual Framework, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition**

The 4<sup>th</sup> edition of the Conceptual Framework for Professional Education Programs at in the Cato College of Education at UNC Charlotte, *Professional Educators: Advancing Educational Equity through Excellence and Engagement*, builds on and expands the shared vision reflected in the 1998, 2004, and 2011 editions of the Conceptual Framework. Supported by an updated knowledge base of educational research, this new addition encompasses the professional judgments of education faculty, the Professional Education Council, and public school partners. The proficiencies that all candidates should exhibit upon completion of a professional education program at UNC Charlotte are presented in the table that follows.



## Professional Educators: Advancing Educational Equity through Excellence and Engagement

### Professional Responsibilities

**Ethics** – Candidates consistently demonstrate and practice high ethical standards

**Professional Identity & Continuous Growth** – Candidates participate in continuous practice opportunities with reflection and in high-quality learning experiences that enable them to attain a professional identity

**Leadership** – Candidates embrace the inherent commitment to leadership implicit in their practice. They fulfill their responsibilities and leverage their leadership role in productive ways

**Collaboration** – Candidates are committed to consensus-building, coalition-forming, and agenda framing strategies and collaborate with professionals from other disciplines

**Policies, Laws, Standards & Issues** – Candidates are both competent and engaged in the understanding and development of educational policy and law, analyze and incorporate standards into practice and identify and consider societal issues that impact education and practice

### Dispositions

**Advocacy** – Candidates are prepared to advocate on behalf of others for services that support the social, emotional, physical, educational, behavioral, and basic needs of students, families, and colleagues

**Self-Awareness** – Candidates have deep knowledge of self in order to self-regulate their teaching, leadership, counseling and/or the learning processes. They understand oneself in relation to others

**Reflective Practice** – Candidates critically and thoughtfully examine their practice for the purpose of continuous improvement

**Social Justice** – Candidates actively engage in the continual process of personal vision-building, inquiry, and collaboration. Candidates use critical inquiry to establish meaningful and relevant changes in pedagogical practices

### Learners and Learning

**Positive Impact & Accountability** – Candidates demonstrate a belief that all individuals can learn as well as an understanding that they have a positive impact on learning and development

**Cultural Competence & Culturally Sustaining Practice: Responsiveness to Diverse Learners** – Candidates design and provide inclusive programs and services and establish respectful learning environments that respond to the needs of all learners, clients, and families

**21<sup>st</sup> Century Literacies, Competencies & Character Qualities** – Candidates demonstrate skills in 21st Century literacies (literacy, numeracy, citizenship, digital, and media); competencies (critical thinking, creativity, collaboration); and character qualities (curiosity, initiative, persistence, resilience, adaptability, leadership)

### Effective Pedagogy

**Specialty Area Knowledge** – Candidates complete rigorous specialty area training in their related fields and have a thorough knowledge base in their disciplines

**Pedagogical Knowledge** – Candidates understand and demonstrate methods of effective teaching as well as research, counseling and leadership strategies

**Research-Based Practice** – Candidates apply research-based strategies and processes while planning, implementing, and evaluating learners

**Research Skills** – Candidates understand and effectively use methodologically sound and useful research practices and evaluation skills

### **The 12 themes of professional development (1988).**

The Conceptual Framework for Professional Education Programs at UNC Charlotte has evolved over the last 23 years. UNC Charlotte professional education programs received initial NCATE approval in 1984, followed by an NCATE accreditation visit in 1989. At that time, the conceptual framework was defined in terms of *twelve themes or domains of professional development*. Those twelve themes were as follows:

- Liberal education
- Inquiry skills
- Experiential learning
- Evaluation proficiency
- Ongoing professional development
- Collaboration with other professionals,
- Practitioner effectiveness
- Methodological proficiency
- Specialty area competency
- Curricula decision-making
- Utilization of modern technology and resources
- Human growth and development

While these twelve themes were useful descriptions of our work in our early years, they remained in the background as we developed and revised our programs of study. Our faculty, candidates, and professional community were, for the most part, unaware of these themes and unable to articulate their relationship to our professional education programs. Following extensive program revisions in the early 1990's and an NCATE continuing accreditation visit in 1996, it became clear that it was time to reexamine our conceptual framework and to create and strengthen a shared vision for our professional education programs.

### **Developing Excellent Professionals. 1<sup>st</sup> Edition (1998).**

A faculty team reviewed the twelve themes, examined their relevance to our revised programs, and determined whether there was a common conceptual framework or program-specific frameworks that undergirded our professional education programs. The team examined the INTASC (Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium) standards for beginning teachers, the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards propositions for experienced teachers, and our College's mission, vision, and values. The team then conducted a literature review and generated a model description of the kind of education professional we strive to prepare. The first edition of the conceptual framework was shared with the Teacher Education Council and our community partners and unanimously adopted by the faculty of the College of Education in October 1998. The first edition focused on three kinds of knowledge: conceptual knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and reflective knowledge. In addition, the Conceptual Framework identified two uses of knowledge: leadership and meeting the needs of students. Characteristics of UNC Charlotte teacher education graduates were named:

- Knowledgeable teachers
- Effective practitioners
- Reflective teachers

- Leaders in the teaching profession
- Responsive teachers

### **Rising to the Challenge: Developing Excellent Professionals. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (2004).**

The Conceptual Framework developed in 1998 served us well: programs of study were more coherent, goals were shared among candidates, professional community, faculty and staff, and we were able to articulate clearly the work that we do together and the desired outcomes. In 2004, we undertook a review and revision of *Developing Excellent Professionals* and considered changing accreditation and program approval standards and the dramatic change in the scope and size of the College's mission. For example, the University was reclassified from a Comprehensive University to a Doctoral, Research-Intensive University in 2000. The campus enrollment grew from 16,000 to 19,000 students. The College itself greatly expanded its efforts to prepare and support excellent professionals through the creation of graduate-level pathways to teaching via a new Master of Arts in Teaching (2002). Three new doctoral programs were established: the Ph.D. in Counseling (2001), Ph.D. in Special Education (2001), and the Ph.D. in Curriculum & Instruction (2003). In this time of rapid growth and change, faculty in the College expressed a strong desire for vision building: What are our priorities for excellence? Where will we be in five years? Responses to questions such as these resulted in an expanded list of characteristics of excellent professionals who graduate from UNC Charlotte:

- Knowledgeable
- Effective
- Reflective
- Responsive to Equity/Diversity
- Collaborative
- Leaders

### **Professional Educators Transforming Lives. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (2011).**

As part of the College of Education's 2010-2015 Strategic Plan, an action item was established to "revise the Conceptual Framework." This action was undertaken as part of our commitment to review and evaluate the Conceptual Framework continuously. The need for revision was informed in part by the formal revisioning of all programs to incorporate 21<sup>st</sup> century knowledge and skills in accordance with the policies of the North Carolina State Board of Education. Additionally, UNC Charlotte has participated in robust and rigorous Teacher Quality studies, conducted by the University of North Carolina General Administration, linking student achievement data to teacher preparation portals. Thus, since the 2004 edition, there has been a shift in the knowledge and skills expected of professional educators and an increased emphasis on the impact of professional educators on student learning. This shift is represented in *Professional Educators Transforming Lives*. In this version of the Conceptual Framework, emphasis is placed on preparing professional educators who can transform lives through:

- Knowledge
- Effectiveness
- Commitment

### **Professional Educators: Advancing Educational Equity through Excellence and**

## **Engagement, 4th Edition (2017).**

As part of the College of Education's 2015-2020 Strategic Plan, an action item was established to "review and revise all programs to reflect a new vision for the College of equity through excellence and engagement within the context of our Conceptual Framework." As the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the Conceptual Framework did not align directly with the vision of the Cato College of Education, an updated version was needed. This action was undertaken as part of our commitment to review and evaluate the Conceptual Framework continuously.

The Dean of the Cato College of Education appointed the Conceptual Framework Committee in October 2016, with diverse representation across the professional education programs in the University and across ranks. The Committee was charged with the responsibility of consulting broadly in the development of the Conceptual Framework, including all programs as well as school and community partners.

During the 2016-2017 academic year, a faculty committee representing all departments of the College guided the review and consideration of a revised conceptual framework. Through extensive reading and discussions, the committee developed a preliminary overview to capture the knowledge base and the professional wisdom of the faculty. Key readings and discussions included careful consideration of all professional programs across the college to ensure representation. A comprehensive review of the literature led the faculty to develop the revised conceptual framework which has a strong emphasis on the Cato College of Education's updated vision to be a national leader in educational equity, excellence, and engagement. The emphasis is captured in the title of the fourth edition, *Professional Educators: Advancing Educational Equity through Excellence and Engagement*.

Over several months, evolving drafts of the Conceptual Framework were presented for discussion. Additional suggestions were solicited via departmental meetings, faculty council, and email. Suggestions for improvement were incorporated into the document. The committee conducted validation exercises with members of the University Professional Education Council, composed of faculty and administrator representatives from the College of Arts + Architecture, the Cato College of Education, and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Campus colleagues found the elements included in the document to be sound. They made a few suggestions for improvement. The University Professional Education Council approved the spirit of the draft document and its conceptual underpinnings on February 14, 2017.

A similar validation exercise was conducted with a group of public school partners who were asked to note the strengths of the document and to make recommendations for improvement, including noting any elements that were missing. School partners approved the spirit of the draft document with a few suggestions for improvement on February 16, 2017.

The formal first reading of the document occurred on March 17, 2017 at the Cato College of Education faculty meeting. The final draft was submitted to the faculty via email in late April, and the Conceptual Framework *Professional Educators: Advancing Educational Equity through Excellence and Engagement* received faculty approval on May 15, 2017.



## **Members of the 2016-2017 Conceptual Framework Committee**

Dr. Drew Polly, Professor, Elementary Education, co-chair  
Dr. Shawnee Wakeman, Clinical Associate Professor, Special Education, co-chair  
Dr. Lyndon Abrams, Associate Professor, Counseling  
Dr. Bettie Rae Butler, Associate Professor, Middle, Secondary & K-12 Education  
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## **UNC Charlotte and Its Institutional Mission**

### **University Mission Statement**

UNC Charlotte is North Carolina's urban research university. It leverages its location in the state's largest city to offer internationally competitive programs of research and creative activity, exemplary undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs, and a focused set of community engagement initiatives. UNC Charlotte maintains a particular commitment to addressing the cultural, economic, educational, environmental, health, and social needs of the greater Charlotte region.

#### **In fulfilling this mission, we value:**

- Accessible and affordable quality education that equips students with intellectual and professional skills, ethical principles, and an international perspective.
- A strong foundation in liberal arts and opportunities for experiential education to enhance students' personal and professional growth.
- A robust intellectual environment that values social and cultural diversity, free expression, collegiality, integrity, and mutual respect.
- A safe, diverse, team-oriented, ethically responsible, and respectful workplace environment that develops the professional capacities of our faculty and staff.

#### **To achieve a leadership position in higher education, we will:**

- Implement our Academic Plan and related administrative plans.
- Rigorously assess our progress using benchmarks appropriate to the goals articulated by our programs and in our plans.
- Serve as faithful stewards of the public and private resources entrusted to us and provide effective and efficient administrative services that exceed the expectations of our diverse constituencies.
- Create meaningful collaborations among university, business, and community leaders to address issues and opportunities of the region.
- Develop an infrastructure that makes learning accessible to those on campus and in our community and supports the scholarly activities of the faculty.

- Pursue opportunities to enhance personal wellness through artistic, athletic, or recreational activities.
- Operate an attractive, environmentally responsible and sustainable campus integrated with the retail and residential neighborhoods that surround us.

*Approved by the Board of Governors on November 20, 2009 as part of the Mission Statement.  
Approved as an independent Statement on April 11, 2014.*

### **University Overview**

The University of North Carolina at Charlotte was one of a generation of institutions founded in metropolitan areas following World War II. Conceived in response to the rising educational demands generated by returning veterans and by changing societal needs, the Charlotte Center opened September 23, 1946, offering evening classes to an initial class of 278 freshmen and sophomores in the facilities of Charlotte’s Central High School. By 1961, the firmly established and rapidly growing Charlotte College moved to a campus of its own, a 1,000-acre site located 10 miles from the city center. Three years later, the North Carolina General Assembly approved bills making Charlotte College a four-year state-supported institution and in 1965, the legislature passed bills designating the college as the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, the fourth campus of the consolidated University of North Carolina system. UNC Charlotte was reclassified by the UNC Board of Governors as a doctoral, research institution in the year 2000.

Today the University of North Carolina at Charlotte serves over 28,000 students and is organized into seven colleges plus the Graduate School: College of Arts + Architecture; Belk College of Business; College of Computing and Informatics; Cato College of Education; William States Lee College of Engineering; College of Health and Human Services; and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. The University offers 88 bachelor's degree programs, 62 master's degree programs, and 23 doctoral degrees. The University is accredited by the Commission of Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

### **UNC Charlotte Cato College of Education and Its Mission**

#### **Cato College Mission Statement**

The mission of the Cato College of Education at UNC Charlotte is to prepare highly effective and ethical professionals who have a positive impact on children, youth, families, communities, and schools and who are successful in urban and other diverse settings. This mission is accomplished through teaching, research, and community engagement that lead to improved practice and by working in partnership with schools, communities, and university colleagues.

*Approved by the College of Education faculty, April 9, 2010*

#### **Goals of the Cato College of Education**

The following goals were established by the Cato College of Education in its 2015-2020 Strategic Plan:

1. The College of Education's *undergraduate and pre-service teacher preparation programs* will produce highly effective and engaged professionals for all settings, including urban and high needs areas.
2. To expand the frontiers of knowledge and leverage discovery for the public benefit through innovative programs of *graduate education* (MEd, EdD, PhD) that span the disciplines.
3. The College of Education will expand the frontiers of knowledge and leverage discovery for the public benefit through innovative *programs of research* that span the disciplines.
4. The College of Education will *engage community partners* in mutually beneficial programs that enhance the economic, civic, and cultural vitality of the region.
5. The College of Education will *increase visibility and connectedness* within the College of Education and across communities.

### **Cato College of Education Commitment to Diversity**

The Cato College of Education at UNC Charlotte is committed to social justice and respect for all individuals, and it seeks to create a culture of inclusion that actively supports all who live, work, and serve in a diverse nation and world. Attaining justice and respect involves all members of our community in recognizing that multi-dimensional diversity contributes to the College's learning environments, thereby enriching the community and improving opportunities for human understanding. While the term "diversity" is often used to refer to differences, the College's intention is for inclusiveness, an inclusiveness of individuals, who are diverse in ability/disability, age, economic status, ethnicity, gender, language, national origin, race, religion, and sexual orientation. Therefore, the College aspires to become a more diverse community in order to extend its enriching benefits to all participants. An essential feature of our community is an environment that supports exploration, learning, and work free from bias and harassment, thereby improving the growth and development of each member of the community. *Unanimously approved by the faculty in January, 2005, and included in all syllabi.*

### **Cato College of Education Technology Statement**

Professional education programs at UNC Charlotte are committed to preparing candidates for success in the 21<sup>st</sup> century through an emphasis on knowledge, effectiveness and commitment to technology integration and application. Preparation in the integration and application of technology to enhance student learning is essential for all candidates. Programs across the professional education unit, including the College of Arts + Architecture, Cato College of Education, and College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, reflect this commitment in coursework, early field experiences, and clinical practice which includes student teaching and/or the capstone/internship phase of the respective programs.

The commitment to technology is identified in the goals of the Cato College of Education with its pledge to support the success of candidates through innovative programming, delivery, and technology integration. The commitment is also reflected in the alignment of programs with the North Carolina standards for teachers, school executives, and counselors, which embed technology integration and application for student learning. This commitment extends to all professional education programs through the membership and shared vision of the University-

wide Professional Education Council. Successful candidates demonstrate their proficiency with technology through artifacts displayed in an electronic licensure portfolio.

### **Overview of the Cato College of Education**

One of seven colleges of the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, the Cato College of Education works in partnership with the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the College of Arts + Architecture to prepare outstanding teachers, counselors, school leaders, instructional technologists, and child development specialists. Of North Carolina's 47 schools and colleges of education, UNC Charlotte is the second largest, producing approximately 500 new teachers each year. Close to 7,000 UNC Charlotte alumni are teaching in North Carolina's public schools.

UNC Charlotte is located in the Charlotte region, a 16-county area with over 250,000 P-12 students in urban and other diverse school settings. UNC Charlotte is located within the bounds of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, one of the nation's twenty largest school districts, serving over 146,000 pupils. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools is the largest single employer of UNC Charlotte graduates, with approximately 2,000 alumni teaching in CMS. As one of its key strategic goals, the College focuses on developing and demonstrating expertise in urban education, as well as preparing excellent education professionals who will be successful in urban and other diverse school settings. UNC Charlotte has formal partnerships with thirteen North Carolina public school districts in the region which comprise the Southwest Education Alliance. UNC Charlotte collaborates with P-12 partners across these thirteen school districts.

Approximately 2300 university students are preparing for careers in education and closely related fields at UNC Charlotte. Professional preparation programs at UNC Charlotte include the following:

Baccalaureate degrees: Child & Family Development; Elementary Education; Middle Grades Education; Special Education.

Dual Program: Special Education and Elementary Education.

Minors: Foreign Language Education, Reading Education, Secondary Education, Teaching English as a Second Language.

Graduate Certificate in Teaching: Art Education, Birth-Kindergarten, Elementary Education, Foreign Language Education, Middle Grades Education (English, Mathematics, Social Studies, Science), Secondary Education (English, Mathematics, Social Studies, Science), Special Education, Teaching English as a Second Language.

Masters degrees: Academically Gifted, Child & Family Studies; Counseling; Curriculum & Supervision; Elementary Education; Foreign Language Education, Instructional Systems Technology; Middle Grades & Secondary Education; Reading, Language & Literacy; School Administration; Special Education; Teaching English as a Second Language.

Doctoral degrees: Counseling; Curriculum & Instruction (literacy, mathematics, elementary

education, urban education); Educational Leadership; Special Education; Research Methods and Evaluation.

In Collaboration with the College of Arts + Architecture and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the Cato College of Education offers teacher education programs in the following disciplines: Art, Comprehensive Science, Comprehensive Social Studies, Dance, English, Foreign Languages (French, German, Spanish), Mathematics, Music, and Theatre.

In addition to accreditation by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), programs in the College are approved by the North Carolina State Board of Education. Graduate programs in Counseling are accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP.)

### **The Knowledge Base for the Shared Vision of Professional Educators: Advancing Educational Equity through Excellence and Engagement**

The mission of the professional education programs at UNC Charlotte is to prepare highly effective and ethical graduates who have a positive impact on children, youth, families, community, and schools in urban and other diverse settings. The vision of the Cato College of Education is to be a national leader in educational **equity** through **excellence** and **engagement**. We are committed to preparing teachers, counselors, instructional technologists, and school leaders who will provide all youth with access to the highest quality education possible and to meet the needs of all students, regardless of their backgrounds.

To achieve this, graduates must develop **excellence** by building the knowledge necessary to provide effective instruction and other educational services and to engage in continuous professional growth, by considerations of **equity** in to response to diverse individual needs, and through **engagement** to lead and collaborate with others. Professional educators must acquire a broad knowledge base as well as more specialized content and pedagogical knowledge in their chosen area. They must know and understand learners and their contexts, as well as the policies, laws, standards, and issues that affect children, families, schools, and community. In addition, they must have the level of self-awareness necessary to advance the profession through **excellence** and **engagement**. Candidates must subsequently use knowledge they have developed to demonstrate **excellence** in working with learners, colleagues, and families. Through varied and extensive field experiences and clinical practice, candidates can develop **excellence** and a commitment to **equity** and **engagement** under the guidance of skilled practicing professionals, refining their practice with data gathered from student performance. Professional educators must demonstrate effectiveness in planning, implementation, evaluation, and research as well as in their use of practices that meet the needs of diverse learners and are culturally relevant and sustaining. Additionally, candidates must couple their knowledge and skills with a clear commitment to educational **equity** through **excellence** and **engagement**. Professional educators must demonstrate commitment to ethics, leadership, collaboration, and continuous growth in order to have a positive impact on student learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 1987).

## **21st Century Literacies, Competencies, and Character Qualities (2016-2017)**

Professional educators need a broad, comprehensive, and integrated understanding of the contemporary world in order to prepare learners for the future and provide equitable experiences for all learners. Because the success of P-12 students in a changing global economy will depend upon their ability to communicate, collaborate and compete effectively with the world community both at home and beyond, educators must have knowledge of our globally interconnected world (Preservice Teacher Education Study Group, 2006). Professional educators must ground their disciplinary knowledge base in the most recent findings and complexities and be able to integrate this knowledge in their work with learners (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2009). Fundamental changes in the nature of work and society have resulted in the heightened importance that educators have broad knowledge of global, financial, civic, health, and environmental issues. Given the globalized and interdisciplinary nature of education, educators must not only prepare themselves, but also edify their diverse students to become globally competent active citizens who are culturally responsive and civic minded - a responsibility that becomes clear when teachers and students find themselves in classrooms and communities with people who are culturally and linguistically different from themselves (Wiggin & Hutchison, 2009). It is generally agreed that 21<sup>st</sup> century skills for higher education students can be organized into the following categories: literacies (literacy, numeracy, citizenship, digital, and media); competencies (critical thinking, creativity, collaboration); and character qualities (curiosity, initiative, persistence, resilience, adaptability, leadership). For example, the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) asserts that professional educators must be grounded in the knowledge necessary to help learners acquire important skills such as critical thinking, communication, creativity, collaboration, information technology, adaptability, and leadership (AACTE & Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2010). In the area of information technology, teacher education programs must integrate technology throughout the programs providing candidates an opportunity to see effective implementation of technology by faculty (Keengwe, 2015).

## **Specialty Area Knowledge (2016-2017)**

Specialty area knowledge is the groundwork for preparation as a professional educator. UNC Charlotte candidates complete rigorous specialty area training in their related fields. Successful teachers, counselors, educational leaders, instructional technologists, and educational researchers who have a thorough knowledge base in their disciplines are essential to successful educational and related organizations. Through collaborative relationships with the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the College of Arts + Architecture, preservice and in-service professionals complete relevant content specialty area coursework that aligns with both the state-level standards of professionals (i.e., North Carolina Standard Course of Study and North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards), as well as the national professional standards (i.e., American Association of School Administrators, American School Counselor Association, and the various specialized professional organizations).

All professional educators are required to have areas of expertise. For teachers, effective pedagogy is inextricably tied to their content knowledge. Shulman (1986, 1987) posited that content knowledge was part of a “missing paradigm” that was often overlooked in educational



training and necessary for educational professionals to flourish in their work. In reaction to this perceived lack of preparation, the standards-based movement and accompanying state and national policies have exerted greater pressure on professional schools and colleges of education to produce educators who develop content-level expertise in their related fields (Darling-Hammond, 2000). The growing importance of this content expertise is applicable to teachers of all students, including those with significant cognitive disabilities (Browder & Spooner, 2011). The reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in 2001-2002 (No Child Left Behind Act or NCLB) required public schools to staff highly qualified teachers in each discipline and grade level. Specifically, NCLB entailed the development and certification of educators who demonstrated mastery in their content area (Darling-Hammond, 2006). The last reauthorization of ESEA (Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015) included provisions for ensuring academic success for students and schools, however removed the “highly qualified teacher” requirements which were seen as restrictive.

Research indicates that effective P-12 education is linked to preparation in one’s subject or discipline area (Baumert et al., 2010; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Goldhaber & Brewer, 2000). Findings suggest that, in order for educators to build upon a successful pedagogical content knowledge, they must have the content area foundation from which to enact appropriate instructional strategies. Similarly, the study of teacher work and decision-making suggests that successful educators are both competent and capable in core discipline-specific knowledge and epistemology (Barton & Levstik, 2003; Hargreaves, 1994; Hoy & Miskel, 2008; Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2008; VanSledright, 2011; Wineburg, 2001).

### **Pedagogical Knowledge**

Pedagogical knowledge entails the understanding of methods of effective teaching as well as research, counseling and leadership strategies. It captures the knowledge of how to teach subject matter to specific learners, with attention to individual differences and how to create environments that support equitable learning. It also captures the knowledge of how to lead successful schools and higher education programs and institutions; conduct rigorous educational research; implement effective school and community counseling programs; and support the families of children who need early intervention services. Pedagogical knowledge is essential to effective instruction, leadership, and equitable educational opportunities.

Teachers have the knowledge to create learning experiences that are engaging for students and that positively impact student learning and development. Darling-Hammond (2006) notes that, without knowing deeply how people learn and how learning differs, educators lack the foundation to know what to do when a given technique or text is not effective with all students. In order to construct a purposeful curriculum, educators are required to incorporate subject matter goals, knowledge of learning, and an appreciation for children’s development and needs. Given the wide range of learning situations posed by contemporary students, educators need a deep knowledge base about teaching for diverse learners. For example, teachers of students with severe disabilities need opportunities to learn how to apply evidence-based practices to engage students more deeply in academic content (Browder, Trela, & Jimenez, 2007; Browder, Trela, Jimenez, Knight, & Flowers, 2012). Berry, Daughtrey, and Wieder (2009) suggest that the quality of a trainee’s student-teaching experience and how well the clinical preparation is tied to

relevant pedagogical coursework influence student academic performance.

Researchers have identified many aspects of pedagogical knowledge that are associated with teacher effectiveness (Marzano, 2003). These common threads consistently appear in the teacher effectiveness literature: planning, setting goals, curriculum design, classroom management, instructional methodology, assessment and feedback, and effective use of technology. These strands are also found in standards for effective teaching. The Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC, 2011) standards articulate a common core of teaching knowledge and skills that all teachers should have. What distinguishes the beginning from the accomplished teacher is the degree of sophistication in the application of the knowledge and skills. The National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (2016) seeks to identify and recognize teachers who effectively enhance student learning and demonstrate the high level of knowledge, skills, abilities and commitments reflected in five core propositions. The following propositions focus on pedagogical knowledge:

- Proposition 2. Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.
- Proposition 3. Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.

While most literature on pedagogical knowledge focuses on what effective educators should know and be able to do, it is important to note that the literature on pedagogical knowledge extends beyond the individual classroom to the building, the district, policy makers, and the community. Marzano (2003) describes five “school level factors” that are associated with student achievement and which are usually the result of formal or informal policy decisions. These factors are:

- Guaranteed and viable curriculum
- Challenging goals and effective feedback
- Parent and community involvement
- Safe and orderly environment
- Collegiality and professionalism

These factors show how pedagogical knowledge is linked not only to teacher education programs, but to programs that prepare other professional educators such as counselors and educational leaders. Through the standards for both the *Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP)* and the *Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC)* pedagogical knowledge are addressed for these professional educators.

Through the literature, it is evident that pedagogical knowledge is essential at the classroom level and at the school level to provide professional educators with the knowledge base to make good decisions about instruction. Candidates in professional education programs at UNC Charlotte are engaged in programs of study that equip them with the pedagogical knowledge to facilitate student learning.

### **Self-Awareness**

In addition to being deeply knowledgeable about subject matter, learners, and other areas of

expertise, professional educators must have deep knowledge of self (self-awareness) in order to self-regulate their teaching and learning processes. Self-regulation consists of three phases: forethought, performance, and self-reflection (Zimmerman, 2000). Self-awareness plays a pivotal role in the processes of both forethought and self-reflection. Knowing oneself includes awareness of not only one's professional competence but also one's beliefs, values, world views, desires, and emotions, including how these aspects relate to and affect others. Self-awareness builds on what one already knows, but also on knowledge of what one does not know. It includes recognizing one's blind spots, stereotypic beliefs, and assumptions. Professional educators who will assist in transforming the lives of others must possess the important attributes of self-knowledge, self-awareness, and self-analysis.

Among the goals for all students at UNC Charlotte is that the academic experience will foster a realistic understanding of one's personal potential (University of North Carolina at Charlotte, 2014). For the professional educator, it is also essential to understand oneself in relation to others. The updated InTASC Core Teaching Standards include the expectation that an effective teacher continually evaluates his/her practice, particularly how these choices and actions affect students, families, and colleagues (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2011; McConnell & Martin, 2016). Among the competencies required of school executives and administrators are self-awareness, self-management, and the ability to build relationships through empathy and social awareness (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2013). Likewise, counseling professionals are expected to demonstrate self-awareness, emotional stability, and recognize their own limitations in building relationships with others (Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs, 2016).

Self-awareness and identity evolve with time and experience. With the awareness that all forms of knowledge are fluid, dynamic, and interactive, professional educators realize that one form of knowledge will likely directly or indirectly influence other forms of knowledge (Alexander, Schallert, & Hare, 1991). According to theories of Piaget (1952) effective educators are transformed by their experiences over time, and they construct new understanding of themselves as a result. Principles of developmental science and adult learning suggest that self-knowledge is a continuous process developing as professional educators work with students, parents, colleagues, and stakeholders in various contexts and settings (Erikson, 1959).

One aspect of self-awareness that impacts the preparation of professional educators is the component of emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence includes self-awareness, self-regard, self-actualization, empathy, and flexibility (Goleman, 1995; Wang, Kim, & Ng, 2012). Emotional knowledge overlaps with many life and career skills noted by the Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills (2009). The ability to perceive and understand one's own emotions contributes positively to resilience and effectiveness for all professional educators (Brinson, Brew & Denby, 2008; Justice & Espinoza, 2007; Trapp, 2010; Wolf, 2010). Furthermore, possessing this ability allows professional educators to model, teach, and explore the consequence of behavior with students in an effective manner (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005).

### **Policies, Laws, Standards and Issues**

Professional educators' must have a set of policies, laws and standards that are common to the

occupation (Hamilton, 2015) and that are related to meaningful student learning shared across the profession (Hammond, 2012). This set of knowledge is supported by the collective criteria of varied national, regional, state and local educational agencies and organizations that govern accreditation, certification, degree programs, and professional development (Tutwiler, et.al., 2013). In order to teach with excellence, common assessments and standards need to guide state teacher preparation, licensure, certification aligned standards ensuring multiple measures of teaching practice and student learning. Support structures to ensure mentoring for teachers who need additional assistance, and fair decisions should be in place (Darling-Hammond, 2006). Even though knowledge is shared, each entity develops a perspective according to the environment context, goals, ideologies, and various aspects of change within the organization (Allen & Penuel, 2015).

Professional educators must appraise policies and standards to assure they mesh with legislation and laws and reauthorizations that guide the field such as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015 (Education Week, 2016; de Marrais & Tutwiler, 2013) replaced No Child Left Behind. It is necessary for counselors, teachers, and school leaders to be both competent and engaged in the understanding and development of educational policy and law. It is also important for professional educators to have knowledge of current educational issues that affect students, schools, families, communities, and the profession. Professional educators uniquely address the concerns of the global community in the real-world context (Campano, Ghiso, & Welch, 2015). Universities, schools, and organizations partner together to address the concerns of the community with the practical tools that influence social issues and structural forces, as well as belief systems. Principals and standards directly influence leadership and governance in a democratic society, and also support is provided to analyze local, state, and national education legislation policies and practices and their impact on teaching, learning and assessment (de Marrais & Tutwiler, 2013). Linda Darling Hammond (2006) believes that education policies are characterized by equitable funding for all communities, with a shared curriculum and investment in quality teaching. She contends that in order to secure societal success, education policy should be focused on reducing the opportunity gap in all communities and improving access to a rich, challenging curriculum delivered by valued and highly trained teachers. Professional educators must be involved in designing effective instruction and therefore must be able to incorporate, analyze standards and develop goals into planning and assessments with consideration to knowledge of students, diversity, content, instructional practices, environment and assessment (Hamilton, 2015).

### **Research-Based Practices**

Professional educators must be excellent and effective in applying research-based strategies and processes while planning, implementing, and evaluating learners. These aspects of effectiveness have been broadly written about as characteristics of teacher quality and have been empirically linked to gains in student achievement (Nye, Konstantopoulos, & Hedges, 2004).

Educators planning, implementation and evaluation should include aligning instruction with assessment, designing and stating clear learning objectives, communicating clear expectations for student performance, incorporating varied instructional methods, and addressing varied levels of Revised Bloom's Taxonomy. Further, the process of evaluating learners should be ongoing,

using formative assessment techniques and strategies, in which professional educators effectively collect data, analyze it, and make data-based instructional decisions (Goe & Stickler, 2008; Hattie, 2012).

Aligning instruction with assessment requires the candidate to plan with the "end in mind" (Wiggins & McTighe, 1998). Professional educators should be taught principles of Backwards Design, beginning with the design their enduring understandings, evidence of learning including assessments and projects, and then instructional activities to support students' development of required knowledge and skills.

Professional educators should also include communication of learning objectives and expectations for learner performance. According to She and Fisher (2002), there is a positive relationship between student perceptions of teacher communication and their attitudes toward content. Feedback given as a result of formative assessment can assist in the identification of gaps that exist in knowledge and skill which can guide professional educators in assisting students to address those gaps (Sadler, 1989).

These same principles of planning, implementation, and evaluation apply to the work of counselors, school executives, and early intervention specialists. To be effective in their work with learners, families, and clients, all professional educators must be effective in assessing problems, developing interventions or approaches, and using data in an ongoing nature to evaluate the effectiveness of their work.

Federal legislation such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act and Every Student Succeeds Act requires the use of scientifically based research to guide the selection and use of educational practices to improve student outcomes. Practices with strong research support are based on findings from rigorous, high-quality research (Odom et al., 2005; U.S. Department of Education, n.d.). This includes efforts by researchers to provide practitioners with reviews of research that meet high standards for quality (e.g., Browder, Ahlgrim-Dezell, Spooner, Mims, & Baker, 2009).

Professional educators access resources (e.g., What Works Clearinghouse, U.S. Department of Education, n.d.), prioritize, and use effective strategies that are well supported by empirical research (Cook, Tankersley, Cook, & Landrum, 2008; Deans for Impact, 2015). Research shows that teacher candidates improve their use of teaching practices when opportunities for fieldwork are connected to coursework (Darling-Hammond, Hammerness, Grossman, Rust, & Shulman, 2005). Candidates in professional education programs at UNC Charlotte have numerous opportunities to make these connections and to develop facility with research-based practices.

Professional educators must make effective and efficient, data-based decisions. Research shows that on-going progress monitoring improves students' achievement, teachers' decision-making, and students' awareness of their performance (Browder, Davis, Karvonen, & Courtade-Little, 2005; Deno, 2003; Stecker, Fuchs, & Fuchs, 2005). Throughout their clinical experiences and coursework, candidates develop skills to make effective data-based decisions to guide their practice.

## **Research Skills**

It is essential that professional educators in all fields of study understand and effectively use research and evaluation skills, at the level appropriate to their preparation. An understanding of methodologically sound and useful research practices is essential (Hancock & Algozzine, 2017). Professional educators with initial degrees should be excellent in using basic research and evaluation skills to design assessments, analyze data, and make data-driven decisions. Meanwhile, professional educators with advanced degrees should be excellent in conceptualizing, synthesizing, conducting, and evaluating research using a variety of research designs, including qualitative research, descriptive and inferential statistics, advanced statistics, multivariate statistics, survey research, single-case research, and program evaluation. As a result, professional educators are able to generate new knowledge through their own research and synthesize and interpret knowledge from existing research.

Professional educators must possess a plethora of research related skills such as; a) the ability to understand, conceptualize, synthesize, conduct, and evaluate research using; b) a variety of research designs, including quantitative and qualitative research; c) varied statistics such as descriptive inferential, advanced, multivariate measurements; and d) survey, single-case, and program evaluation type research. As a result, professional educators are able to generate new knowledge through their own research, synthesize and interpretation.

It is requisite for teacher educators be familiar with conducting research and to have the ability to guide preservice and practicing teachers with the knowledge and skills to conduct it (Bearman, Wadkins, Bailin, & Doctoroff, 2015; Scallan, 2014). Empirically-based research that includes a system-based approach to setting goals and monitoring progress is key to research related competencies and teacher career development (Drotar, Cortina, Crosby, Hommel, Modi, & Pai, 2015). Professional educators will need to develop a theoretical framework that promotes the concepts and ideas of action research (Zehetmeier, et al., 2015), for example, efforts to close the gap between research and practice. Because evidence-based practices have a significant impact on learning approaches and strategies, practices such as these are targeted (Philippou et al., 2015; Wang, et. al., 2014).

## **Cultural Competence & Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy: A Response to Diverse Learners**

Since deficit approaches to teaching, counseling, and administrating have been endemic in schools since integration (Paris & Ball, 2009), it is essential that cultural competence is developed and sustained in multiethnic learning, counseling, and administrative environments. As American public schools and society increase in linguistic, ethnic, racial, and religious diversities it is imperative that professional educators become integral participants in cross-cultural interactions, critical pedagogy, and critical reflective practice in an effort to sustain cultural competence. Since multiethnic schools will have students who display intelligences, behaviors, languages, and learning patterns that may differ from the cultural epistemology of professional educators, it is important that educators promote multiple intelligence and pluralistic ontological environment. In addition, educators must embrace culturally sustaining pedagogy in an effort to support both traditional and evolving strategies to connect with students (Paris, 2012).



Professional educators provide inclusive programs and services that respond to the needs of all learners, clients, and families. Failure to develop cultural competence will lead to misinterpretation of student performance and contribute to students losing motivation, self-esteem, pro-social behavior, and ambition (Hutchison, 2010). CAEP (2015) requires clinical experiences of “sufficient depth, breadth, diversity, coherence, and duration to ensure candidates demonstrate their developing effectiveness and positive impact on students’ learning and development.

The North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards (2013) set the goal that all teachers establish respectful learning environments for diverse population of students. Professional educators are expected to embrace diversity in the school community and the world, to treat students as individuals, to adapt their teaching to benefit those with special needs, and to work collaboratively with families. Likewise, the North Carolina School Executive Standards (NCDPI, 2013) speak to fostering a commitment to diversity, equity, and culturally responsive traditions of the school and community, while the North Carolina School Counseling Standards (2008) emphasize the need to provide services that consider students’ culture, language, and background. Professional educators display competence when they possess the ability to function within the context of culturally integrated patterns of human behavior defined by a particular group. Culturally competent practice is demonstrated when professional educators become aware of their own assumptions, personal values and biases, learn new patterns of behavior by understanding the worldview of multiple cultures, and develop effective practices in appropriate settings (King, Sims, & Osher, ND). Culturally competent professional educators have the knowledge and skills needed to function effectively in the majority culture, while maintaining a connection to their native cultural identity (Siwatu, 2008). Research suggests that integrating a socio-cultural context in all course work, rather than as a separate multicultural education course, positively impacts professionals’ ability to meet the needs of diverse learners (Fitchett, Starker, & Good, 2010).

Professional educators provide inclusive programs and services that respond to the needs of all learners, clients, and/or their families. Within developmental age ranges, there is natural variation among ability levels of children and youth. Failure to understand natural variation among children and youth may lead to misinterpretation of the performance of children and youth (e.g., false attributions of laziness or incompetence) and student loss of motivation, esteem, pro-social behavior, and ambition (Levine, 1994; Hutchison, 2010). Failure to understand individual students’ abilities and disabilities can result in inability or unwillingness to accommodate special needs. Effective educators who have commitment to and knowledge of issues of ability and disability have high expectations for all learners, are able to discern strengths in all learners, and are able to build upon student strengths during instruction. Educators with knowledge of human ability and disability achieve more self-awareness of personal reactions to exceptionality, increase in acceptance and tolerance for human differences, avoid stereotyping, and have a “people first” perspective. While all educators do not have or need to have equivalent expert knowledge of special instruction to meet the needs of students with disabilities, all professional educators must be willing to work collaboratively with teams of professionals in shared ownership to meet the needs of all individual students (O’Brien & Beattie, 2011). Candidates in professional education programs at UNC Charlotte hold high expectations for all learners, regardless of ability level, offer high levels of support that are responsive to individual differences, and provide inclusive educational opportunity.

## Reflective Practice

Professional educators must have the knowledge, skill, and commitment to reflective practice that enables them to critically and thoughtfully examine their practice for the purpose of continuous improvement. Reflective practice has been termed the foundation for the highest level of professional competence (Larrivee & Cooper, 2006). Because education is a perpetual work-in-progress, effective educators develop the habit of taking a thoughtful, self-questioning look at their work, questioning whether they selected the right approach, and adjusting as necessary. In many educational environments, success hinges on the ability to thoughtfully consider, reconsider, monitor, change and evaluate decisions (Bembenutty, Cleary, & Kitsantas, 2013). Seminal work on teacher reflection was developed by Dewey (1933) and later by Schon (1987). The element of contemplative self-evaluation was first defined in Dewey's (1933) reflective practice.

. . . the active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends [that] includes a conscious and voluntary effort to establish belief upon a firm basis of evidence and rationality (p. 9).

Dewey's definition points up one of the primary challenges in cultivating reflective practice: that the primary target of reflection is the set of beliefs educators hold about the learning process. Beliefs direct an educator's decision-making because those beliefs are, in essence, the educator's personal picture of how learning ought to be supported. An educator who believes learning is complex will account for the many different ways to transfer knowledge or stimulate motivation based on the understanding of particular students. Consequently, professional education programs must weave among lessons in content and pedagogy, opportunities to practice self-analysis of beliefs about children, teaching and learning, grounded in the growing research on effective classroom practices (Schon, 1987). Hammerness et al. (2005) outline the refinement of beliefs through reflective practice that educators must undergo as they progress from novice candidates with naïve preconceptions to accomplished professionals. Educators must progress from early experience as students to "thinking like a professional," and then learning to act upon refined beliefs in a complex environment. Reflective practice is the combination of knowledge, skill, and commitment that enables candidates to evaluate and learn from practice so that it continually improves (Bransford, Darling-Hammond, & LePage, 2005).

Reflective knowledge extends beyond the walls of a single classroom. Senge (2000) hold out the ideal in *Schools That Learn* that school communities will use reflective practice to design and refine a common vision, with questions like these (p. 300):

What processes and programs work best for different groups of students, with respect to student learning? How has student performance changed, year by year? How do students, parents, and teachers perceive the school as a learning community? How are students' needs changing?

Whether viewed from the perspective of individual educator development or school

improvement, reflective practice will strengthen professional practice and enhance student learning outcomes.

### **Positive Impact and Accountability**

Professional educators are committed to doing whatever it takes to make a positive impact on learners. In addition to their knowledge and skills, professional educators have an equitable belief that all children can learn and that the role of all educators is to facilitate this learning via student engagement in all possible ways. Educators contribute to the success of students by meeting standards that positively affect student learning (North Carolina State Board of Education (2008, 2013). It is expected that all candidates demonstrate a positive impact on P-12 student learning and development (Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation, 2015). Research demonstrates that of all the school-related factors that affect student achievement, teacher quality that includes a commitment to all learners is the most crucial (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005). Research has also shown the positive impact of individual teachers on student performance data (e.g., Boyd, Grossman, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2006; Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor, 2007; Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor, 2006). The very first proposition in the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (2016) articulates a teacher's commitment to his or her student and the belief that every student can learn. Teachers are committed to treating students fairly and equitably, while recognizing the individual differences of students and taking into account these differences in their educational practice. Additionally, professional educators understand the importance of and maximize student engagement in schools as best practice.

It also is essential to recognize that school leadership is second only to classroom instruction as a contributing factor for what students learn at school (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). School leaders create a positive impact through the provision of direction in curriculum development, the knowledge and expectation for the use of best practices in teaching and the efficient management of and guidance within an organization to support student learning. Quality school leaders demonstrate excellence by holding themselves and others responsible for student learning and seeking to build and continually enhance the capacity of teachers to have a positive impact on student achievement.

### **Ethics**

Ethical practice by all educators is an expectation for excellence. Professional educators must consistently demonstrate and practice high ethical standards utilizing skills to effectively serve as school and community instructional leaders, or as champions for all students by addressing the many equitable, ethical, social and academic factors that impede a student's opportunity to engage in and receive quality education. Considered an essential feature of established organizations, ethics is often used interchangeably with morality and while related, they have different definitions. Whereas morality is based on the consensus values and behaviors that govern a particular group, ethics is defined as the process used to examine this behavior in terms of what is right and wrong (Ozturk, 2010). It is the expectation for every educator to act in an ethical manner (American School Counselor Association, 2012; Association of American Educators, n.d.; Council for Chief State School Officers, 2008). In standard 5 within the policy

standards for ethical leadership, the Council for Chief State School Officers (2008) purports “an education leader promotes the success of every student by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner” (p. 15). Professional educators realize that ethical behavior is considered socially responsible behavior that enriches human welfare and enhances the interest of organizations and communities (Saeed, 2005). The North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards (2013) expects that teachers demonstrate ethical principles including honesty, integrity, fair treatment, and respect for others. All educators are expected to uphold the professional code of ethics and the standards for professional conduct (North Carolina State Board of Education, 1997, 1998).

Professional educators are also aware of the reality that ethical behavior cannot be completely defined by an individual’s personal value system because not all value systems are ethically equal (Couch & Alexander, 2009). Given the diversity of students that attend our public schools, ethical professional educators must resist the desire to simply impose their personal beliefs on students, parents, and other stakeholders. When issues arise they are encouraged to seek common ground by understanding their organization and how others think and feel about the situation. This type of mutual respect may lead to a conclusion that incorporate the view of the person or issue being confronted (Mirk, 2009), thus creating an ethic of caring. According to Thurston and Berkeley (2010), the ethic of caring has the potential to create safe and peaceable schools that create an environment conducive for learning. Professional educators adhere to ethical behavior that creates a caring school community because this type of learning environment will help develop more responsible, respectful, empathetic, caring students and members of society.

## **Leadership**

Historically, educational leadership featured a hierarchical framework that relied on a knowledgeable few directing the efforts of well-trained subordinates in the delivery of educational services. While this model continues to exist, an evolution toward modern approaches is rapidly occurring. A novel adage challenging more traditional approaches suggests that “every [educational professional] carries a leadership wand.”(Tubin, 2017, p. 259) This would suggest that leadership is not the function of a select few but the responsibility of all. Toward that end the first standard identified in the standards for professional teachers in the state of North Carolina directs teachers to demonstrate leadership in five areas including (a) classroom leadership, (b) school leadership, (c) leadership in the profession, (d) advocacy, and (e) demonstration of ethical behavior (NC State Board of Education, 2013). Embedded in the American School Counselor Association National Model (ASCA, 2005) are four themes; the first of which is leadership. For the professional school counselor leadership represents advocacy, delegation, collaboration, and effective communication in working toward the success of all students. Thus, leadership is a central tenant in learning and must be central in the training of professional educators. Just as the role of leadership has been broadened styles of leadership have evolved simultaneously. Recent models of leadership that have emerged during this evolution are the constructivist and democratic approaches (O’Hair & Reitzug, 1997). In constructivist leadership the individual engages in an iterative process of creative and reflective engagement with a given issue. The constructivist leadership notion gives rise to democratic leadership which exists when there is equity, shared ideals and an amplification of all voices. Leadership is non-hierarchical, relational, and situational (Goffee & Jones, 2006). Effective

leaders understand that leadership is non-hierarchical and can appear and should be encouraged throughout an organization, community, and society (Tichy & Cohen, 1997). Professional educators intentionally develop deep and transparent relationships with their colleagues and constituencies to achieve common pursuits. They seek and welcome the responsibility for orchestrating activities of continuous improvement through multiple roles. They are able to sense the subtle differences across audiences and disparate groups and are able to forge coalitions and useful alliances of mutual purpose. “Authentic leaders are transparent about their intentions and desires; they say exactly what they mean; they go beyond self-interest for the good of the organization; they consider the moral and ethical consequences of their decisions; and, they readily admit when mistakes are made” (Avolio & Luthans, 2006, pp. 35-36). Professional educators who have impact by transforming lives do so by embracing the inherent commitment to leadership implicit in their practice. They are comfortable with their responsibilities and they leverage their leadership role in productive ways to increase their spheres of influence for the benefit of their learners. They acknowledge the need for continuous improvement and effectively instill a sense of urgency among learners and colleagues to achieve common goals.

## **Collaboration**

The commitment to collaboration – engaging with others to address issues, to discover new ways of addressing needs and opportunities, and to solve problems – is required of professional educators in multiples contexts and at multiple levels, ranging from individual classrooms and in interaction with single families to school buildings, school systems, communities, and the broader society. Examples of classroom-based collaborative engagement include teamwork among the classroom teacher, speech pathologist, physical therapist, special education teacher, and parents to design a communication system for a nonverbal child or collaboration between the classroom teacher, visual arts teacher, and teaching artist to integrate the arts into a unit of instruction on American history. An example of school system and community collaboration is the systematic effort to promote high school completion by connecting schools to research-based practices and linking the schools to human services agencies and mentoring programs. As a result of collaborative practices, professional educators, parents and families, other professionals, and community partners acquire an increased sense of efficacy, commitment, ownership, and excellence in the educational program and its students.

The value of collaboration extends to broad societal issues that have an impact on students, their learning, and their future. Many major public problems or challenges – such as global warming, HIV/AIDS, economic development, and homelessness – can be addressed effectively only if many organizations collaborate” (Crosby & Bryson, 2010, p. 211). The concerns surrounding the institution of public education has roots across several sectors of our society. Demographically defined achievement gaps, constricting revenue sources, and the diminution of public confidence in public education are problems that require the collaboration of all stakeholders. Professional educators cannot solve these problems acting alone. They must engage collaboratively with other leaders both within and outside of education to generate the conceptual knowledge and means of accomplishment to bring about meaningful and sustainable change for improvement.

Insuring equity for all requires that societal problems such as poverty, racism, lack of accessible health care, and crime affect children and their future academic success. Teachers, school

counselors, and school executives, with collaboration from public and private sectors, must be committed to consensus-building, coalition-forming, and agenda framing strategies which can be applied to local or regional problems. Such collaborative effort is needed to effectively, efficiently, and compassionately deal with chronic, inter-generational, under-performance of students. Professional educators must collaborate with professionals from other disciplines as they work to have a positive impact on all learners. Bryson, Crosby, and Stone (2006) posit a collaborative framework with five main elements: initial conditions, processes, structures and governances, contingencies and constraints, and outcomes and accountabilities. “In public administration and related fields, the benefits of collaboration ‘across boundaries,’ and ‘boundary crossing’ leadership are widely viewed as key components to accomplishing important public goals. The challenges facing public service organizations today are so complex that no single agency can adequately address them. Now more than ever, solving public problems or otherwise creating public value occurs primarily through boundary-crossing partnerships” (Morse, 2010, p.231).

## **Advocacy**

Professional educators must speak for those students and their families who need an advocate voice. Advocacy efforts are an integral component in the education of children in our nation’s public schools today. According to Lee (2007), “Advocacy refers to the process or act of arguing or pleading for a cause or proposal, either of one’s own or on behalf of someone else” (p. xvi). Cohen (2004) contends that in order for one to be an advocate and engage in advocacy, the person has to adopt a position, advance a cause, and produce an outcome in support of the individual, group, or cause. Whipp (2013) found that cross cultural experiences within the preservice program as well as course content that challenge previously conceived notions influenced a candidate being oriented toward socially just teaching. As an urban research institution, the candidates at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte in professional educator programs are prepared to advocate on behalf of students enrolled in urban and other diverse public schools. Some characteristics of urban schools include higher concentration of students of color, higher than average teacher-student ratios, high absentee and poverty rates, 50 percent dropout rates, and test scores well below the national average (Breault & Allen, 2008). These daunting characteristics make it difficult for many students to reach their academic potential, thereby increasing academic underachievement, further reflecting the need for professional educators to advocate in a manner that will help close the achievement gap (Gardiner, Canfield-Davis, & Anderson, 2009). Advocacy efforts must focus on creating learning opportunities for all students, developing a collaborative partnership within and outside of school to help meet student needs, and a willingness to promote systemic change (American School Counselor Association, 2010; Whitaker, 2007).

Professional educators also advocate for services that support the social, emotional, physical, educational, behavioral, and basic needs of students, families, and colleagues. Bell, Limberg, and Robinson stated that “educators help children feel safe, connected, and supported” (2013, p. 142). Banks, et. al., (2005) stated that professional educators “need to be aware of – and be prepared to influence – the structural conditions that determine the allocation of educational opportunity with a school,” (p. 233). Therefore, effective educational professionals are



resourceful in that they are aware of proper social service, cultural services, and community services that best help students learn and be successful.

Professional educators must possess specific advocacy dispositional characteristics in order to become effective advocates (Trusty & Brown, 2005), including empathy, professional self-confidence, a strong sense of fairness, persistence, the belief in making a difference, willingness to take risks, and the ability to see imperfections in the educational system (Catapano, 2006; Ripski, LoCasale-Crouch, & Decker, 2011). Professional educators are most effective advocates when they are proactive and possess knowledge about current education policy and its impact at the local, state, and national. They also believe that advocacy is about students and their learning, and furthermore they understand the need to cultivate a fair and just school environment. This is accomplished when professional educators learn to become a voice for students (Whitaker, 2007). Becoming a voice for students and developing autonomy as an advocate is influenced by the culture of school environment. According to Trusty and Brown (2005), schools with a culture of autonomy are more open to embracing advocacy because they are characterized by an environment that values individual change and expression.

Professional educators are aware of the sociopolitical challenges that students from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds encounter, particularly those in urban school settings. Therefore, becoming an effective advocate is essential (Holmes & Herrera, 2009). Professional educators perceive themselves as change agents and stakeholders in the education process. They advocate for schools and students. They are problem solvers who know how to collect, analyze, and make informed decisions based on the data in a timely manner. Professional educators are flexible and have realistic expectations concerning their ability to intervene when their advocacy skills are required (Trusty & Brown, 2005, Whitaker, 2007). The ultimate advocacy goal for professional educators is to create a school climate that is inclusive with the intended purpose of providing an enriched education for all students (Gardiner, Canfield-Davis, & Anderson, 2009).

## **Social Justice**

Professional educators understand that not all schools are created equally as it concerns access to resources and opportunities to learn. Acknowledging that inequalities are unjust, and therefore, wrong is foundational to the principles which underlie justice-oriented dispositions and equitable teaching practices. According to Chubbuck (2010), an educator that is committed to teaching for social justice must possess the following characteristics: (a) the ability to position curricula, pedagogical practices, and teachers' expectations/beliefs to "improve learning opportunities (and, by implication, life opportunities) for each individual student, including those who belong to groups typically underserved in the current educational context" (p. 198)(Paris, 2012; Ladson-Billings, 2014); (b) the ability to understand teaching as a political act (Murrell, 2000), that is, to identify how structural inequities in schools can impede student learning, and then challenge or interrupt the structures or policies that diminish students' learning opportunities through participative decision-making in educational processes; and (c) the ability to serve as an agent of change (Villegas & Lucas, 2002), in which, "teachers recognize the need to look beyond the school context" and dismantle any structures that "perpetuate injustice at the societal level" (p. 198), while also, teaching students how to work collaboratively toward civic engagement to address social issues and promote social change through advocacy and activism (Westheimer & Kahne, 1998).

Social justice, in education, is more than increased awareness of diversity and multiculturalism in schools; it is action-driven and focuses largely on what teachers must do to move towards a socially just pedagogy. In embracing a socially just pedagogy, professional educators must actively engage in the continual process of personal vision-building, inquiry, mastery, and collaboration (Fullan, 1993). They examine and reexamine their reasons for teaching through ongoing and deep personal reflection (personal vision-building). They engage in continuous learning through the process of critical inquiry which uses persistent questioning to establish meaningful and relevant changes in pedagogical practices (inquiry). They expose themselves to new ideas, new ways of thinking, that invite change through curriculum innovation (mastery). They collaborate with others on both a small- and large-scale to develop community partnerships and integrate service-learning into the curricula (collaboration).

### **Professional Identity and Continuous Growth**

Professional preparation programs at UNC Charlotte provide instruction in essential knowledge and skills, but also provide opportunities to practice new knowledge and skill in actual service settings and reflect on processes and outcomes related to that practice. Strong professional preparation programs provide continuous practice opportunities with reflection during their program (e.g., Etscheidt, Curran, & Sawyer, 2012; Grossman, 2008; Hollins, 2011) and new professionals are better served when they experience this form of continuous learning in their initial years of practice (Darling Hammond, 2006; Darling-Hammond, Chung, & Frelow, 2002). The ongoing cycle of learning about effective practice, actual practice, and reflection on practice is essential to the development of a professional identity. The development of professional identity entails an ongoing refinement of beliefs about effective practice and the development of a vision for what effective practice is (Hammerness, 2006). Professional preparation programs at UNC Charlotte are committed to providing candidates with high-quality learning experiences that enable them to attain a professional identity that guides effective practice for excellence, engagement, and equity. Professional educators acquire a professional identity that entails a high degree of self-efficacy, a commitment to personal responsibility for effective service, and a commitment to persist in their profession.

The professional responsibilities needed for optimal service, however, cannot be completely attained during preservice educator education, particularly given the consistency of change within education. Excellent preparation programs, therefore, must prepare candidates to become adaptive experts and life-long learners (Hammerness et al., 2005). There is growing support within the education profession for the proposition that life-long learning is most effective when linked to communities of practice or learning teams (e.g., Carroll, 2010; Cuddapah & Clayton, 2011; Stoll, Bolam, McMahon, Wallace, & Thomas, 2006; Visser, Evering, & Barrett, 2014). Communities of practice or professional learning communities can be informal and site-based or formal affiliations within professional organizations. Communities of practice enable educators to address problems and issues of theory, research, and practice together. Communities of practice support collegial and life-long career development. Candidates in UNC Charlotte education programs are provided opportunities to participate in communities of practice and are encouraged to continue participation upon entry to their professions.

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