



**Georgia Southern University
College of Education**

Conceptual Framework

Part I: Beliefs and Commitments

The College of Education assumes leadership for the preparation and continuing development of teacher candidates and other professional school personnel in collaboration with other colleges on campus, public schools, and related educational agencies. Further, we believe in the inclusive nature of the term *educator* as it refers to candidates in all programs of the College of Education who work in schools or other educational agencies. We understand our work affects both our candidates and the individuals (including students) with whom they work. Toward that end, our conceptual framework extends beyond the traditional boundaries of the College to form a professional community. The Teacher Education Committee (TEC), which includes representatives from the College of Education, other colleges on campus, public schools, and related agencies, provides a forum for coordinating these efforts.

Georgia Southern University's College of Education has adopted *Reflective Educators for Diverse Learners* as the theme for its conceptual framework. This theme reflects and extends the mission of Georgia Southern University, which is "rooted in South Georgia, a largely rural region. Our hallmark is a comprehensive university experience that promotes student growth and success through creative strategies for using technology, enhancing learning, and connecting all we do to those around us." The College of Education's professional community frames its work on the commitments described below. Embedding these commitments in the competencies in all programs ensures coherence among curriculum, instruction, field experiences, clinical practice, and assessment across a candidate's program.

C.1 Commitment to the Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions of the Profession - We believe that it is of primary importance for our candidates to possess adequate knowledge of the subject matter they plan to teach, including a thorough understanding of the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of their fields as delineated in professional, state and institutional standards. These standards provide the framework for the College of Education unit assessment system and for each program's ongoing assessment and revision efforts. We believe that candidates must be knowledgeable about learning theories and related methodologies, the application of emerging technologies, and the influence of human growth and development on the educational process, coupled with a strong subject-matter knowledge base grounded on a firm ethical foundation. Educators must have the ability and the knowledge to create and evaluate personal guidelines for decision making in a professional context. We believe that by presenting a strong research base and linking it with practice we will facilitate the growth of our candidates as informed and reflective practitioners. Collaboration across academic fields prepares our candidates to support and promote positive change. Indeed, we believe that it is of utmost importance that our candidates work with change both proactively and reactively and recognize its implications on the future of individuals and groups with which they work. This

represents the wide spectrum of educational activities in the College of Education and recognizes the dynamic nature of the work environments in which our candidates are or will be engaged.

C.2 Commitment to Diversity - We believe in the necessity of a strong historical understanding of one's profession and the willingness to view knowledge as a personal construction affected by one's cultural beliefs. We believe that educators must also recognize their responsibilities to, and the rights and needs of, all students. We believe educators must be able to enhance students' learning by addressing diverse learning styles and abilities and taking into account each individual's physical, cognitive, emotional, and social development. We believe that our candidates must understand the interrelatedness of individuals, small groups, and society, both locally and globally. Educators must be active in working with issues of culture, diversity, and equity; understand the political nature of education; and have the skills to effect change. Educators must be cognizant of the ideological, economic, and special interest pressures exerted on the institution of education at all levels. We believe educators must be able to enhance communication among all users of education in the school, community, home, and industry. We believe that educators must understand how human emotions interact with the education process, both in terms of the student and the educator. Educators must understand how personal perceptions of self, work, and professional relationships affect the daily decision-making process. Educators must be sensitive to prejudice and the effect it has on educational environments. Toward that end, diversity is an integral component of the mission of Georgia Southern University. Our candidate's field experiences, clinical practice, and assessment have been designed to ensure that candidate experiences reflect the diversity of south Georgia.

C.3 Commitment to Technology - We believe that candidates must recognize the critical role of technology in all facets of the educational process thus we provide all candidates with experiences that allow exploration of a broad range of technologies. To that end, initial and advanced teacher education candidates integrate technology and other multimedia resources to maximize learning opportunities for all students. Candidates in fields preparing other school personnel collect and analyze data related to their work, reflect on their practice and use research and technology to support and improve student learning environments. The College of Education has implemented a technology-based assessment system that continuously gathers data at the unit and program levels. Through data analysis, the College of Education's professional community ensures that candidates meet technology-related professional and state standards. Use of the technology-based assessment system by individual candidates facilitates the process of self-reflection and analysis.

C.4 Commitment to the Practice of Continuous Reflection and Assessment - We believe that reflective educators continually engage in self-assessment and assessment of student learning. As part of this process, candidates who work directly with students are provided with opportunities to accurately monitor, assess and analyze student learning, and make appropriate adjustments to instruction. Other professional school personnel candidates critique and are able to reflect on their work within the context of student learning. We believe that reflective educators evaluate the results of past actions and use the information to anticipate or plan for the future. They have the ability to define and frame a problem, to consider reasoned courses of action, to act, and, finally, to reflect on the appropriateness of their actions. We strive to develop in all our candidates both an awareness of their surroundings and the consequences of their actions, with the belief they will foster the same in the individuals with whom they work.

Reflective Educators for Diverse Learners considers all learners and represents a vision of professional practice for the entire College of Education professional community. To that end, our conceptual framework demonstrates that we believe all educators must acknowledge the multifaceted nature of their work and engage in practice that reflects a commitment to the knowledge, skills and dispositions of the profession; diversity; technology; and the practice of continuous reflection and assessment.

The purpose of our conceptual framework document is to capture and clearly convey to our candidates, school partners and other stakeholders what we believe to be the purpose and content of educator preparation. We want to emphasize that these beliefs are also commitments we desire to instill in our candidates. With this as a goal, our conceptual framework document is presented in two sections. Part I contains our belief statements expressed as *Four Commitments* and Part II contains the bibliographic support for each commitment. It includes a mixture of foundational literature and literature that is currently used by faculty in course bibliographies or as required textbooks. This literature underpins our beliefs and the *Four Commitments* across all programs in the College of Education. The Conceptual Framework Bibliography is a dynamic document that is maintained on our COE Web site.

Part II: Bibliography

The following bibliography is provided by the COE faculty and administration as a resource for candidates, school partners and other stakeholders. It includes foundational literature and literature that is currently used by faculty in course bibliographies or as required textbooks. This literature supports our Conceptual Framework beliefs and the *Four Commitments* across all programs in the College of Education. Many of these books are available in our Conceptual Framework Collection housed in the Instructional Resource Center (Rm. 2160).

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