

Indiana University Southeast
School of Education
Executive Summary of Unit Conceptual Framework*
(9/19/01)

Educators Engaged in Growth

Mission Statement - The mission of the Indiana University Southeast School of Education is to develop high quality, caring professionals who stimulate continuous renewal of schools within a multicultural society.

Introduction

Indiana University Southeast School of Education (SOE) prepares candidates to work in schools as teachers and other professional school personnel through the following programs: Bachelor of Science in Education with majors in elementary education, secondary education and special education and the Master of Science in Education with majors in elementary education, secondary education and counseling. The Unit currently prepares candidates for initial licensing for elementary and secondary education, educational leadership, special education, and school counseling under the Indiana Professional Standards Board (IPSB) licensing patterns, "Rules 46/47." ** The Unit is transitioning to IPSB's 2001 content and developmental standards with individual programs piloting these standards and assessment measures during 2001-02 with full Unit implementation scheduled for 2002-03.

The theme, "Educators Engaged in Growth," is used by the Unit to denote both commitment and reflective action. This descriptor highlights the proactive expectations established for Unit candidates: to engage in life-long professional growth aimed at bringing about renewal of schools within a multicultural society.

The "Educators Engaged in Growth" Unit Conceptual Framework and underlying knowledge base are aligned with the IUS Campus mission that calls for a "challenging, innovative, supportive learning community, committed to the intellectual and social growth of students" (IUS Bulletin, 1999-2001, p. 1). This campus mission supports the Unit because the better a teacher is educated, the better an education that teacher potentially can provide (Soltis, 1987).

The Unit Conceptual Framework incorporates the SOE Mission, SOE Goal Statements, SOE Disposition Statements and individual program goals. The beliefs of the Unit are explicit, pervasive and evident within instructional practices. The Unit Conceptual Framework establishes a benchmark for high-quality, challenging and innovative programs. Unit programs provide opportunities for students to gain skills, knowledge and dispositions for growth and success as our candidates strive to meet the changing needs in our communities. High quality educators are shaped and reshaped by their continuous preparation, educational practices and teaching environment. The complex endeavor of learning the work of schools is embodied in the Unit's beliefs and goals. The Unit Conceptual Framework articulates our professional commitments to knowledge, professional practices, teaching competence and student learning.***

Four Themes

The Unit framework outlines four themes that embody the Unit's beliefs, goals, and dispositions. Each theme incorporates a set of assumptions about learning, teaching, and professional competence and signifies commitment to professional education at Indiana University Southeast. These themes are:

- High Quality Educators
- Caring Professionals
- Continuous Renewal of Schools
- Multicultural Society

High Quality Educators

Successful candidates meet standards representative of both general and discipline specific teaching knowledge and can apply this knowledge differentially when working with students with special needs. Program standards delineate key aspects of professional practice and incorporate planning and preparation, creating a multi-cultural learning environment, effective instruction, leadership qualities and professional responsibilities.

Candidates in the Unit understand the central concepts, tools of inquiry and structure of the discipline(s) they teach and can create educational experiences that make these aspects meaningful for students.

The Unit Conceptual Framework is supported by a knowledge base of professional practices outlined by the Indiana Professional Standards Board (IPSB). The Unit ensures that candidates blend content knowledge with teaching knowledge to understand how children learn and develop, incorporating IPSB Developmental Standards at appropriate levels. Unit candidates meet standards regarding how and why instructional variety is important to motivation, management, and learning and provide learning opportunities to support intellectual, social, and personal development.

Candidates use their understanding of intellectual, cultural, social, emotional, physical and psychological development to make informed decisions about which techniques to use in a particular context. By understanding how students think, why they tend to do what they do and how their needs and desires change, educators can facilitate instructional success. Candidates demonstrate mastery of subject content, appropriate practices, and the processes of critical thinking, creative thinking, and problem solving. Candidates use effective methods, including Instructional Technology, to achieve diverse educational goals aligned with professional standards and make decisions based on data and information. Candidates create safe and effective learning environments aligned with the concerns, needs and resources of individual students, their families, the school, and the community.

Field and clinical experiences of SOE programs are a series of sequential activities in schools and are integral to standards' assessment. Candidates are immersed in school communities and develop and demonstrate competence in the professional roles for which they are preparing.

The Unit Conceptual Framework establishes a formalized system for ensuring coherence among curricula, instruction, field experiences, clinical practice and assessment across a candidate's program. Adherence to Unit standards is monitored in various ways by program teams, quality teams (i.e., Diversity, Instructional Technology, etc.), a unit assessment team, stakeholder groups and the SOE coordinators.

Caring Professionals

The SOE firmly believes that high quality educators cannot separate sound educational decision making from the dispositions associated with “caring.” The values found in the theme of “caring” are crucial to educators engaged in growth (Noddings, 1987). The common threads that run through this theme include the role educators play in the lives of their students, in the welfare of the community, and in the ethics of personal and professional accountability (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Educators are caregivers, models, and mentors and must treat students with respect, set good examples, and support positive social behavior (Lickona, 2001). The Unit is mindful that there is no prototypical “teaching personality” but believes that standards would be incomplete without attention to dispositions. The Unit supports values, commitments and professional ethics that influence behaviors toward students, families, colleagues, and communities and that affect student learning, motivation, and the educator’s own professional growth. Candidates engage in continuous self-improvement and professional growth, support the professional development of others and display positive professional behaviors and dispositions as further evidence of caring professionals engaged in effective practice. Service learning is incorporated into several programs within the Unit.

Continuous Renewal of Schools

School reform efforts call for knowledge of schools as organizations, knowledge about central issues that are at the center of school change, and skills to analyze and revise new approaches proposed in reforms (Holmes Group, 1986). Systematic reform takes into consideration the interrelatedness of all components that function together in the education system. As one component changes, so must the others in order to maintain the integrity, unity, continuity, and consistency of the entire system (Slick and Burrett, 1995).

A caring, high quality, educator is well positioned to participate in the continuous renewal of schools. SOE preparation includes attention to four key knowledge and skill areas needed for renewing schools: effective communication, knowledge of assessment, Instructional Technology, and professional development. Knowledge and skills addressing these areas are imbedded in Unit and program standards and assessments.

Multicultural Society

The Multicultural Society theme stresses the central human values of social justice, equal opportunity and respect for the dignity of all, regardless of their backgrounds and individual characteristics. “All students of all backgrounds bring talents and strengths to their learning and as educators we need to find ways to build on these” (Nieto, 2001, p. 121). The Unit defines diversity as the multiplicity of identities such as culture, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, language, gender, religion, sexual orientation, geographic origin and exceptionalities in accordance with NCATE (2000).

This fourth theme is operationalized through program curricula, diverse field experiences and faculty development. Recruitment and retention of diverse faculty and students are also highly valued by the Unit representing these backgrounds.

The Unit understands that attitudes and beliefs about diversity affect decisions about student standards and assessment. The Unit provides candidates with opportunities to reflect on their own membership in multiple groups (e.g., ethnicity/race, class, gender) and to self-assess their access to power and privilege (hooks, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Zeichner, 1993).

Candidates in the Unit learn knowledge, skills and dispositions to respond appropriately to diversity and to the needs of all students, and promote educational success and positive personal

change in themselves and others. Candidates familiarize themselves with the literature on multicultural differences, read with a critical eye, and attempt to assess their own classroom practices (Asante, 1987, 2001; Banks, 1991, 1994, 1995, 1997; Hirsch, 1987; McCarthy and Crichlow, 1993; Nieto, 1992; Ogbu, 1991; Schlesinger, 1991, 2001; Sleeter and Grant, 1993; Spring, 2001; Tatum, 1994). Candidates learn to work in inclusive settings and seek assistance from other key formative institutions that shape the values of the young, such as families and community organizations and resources (Davern, 1999).

Conclusion

The Indiana University Southeast School of Education Unit Conceptual Framework provides the basis for the Unit's intellectual philosophy that distinguishes IUS graduates from other institutions. The framework establishes a shared vision for the Unit's efforts in preparing educators to work in P-12 schools. It provides direction for programs, courses, teaching, candidate performance, and field experiences as well as guides the faculty in directions of scholarship, service, and unit accountability. The Unit Conceptual Framework portrays an image of the teacher as a caring intellectual rather than a technician, and a knowledge generator rather than simply an implementer.

The Indiana University Southeast School of Education Conceptual Framework is not permanent, and will undergo continuous development and systematic management and change. The Unit is "engaged in growth."

* The Executive Summary of Unit Conceptual Framework document is composed of excerpts from the SOE Unit Conceptual Framework. Detailed information and full citations can be obtained from the SOE Unit Conceptual Framework document (SOE approved 9/19/01), located at www.ius.edu/Education/.

**The Unit also complies with Kentucky Statutes for the preparation of Kentucky candidates qualifying under the "Memorandum of Understanding between Indiana and Kentucky Regarding Tuition Reciprocity 1997-2005."

***This conceptual framework is a shared vision developed with our professional community composed of unit faculty (tenure-track, lecturers, and part-time) Unit professional staff, content faculty, P-12 faculty and administrators, program candidates, and program alumni.