

Conceptual Framework



KSC Teacher Education Conceptual Framework

In keeping with our mission and vision, the Keene State College Teacher Education faculty, in conjunction with our professional contacts in the field, have generated four themes. These themes weave through our curriculum for beginning teachers and advanced-level professionals at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

KSC Teacher Education programs strive to prepare education professionals who:

- **Explore** the dynamic nature of the teaching and learning process
- **Demonstrate** professional and ethical behaviors that meet high expectations and standards
- **Understand** the world from multiple perspectives
- **Contribute** to a just and equitable world

Theme #1 Explore the dynamic nature of the teaching and learning process

Aristotle's statement "Teaching is the higher form of understanding," reminds us of the important interaction between teaching and learning. In a multicultural world, teaching and learning occur in many settings and are influenced by developmental, social, linguistic, and personality variables. Utilizing multiple differentiated instructional strategies, implementing authentic assessment approaches, reflecting on the success of each learning experience, and developing a deep understanding of developmentally appropriate practices all contribute to the success of the teaching and learning process.

Faculty utilize varied instructional approaches and involve students in constructing their own understanding of their skills and abilities as learners and as teachers. Case studies, observations, simulations, and readings provide opportunities for analysis and discussion and promote growth. Participation in P-12 settings through authentic field experience facilitates the development of knowledge and skills needed to address the learning needs of diverse populations. Careful planning and

reflection on observation and assessment data, and the ability to take risks and try new approaches, support the growth of successful teachers who are lifelong learners.

In order to demonstrate their understanding of this theme:

Candidates need to know

- Student developmental characteristics and background
- Appropriate content and associated pedagogy
- Developmentally appropriate practices
- Strategies for planning lessons, units, assessments
- Strategies for assessing student learning and using this data for future planning

So that they will be able to

- Plan appropriate lessons with clear goals, objectives, and assessments
- Implement a wide variety of appropriate activities
- Utilize assessments that are aligned with goals
- Create an environment of respect and rapport in the classroom
- Manage classroom routines
- Guide and manage student behavior
- Engage students in learning
- Utilize technology to enhance student learning

The dispositions that will help candidates achieve these goals include

- Flexibility and responsiveness
- Curiosity and inquisitiveness
- Willingness to take risks and work hard
- Willingness to accept and utilize feedback
- Reflection

The impact on student learning will be

- Instruction that is appropriate to student level and need
- Appropriate assessments that guide further teaching and learning

Theme #2 Demonstrate professional and ethical behaviors and meet high expectations and standards

In a world dominated by corporate scandal, political corruption, and individual dishonesty, it is incumbent upon educational professionals to model the highest professional and ethical standards in their professional and personal lives. Society has high expectations for its educators, and scrutinizes

their behavior both in and out of the classroom setting. Analysis of professional expectations and codes of ethics becomes a vehicle for reflection and personal growth that goes beyond a basic understanding of appropriate appearance and language and moves to an awareness of issues of confidentiality, response to harassment, and tolerance. Knowledge and acceptance of personal responsibility for one's actions; respect and empathy for others; a clear understanding of the legal mandates and moral obligations of the profession; and the ability to implement one's values in the "real world" are all important components of ethical behavior.

Hand in hand with professional and ethical standards, teachers and other school personnel must understand the importance of high expectations and of multiple strategies for assessment and evaluation of performance. College standards for academic honesty and academic excellence, state and national standards for excellence in teacher preparation, and national legislation and standards for school performance (e.g. IDEA, NCLB, Title IX, ADA, etc.), influence the establishment of a climate of academic and personal excellence. Developing curriculum to meet the needs of diverse learners requires a deep understanding of planning and assessment; future teachers and educational leaders need the ability to critically analyze current practices and work for improvement.

Faculty and cooperating professionals model ethical behavior and facilitate reflective practice, and encourage advocacy for the benefit of children, their families, and the educational system. Understanding the role of teacher as educational leader; acceptance of the need to foster good communication skills (e.g. listening, writing, speaking); cooperation and collaboration with families, students, and colleagues; and experience with conflict resolution strategies are all fundamental to professionalism.

Likewise, by modeling academic excellence, critical analysis, and active scholarship, faculty and cooperating professionals support students as they develop the ability to clearly articulate standards, to construct their own knowledge, to assess progress toward meeting standards, and to reflect on personal and professional growth. Portfolio artifacts provide authentic assessment of academic knowledge, professional skills and dispositions, and provide the framework for continuous improvement that integrates theory with practice.

In order to demonstrate their understanding of this theme:

Candidates need to know

- Background about cultural context of the school environment, children, and families

- Appropriate content and pedagogical approaches
- Appropriate laws and codes of ethics affecting professional educators

So that they will be able to

- Interact professionally with all constituencies
- Pace lessons appropriately for all learners
- Guide and manage student behavior
- Behave in an ethical manner
- Communicate clearly in writing and speaking

The dispositions that will help candidates achieve these goals include

- Commitment to excellence
- Willingness to work hard
- Willingness to accept and utilize feedback
- Reflection

The impact on student learning will be

- High expectations that lead to high achievement
- Ethical behavior modeled in the school setting

Theme #3 Understand the world through multiple perspectives

The demographics of the KSC student body and of the region in which we are located do not yet reflect the diversity of the United States and of the world. Because of that fact, we are especially committed to guiding our students to move beyond their “home town” perspectives in order to develop an understanding and respect for the peoples of the world and for the impact of globalization on our cultures and on our educational systems. Knowledge gained from courses taken in the traditional liberal arts disciplines, combines with knowledge gained from personal experiences, guest speakers, readings, reflection, and self-examination. The result is a strengthening of the self-knowledge and the creation of windows to new understandings that reflect the awareness of diverse perspectives.

To us, the concept of multiple perspectives includes knowledge of the diversity of learning style and intelligence; of ability; of personal and cultural background; of historical and philosophical approach; and of the contexts in which these differences interact. Why is this important? Because we live in an increasingly pluralistic society in which the awareness of multiple perspectives enriches our experience and supports the development of critical thinking toward equity and justice. Contemporary issues and world events influence children/youth, their families, and the environments in which they work and learn. Educators must possess the capacity to promote understanding of the dominant and non-

dominant experience of a multicultural world in their classrooms and in society. We believe that this understanding is foundational to becoming an effective educator.

In order to demonstrate their understanding of this theme:

Candidates need to know

- The context of the school and its students, families, staff
- Historical, cultural, and political themes that impact education

So that they will be able to

- Support the learning of all students
- Engage in constructive dialogue with students, families, colleagues, community

The dispositions that will help candidates achieve these goals include

- Flexibility and responsiveness
- Respect, integrity and honesty
- Caring and compassion
- Curiosity and inquisitiveness
- Reflection

The impact on student learning will be

- Expanded learning opportunities and knowledge
- Multiple approaches to teaching and learning that lead to increased success

Theme #4: Contribute to a just and equitable world

Teaching is a political act, and educational systems are impacted by global, political, social, economic, and cultural changes. Teachers and other school personnel have significant influence and impact on their P-16 students, and must acknowledge that role in the education community as well as in the larger society. By emphasizing the importance of embracing the political nature of education, developing a sense of service to the community, and working to become advocates for all learners and their families, we empower education professionals to see themselves as citizens of the global world and as change agents. By analyzing the dominant perspective and working for inclusion and diversity, we develop respect for each other as unique humans and affirm and expand upon individual viewpoints and experiences.

Our rural New England collegiate environment challenges us to go beyond our boundaries and borders in many ways: intellectually, by reading challenging texts; physically, through travel and study away; psychologically, through outreach to members of the community in need; personally, through attendance at lectures, artistic and cultural events, and workshops designed to confront biases and expand horizons. We strive for transformative experiences that motivate our graduates to advocate for their students, for their communities, and for the world.

In order to demonstrate their understanding of this theme:

Candidates need to know

- Codes of ethical behavior
- Approaches to school reform

So that they will be able to

- Create healthy classroom environments for all learners
- Cooperate with other school personnel
- Respect and involve families in the educational process for their students

The dispositions that will help candidates achieve these goals include

- Open-mindedness
- Clear communication
- Ethical behavior
- Reflection

The impact on student learning will be

- Improved educational climate
- Safe and open learning environment