

Preparing Teachers as Agents of Change

The Wheaton College Teacher Education Program Conceptual Framework

The Department of Education (the unit charged with teacher preparation) at Wheaton College envisions the teacher as an **agent of change**. This conceptualization of teaching has a spiritual and historical foundation as well as a theoretical framework. The role of teacher as an agent of change is tied closely to the college's mission, "to produce whole and effective Christians to serve Christ and His Kingdom" (Wheaton College Catalog, 2002, p. 4). This mission, which calls Wheaton students to integrate their faith with learning and living, reflects the view that all are to be faithful servants of Christ in whatever form of service their vocations lead them. For those who are called to service in our state's, nation's, and world's public and private schools, this mission charges the candidates to devote their lives wholly to Christ by faithfully teaching **all** of His children to the best of their abilities while continually working to improve conditions in the schools.

Jonathan Blanchard, Wheaton College's first president and a strident abolitionist, believed strongly in preparing Christian young men and women to fight injustice and improve life for those in need. Under Blanchard's leadership, Wheaton College was the first four-year college in Illinois to graduate an African American and to enroll women on an equal basis with men (Maas, 1996). As an advocate for social reform, Blanchard's activist role and nineteenth century ideals still guide the Wheaton teacher education program as it develops educators for an increasingly diverse nation.

The unit's current conceptual framework was originally developed in 1993. The first effort involved the collective efforts of the faculty members in the Education Department and several teachers and principals in the local public and private schools. These initial consultative efforts evolved into a regular advisory group which is now known as the Teacher Education Advisory Committee (TEAC). Membership in this group includes all of the faculty members in the Department of Education, faculty members from all of the content area departments that offer certification, four teachers from the local public schools, four principals from local public and private schools, two teacher education candidates, and a representative from the Regional Office of Education. The Conceptual Framework is brought to this group on at least an annual basis, discussion is held, and revisions are incorporated as necessary.

Vision and Mission of the Unit

As the framework was developed, the unit and its partners were influenced by the work of Arthur Holmes (1987) and his vision of how one's Christian faith and learning can be integrated. Holmes (1987) maintains that the integration of one's Christian faith and learning can be approached in four overlapping ways: (1) attitudinally, (2) ethically, (3) foundationally, and (4) as a worldview. All of these concepts play important roles in classroom discussions about the centrality of the Christian faith in forming the basis of

the unit's conceptual framework and its translation to practice. This vision of integrating faith, learning and life service is consistent with the charge Paul gave to the church at Corinth, "Whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God" (I Cor. 10:31). As such, the mission of the unit is to prepare candidates through all of its approved programs who are agents of change, are able to ensure the learning of all of their students and, concurrently, to work effectively for positive change in their schools and communities.

What does it mean to be an agent of change in schools today? In order for educators to create a significant difference in the lives of their students, their schools, and their communities, the unit believes that these educators must be able to make responsible decisions that are based on a substantial liberal arts and professional knowledge base and reflect a strong commitment to their profession. Additionally, Christian teachers who seek to be agents of change cannot be content with merely replicating traditional practice but must accept the ethical responsibility to become, themselves, students of teaching and learning and effective models who demonstrate moral and professional behaviors. Finally, Christian teachers who seek to be agents of change are students of teaching and learning who continually seek and apply new insights, methods, and understandings of content and pedagogy in order to be a champion for social justice and to ensure that **all** students, regardless of any differences, are truly educated (Darling-Hammond, 1997).

The Department of Education in consultation with its partners envisions a commitment to educational reform that is both consistent with Wheaton College's historical and spiritual foundations and addresses the challenges of contemporary American education. Over the years, the unit and its partners have interpreted the conceptual framework to encompass three central themes as it works to further articulate its mission to prepare teachers as agents of change in the schools: (1) teaching for social justice, (2) making informed decisions, and (3) acting responsibly. These three central themes are the unit's primary purposes and their supporting research forms the philosophical basis for the conceptual framework.

Teaching for Social Justice

"What does the Lord require of you but to do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with our God?" Micah 6:8

Teaching for social justice recognizes the relationship between individual identity and the learning process (Darling-Hammond, French, & Garcia-Lopez, 2002). Each student engages in the task of learning according to his or her ability to connect this process to prior experiences, capacities, interests and ambitions. As the unit works to prepare teachers who can teach for social justice, a number of significant influences are addressed. One of these influences is the student's race and ethnicity. Researchers (Banks, 1999; Greene, 1988; 1995; Kozol, 1991; 2000; Nieto, 2000) have shown that this factor can affect how students learn and that teachers must be sensitive to a student's background when planning lessons and assessments. Other factors include gender (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberg & Tarule, 1986; Gilligan, 1982; Greene, 1988; Katz, Noddings & Strike, 1999; Orenstein, 1994; Sadker & Sadker, 1994), class (Friere, 1973;

1974; 1994; Kozol, 1991) and family (Brofenbenner, 1979; McAdoo, 1993; Vygotsky, 1978). All of these issues are discussed in classes beginning with the candidate's first education classes and are continued throughout the program. Practicum experiences are also designed to ensure that all candidates have experiences with students from varying backgrounds.

Students also approach educational tasks through diverse learning styles and intelligences. Researchers (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997; Dunn & Griggs, 1995; Gardner, 1985; 2000; Lazear, 1991) have demonstrated that teachers must take these styles into account. Additionally, researchers have shown that students function at various developmental levels of intellectual and moral reasoning (Canella, 1997; Erickson, 1987; Gilligan, 1982; Kohlberg, 1984; Piaget, 1995). Finally, students may also require modifications in instructional methods, materials and environment because of physical, emotional, perceptual or intellectual exceptionalities (Dunn, Dunn & Perrin, 1994). This valuable but challenging diversity within and among students creates various learning needs that teachers must address. In recognizing and meeting these individual needs, educators seek to establish just relationships by their commitment to promoting every individual student's development. Again, all of these individual differences and the worth of each and every student are addressed in classes and practicum assignments.

The unit also believes that teachers who are informed about issues regarding social justice must first be made aware of the injustices that occurred in the past as a result of the pervading social milieu, one that supported segregation, inequitable treatment of women, and other marginalizing practices. The importance of this concept has been and continues to be supported by a variety of educational researchers (Greene, 1988; Gutek, 1995; Herrell & Jordan, 2004; Hoffman, 2000; Katz, Noddings, & Strike, 1999; Kliebard, 1986; Noddings, 2002; Nucci, 2001; Spring, 1994; 2000). As teacher candidates become aware of past assumptions and behaviors that have contributed to present conflicts, candidates can then attempt to understand current issues affecting social injustice and make informed decisions concerning their own pedagogical practices. As such, the unit has instituted a first course in education that addresses both the historical foundations of education and the influences of a multicultural society on the practice of education.

Social justice, however, cannot exist apart from community. In order to establish a model of social justice within their classrooms, teachers who act as agents of change take this knowledge of individuals to create a safe and inviting learning environment, a critical component that has been supported by many (Ayers, 1995; Friere, 1974; Giroux, 1993; Kozol, 1991; Noddings, 1992; Rorty, 1997). Palmer (1993; 1998) has pointed out that creating a community of learners requires that educators enable their students to see themselves as offering each other mutual encouragement and accountability. Initially, researchers point out that this community is promoted through educators creating an atmosphere of safety and belonging within the class (Glasser, 1990; Maslow, 1968; 1970; Sergiovanni, 1994). A commitment to social justice also requires educators to plan for enough individualization so students can enter into the content at various skill levels (Banks, 1999; Shor, 1992; Slattery, 1995) and to create space for all students to develop a

sense of voice and a feeling of inclusion (Delpit, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Palmer, 1993). Establishing trust within a community requires that teachers assist their students in acquiring the skills to explore and understand varying perspectives (Howard, 1999; Nieto, 2000; Takaki, 1987). A socially just learning community enables every learner to establish high individual goals and then offers the opportunity to achieve them (Greene, 1988; 1995). Developing this sense of community is particularly stressed in the candidates' methods and later practicum experiences.

Finally, teaching for social justice extends beyond one's individual classroom. An agent of change is aware of current inequitable access to quality education (Ayers, Klonsky & Lyon, 2000; Giroux, 1993; Goodlad, 1984; Greene, 1988; 1995; Kozol, 1991; 2000; McNeil, 1986; Noddings, 2002; Nucci, 2001; Oakes, 1999; Ogbu, 1992; West, 1990) and recognizes the inter-relatedness of educational opportunity and society at large (Ayers, Hunt & Quinn, 1998; Freire, 1973). A Christian educator who serves as an agent of change seeks effective means for removing or modifying present structures that deny or limit students from reaching their potential through curricular, pedagogical, and political action (Banks, 1999; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Nieto, 2000). This issue is again particularly stressed during the candidates' student teaching experience and discussed in the senior seminars.

Goals/outcomes related to teaching for social justice. The issue of teaching for social justice has generated significant discussion in recent TEAC meetings as the partners discussed changes in their schools. Based on these discussions, the unit has delineated three broad goals related to social justice. These broad goals are further interpreted in highly specified outcomes incorporated into each class/experience; and measurements in the form of key assessments related to standards promulgated by ISBE, NCATE, and national specialty organizations ensure that all of the candidates are learning to teach for social justice. The goals are also measured by the unit's capacity to meet several of the unit standards as promulgated by NCATE and ISBE. The first broad goal is to *ensure that candidates learn to work effectively with all children and their families regardless of race, creed, religion, national origin, sexual preference, disabling condition, or capabilities*. This broad goal is measured by numerous indicators on the field experience evaluation forms, examinations in several classes, several papers prepared in classes common to all certification candidates, and the candidates' portfolios. The second broad goal is to *ensure that diversity is respected and that candidates have the opportunity to work in diverse environments and with diverse colleagues and teachers*. This goal is measured primarily by evaluations of candidates in their practicum experiences and by the unit's capacity to meet Standards 3 and 4 of the NCATE Unit Standards. Outcomes include cooperating teachers' and college supervisors' evaluations of candidate performance, cooperating districts' diversity indicators, and College data regarding diversity among students and faculty. The third broad goal is to *ensure that candidates understand current social justice issues in education and understand their obligation to work for positive change*. This goal is measured primarily by an action research paper completed by each candidate during the student teaching experience. This paper is also included in each candidate's final portfolio.

Making Informed Decisions

“It is not good to have zeal without knowledge, nor to be hasty and miss the way.”

Proverbs 19:2

Teachers are required to make numerous daily decisions in designing instruction, interacting with students, and assessing their own performance. As a culture that has been accused of being myopic during the twentieth century regarding its focus on the present, educators in the twenty-first century need a thorough understanding of the past to accurately comprehend the world around them. By recognizing that educational policies are never created in a vacuum, candidates who know that educational theories are often products of larger philosophical paradigms can make informed decisions regarding their own future practice (Coulter & Wiens, 2002; Gutek, 1995; Kliebard, 1986; Spring, 1994; 2000). As such, candidates at Wheaton College study carefully the historical contexts of various educational theories and philosophies and are expected to articulate how this past work will influence them as agents of change in the future.

In addition to gaining an awareness of historical precedents, researchers have clearly shown that educators who acquire a broad understanding of childhood and adolescent domains of development are able to make informed choices regarding pedagogical practices and age-appropriate curricular materials (Atwell, 1998; Cambourne, 1988; Elkind, 1994; Crikson, 1987; Kohlberg, 1984; Piaget, 1995; Pipher, 1994; Vygotsky, 1978). Competent decision-making includes the ability to offer a balance of individualized, collaborative small group and whole class instruction when appropriate for pre-school, elementary, middle and senior high school students (Johnson, Johnson & Holubec, 1991). Teacher candidates who seek to be agents of change also need to understand various theories of learning (Atkinson & Shiffrin, 1968; Ausubel, 1963; Bandura, 1986; Bruner, 1966; Skinner, 1953) and how these might be applied in diverse classroom settings in order to shape curriculum and establish instructional practices that are learner-focused, experiential, and cognitively challenging (Zemelman, Daniels & Hyde, 1998). These critical aspects of developing the ability to make informed, research-based decisions are addressed early in the candidates' programs and are continually stressed throughout later methodological classes and practicum experiences.

Inherent in educational decision-making is the difficult process of providing for larger conceptual understandings of each discipline while at the same time offering the specific content and procedural knowledge necessary to apply such understandings in everyday experiences (Gardner, 1999; Jackson, 1986; Lyons, 2002; Palmer, 1993; 1998). In order to ensure that certification candidates at Wheaton College have sufficient content knowledge, all candidates for content-specific certification complete full majors in their subjects and elementary education majors complete a rigorous concentration in one subject area and a series of experiences in all the subjects they will teach.

Another of the more significant demands of educational decision-making is the need to balance individually differentiated instruction that addresses the needs and

abilities of **all** students with uniformly high expectations (Garber, 1996; Hansen, 2001). To meet this challenge, educators must develop an awareness of content area goals and benchmarks and the role they play in guiding curricular objectives. All candidates for certification at Wheaton College become familiar with the Illinois Learning Goals for K-12 students and demonstrate their understanding of these goals through their integration into all lessons. Candidates in their lessons also show that they can make adaptations that address individual learning needs and special situations.

Educators must also be able to demonstrate competence through meeting both professional and content-area standards as promulgated by the Illinois State Board of Education, the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium, and the national specialty organizations that are a part of the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1992; ISBE, 2002; National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education, 2000). Specifically, all candidates demonstrate through their successful completion of key assessments that they have met all of the Illinois Professional Teaching Standards, the Illinois Core Language Arts Standards, the Illinois Core Technology Standards, and their specific subject matter standards as delineated either by the State of Illinois and/or the national Specialty Professional Associations. The progress of all candidates in meeting these standards is tracked through individualized electronic records. A candidate can only complete the program when his/her record indicates that he/she has successfully demonstrated at least minimum competency appropriate for a beginning teacher in each of the standards.

Making future decisions is strongly dependent on educators' abilities to assess current performance. This requires teachers to develop expertise in a variety of assessment practices including norm-referenced and criterion-referenced evaluation as well as observation, portfolio and performance assessments. In addition to evaluating student growth, educators must engage in reflective practice in order to critically question the value of curricular content and the effectiveness of their own teaching (Greene, 1988; Kohn, 2000; Schon, 1987). This process of reflective decision-making is stressed in all practicum experiences.

As technological advances continue to become a part of everyday life, informed teachers must be able to utilize various technologies to assist students in their learning (Kauchak, Eggen, & Carter, 2002; Snowman & Biehler, 2000). Various technological skills that can be used by teachers in communication, presentations, curricular enhancement, record-keeping, and research are stressed and expected in all classes as appropriate. Each class and experience includes key assessments that require candidates to incorporate various technologies as appropriate. The primary technological focus of the unit is on technologies that can be used to support student instruction and professional growth, and all of the Illinois Core Technology Standards are addressed throughout the program.

Finally, educators who seek to be agents of change must recognize that sound professional decisions are not made in isolation. Teachers must collaborate with parents,

students, and colleagues in order to make truly informed choices (Nieto, 2000; Palmer, 1993; 1998). In so doing, they become part of a pedagogical team in which disciplines intersect in order to encourage an engaging, integrated curriculum that will benefit school culture as a whole (Atwell, 1998; George, Lawrence & Bushnell, 1998; Moore, Moore, Cunningham & Cunningham, 1998). Again, this professional collaboration is developed both through classes and the candidates' practicum experiences.

Goals/outcomes related to making informed decisions. All of the broad goals related to making informed decisions are articulated with more detail in the syllabi and key assessments in all classes/experiences. Based on discussions with TEAC members and other colleagues in the schools, the unit has developed five broad goals. The first goal is to ensure that candidates *use a variety of current and validated techniques of effective teaching, understand the theory behind the techniques, and use assessments to guide developmentally and culturally appropriate instruction for students*. A number of key assessments in all education classes common to all candidates address this broad goal including such assessments as examinations, papers, lesson plans, and oral presentations. Additionally, the evaluations of the candidate's field experiences and the candidate's portfolio incorporate a variety of assessments that address this broad goal. The second goal is to have candidates *develop an individual philosophy of education based on Christian commitment, important philosophers, and contemporary issues*. The unit believes strongly that candidates must have a clear understanding of the philosophy of education in order to make informed decisions. A separate, reflective philosophy class is required upon completion of student teaching. The key assessments in this class include examinations and a personal philosophy of education paper. This paper or a shortened version of it is also included in each candidate's final portfolio. The third goal is to ensure that candidates *understand human development and use this knowledge to prepare effective lessons*. Key assessments related to this goal include examinations, papers, observations of children, and practicum evaluations. The fourth goal is to enable candidates to *establish and maintain an appropriate climate for learning*. This goal has always been addressed in the elementary education classes, and recently a new class for secondary and special certification candidates has been instituted in response to data from practicum evaluations and feedback from TEAC. The key assessments in this area include examinations, papers and presentations, the candidate's portfolio, and evaluations of practicum experiences. The fifth goal is to ensure that candidates *use and incorporate, when appropriate, current technology to enhance educational experiences for all children*. Education classes routinely require candidates to use a variety of technologies in their presentations and plans, and specific items are included in the evaluation forms for all practicum experiences.

Acting Responsibly

“Live as children of light for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth.” Ephesians 5: 8-9

Wolterstorff (1980) informs us that Christians are not educated merely for knowledge, but rather see knowledge as a means to responsible action. In order for

educators to be agents of change, they must be committed to teach in a Christ-honoring, ethical manner. Researchers have shown that, because of their leadership role in the classroom, the school and the community, teachers exercise a significant influence over students, parents and educational policy (Ayers, 1995; McLaren, 1989; Palmer, 1995; Purpel, 1989; 1999). This is not a role to be taken lightly. The call to teach carries with it an implied stewardship of students' and parents' trust and time in addition to developing students' moral, social, personal, intellectual and academic capacities (Hansen, 1995; 2001; Oser, Dick & Patry, 1992; Tom, 1984; Wolterstorff, 2002).

Schwartz (1997) has described three roles that Christian educators play when involved in public school teaching: (1) Agent for Enculturation (a role that reflects a subtle influence), (2) Christian Advocate/Evangelist (a role that reflects an active insertion of a Christian viewpoint whenever possible), and (3) Golden Rule Truth Seeker (a role whereby the teacher treats "religious questions and concerns as a normal and healthy part of public human life" (p. 295). Part of the teacher preparation experience is to explore these roles and to assist candidates in determining when and where it is appropriate to assume each role. Candidates for certification at Wheaton College have the opportunity to explore all of these roles as they practice reflectively in the schools.

Acting responsibly requires educators to fulfill their roles of instructor, advisor and evaluator with a high degree of integrity. This integrity must be cultivated through a rich inner life characterized by personal reflection. Teachers who hope to positively influence their students must be aware of their own identities and beliefs, both personally and professionally, before they can hope to become agents of change (Bellah, 1985; Fenstermacher, 2001; Rensaglia, Hutchins & Lee, 1997; Schubert & Ayers, 1999).

Throughout their coursework in the Department of Education, teacher candidates are encouraged to reflect on their own educational experiences and anticipate how they will contribute to the experiences of the students they will teach. As educators grow in self-awareness, they will more adequately be able to act as responsible educators to those students with whose lives they have been entrusted (Dewey, 1916; Greene, 1988; Lewis, 1944; Nieto, 2003; Noddings, 1992; 2002; Palmer, 1995; 1998; Rorty, 1997; Sayers, 1993; Sizer & Sizer, 1999; Tillich, 1959; Tinder, 1993).

Goals/outcomes related to acting responsibly. The unit has articulated one goal related to acting responsibly, and that is to ensure that candidates *exhibit appropriate dispositions for teaching including an articulated desire to teach all children, a passion for and capabilities in the appropriate subject area, a demonstrated ability to meet appropriate professional expectations, an acknowledgement of the need for continued professional growth and reflection, and a commitment to reflect Christ in all that is done.* This very important goal is assessed through observations in classes, personal interviews, observations in practicum experiences, acceptable scores on examinations conducted by the Illinois Certification Testing System, and written feedback from subject matter departments. No one screening instrument or checklist is used because the unit believes that appropriate dispositions for teaching are too complex to be reduced to cursory instrumentation. Instead, a candidate's behaviors and statements are constantly

scrutinized and appropriate dispositions for teaching must be affirmed by the unit faculty members at several assessment checkpoints (described later). The unit has also instituted a referral process for identifying and assisting candidates who do not exhibit appropriate dispositions to teach. This process is described in detail in the Unit Assessment Plan. In essence, any professor may complete a referral on any candidate who, in the professor's judgment, does not exhibit the appropriate dispositions to teach. The ramifications of such a referral include both remedial and punitive aspects.

Influence on Policies and Practices

The conceptual framework of the Wheaton Teacher Education Program has a direct effect on its policies and practices. First, the three guiding principles form the bases for all of the course offerings and experiences designed to prepare our candidates for tomorrow's classrooms. Teaching for social justice is addressed in all of the unit's classes to ensure that the candidates both understand and are able to demonstrate a respect for **all** individuals regardless of any particular characteristics, belief systems, or disabling conditions. Making informed decisions is addressed most heavily in the program during the candidates' junior and senior years when they begin exploring effective means by which they will be able to help all of their students to learn. Effective, research-based techniques are covered in classes, and candidates demonstrate their understanding of the techniques through completion of several sequential practicum classes culminating in an intensive student teaching experience. The third principle of acting responsibly is a focus in all classes and experiences both within WheTEP and the College as a whole. As Christians, all candidates agree to abide by the College's Community Covenant which illustrates clearly that acting responsibly as a Christian teacher goes far beyond adhering to a simple listing of rules. It involves acting in a manner that is viewed as ethical by the education profession **and** that reflects Jesus Christ in all interactions with students, their parents, and coworkers. Responsible actions are stressed in all classes, issues are explored, and real-life examples drawn from the candidates' experiences are discussed in a manner that enables the candidates to learn the depth of acting responsibly as a teacher.

The conceptual framework is also addressed specifically in each education class. All instructors have included a section titled "Relationship to the Conceptual Framework" in their syllabi. This section describes in more detail how the principles of the conceptual framework provide the guidance for the conduct of each class. Each syllabus also includes an expanded knowledge base in which the research that forms the content of the class is delineated.

The unit's conceptual framework has also been used to develop the evaluation forms that are completed on each candidate after the completion of each practicum experience. The three guiding purposes (teaching for social justice, making informed decisions, and acting responsibly) form the major headings, and the specific behaviors that allow both the College personnel and our school partners to assess the candidates' knowledge, skills, and dispositions for teaching are grouped under each heading.

In addition to its influences on the classes and school experiences of the candidates, the conceptual framework also guides the practices of the faculty in all aspects of their work and the unit itself in its assessment of its own effectiveness. As new faculty members are recruited, all are provided with a copy of the conceptual framework. During the interview, the faculty candidate's fit with the College's beliefs regarding the preparation of teachers is assessed. Additionally, all current faculty members address aspects of the conceptual framework in their research on effective practices and policies, in their service to the profession and the community, and in their service to the College. Finally, the unit assessment plan has been designed to assess whether or not the unit's graduates are becoming agents of change in the schools through its annual surveys of graduates and their employers.

Performance Expectations and Assessment of Candidates

The standards promulgated by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC), and the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and its specialty groups (SPAs) are incorporated into all of the unit's programs. With the conceptual framework as the overall guide, the unit has designed both its classes and its assessment devices to reflect specifically the Illinois Professional Teaching Standards (which incorporate the INTASC standards), the Illinois Core Language Arts Standards, and the Illinois Core Technology Standards. Each individual program ensures that its offerings reflect both the standards of the national specialty group for its program **and** the Illinois content area standards.

Each class and practicum experience has specific, delineated standards it addresses, and candidates are assessed through a variety of means to ensure that each candidate who completes the program has demonstrated that he/she has the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for success in the classroom as a beginning teacher and can function as an agent of change in the schools. Each candidate's knowledge and skills are assessed in classes through a variety of means including but not limited to examinations, papers, presentations, demonstrations, and observations. All of these assessments are tied to the conceptual framework through one or more of the three central purposes. Throughout the program, candidates' dispositions for teaching are assessed through the completion of several sequential practicum experiences where the candidates are observed closely and through observations by the professors of classes.

While the addressing of all relevant standards is a critical component, the various standards do not form the whole of the Wheaton Teacher Education Program. The conceptual framework provides that the program's candidates must strive to do more than simply meet mandated standards. Instead, its candidates must strive to affect the world for Christ and His Kingdom through faithful service in the state's, the nation's, and the world's schools. As such, the program includes numerous reflective components designed to ensure that its graduates are lifelong learners who will strive to affect the profession in a truly positive manner.

The unit has identified five specific checkpoints during each candidate's program where the candidate's knowledge, skills, and dispositions to teach are closely checked. Each checkpoint includes increasingly more rigorous requirements. These points are listed below.

1. Assessment Point One: Declaration of Intent to Teach. Wheaton College is a highly selective, national liberal arts college. As such, the Department of Education is proscribed from conducting any direct recruiting efforts with students who have not been admitted to Wheaton College. Admission to Wheaton College is a function of the Admissions Office, and admitted students do not declare majors until the middle of the second semester of their first year. As the students reach this point in their first year, each student meets with his/her freshman advisor and declares a major. Each person who wishes to teach indicates either the selection of a major in elementary education or a desire to pursue teacher certification in any of the secondary or special fields. Candidates in the secondary fields also declare a second major in secondary education. This step is the formal **declaration of intent to teach** by the candidate and is the first point at which a formal assessment occurs. The only performance criterion used at this point is the candidate's eligibility (as assessed by his/her cumulative grade point average) to continue as a student at Wheaton College. Because students sometimes have difficulty during the first year of college, Wheaton College has set a fairly liberal retention policy for students who have not yet completed a total of 60 semester hours (1-19 hours, 1.70 GPA; 20-39 hours, 1.80 GPA; 40-59 hours, 1.90 GPA). Additionally, each candidate must complete the Declaration of Intent to Teach form and file it with the Department of Education. At this point, each candidate is assigned an advisor in the Department of Education. For each candidate whose GPA is below 2.50, his/her advisor reviews the candidate's plan to raise his/her GPA as soon as the advisor is notified of the candidate's GPA.

In addition to the determination of the candidate's eligibility to continue as a student at Wheaton College, demographic data on the candidates are also collected. The Department of Education collects the demographic data listed below and prepares a summary report annually. The data patterns are used to determine if the applicants for certification are of high potential, ethnically, gender and exceptionality diverse, and reflective of the general student population at Wheaton College.

The data to be collected at this first formal assessment point include:

Performance Criterion

1. GPA appropriate for continuation as a student at Wheaton College

Demographic Data

1. Name, address, telephone number, email
2. Birthday and birthplace

3. Citizenship status
4. Social security number
5. Gender
6. Ethnicity
7. Disabling condition
8. Field of certification
9. Admission test information (ACT or SAT)

2. Assessment Point Two: Admission to WheTEP. Admission to the Wheaton College Teacher Education Program (WheTEP) is the second point where a formal candidate assessment occurs. For most candidates, this step occurs toward the end of the candidate's second (sophomore) year at Wheaton College. At this point, the candidate must have completed ten (10) semester hours of professional education classes including at least 60 pre-clinical hours of observation and tutoring with no grade lower than a C- and have demonstrated competence in the appropriate standards by successfully completing all of the key assessments in those classes. Additionally, he/she must meet specific grade point average (GPA) requirements (2.50 in his/her major, 2.50 in professional education classes, and 2.50 overall) and have passed the Illinois Test of Basic Skills. The candidate must also have demonstrated the appropriate skills and dispositions by successfully passing the multicultural tutoring practicum (EDUC 125L) and the teacher aiding practicum (EDUC 225L). Dispositions are also assessed by the candidate's advisor through the completion of the WheTEP essays, an interview with the advisor, and the sharing of faculty perceptions at a formal department meeting. Any candidate whose advisor questions his/her dispositions as a result of the WheTEP essays and the interview is assigned a second reader and a second interviewer to assure fairness. Finally, the candidate must submit a beginning professional portfolio that includes artifacts that illustrate how the candidate is addressing the Illinois Professional Teaching Standards, the Illinois Core Technology Standards, and the Illinois Core Language Arts Standards. The instructor in EDUC 225L scores each candidate's portfolio.

In list form, in order to be admitted to WheTEP, the candidate must meet the following criteria:

Performance Criteria

1. Minimum Overall Grade Point Average (GPA) of 2.50.
2. Minimum GPA of 2.50 in EDUC 125 and EDUC 225 (or their transfer equivalents) with no grade lower than C-.
3. Minimum GPA of 2.50 in the candidate's major.
4. Successful completion of the Illinois Enhanced Test of Basic Skills.
5. Acceptable performance on all of the key assessments as specified in EDUC 125 and EDUC 225.
6. Acceptable performance in the EDUC 125L Field Experience as assessed by the candidate's field supervisor using the performance checklist.
7. Acceptable performance in the EDUC 225L Field Experience as assessed by the candidate's cooperating teacher using the performance checklist.

8. Acceptable completion of a beginning portfolio in which the candidate provides artifacts demonstrating beginning competence in at least six (6) of the Illinois Professional Teaching Standards and beginning competence in meeting the Illinois Core Language Arts Standards and the Illinois Core Technology Standards.
9. A positive recommendation from the candidate's major department.
10. An affirmation of appropriate dispositions as indicated by the evaluations of the candidate's field experience performance and a formal vote of the faculty in the Department of Education.

Other Criteria

1. Completion of the WheTEP application.
2. The candidate's affirmation of freedom from any disqualifying legal convictions and a signed statement indicating that he/she will inform the Department of Education of any subsequent convictions.

3. Assessment Point Three: Prior to Student Teaching. Admission to WheTEP allows the candidate to enroll in the methods sequence of courses and practica. This intensive series of experiences is designed to provide the candidate with the skills necessary to effectively teach **all** children in today's classrooms. Depending on the major, the candidate completes at least one methodological course, a course dealing with adaptations for children with disabilities, a practicum (minimum of 30 hours) involving teaching in his/her subject area, and a practicum (minimum of 30 hours) involving teaching children with disabilities. Secondary and special certification candidates also complete a course in Curriculum Integration and Classroom Communication (EDUC 462) that addresses both the Core Language Arts standards and many knowledge and skills standards. Candidates in Elementary Education complete a series of content and methodological courses. Additionally, more detailed field experience rating forms are completed by the candidate's cooperating teacher. As noted previously, a minimum rating of at least 2 on the 4-point scale on each ratable item is necessary for the candidate to successfully complete the knowledge, skill, and dispositional standards addressed in the classes and the practica. Each candidate must also maintain at least a GPA of 2.50 in his/her major, in all education courses, and overall. At the completion of the methods sequence, each candidate is required to present a comprehensive portfolio that includes at least one artifact for each of the Illinois Professional Teaching Standards, two artifacts that address the Illinois Core Technology Standards, and two artifacts that address the Illinois Core Language Arts Standards (15 total artifacts). In the secondary/special fields, methods professors and/or advisors (two assessors per candidate) score this portfolio submission. In Elementary Education, one of the methods professors scores the candidate's portfolio. Again, for each artifact, a minimum rating of 2 on the 4-point scale is necessary for successful completion. Finally, each candidate must successfully complete the State of Illinois Content Area Examination pertinent to his/her major. The faculty members in the Department of Education view each candidate's file and, in a formal meeting, determine the candidate's suitability for entry into student teaching in light of the documentation of knowledge, skills, and dispositions.

In list form, in order to be admitted to student teaching, the candidate must meet the following criteria:

Performance Criteria

1. Minimum GPA of 2.50 in all courses.
2. Minimum GPA of 2.50 in all Education classes.
3. Minimum GPA of 2.50 in all classes in the candidate's major.
4. Acceptable performance on all key assessments included in the candidate's methods sequence.
5. Acceptable performance in the methods practicum and the special education practicum as indicated by the performance checklists.
6. Successful completion of a professional portfolio that includes at least one artifact for each of the Illinois Professional Teaching Standards, two artifacts that address the Illinois Core Language Arts Standards, and two artifacts that address the Illinois Core Technology Standards (15 total artifacts).
7. Successful completion of the Illinois Content Area Examination in the candidate's major field.

Other Criteria

1. Completion of the Application to Student Teach.
2. An affirmative vote from the faculty of the Department of Education indicating acceptable dispositions to teach.

4. Assessment Point Four: Post student teaching. The fourth formal assessment occurs after the candidate has completed his/her student teaching experience. This intensive practicum provides the candidate with an opportunity to experience full-time teaching responsibilities under the supervision of qualified College and school personnel. Additionally, each candidate participates in a Senior Seminar that meets once a week during the student teaching experience. Throughout the student teaching experience, a number of formative assessments are conducted including a formative midterm assessment that is identical to the final assessment. The candidate's cooperating teacher provides a summative assessment of the candidate's competence through the completion of the performance checklist where, once again, a minimum rating of 2 on the 4-point scale is necessary for each item. In addition to this minimum rating on each item, the candidate must also attain an overall average of at least 2.5 on the 4-point scale. In the candidate's senior seminar class, two key assessments are included. The first is a reflective research paper where the candidate addresses an aspect of the Conceptual Framework. The reflective research paper is also presented in class. The second key assessment is the completion of a final professional portfolio that includes at least two artifacts for each of the Illinois Professional Teaching Standards, three artifacts that

address the Illinois Core Technology Standards and three artifacts that address the Illinois Core Language Arts Standards (total of 28 artifacts). In the secondary/special fields, the candidate's senior seminar instructor evaluates this final portfolio. In Elementary Education, each candidate's portfolio is scored by two senior seminar professors and the average rating used to determine acceptability. Again, each item must be scored at least 2 on the 4-point scale and an overall average of 2.5 must be attained to have the portfolio considered as acceptable. Each candidate must deposit a copy of his/her final portfolio with the Department of Education where it will be maintained for a period of seven (7) years. Finally, each candidate must maintain at least a minimum grade point average of 2.50 in his/her major, Education classes, and overall.

In list form, each candidate must meet the following criteria in order to continue in the program:

Performance Criteria

1. Minimum GPA of 2.50 in all courses.
2. Minimum GPA of 2.50 in all Education classes including student teaching.
3. Minimum GPA of 2.50 in all classes in the candidate's major.
4. Acceptable performance in the student teaching experience as indicated by the performance checklist completed by the candidate's cooperating teacher and by the final grade assigned by the college supervisor.
5. Acceptable completion of a professional teaching portfolio that includes artifacts indicating how the candidate has met the Illinois Professional Teaching Standards, the Illinois Core Language Arts Standards, and the Illinois Core Technology Standards (28 total artifacts).
6. Acceptable completion and presentation of a Reflective Research Paper addressing at least one aspect of the Conceptual Framework.

5. Assessment Point Five: Program completion. The Registrar of Wheaton College and the Department of Education complete the fifth and final formal assessment of each candidate. As noted in earlier evaluations, the candidate must maintain a GPA of 2.50 in his/her major, Education classes, and overall. Additionally, the candidate must complete all Wheaton College general education and major requirements. These final assessments are completed through a transcript evaluation completed by the Registrar. Finally, each candidate must successfully complete State of Illinois Assessment of Professional Teaching. Once all of these requirements are met, a candidate is considered to be a program completer and he/she will be recommended to the State of Illinois for certification.

In list form, a candidate is considered to be a program completer when the following criteria are met:

Performance Criteria

1. Final GPA of 2.50 in all courses.

2. Final GPA of 2.50 in all Education courses.
3. Final GPA of 2.50 in all courses in the candidate's major.
4. Completion of all Wheaton College general education and major requirements.
5. Successful completion of the State of Illinois Assessment of Professional Teaching.

Other Criteria

1. Payment of all fees due.
2. Completion of State of Illinois Certification application.

Assessment of the Conceptual Framework

As a living document that provides the overall guidance for WheTEP, the unit's conceptual framework must be assessed on a regular basis. Changes or updates to the conceptual framework may be proposed by any member of the Teacher Education Advisory Committee. Additionally, input from selected school partners, candidates, graduates, and employers regarding the conceptual framework and other matters that affect the program is solicited annually through a mailing requesting formal feedback. At its annual spring meeting, the Teacher Education Advisory Committee will consider any suggested changes to the conceptual framework and make appropriate revisions.

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