

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Teacher as Reflective Practitioner

Catawba College

“The Mission of the Teacher Education Unit is to prepare reflective teachers who possess the professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for effectively teaching students in a diverse and global society.”

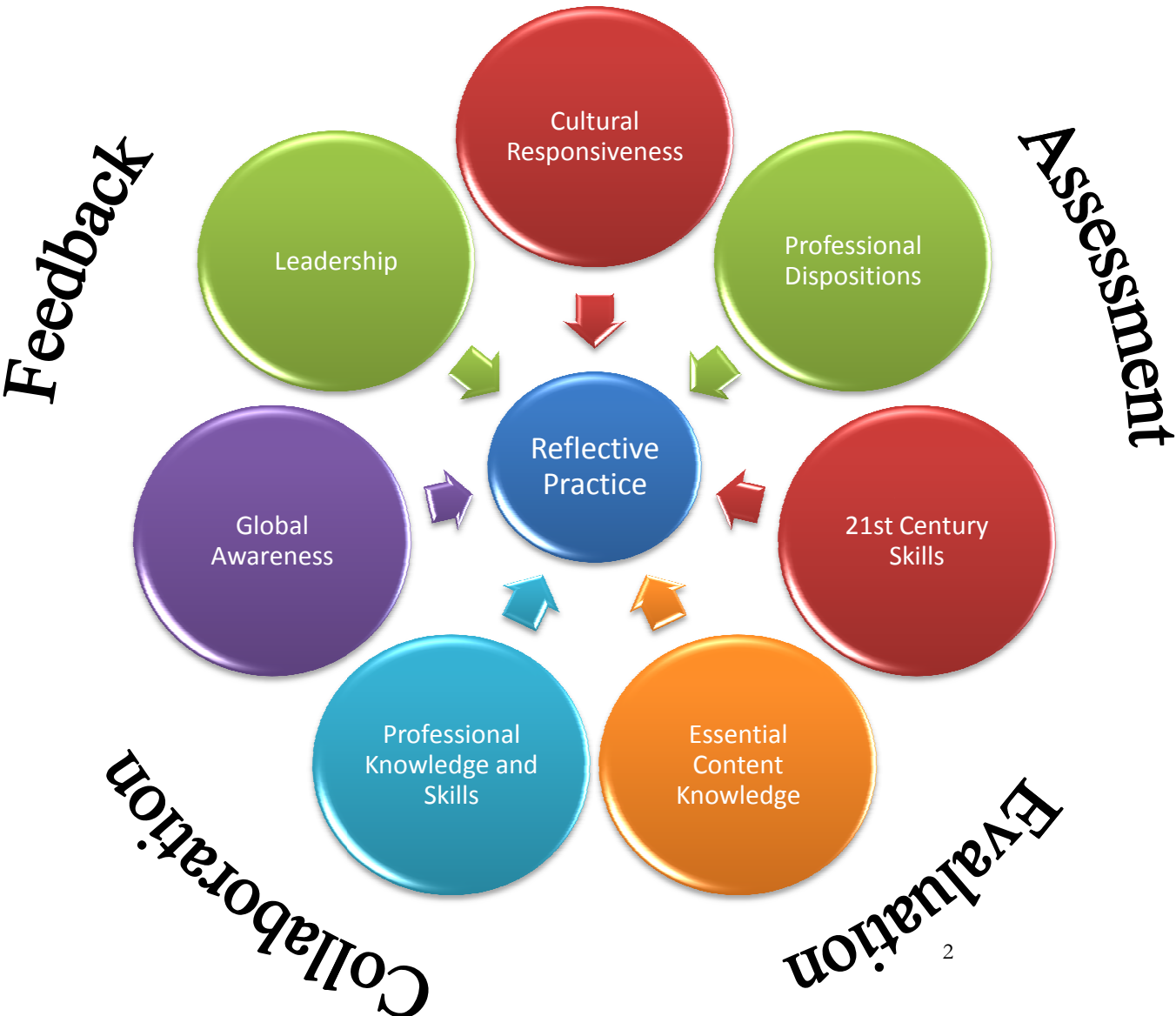
The vision of the Department of Teacher Education is to provide a conceptually coherent teacher education program, which prepares teachers to understand the world’s interconnectedness and to create classrooms that reflect a culture of learning and empower all students to contribute to our diverse and global society. This vision is translated into action as we conduct our mission of preparing reflective teachers who possess the skills necessary for becoming effective teachers who lead in their classrooms and schools and engage in practical action in order to contribute to the transformation of schooling and learning.

The conceptual framework, *Teacher as Reflective Practitioner*, provides the philosophical foundation for Catawba College’s teacher education undergraduate programs and the advanced master’s degree program in elementary education. Rooted in the rich tradition of a college that blends liberal studies with career preparation for the 21st century is a new commitment to prepare leaders for a globally competitive society. We view teacher preparation as a multidimensional, dynamic process of assisting pre-service and in-service teachers in acquiring global awareness, cultural responsiveness, leadership, 21st century skills, professional knowledge and skills, essential content knowledge, and professional dispositions. A diagram representing this view of teacher preparation can be found on the next page.

Feedback and evaluation about performance in each of these areas are received from college faculty and school-based partners as a candidate progresses through the program. Professional growth occurs as the pre-service or in-service teacher engages in scaffolded experiences, collaborates with other professionals and members of the educational community, and reflects upon practice. Optimal professional growth takes place within the context of a supportive school culture, a commitment to diversity, and a philosophy rooted in the belief that all students can learn. The assessment and evaluation of how well the unit is accomplishing its mission ultimately center on how well it is preparing each candidate as a reflective practitioner. The assessment of the teacher education undergraduate and graduate programs, candidates, and program completers is a cooperative endeavor of the teacher education faculty, specialty area faculty, public school partners, and current students and program completers.

The general studies core of Catawba College's undergraduate program consists of traditional subject matter and the reading, writing, quantitative thinking, and reasoning skills associated with a sound basic education. Examination of enduring human concerns and transmission of our cultural heritage are central to the general studies component of all Catawba programs. We strive to educate the rational, competent citizen while giving attention to the interests and needs of individual students — to develop in our students an appreciation of that which has gone before and an abiding interest in continued learning, which is consistent with our rapidly changing world.

Reflection



The fundamental ideals expressed in Jerome Bruner's *The Process of Education* (1977) are not only a significant part of what we teach our students in regard to curriculum development but are also among the ideals that we followed in developing the professional component of the program in teacher education. More specifically, we have sought to provide a teacher preparatory curriculum that counters our pre-service teachers' preexisting schemas about teaching; restructures their fundamental notions of teaching and learning; encourages metacognition and intuitive and analytical thinking; and is relevant and engaging. This professional process continues on a developmental path as experienced teachers expand on their pedagogical knowledge and skills of inquiry.

Readiness for learning to be a teacher implies that we require prospective teachers to move from the simple to the more complex understandings of what teaching involves. Prior to entering the program they take introductory courses that provide a broad view of the purposes of schools and the needs of children and adolescents and the application of emerging technologies to educational practice. Once they are admitted into the program, they experience a "spiral curriculum" in which they are presented fundamental principles of teaching and learning that are frequently revisited in their professional courses. Consistent with recommendations in *Educating School Teachers* (Levine, 2006) and *Preparing Teachers for a Changing World* (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005), the program design provides for curricular coherence and balance and integrates strategies across courses and field placements, which has a greater impact on the deliberation of practice for preservice teachers.

Theories of Teaching and Learning and *Learning Environments and Professional Practice* are two courses that present a comprehensive view of the program's fundamental structures. In *Theories of Teaching and Learning* the teacher candidates study the theories and research related to teaching and learning and their relationship to instruction and assessment in public school settings. They explore how theories of teaching and learning inform professional practice and thus provide a foundation for the planning, implementation, and assessment of instruction. Particular attention is paid to helping students understand the theoretical rationale for 21st century skills and 21st century assessments. In *Learning Environments and Professional Practice* teacher candidates study effective learning environments, diversity, motivation, and classroom management. They explore how quality instructional strategies, such as cooperative learning and differentiation enhance the learning environment. Teacher candidates examine the importance of ethical behavior, collaboration within the educational environment and community, and professional development opportunities and how these behaviors affect professional practice. A concerted effort is made to coordinate the methodology taught in the methods classes with the learning theories being taught in *Theories of Teaching and Learning* and *Learning Environments and Professional Practice*. Teacher candidates acquire a repertoire of instructional approaches aimed at addressing multiple needs and content areas (Joyce, Weil, & Calhoun, 2009).

Teacher candidates engage in a variety of simulated and real-life experiences that require them to use both their analytical and intuitive thinking skills. They learn analytic approaches to planning and use various problem-solving heuristics and algorithms. They use these approaches when planning lessons and units, and they implement their plans both in the college classrooms and in the field. They develop intuitive thinking skills as they observe their college-based and school-based educators teach model lessons. These observations help them recognize how experienced teachers use their knowledge of the content, the social context, and the diverse learning, social, and cultural needs of their pupils when making instructional decisions that may involve modifying prescribed steps or making radical changes.

The teacher education programs, both undergraduate and graduate, seek to make learning relevant, practical, and engaging. The programs utilize 21st century technology, research, discussions, and large and small group activities that employ problem solving and collaboration. These strategies provide prospective teachers with opportunities to synthesize information and skills through application to simulated and real-life settings. Students are encouraged to go beyond the traditional methods of teaching and to implement multimodal communicative experiences (The New London Group, 1996; Jewitt & Kress, 2003). By design, teacher candidates are then asked to reflect on the results of their efforts as a means of developing and improving their instructional abilities and applying technology. As a continuance of the spiral curriculum, graduate students as practicing teachers revisit and extend major pedagogical and psychological concepts through study, application, collaboration, and reflection on practice.

Montie, York-Barr, and Kronberg (1998) defined reflective practice as “cognitive processes and an open perspective that involve a deliberate pause to examine beliefs, goals, and practices in order to gain new or deeper understanding that leads to actions that improve the lives of students” (p. 9). Reflection serves as a bridge between theory and practice. Grounded in frame analysis it is problem-solving that involves describing situations and problems; identifying understandings that support or refute teaching and learning behaviors; and forming and testing hypotheses (Dewey, 1933; Kennedy, 1983; Schön, 1983; Valli, 1997). While our prospective and practicing teachers may at first follow a prescribed order of how to reflect formally upon a teaching experience, we recognize that reflection cannot be reduced to a systematic series of steps. Many times reflection is spontaneous, blending thought and action (Schön, 1987; Tremmel, 1993). Effective teachers must be eclectic in the way that they approach reflection.

Our program blends elements of the **five different traditions of reflective practice** as described by Zeichner and Liston (1996). We begin with the **generic tradition**, which describes reflection as an end in itself. In an introductory course prior to admission into the teacher education programs, our prospective teachers observe in classrooms from grades K-12. They report on their observations, but the substance of what is reported is limited to description. Other pre-admission reflections involving experiences in teaching and observation vary in substance with regard to issues of content, quality and context.

Our goal is to assist students in becoming more intuitive, analytical, and substantive as they reflect upon their observational and teaching experiences. This includes drawing from and blending academic, social efficiency, developmentalist, and social reconstructivist traditions of reflection.

The **academic tradition** stresses teacher knowledge of the academic content including the structures of the discipline and its tools of inquiry. Furthermore, this tradition stresses understanding of related pedagogy. The foundation for reflection on content pedagogy is built in the methods courses and comes to fruition as the prospective and practicing teachers create and reflect upon evidences of content knowledge, which is assessed by specialty area faculty.

The **social efficiency tradition** stresses awareness of what research says and appropriate application of generic teaching models based on an individual’s teaching experience, intuition, and values. Prospective and practicing teachers observe and reflect upon simulated and actual applications of varying teacher models. When they teach, they use thoroughly researched recognized methods. The when, where, and how of using these methods are frequently the basis of their discussions with their school-based and college-based educators. Both undergraduate and graduate candidates create evidences that demonstrate effective design of classroom instruction based on research-verified practice. For undergraduate candidates, this is demonstrated through their creation of a comprehensive unit plan, which is used to assess their positive impact on student learning. Graduate candidates create an action research report that demonstrates the fulfillment of the North Carolina Standards for Graduate Teacher Candidates.

The **developmentalist tradition** emphasizes reflection upon what and how pupils should be taught based on their backgrounds, interests, understandings, and developmental levels. Requirements in various psychology and education courses include writing descriptive reflections on child and adolescent behaviors and the societal and classroom environments that contribute to these behaviors. Similarly, a developmentalist orientation is used to inform and guide the prospective and practicing teachers as they plan, teach, and reflect upon how to make learning appropriate.

The **social reconstructionist tradition** emphasizes social, political, and ideological realities that influence classroom procedures as well as the overall learning community. These considerations are a part of the discussions in all of the professional courses. They are the central foci in the methods courses, student teaching experience, and the graduate core courses. Both undergraduate and graduate candidates develop evidences that demonstrate their leadership and collaboration efforts in school and community settings.

The teacher education faculty agrees that values and valuing comprise an essential element of our programs. We have reached consensus, therefore, on the following **belief statements** that shape our understanding of the purpose of schools, the role of the teachers who work there, and the programs we provide to prepare teachers for the profession and for life in general.

We believe in the worth and dignity of each and every individual in our diverse and global society.

We believe that it is important to live an examined life including an understanding of self and one's values.

We believe that it is important to have a sense of responsibility to self and to others that includes a commitment to civic life.

We believe that everyone can learn – in some way and at some level.

We believe that knowledge is empowering and that it is acquired through an educational process which is lifelong and which takes place in many settings, both formal and informal, both planned and serendipitous.

We believe that education involves intellectual, social, emotional, and spiritual growth that occurs when individuals strive to make sense out of life's experiences. This implies a dynamic process through which an individual engages in remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and finally creating new patterns and alternative solutions to daily challenges.

We believe that schooling is a part of the educational experience, which provides an organized approach to learning about the knowledge accumulated through the ages by human societies; to developing the processes and abilities needed to understand and use that knowledge; and to evaluating that knowledge as a basis for making decisions about life and living.

We believe the purpose of schools, as one of society's major institutions, is to prepare all citizens to lead productive, satisfying lives within a global society embedded in a rapidly changing world. This implies society's reliance on the schools to contribute, in conjunction with other major social institutions such as family and religion, to the development of a citizenry that is informed, is concerned about society as a whole, is participative, and is cognizant of the basic tenets of democracy and republicanism. This belief further implies the school's role in contributing to the development of a citizenry that possesses an appreciation for diversity built upon understanding the sources of that diversity. This citizenry possesses the ability to be flexible without compromising standards and possesses resourcefulness, the ability to see possibilities, and the willingness to be risk-takers.

We believe a strong liberal arts education provides an appropriate foundation for preparing teachers for schools. This implies academic study of sufficient depth and breadth, and of such design, that students grasp not only the major concepts or ideas of the disciplines but also the relationships among the disciplines.

We believe that to communicate and collaborate effectively are essential skills for teachers.

We believe the effective teacher is a professional who possesses integrity; passions for teaching and learning; knowledge and expertise in teaching one or more of the recognized disciplines to others; appreciation for diversity; the ability to be a reflective practitioner within an educational setting; and the strength to make wise decisions and take action, assuming a leadership role when appropriate.

The core of beliefs outlined above provides the foundation for a teacher education program that is in keeping with the mission of the College as set forth in the *Catawba College Catalog* and *The Graduate Catalog*. Catawba College's teacher education program subscribes to both state and national program standards. The Teacher Education Unit Assessment System measures and tracks teacher candidate outcomes from matriculation to continuing licensure status. Many program completers continue professional development by pursuing graduate

studies, attaining NBPTS certification, and serving as departmental advisory committee members, mentors, and cooperating teachers. Graduates of the M.Ed. program are also followed. Many have continued in leadership roles, and some have pursued additional graduate studies. Catawba students and faculty frequently engage in service opportunities in schools and in the community at large. Students and faculty are encouraged to expand their scholarly activities by participation in conferences, consortia, and professional organizations.

We believe, therefore, that it is essential for the reflective practitioner to be at the center of the program. This emphasis on the growth and development of the individual, on acquiring knowledge through experiences, which call for the blending of content, skills, and dispositions, is consistent with the College's Mission Statement, which says, *“Catawba College is committed to providing students an education rich in personal attention that blends the knowledge and competencies of liberal studies with career preparation. Catawba College draws strength from Judeo-Christian values, sustains a dynamic community of learners and seeks to unite a diverse population of students, faculty and staff as active co-participants in scholarship and service. Catawba College prepares students to reach their highest potential while becoming responsible citizens with a zeal to enrich human life.”*

The Catawba College programs to prepare reflective practitioners are designed (1) to provide the opportunity to acquire the essential knowledge and skills needed for effective instruction, (2) to provide the guided experiences needed to combine and adapt knowledge and skills through reflective techniques into competent teaching practices, and (3) to provide opportunities to develop awareness of the relationships of personal attitudes and characteristics to the discharge of professional responsibility and professional growth and development.

The knowledge, skills, and dispositions (attitudes and characteristics) set forth in the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards and the Partnership for 21st Century Skills are those we believe to be essential for the development of reflective teaching practices and professional dispositions.

North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards

Standard 1: Teachers demonstrate leadership.

1a. Teachers lead in their classrooms.

- 1a.1 Evaluates the progress of students toward high school graduation using a variety of assessment data measuring goals of the North Carolina Standard Course of Study.
- 1a.2 Draws on appropriate data to develop classroom and instructional plans.
- 1a.3 Maintains a safe and orderly classroom that facilitates student learning.
- 1a.4 Uses positive management of student behavior, effective communication for defusing and deescalating disruptive or dangerous behavior, and safe and appropriate seclusion and restraint.

1b. Teachers demonstrate leadership in the school.

- 1b.1 Engages in collaborative and collegial professional learning activities.
- 1b.2 Identifies the characteristics or critical elements of a school improvement plan.
- 1b.3 Displays the ability to use appropriate data to identify areas of need that should be addressed in a school improvement plan.

1c. Teachers lead the teaching profession.

- 1c.1 Participates in professional development and growth activities.
- 1c.2 Begins to develop professional relationships and networks.

1d. Teachers advocate for schools and students.

- 1d.1 Implements and adheres to policies and practices positively affecting students' learning.

1e. Teachers demonstrate high ethical standards.

- 1e.1 Upholds the *Code of Ethics for North Carolina Educators* and the *Standards for Professional Conduct*.

Standard 2: Teachers establish a respectful environment for a diverse population of students.

2a. Teachers provide an environment in which each child has a positive, nurturing relationship with caring adults.

- 2a.1 Maintains a positive and nurturing learning environment.

2b. Teachers embrace diversity in the school community and in the world.

- 2b.1 Appropriately uses materials or lessons that counteract stereotypes and acknowledges the contributions of all cultures.
- 2b.2 Incorporates different points of view in instruction.
- 2b.3 Understands the influence of diversity and plans instruction accordingly.

2c. Teachers treat students as individuals.

- 2c.1 Maintains a learning environment that conveys high expectations of every student.

2d. Teachers adapt their teaching for the benefit of students with special needs.

2d.1 Cooperates with specialists and uses resources to support the special learning needs of all students.

2d.2 Uses research-verified strategies to provide effective learning activities for students with special needs.

2e. Teachers work collaboratively with the families and significant adults in the lives of their students.

2e.1 Communicates and collaborates with the home and community for the benefit of students.

Standard 3: Teachers know the content they teach.

3a. Teachers align their instruction with the *North Carolina Standard Course of Study*.

3a.1 Develops and applies lessons based on the *North Carolina Standard Course of Study*.

3a.2 Integrates effective literacy instruction throughout the curriculum and across content areas to enhance students' learning.

3b. Teachers know the content appropriate to their teaching specialty.

3b.1 Demonstrates an appropriate level of content knowledge in the teaching specialty.

3b.2 Encourages students to investigate the content area to expand their knowledge and satisfy their natural curiosity.

3c. Teachers recognize the interconnectedness of content areas/discipline.

3c.1 Demonstrates knowledge of links between grade/subject and the *North Carolina Standard Course of Study* by relating content to other disciplines.

3c.2 Relates global awareness to the subject.

3d. Teachers make instruction relevant to students.

3d.1 Integrates 21st century skills and content in instruction.

Standard 4: Teachers facilitate learning for their students.

4a. Teachers know the ways in which learning takes place, and they know the appropriate levels of intellectual, physical, social, and emotional development of their students.

4a.1 Identifies developmental levels of individual students and plans instruction accordingly.

4a.2 Assesses and uses resources needed to address strengths and weaknesses of students.

4b. Teachers plan instruction appropriate for their students.

4b.1 Collaborates with colleagues to monitor student performance and make instruction responsive to cultural differences and individual learning needs.

4c. Teachers use a variety of instructional methods.

4c.1 Uses a variety of appropriate methods and materials to meet the needs of all students.

4d. Teachers integrate and utilize technology in their instruction.

4d.1 Integrates technology with instruction to maximize students' learning.

4e. Teachers help students develop critical-thinking and problem-solving skills.

4e.1 Integrates specific instruction that helps students develop the ability to apply processes and strategies for critical thinking and problem solving.

4f. Teachers help students to work in teams and develop leadership qualities.

4f.1 Organizes student learning teams for the purpose of developing cooperation, collaboration, and student leadership.

4g. Teachers communicate effectively.

4g.1 Uses a variety of methods to communicate effectively with all students.

4g.2 Consistently encourages and supports students to articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively.

4h. Teachers use a variety of methods to assess what each student has learned.

4h.1 Uses multiple indicators, both formative and summative, to monitor and evaluate students' progress and to inform instruction.

4h.2 Provides evidence that students attain 21st century knowledge, skills and dispositions.

Standard 5: Teachers reflect on their practice.

5a. Teachers analyze student learning.

5a.1 Uses data to provide ideas about what can be done to improve students' learning.

5b. Teachers link professional growth to their professional goals.

5b.1 Participates in recommended activities for professional learning and development.

5c. Teachers function effectively in a complex, dynamic environment.

5c.1 Uses a variety of research-verified approaches to improve teaching and learning.

Professional Dispositions

1. Competent teachers demonstrate the belief that everyone can learn – in some way and at some level. They value the worth and dignity of each individual and strive to provide equal opportunities for all.
2. Competent teachers display ethical behavior, as evidenced by fairness, honesty, and integrity. They act responsibly with the interests of the larger educational community in mind. They are committed to following the Code of Ethics for North Carolina Educators.
3. Competent teachers conduct themselves in a professional manner, employing proper etiquette, displaying a positive attitude, and showing respect for themselves and others.
4. Competent teachers learn from and work collaboratively with individuals representing diverse cultures, religions, values, points of view, and lifestyles in a spirit of mutual respect and open dialogue in personal, work, and community contexts.
5. Competent teachers demonstrate the ability to work effectively, respectfully, and collaboratively within the educational community. They exercise flexibility as they adapt to changes in roles, responsibilities, and priorities. They reflect upon and incorporate feedback effectively and deal positively with setbacks and criticism.
6. Competent teachers reflect critically and reason effectively while analyzing and evaluating interacting factors, outcomes, and alternative points of view that eventually contribute to solving problems. They create new and worthwhile ideas, demonstrate originality and inventiveness in work, and act on or adapt creative ideas to make tangible and useful contributions to the educational community.
7. Competent teachers inspire others by example and selflessness. They are willing to assume a leadership role when appropriate.
8. Competent teachers demonstrate an understanding of and a commitment to civic life by staying informed at local, state, national, and global levels.
9. Competent teachers demonstrate the initiative to advance their skill levels and the commitment to learning as a lifelong process.

Hurst, B., & Reding, G. (2009). *What every teacher should know about professionalism in teaching* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Pearson Education.

Partnership for 21st Century Skills. (2009). *P21 framework definitions document*. Retrieved from http://www.p21.org/documents/P21_Framework_Definitions.pdf

Catawba College's Conceptual Framework
Correlation between the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards and
NCATE Standard 1: Candidate Knowledge, Skills, and Professional Dispositions

- NCATE Standard 1a. Content Knowledge for Teacher Candidates
- NCATE Standard 1b. Pedagogical Content Knowledge and Skills for Teacher Candidates
- NCATE Standard 1c. Professional and Pedagogical Knowledge and Skills for Teacher Candidates
- NCATE Standard 1d. Student Learning for Teacher Candidates
- NCATE Standard 1g. Professional Dispositions for All Candidates

North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards	NCATE Standard 1				
	1a	1b	1c	1d	1g
Standard 1: Teachers demonstrate leadership.			✓	✓	✓
1a. Teachers lead in their classrooms.			✓	✓	✓
1a.1 Evaluates the progress of students toward high school graduation using a variety of assessment data measuring goals of the North Carolina Standard Course of Study.			✓	✓	
1a.2 Draws on appropriate data to develop classroom and instructional plans.			✓	✓	
1a.3 Maintains a safe and orderly classroom that facilitates student learning.					✓
1a.4 Uses positive management of student behavior, effective communication for defusing and deescalating disruptive or dangerous behavior, and safe and appropriate seclusion and restraint.					✓
1b. Teachers demonstrate leadership in the school.			✓	✓	
1b.1 Engages in collaborative and collegial professional learning activities.			✓	✓	
1b.2 Identifies the characteristics or critical elements of a school improvement plan.			✓		
1b.3 Displays the ability to use appropriate data to identify areas of need that should be addressed in a school improvement plan.			✓	✓	
1c. Teachers lead the teaching profession.			✓	✓	
1c.1 Participates in professional development and growth activities.			✓	✓	
1c.2 Begins to develop professional relationships and networks.			✓	✓	
1d. Teachers advocate for schools and students.				✓	✓
1d.1 Implements and adheres to policies and practices positively affecting students' learning.				✓	✓
1e. Teachers demonstrate high ethical standards.					✓
1e.1 Upholds the Code of Ethics for North Carolina Educators and the Standards for Professional Conduct.					✓
Standard 2: Teachers establish a respectful environment for a diverse population of students.		✓	✓		✓
2a. Teachers provide an environment in which each child has a positive, nurturing relationship with caring adults.					✓
2a.1 Maintains a positive and nurturing learning environment.					✓
2b. Teachers embrace diversity in the school community and in the world.			✓		✓
2b.1 Appropriately uses materials or lessons that counteract stereotypes and acknowledges the contributions of all cultures.			✓		✓
2b.2 Incorporates different points of view in instruction.			✓		✓

North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards	NCATE Standard 1				
	1a	1b	1c	1d	1g
2b.3 Understands the influence of diversity and plans instruction accordingly.			✓		✓
2c. Teachers treat students as individuals.			✓		✓
2c.1 Maintains a learning environment that conveys high expectations of every student.			✓		✓
2d. Teachers adapt their teaching for the benefit of students with special needs.		✓	✓	✓	✓
2d.1 Cooperates with specialists and uses resources to support the special learning needs of all students.			✓	✓	✓
2d.2 Uses research-verified strategies to provide effective learning activities for students with special needs.		✓		✓	✓
2e. Teachers work collaboratively with the families and significant adults in the lives of their students.			✓		✓
2e.1 Communicates and collaborates with the home and community for the benefit of students.			✓		✓
Standard 3: Teachers know the content they teach.	✓	✓			
3a. Teachers align their instruction with the <i>North Carolina Standard Course of Study</i>.	✓	✓			
3a.1 Develops and applies lessons based on the <i>North Carolina Standard Course of Study</i> .	✓	✓			
3a.2 Integrates effective literacy instruction throughout the curriculum and across content areas to enhance students' learning.	✓	✓			
3b. Teachers know the content appropriate to their teaching specialty.	✓	✓			
3b.1 Demonstrates an appropriate level of content knowledge in the teaching specialty.	✓	✓			
3b.2 Encourages students to investigate the content area to expand their knowledge and satisfy their natural curiosity.		✓			
3c. Teachers recognize the interconnectedness of content areas/discipline.	✓	✓			
3c.1 Demonstrates knowledge of links between grade/subject and the <i>North Carolina Standard Course of Study</i> by relating content to other disciplines.	✓	✓			
3c.2 Relates global awareness to the subject.		✓			
3d. Teachers make instruction relevant to students.		✓			
3d.1 Integrates 21 st century skills and content in instruction.		✓			
Standard 4: Teachers facilitate learning for their students.		✓	✓	✓	
4a. Teachers know the ways in which learning takes place, and they know the appropriate levels of intellectual, physical, social, and emotional development of their students.		✓	✓		
4a.1 Identifies developmental levels of individual students and plans instruction accordingly.		✓	✓		
4a.2 Assesses and uses resources needed to address strengths and weaknesses of students.		✓	✓		
4b. Teachers plan instruction appropriate for their students.		✓	✓	✓	
4b.1 Collaborates with colleagues to monitor student performance and make instruction responsive to cultural differences and individual learning needs.		✓	✓	✓	
4c. Teachers use a variety of instructional methods.		✓	✓	✓	
4c.1 Uses a variety of appropriate methods and materials to meet the needs of all students.		✓	✓	✓	
4d. Teachers integrate and utilize technology in their instruction.		✓			
4d.1 Integrates technology with instruction to maximize students' learning.		✓			
4e. Teachers help students develop critical-thinking and problem-solving skills.		✓			

North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards		NCATE Standard				
		1a	1b	1c	1d	1g
4e.1	Integrates specific instruction that helps students develop the ability to apply processes and strategies for critical thinking and problem solving.		✓			
4f.	Teachers help students to work in teams and develop leadership qualities.		✓			
4f.1	Organizes student learning teams for the purpose of developing cooperation, collaboration, and student leadership.		✓			
4g.	Teachers communicate effectively.		✓		✓	
4g.1	Uses a variety of methods to communicate effectively with all students.		✓		✓	
4g.2	Consistently encourages and supports students to articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively.		✓		✓	
4h.	Teachers use a variety of methods to assess what each student has learned.		✓		✓	✓
4h.1	Uses multiple indicators, both formative and summative, to monitor and evaluate students' progress and to inform instruction.		✓		✓	
4h.2	Provides evidence that students attain 21 st century knowledge, skills and dispositions.		✓		✓	✓
Standard 5: Teachers reflect on their practice.				✓	✓	✓
5a.	Teachers analyze student learning.			✓	✓	
5a.1	Uses data to provide ideas about what can be done to improve students' learning.			✓	✓	
5b.	Teachers link professional growth to their professional goals.			✓	✓	✓
5b.1	Participates in recommended activities for professional learning and development.			✓	✓	✓
5c.	Teachers function effectively in a complex, dynamic environment.			✓	✓	✓
5c.1	Uses a variety of research-verified approaches to improve teaching and learning.			✓	✓	✓

Master of Education Conceptual Framework

Many of our beliefs regarding competent teachers are the expected outcomes of both the undergraduate and graduate programs. The master's degree program in elementary education provides a continuum of professional growth as it prepares *practicing* teachers as reflective practitioners. The graduate program builds upon the essential content knowledge and professional knowledge and skills gained through undergraduate studies and through classroom teaching experiences. The goals of the Master of Education (M.Ed.) program are based on North Carolina's *Standards for Graduate Teacher Candidates* (North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards Commission, 2009) which are parallel to and expand upon the *North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards*. These are advanced standards, used as guidelines in preparing teacher leaders who facilitate the creation of healthy educational environments, have deep knowledge and skills in their content and curriculum, use research in making decisions about effective practice for student learning, and are continuous, reflective practitioners who model the values of lifelong learning, critical thinking, problem-solving and innovation.

Standard 1: Teacher Leadership

Teacher leaders assume the roles and responsibilities of collaborative leaders in schools and communities. Teachers demonstrate leadership in their classrooms, schools and professional organizations; they advocate for students and effective educational practices and policies; and they are role models for ethical leadership. Teacher leaders will know and be able to

- Demonstrate effective ongoing communication, collaboration, and team-building among colleagues.
- Facilitate mentoring and coaching with novice teachers.
- Set goals and establish priorities while promoting educational initiatives that positively affect student learning.
- Participate in professional learning communities.

Standard 2: Respectful Educational Environments

Teacher leaders model leadership by establishing a positive and productive environment for a diverse population of students, their families, and the community. Teachers are knowledgeable about cultures and global issues and how they are contextualized locally. Teachers help colleagues develop effective strategies for students with special needs. They encourage positive, constructive relations among colleagues and students. Teacher leaders

- Facilitate the development of inviting, respectful, supportive, inclusive, and flexible educational communities.
- Create collaborative partnerships with families, schools, and communities to promote a positive school culture.
- Facilitate and model caring and respectful treatment of individuals within the learning community.
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of diverse world cultures and global issues.
- Encourage high expectations for all students.
- Collaboratively design and implement curriculum and instruction that is responsive to learner differences.

Standard 3: Content and Curriculum Expertise

Teacher leaders have a deep knowledge of the subjects they teach and understanding of curriculum theory and development. They value collaboration and the interconnectedness of disciplines. They understand the importance of curriculum relevance in engaging students in content. Teacher leaders

- Demonstrate in-depth knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
- Model the integration of 21st century content and skills into educational practices.

- Develop relevant, rigorous curriculum.

Standard 4: Student Learning

Teacher leaders facilitate student learning through evidence-based practice informed by research. They understand and apply research in child and adolescent development, cognitive development, and general and specialized pedagogy. They encourage critical reading, writing and thinking in the learning process. They foster instructional and evaluation methods that embrace variety and authenticity. They promote student reflection and self-assessment. They encourage colleagues and students to take on leadership roles and work in teams. Teacher leaders

- Seek out and use existing research to inform school practices.
- Design action research to investigate and improve student learning and school policies and practices.
- Model technology integration that supports student learning.
- Critically analyze student and school performance data to determine needs and plan instruction that is rigorous, coherent, and substantiated within a theoretical and philosophical base.

Standard 5: Reflection

Teacher leaders contribute to systematic, critical analysis of learning in their classrooms and beyond. They are lifelong learners who model and support ongoing professional development. Teachers embrace critical thinking, problem solving, and innovation. Teacher leaders

- Promote an educational culture that values reflective practice.
- Model the development of meaningful professional goals.
- Model personal and professional reflection to extend student learning and school improvement

THE NCATE UNIT STANDARDS RELEVANT TO ADVANCED DEGREES

The Catawba College teacher education programs are accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). The *NCATE Unit Standards* (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, 2008) serve as additional guidelines for the goals the College aspires to achieve for both the overall program quality and for the master's teacher candidates. The unit aims to have the master's candidates receive at the minimum acceptable/proficient ratings or target/accomplished ratings in those NCATE sub-standards that are relevant to elementary teachers.

Standard 1: Candidate Knowledge, Skills, and Professional Dispositions

1a. Content Knowledge for Teacher Candidates

Acceptable: Candidates have an in-depth knowledge in the content they teach.

Target: Candidates are recognized experts in the content they teach.

1b. Pedagogical Content Knowledge and Skills for Teacher Candidates

Acceptable: Candidates demonstrate an in-depth understanding of the content of their field and of the theories related to pedagogy and learning. They are able to select and use a broad range of instructional strategies and technologies that promote students learning and are able to clearly explain the choices they make in their practice.

Target: Candidates have expertise in pedagogical content knowledge and share their expertise through leadership and mentoring roles in their schools and communities. They understand and address student preconceptions that hinder learning. They are able to critique research and theories related to pedagogy and learning. They are able to select and develop instructional strategies and technologies, based on research and experience, that help all students learn.

1c. Professional and Pedagogical Knowledge and Skills for Teacher Candidates

Acceptable: Candidates reflect on their practice and are able to identify their strengths and areas of needed improvement. They engage in professional activities. They have a thorough understanding of the school, family, and community contexts in which they work, and they collaborate with the professional community to create meaningful learning experiences for all students. They are aware of current research and policies related to schooling, teaching, learning, and best practices. They are able to analyze educational research and policies and can explain the implications for their own practice and for the profession.

Target: Candidates develop expertise in certain aspects of professional and pedagogical knowledge and contribute to the dialogue based on their research and experiences. They take on leadership roles in the professional community and collaborate with colleagues to contribute to school improvement and renewal.

1d. Student Learning for Teacher Candidates

Acceptable: Candidates have a thorough understanding of the major concepts and theories related to assessing student learning and regularly apply these in their practice. They analyze student, classroom, and school performance data and make data driven decisions about strategies for teaching and learning so that all students learn. They are aware of and utilize school and community resources that support student learning.

Target: Candidates have a thorough understanding of assessment. They analyze student, classroom, and school performance data and make data-driven decisions about strategies for teaching and learning so that all students learn. They collaborate with other professionals to identify and design strategies and interventions that support student learning.

1g. Professional Dispositions for All Candidates

Acceptable: Candidates are familiar with the professional dispositions delineated in professional, state, and institutional standards. Candidates demonstrate classroom behaviors that are consistent with the ideal of fairness and the belief that all students can learn. Their work with students, families, colleagues and communities reflects these professional dispositions.

Target: Candidates work with students, families, colleagues, and communities in ways that reflect the professional dispositions expected of professional educators as delineated in professional, state, and institutional standards. Candidates demonstrate classroom behaviors that create caring and supportive learning environments and encourage self-directed learning by all students. Candidates recognize when their own professional dispositions may need to be adjusted and are able to develop plans to do so.

Standard 2: Assessment System and Unit Evaluation

Candidates are kept abreast of their performance through formative feedback. They review their performance data with faculty and develop plans for improvement based on this data. In most courses, individual conferencing with faculty is encouraged and in the final three culminating courses is required of all candidates. Candidates contribute to data aimed at evaluating and improving candidate performance, the unit, and the graduate program. Current and former candidates are called upon for their recommendations aimed at program improvement.

Standard 3: Field Experiences and Clinical Practice

3b. Design, Implementation, and Evaluation of Field Experiences and Clinical Practice

Acceptable: Candidates participate in field experiences that require them to apply course work in

classroom settings, analyze student learning, and reflect on their practice in the context of theories on teaching and learning. They engage in structured activities that involve analysis of data, the use of technology and current research, and the application of knowledge related to students, families, and communities.

Target: Candidates participate in field experiences that require them to critique and synthesize educational theory related to classroom practice based on their own applied research. This research is theoretically based, involves the use of research and technology, and has real world applications.

The five propositions of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (2011) have similarly influenced our graduate program's conceptual framework. We have sought to have a positive impact upon helping our candidates meet the fundamental requirements and descriptors of proficient and accomplished teachers who

- are committed to students and their learning,
- know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students,
- are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning,
- think systematically about their practice and learn from experience, and
- are members of learning communities.

Diez and Blackwell (1999) identified from the National Board process three critical factors as having major implications in the improvement of master's programs: 1) teacher examination of their own practices, 2) the systematic raising and pursuance of questions, and 3) collaboration with others. These three factors have influenced Catawba College's graduate course and program requirements; therefore, in 2004, when the American Council on Education (ACE) recommended that National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) may be eligible for six hours of graduate credit (NBPTS, 2004), members of Catawba College's Department of Teacher Education, the Graduate Advisory Committee, and the Graduate Council approved the acceptance of six semester hours of credit for National Board Certification as substitution for the project-practicum series. In 2010, the master's program was revised. The number of required semester hours of credit was reduced from 36 to 33, and all students were required to complete the action research project (a six-semester hour culminating project), the same three bodies of governance chose to reduce the number of credits from six to three semester hours of credit for National Board Certification.

Upon examination of collective literature on reflective thinking as an essential practice for experienced educators, York-Barr, Sommers, Ghore, and Montie (2006) recommended the development of reflective educators who are "focused on student learning, committed, responsible, aware, thoughtful, inquiring, and action-oriented" (p. 16). They contended that reflective practice is not solely learned from experience gained in the field but must be developed under the guidance of other professionals committed to helping teachers examine their practices and develop their leadership potential.

The reflective skills of Catawba College's M.Ed. candidates are developed sequentially. These skills are first developed through class discussions and assignments. They participate in various practica and implement research projects upon which they have reflected both in writing and in oral sharing with classmates. By the time they design and implement their action research, they are able to follow a systematic approach toward achieving student progress and professional goals. Throughout the action research process, candidates reflect on student needs, theories, existing research findings, best practices, and implications of their own research findings. They model leadership and initiative as they exemplify problem-solving skills and critical analysis of student needs and teaching effectiveness. When these candidates create and deliver a multimedia presentation of their research project, they not only share what they have learned for the edification of others, but they have developed professional skills that will enable them to contribute effectively in future opportunities to share professionally. Moreover, they are

experienced in what Zeichner and Liston (1996) described as different traditions of reflective practices (i.e., academic, social efficiency, developmentalist, and social reconstructionist orientations to reflecting). More importantly, the reflective skills that are employed in producing these action research reports and their accompanying multi-media presentations are aimed at developing true reflective practitioners who will ultimately contribute to the improvement of their schools.

A third factor that distinguishes the graduate program from the undergraduate program is collaboration. Graduate classes are small, and over a period of three years, the graduate students become aware of the needs and strengths of each of their classmates and the problems that each faces in his or her own school settings. M.Ed. candidates participate in discussions, complete class assignments as group projects, and make class presentations. As predicted by York-Barr, Sommers, Ghore, and Montie (2006), through numerous collaborative experiences, candidates begin to develop a deeper understanding of their roles and identities, an increased sense of efficacy, stronger relationships and connections, and greater professionalism and voice.

We realize that collaboration goes beyond the classroom and the ability to share with fellow educators. It encompasses growth in introspective behavior that ultimately leads to cultural awareness and competence. A goal of the graduate program is to develop candidates who understand and appreciate our nation's diverse cultures and who expand their world views, so that they will be able to communicate and collaborate effectively with culturally diverse students and parents. Furthermore, collaboration and cultural respect are major elements in the nine professional dispositions that we require both our pre-service candidates and master's candidates to aim to achieve (Hurst, B., & Reding, G., 2009; Partnership for 21st Century Skills., 2009). They are required to reflect upon the following dispositions periodically as they progress through their programs:

10. I demonstrate my belief that everyone can learn – in some way and at some level. I value the worth and dignity of each individual and strive to provide equal opportunities for all.
11. I display ethical behavior, as evidenced by my fairness, honesty, and integrity. I act responsibly with the interests of the larger educational community in mind. I am committed to following the Code of Ethics for North Carolina Educators.
12. I conduct myself in a professional manner, employing proper etiquette, displaying a positive attitude, and showing respect for myself and others.
13. I learn from and work collaboratively with individuals representing diverse cultures, religions, values, points of view, and lifestyles in a spirit of mutual respect and open dialogue in personal, work, and community contexts.
14. I demonstrate the ability to work effectively, respectfully, and collaboratively within the educational community. I exercise flexibility as I adapt to changes in roles, responsibilities, and priorities. I reflect upon and incorporate feedback effectively and deal positively with setbacks and criticism.
15. I reflect critically and reason effectively while analyzing and evaluating interacting factors, outcomes, and alternative points of view that eventually contribute to solving problems. I create new and worthwhile ideas, demonstrate originality and inventiveness in work, and act on or adapt creative ideas to make tangible and useful contributions to the educational community.
16. I inspire others by example and selflessness. I am willing to assume a leadership role when appropriate.

17. I demonstrate an understanding of and a commitment to civic life by staying informed at local, state, national, and global levels.
18. I demonstrate the initiative to advance my skill levels and the commitment to learning as a lifelong process.

At the completion of our M.Ed. program, our graduate candidates present before the three-person evaluation panel their Action Research Report and accompanying multi-media presentation, both of which should demonstrate several of the above professional dispositions toward which they have strived. Candidates are also questioned regarding their growth in meeting these professional dispositions. They have been prepared to become school leaders and mentors to prospective, beginning, and career teachers and are expected to demonstrate their acceptance of the responsibility of serving as exemplary role models. For schools to meet the changing needs of society, teachers must be willing to act as change agents who collaborate within and outside of their schools in partnerships, networks, and other collaborative endeavors (Lieberman, 2000).

The extent to which our master's candidates have demonstrated these outcomes is assessed by a variety of measures outlined in the Unit Assessment System. The action research report and the accompanying multi-media presentation serve as the primary evidence that the unit is accomplishing its mission. Other sources of evidence include observations of performance by college faculty, grade point averages, the panel's evaluation of the action research report, candidates' evaluations of courses, and follow-up surveys of program completers and their employers. Documents such as course syllabi and action research reports support the theory, research, and experiential base on which the program is founded.

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