

DEVELOPMENT OF YOUR CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

INTRODUCTION

As a teacher, you will make hundreds of decisions every day—decisions about what should be taught, why it should be taught, when it should be taught, how it should be taught, why it should be taught, and to whom it should be taught. You make decisions that affect the learning of individual students and groups of students. You will make decisions that affect students' future learning and academic progress. All of these important decisions will be based on *your* knowledge, understanding, experience, purposes, values, attitudes, and beliefs. The better informed you are, the more likely you are to make sound, defensible decisions, and the less likely you are to make serious mistakes in judgment.

As you progress through your program of study, you will be acquiring essential knowledge and understandings about the profession, schools, diverse learners, how people learn, the environment for learning, curriculum, instruction, and evaluation. The basic concepts you acquire initially will become increasingly complex and content specific as you progress through your program of study. You will integrate all of this knowledge into a *conceptual framework for teaching and learning*. It will reflect who you are as a person and what you value, as well as what you know and understand. You will also have opportunities to observe and reflect on the effects of teacher decisions on real students in public school classrooms. During the senior internship, you will make teacher decisions and be responsible for the effects of those decisions on student learning and well-being. All of these experiences are intended to prepare you for a *successful transition* from the preservice phase to the induction phase of your professional career.

So, how does a person construct a conceptual framework? Easy. All that is required is a shift in mental attitude toward what you study in your courses, plus one important disposition or habit. First, the shift in mental attitude toward what you are learning in your courses is this: instead of checking off every assignment and every course as if it were a list of chores, own what you learn. Make it count. Make it worth the time and effort you put into it. Make it meaningful to you on your own terms. Think about what you are learning. The second step in conceptual framework development is the disposition or habit to put what you learn into your own words, preferably in writing. Writing is thinking. The act of writing about what you are learning or experiencing is a learning process called *critical reflection*. Thinking in writing organizes your mind and your thoughts. It also brings unanswered questions and unresolved issues to the surface of thought where they can be dealt with intelligently and consciously.

To support you in the process of conceptual framework development, you will be asked to write a critical reflection about at least one aspect of teaching and learning in different courses as you progress through your program. Table 1 shows the courses designated for conceptual framework development and the topics you will focus on for your written reflections. Your initial ideas will keep growing as you learn and experience more. Feel free to revise any

statement you write as many times as you wish. Revising your statements is evidence that you are continuing to grow and develop as a professional educator.

Table 1. Designated Courses and Topics for Conceptual Framework (CF) Development

CF Topics	School & Democracy	Learners	Diversity	Learning	Language	Curriculum	Instruction	Evaluation
Designated Courses	EDN 3020	EDN 3060/3070/ 3080/ 3090/3100	EDN 3500 EDN 4300 (SED 3000)	EDN 3500	EDN 4080/4090/ 4100/4190	ART 4000 ECE 3400 SCE 4000 EED 3840 MAT 4000 EDN 4760 PED 4000 SSE 4000 MUS 4050 EDN 3040 SED 3010/ 3020	ART 4000 ECE 3400 SCE 4000 EED 3840 MAT 4000 EDN 4760 PED 4000 SSE 4000 MUS 4050 EDN 4550 SED 4710/ 4700	ART 4000 ECE 3400 SCE 4000 EED 3840 MAT 4000 EDN 4760 PED 4000 SSE 4000 MUS 4050 EDN 4650

The questions you will be asked to reflect on for each course are presented in the following sections. You can write your responses in this file and save it to disk, or you can create separate files for each question and save them to disk. At midpoint in your program of study, you will be asked to share your responses with your program coordinator or advisor. He or she will determine whether or not you are making satisfactory progress in conceptual framework development. Your rating at midpoint will determine, in part, whether or not you are prepared for the senior internship, as shown in Figure 1 below. During the final semester of your program, you will finalize your conceptual framework for teaching and learning and present it in the preface of the Teacher Candidate Work Sample (TCWS). You will learn about the TCWS later in your upper division methods courses.

Figure 1. Program Progression Midpoint Evaluation

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK DEVELOPMENT	The teacher candidate has completed conceptual framework reflections to date and has saved them to disk.	The teacher candidate is integrating new knowledge, skills, and dispositions into personally meaningful constructs.	The teacher candidate is making connections between beliefs and practice.
Program Coordinator Verification	<input type="checkbox"/> making satisfactory progress <input type="checkbox"/> unsatisfactory	<input type="checkbox"/> making satisfactory progress <input type="checkbox"/> unsatisfactory	<input type="checkbox"/> making satisfactory progress <input type="checkbox"/> unsatisfactory
Recommendation based on conceptual framework progress only	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>approved</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>conditional approval</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>denied</i>

Since you will be using this file for the next couple of years, it would be a good idea to insure that your file can be found when you need it. You may want to copy this file both to disk and to your personal computer's hard drive. You will probably want to make at least one backup copy of the disk and put it in a safe place, saving new work to your hard drive and to each disk as you go. Also, you may want to make hard copies of your responses and file them in a folder just in case your disks are misplaced. That way, you will never have to start all over again. In addition, you might want to save a copy of your files to your student space on the UNCP server, which is backed up daily.

PART I. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING: THE TEACHING CYCLE *(To be Completed at Entry-Level)*

Teaching occurs in three phases—planning, implementation, and reflection. *Planning* is what the teacher does to plan instruction, *implementation* is the where the teacher enacts the plan with students, and *reflection* is what the teacher does after the lesson is taught.

Right now at the beginning of your teacher education program—based on your current knowledge, observations, and experience—answer the following three questions. You are not expected to have "right" answers at this point in your professional development. You will be asked to respond to the same three questions at the conclusion of your teacher education program.

1. What does a teacher do when *planning* instruction?
2. What does a teacher do when *implementing* instruction?
3. What does a teacher do when *reflecting* on instruction?

PART II. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING: ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDINGS

To continue building your conceptual framework, respond in writing to the following questions, which are grouped according to the required courses you will take. As you can see, the first group of questions relate to the content of your Foundations of Education (EDN 3020) course.

EDN 3020, Foundations of Education

1. Why do Americans pay taxes to support free public schools for all children and youth?
2. What is the purpose(s) of public schooling?
3. What are a teacher's roles and responsibilities?
4. What is your **mission** as a ____ teacher? (What do you hope to accomplish or achieve? What impact do you want to have on children/youth?)

Answering questions 1-3 will provide you with ideas for your first *mission statement* draft, which will be the same as your response to question four. As you progress through the program, you will revise your mission statement several times. In fact, your mission statement will continue to change and evolve throughout your professional career. The final draft of your mission statement will be presented in the *preface* of the Teacher Candidate Work Sample (TCWS) during your senior internship. Most school districts and individual schools have mission statements posted on their Web sties. Most organizations and corporations also have mission statements. Explore the Internet for examples of good, bad, and even humorous mission statements.

As you reflect in writing to the following questions as you take other courses in your program, you will continue to create a draft of your conceptual framework for teaching and learning.

EDN 3060/3070/3080/3090/3100 required development course

1. What are the developmental characteristics of the age group you will be teaching?
2. What impact do these developmental characteristics have on the students as learners?
3. How does cultural background influence development? What impact do these cultural characteristics have on the students as learners?
4. How can development in any one domain (physical, social, emotional, moral and cognitive) affect a child's performance in others?

SED 3000 Introduction to Exceptional, Diverse, and At-Risk Students (or EDN 4300 Including Students with Special Needs)

1. What rights to educational programs and services are guaranteed to children/youth with special needs, and how are those rights protected?
2. What are your responsibilities as a classroom teacher to students with special needs?

EDN 3500 Educational Psychology

1. How do people learn?
2. What kind of environment is conducive to learning?
3. In what ways are learners "diverse"? Do all learners learn the same way?
4. What classroom discipline model do you prefer and why?

EDN 4080/4090/4100/4190 required course in content literacy

1. What is the relationship between language and learning?
2. What is the relationship between reading and writing?
3. What is the relationship between writing and thinking?
4. What is the relationship between talking and learning?
5. How can content area teachers promote literacy development without detracting from the study of content?

Methods Courses

1. What is the value of the subject matter that you will teach? (That is, why should your content area be a required subject of study for all students?) *
2. What is curriculum?
3. What kind of curriculum is the SCOS for your licensure area?
4. What methods of instruction are appropriate for the age/grade level of the students and for the content area you will be teaching and why?
5. What is the purpose of assessing student learning?
6. What is the value of assessing students both before and after instruction?
7. How can instructional technology be used to enhance instruction and/or scaffold student learning?

* *Elementary education majors will respond to this question for each content area in the K-6 curriculum: science, mathematics, reading/language arts, social studies, physical education, health, art, and music.*

PART III. SYNTHESIZING YOUR REFLECTIONS: YOUR FINAL POSITION STATEMENT (CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING), YOUR MISSION STATEMENT, AND YOUR PERSONAL PROFILE

By the time you have completed the required courses in your program of study, you will have constructed responses to the guiding questions listed above in Part II. Your responses constitute a draft of *your conceptual framework for teaching and learning*. In the final version, you will omit the guiding questions and insert transitions so that your statement is coherent and easy to understand.

At that point, you will also want to put the finishing touches on *your mission statement*. In addition, you will need to write a brief *profile of yourself as an educator*. The personal profile should be approximately one page in length and, ideally, will include a photo.

You will include these three elements—your mission statement, your personal profile, and your conceptual framework for teaching and learning—in the preface to your Teacher Candidate Work Sample (TCWS), which you will complete during your internship semester. The TCWS serves as an important product of learning for you, because it is the vehicle through which you will synthesize much of what you have learned throughout your program of study. As stated previously, you will find out all about the TCWS in methods courses that you will take as you progress through your teacher preparation program.