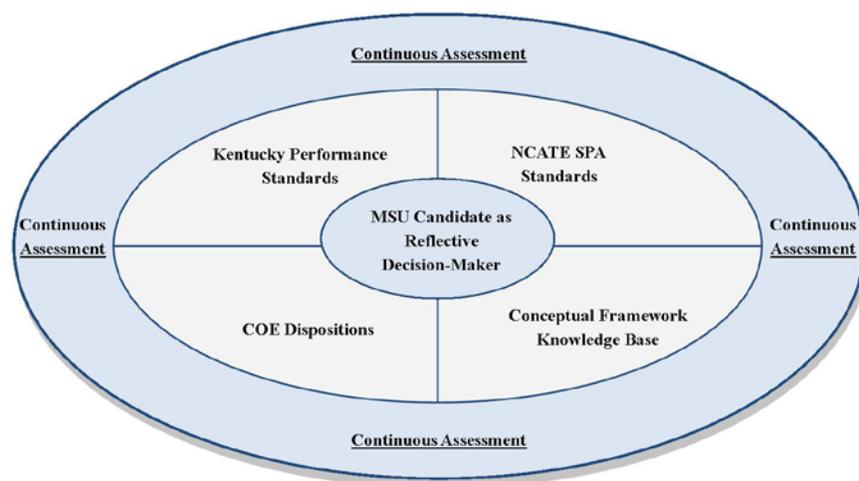


EDUCATION PROGRAM'S CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The mission of the College of Education and Human Services is the preparation of leaders for successful careers that positively impact communities as advocates and practitioners, through student-centered, authentic, and engaging academic programs. The college envisions it will be recognized for producing graduates who foster excellence in their communities. The college's education programs support that mission and vision by ensuring candidates exemplify the knowledge, skills, dispositions, leadership qualities, and decision-making skills necessary to serve as effective educators in their communities. The goal of the college's educator preparation program is to produce candidates who demonstrate the characteristics of a Murray State University graduate, the proficiencies delineated by **Kentucky Teacher Standards** and the knowledge required by learned societies. Program experiences equip candidates with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to become **reflective decision-makers**. "Educator as a reflective decision-maker" is the unit's **theme**. Undergraduate candidates demonstrate professional dispositions throughout their course work, field experiences, and student teaching. Graduate candidates exhibit the same dispositions while developing their capacity as **teacher leaders** who foster excellence in their classrooms, schools, districts, and communities. Murray State University candidates will become educators who are:

1. **Inclusive** – Advocate for an inclusive community of people with varied characteristics, ideas, and worldviews.
2. **Responsible** – Consider consequences and makes decisions in a rational and thoughtful manner for the welfare of others. Act with integrity to pursue an objective with thoroughness and consistency.
3. **Enthusiastic** – Exhibit eagerness and passion interest in tasks that relate to beliefs about education.
4. **Caring** – Demonstrate regard for the learning and well-being of every student.
5. **Confident** – Exhibit certainty about possessing the ability, judgment, and internal resources needed to succeed as a teacher.
6. **Ethical** – Conform to accepted professional standards of conduct by making decisions based on standards and principles established by the education profession.

Educational research, theory, philosophy, and best practices create the **knowledge base** that informs faculty and guides program goals. Program curricula, goals, and outcomes are aligned with and informed by the standards of learned societies, SPAs, and professional benchmarks including but not limited to the **EPSB Kentucky Teacher Standards, EPSB, Kentucky Interdisciplinary Early Childhood Education Teacher Standards, National Council of Teacher Educator Standards, CAEP Standards, InTASC Standards, National Association of School Psychologists Standards, and the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs Standards**. Candidates' standards-based knowledge, pedagogical proficiency, and professional dispositions are systematically monitored and formally evaluated through the education program's **continuous assessment** system. Each program uses student data to inform program improvement.



KNOWLEDGE BASE

I. Action Research

Practitioners often question the role that research should have in school decision-making and policies. Hitchcock and Hughes (1993) defined action research as, "...inquiry conducted into a particular issue of current concern, usually undertaken by those directly involved, with the aim of implementing a change in a specific situation" (p. 7). Kennedy (1997) and others (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1993; Strickland, 1988) suggest action research as a solution to the problems quoted above. As teachers conduct and share investigations of their own classroom problems, action research attempts to make research both available and relevant. Strickland (1988) explains that, in addition to action research being carried out by a local practitioner, its design process evolves as the research develops, and it is conducted to produce conclusions for the local setting which need not be generalized to other populations and settings. Furthermore, she states that the empowerment of teachers as decision-makers is the principle benefit of action research. For these reasons, action research is the primary methodology advocated for educators by Murray State University's educator preparation faculty.

II. Theory

Cognitive Theory

Piaget's theoretical framework supports the understanding of cognition as an active and interactive process that progresses through developmental stages. Thus, cognition is the active and constant process of the individual interacting with the environment. Through this interaction the individual forms dynamic systems of conceptualization – schemata – that become both a repository of cognition and a resource for future conceptualization (Piaget, 1970). Schemata are cognitive constructs that organize and structure the concepts in memory and thus allow the adaptation, generalization and refinement of knowledge (Anderson, 1976; Gagné, 1965; Piaget, 1970). Schema theory helps explain how humans acquire, store, manipulate and retrieve information; develop specific academic skills, and adapt to environmental demands. Educators apply this theory as they develop, adapt, and provide lessons for a diverse student population.

In his book *Frames of Mind* (1985), leading cognitive psychologist, Gardner that the conceptualization of human intelligence as comprised of only the linguistic and logical faculties is too limited. He suggests that the additional human abilities of spatial, musical, bodily-kinesthetic and personal intelligences should be considered - among others - on the same level as the linguistic and logical faculties. In *The Unschooled Mind* (1991), Gardner describes three types of knowledge – surface knowledge, scholastic knowledge and dynamic knowledge. Traditionally, elementary schools promote the attainment of surface knowledge, while high schools and universities encourage scholastic knowledge. Gardner contends that formal schooling rarely supports the attainment of dynamic knowledge, the type of knowledge necessary for decision-making in professions such as classroom teaching, school psychology, counseling, school administration and speech language pathology. By using Kentucky Standards as the foundation for a well-informed Conceptual Framework, Murray State University's educator preparation program facilitates the attainment of dynamic knowledge in its graduates.

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Developmental Psychology

Effective educators consider students' cognitive development as well as their personal and emotional growth. Erikson's work provides an overview of the developmental stages, crises, and resolutions that accompany human growth and development. His *epigenetic principle* is the ground plan for psychosocial development consisting of stages, each of which involves the resolution of conflicting tendencies. The successful resolution of the conflict at each stage results in the acquisition of positive constructs (e.g., hope, will, purpose) which contribute to the individual's psychological health and subsequent development. Marcia (1987), Havighurst (1972), and Super (1957) also inform an understanding of adolescence and beyond. In addition to the concept of critical stages and the mastery of environmental personal demands by individuals, these theorists suggest that people are lifetime learners and require information to make informed decisions throughout their lives.

Social and Behavioral Learning

Operant learning theorists who employ applied behavior analysis techniques believe that behavior is learned and therefore can be unlearned. Thus, students can be taught new behaviors. The principles of operant learning focus on identifying observable behaviors and manipulating the antecedents and consequences of these behaviors to change behavior. Reinforcement is used to increase desirable behaviors and punishment is used to decrease undesirable behaviors. The importance of these principles is that they are applied to everyday situations and settings (Baer, Wolf, & Risley, 1968), applications that are essential in contexts where behavior impedes learning and development.

Bandura's Social Cognitive Learning theory is a descriptive paradigm that captures the dynamics of reciprocal interaction among the individual's cognitive and other personal factors, behavior, and the human environment. In Bandura's model, three elements - cognitive/personal, behavioral, and environmental - reciprocally influence one another in a successive fashion (Bandura, 1986). In social cognitive learning, "psychological functioning is a continuous reciprocal interaction between personal, behavioral and environmental determinants" (Bandura, 1977, p. 194). This reciprocal dynamic underscores the importance of creating learning environments that respond to individual cognitive and behavioral needs, while also acknowledging and responding to the individual's influence on the learning environment.

The importance of social learning also echoes in the words of Vygotsky, who emphasized, "The most significant moment in the course of intellectual development, which gives birth to the purely human forms of practical and abstract intelligence, occurs when speech and practical activity, two previously completely independent lines of development, converge" (Vygotsky, 1978). The importance of learning within the social context girds the belief that the practitioner must create and maintain learning climates that facilitate the social cognitive development of the learner.

Contextually, Minuchin's (1974) Family System Theory provides an additional framework to assist educators in understanding family functioning. The family is seen as a system of interacting subsystems where an event or intervention with one family member is

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likely to impact other family members and their interactions within and outside the family. Turnbull (1984) proposed that educators must be aware that family characteristics such as cultural background, religious beliefs, and socioeconomic status will influence the family's response to issues such as educational progress or disability status. Interventions requiring family participation should take into account the family's values, priorities, boundaries and comfort with persons outside the home.

III. Philosophy

Foundations of Education

With the study of the educational foundations, candidates learn that education is grounded in philosophies that facilitate the growth and development of individuals whose learning enriches their societies and their world. Social change occurs when one person or a few individuals look at old ways differently and have the courage and intelligence to envision a new social reality; the school is the primary institution whose sole purpose is to nourish, enrich, and renew the culture of the group that established it. This unique cultural role of the school puts it and its teachers in a position to both support and to reform the status quo, if children are to be prepared to live in a rapidly expanding world of interdependent and diverse cultures. Candidates need to draw upon their understanding of educational foundations as they learn and practice pedagogy and develop dispositions that enable them to be positive change agents in their communities.

Progressivism

Progressivism as a philosophy of education has been one of the most influential and controversial forces in education during the 20th century. Dewey, who synthesized the pragmatic tenets of his predecessors, selected education as the crucible to test the real-life application of his progressive ideas (Ozmon & Craver, 1990). This testing began at the Laboratory School at the University of Chicago, but Dewey's ideals live on as one philosophical underpinning of the College of Education. These ideals include the notion of education as learner-centered and experiential, with the view of the learner as a unique individual who requires relative freedom in order to create his or her own truth and knowledge. The role of the educator becomes one of guiding the learner's activities and creating a supportive environment for learning. The progressive curriculum is concerned with instructing students in problem-based learning, within social, democratic, and moral contexts. Subject matter is connected to the student's own experiences, culture, and community (Ozmon & Craver, 1990). In *Experience and Education* (1938), Dewey states, "To imposition from above is opposed expression and cultivation of individuality; to external discipline is opposed free activity; to learning from texts and teachers, learning through experience; to acquisition of isolated skills and techniques by drill, is opposed acquisition of them as means of attaining ends which make direct vital appeal; to preparation for a more or less remote future is opposed making the most of opportunities of present life; to static aims and materials is opposed acquaintance with a changing world" (p. 19-20).

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Social Reconstructionism

The College of Education and Human Services education program faculty ascribe to a range of beliefs with regard to the extent to which the institution of schooling should promote the status quo or act as an institutional agent of change and social reform. Dewey (1959), in addition to being considered a pragmatist philosopher and a progressive educator, proclaimed himself a social reconstructionist when he stated, "I believe that education is the fundamental method of social progress and reform" (p. 30). In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970), Paulo Freire challenges educators and their pupils to become powerful advocates of social change. To grow in literacy and knowledge advances the democratic principles of a free society. To accomplish this, teachers and students alike need to question existing knowledge. Differences among faculty members regarding educational philosophy create an appropriate intellectual tension that reflects the differing values of a pluralistic society.

IV. Practice

Learner-Centered

Belenky and colleagues (1986) outlined a model of *connected teaching*, which reflects in the beliefs and practice of teacher educators at Murray State. The following are tenets of the model which are manifested in this unit's practice.

Incorporating personal individual experience. Because students need to assimilate new information with prior knowledge, good practitioners create opportunities for students to reflect and write about how new learning helps them to understand previous experiences more fully.

Nurturing each other's thoughts to maturity through consensus. Practitioners use discussion and open-ended questions to prompts learners to refine and organize higher-level thinking.

Respecting each other's unique perspective. Connected teachers realize the importance of recognizing all learners have unique perspectives and styles of thinking.

Basing teacher's authority on cooperation, not subordination. As adult learners, college students have reached the last stage in a developmental discipline model (Sprinthall, Sprinthall, & Oja, 1998). At this stage, teacher and learners acknowledge and act on basic democratic principles, such as tolerance, equity, and fairness.

Midwife paradigm of education versus banker education. Rather than the depositor of knowledge, the connected teacher promotes individual and group proactive, positive problem solving (Sprick, 1998). At this stage teachers and learners acknowledge

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and act on basic democratic principles, such as tolerance, equity, fairness, and collaboration.

Higher education instruction and the teaching of adult students require special instructional considerations such as postmodern approaches that adapt to the changes of behavior and attitudes of the current generation by focusing more on the learning environment. This calls for the allowance of more ownership of information and ideas by students (Taylor, 2004; Barr & Tagg, 1995). Such a model promotes self and group efficacy, which in turn directly influences achievement and goal setting. Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1970) and Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives (1956) are the last components of a learner-centered framework. Rather than a behavioral view, in which human will and actions are controlled by stimuli and reinforcement, Maslow posited that, as humans move through the different levels of a pyramid of needs, they strive to reach their highest levels of achievement and actualization. Reflective, deliberate, practitioners recognize the necessity of promoting learning through tapping into the individual's intrinsic human motivation and, whether working with students who work with adults or children, education faculty ensure that students continue to proceed toward the self-actualizing process. To assist in developing instruction and questions at complex levels, Bloom's taxonomy is used in pedagogy courses throughout the program to create the learner-centered practice that is fundamental to the College of Education and Human Service's mission.

Experiential

Dewey (1938) proposed the need for education to turn away from traditional, classroom-based education in which mind and world are separated. Rather, he argued, effective education should be integrative, allowing the student the opportunity to find (and construct) meaning in experiences that reflect life outside of school. Kolb (1984) in *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*, was explicit in stating, "Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience." As with Bruner's (1969) active learning, this unit's framework reflects the importance of experiential learning through collaborative inquiry, problem-posing and problem-solving, service learning, practicum and field experiences. In addition, education program faculty acknowledge that it may be appropriate on some occasions to deliver content through direct instruction. Direct instruction methods, such as lecture, can be an efficient means to deliver content knowledge while paired with other instructional methods that facilitate deep understanding of concepts, problem solving and reflective decision-making

The eco-behavioral framework guides much of the practice of mental health practitioners and school psychologists. This model suggests that most personal-social, educational, vocational, and emotional issues children and adults face stem from the environment and the individual's interaction with the environment (e.g. family, schools, peers, culture). Thus, the solution to and prevention of most problems can be found within the environment (Bergan, 1977; Glasser, 1961; Minuchin, 1974; Skinner, 1971). However, practitioners and psychologist also consider a disease or medical model of maladaptive behavior and concede that, for some individuals, their problems

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(and subsequent solutions) stem from biochemical dysfunction and require different interventions.

The use of instructional technology is also a critical component of educator preparation as students are expected to take leadership positions in a technological society. To prepare for that eventuality, many course experiences are provided which are designed to allow students to explore the use of technology as aids to learning, research, and for personal productivity. These experiences are designed to use a range of traditional, interactive, and emerging technology tools to enhance learning as well as to compose and produce artifacts using technology resources.

Reflection

Reflection has increasingly been recognized by educators as an important process for facilitating pre-service professionals to engender good classroom practices. Dewey's definition of reflection is often cited as, "active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and future conclusions to which it tends..." (1933, p. 9). According to Rodgers (2002) Dewey offered the following traits as elements supporting teacher reflection – whole-heartedness, open-mindedness, and responsibility. These traits serve as the basis for the College of Education's Educator Dispositions. Dewey was interested in replacing the folklore, customs, and traditions of education with scientific problem solving resulting from a perspective shift that occurred as the professions moved from technical rationality in decision-making to *reflection-in-action* (Schon, 1983, 1987). Schon argued that reflection-in-action represented a style of problem solving necessary when recipe solutions fail and the professional acts as a researcher to solve difficult and complex social problems. Reflection-in-action is a process of inquiry, based on a prior understanding of a situation where solutions serve to resolve the problem at hand as well as to generate new understanding that will be applied to future situations. The unit supports an analytical-pluralistic approach to reflection where teachers develop a repertory of research-based strategies as they prepare for their teaching careers (Cooper, 2003). Reflective practice affords teachers the ability to make decisions that will best address students' needs. Murray State faculty recognize the importance of documenting and promoting student reflection. Reflection is one of the Kentucky Standards. Furthermore, educators who possess this critical quality approach learning as a life-long endeavor.

Professional Resources

Cooperating with the main university library, education program faculty engage students in appreciating and learning to use the professional teaching materials that are available in the COE's Curriculum Materials Center's Resources. These are provided in accordance with the highest national standards – Guidelines of the Association of College and Research Libraries. Teaching incorporates the specialized knowledge of academic librarians and thus facilitates professional performance with research and lifelong learning skills that are necessary, and acquired beyond the traditional classroom, practicum and student teaching.

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