

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS
AT EASTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

Mission statement: To teach, to learn, to help others teach and learn.

The Professional Education Programs at ECU are dedicated to preparing the highest quality educators and related professionals for Kentucky and beyond. Our graduates integrate content, effective pedagogical skills, and dispositions that foster life-long growth and learning. Being true to our heritage as a school of opportunity, ECU provides a climate that supports, challenges, and enriches students aspiring to careers in a diverse society. (November 2000)

THE EFFECTIVE EDUCATOR* AS AN EFFECTIVE PERSON _____

Eastern Kentucky University's professional education programs are developed around the belief that effective educators are effective people. This belief is based on research into the characteristics of effective helping professionals. At Eastern, students are provided opportunity to acquire both depth and breadth in knowledge of subject matter, to study and practice the skills of teaching, and to reflect upon personal abilities, interests, and dispositions as they relate to helping others learn and grow. The effective educator is perceived as one who is able to integrate content and skills with personal dispositions in order to help students learn and develop. The primary goal of the professional education programs is to help pre- and in-service educators become more effective people. The three major elements of the ECU Professional Education Conceptual Framework are **Knowledge, Pedagogical Skills, and Dispositions**. Students progressing through a professional education program at Eastern Kentucky University encounter numerous opportunities for inquiry, analysis, and reflection as they strive to become more effective persons and educators.

The **Knowledge** element enables students to construct understanding of the complexity and richness of the learning /teaching process and includes:

* Educators include teachers, administrators, school counselors, interpreters of the deaf, speech-language pathologists, library media specialists, school psychologists and non-teaching Special Education service providers.

1. general knowledge needed in order to develop as an educated person and citizen in a diverse society,
2. specific knowledge related to a professional specialty,
3. foundational knowledge in professional subjects basic to professional preparation, and
4. behavioral knowledge needed for understanding of self and others.

The **Pedagogical Skills** element enables the professional educator to facilitate learning.

Program experiences for both pre-service and in-service educators address best practices in content-independent and content-specific pedagogical methods. This is accomplished through a variety of in-class, virtual, and field-based experiences involving acquisition of knowledge, application, and reflection upon effectiveness. Recognizing the vital connection between knowledge, experience and reflection, faculty incorporate these in every course in every program. The Model Laboratory School and Madison County as well as educational communities scattered throughout the state provide essential settings for guided field-based experiences for undergraduate and graduate students. These experiences allow students to apply theory to real-life situations and receive immediate feedback - an essential component of a program utilizing authentic, continuous assessment.

The **Dispositions** element includes the attitudes, beliefs, and/or perceptions that educators possess which form the basis for behavior and include:

1. self-perceptions that allow for identifying with diverse student populations,
2. perceptions of students as able learners and worthy individuals,
3. perceptions of the purposes of education in a larger context, and
4. frame of reference as people oriented.

Research indicates that educators' dispositions strongly influence student learning and development. A major goal of Education programs at Eastern Kentucky University is to assist students in identifying the dispositions associated with effective educators, to help them self-assess their dispositions in order to determine their "fit" for an education career, and to facilitate

their development of even more positive perceptions. Effective educators can handle a multiplicity of rapidly developing situations in ways that maximize learning and facilitate the psychological growth of students. Being such an “effective educator” is an outcome of developing and maintaining certain perceptions about oneself, students, and the tasks of teaching.

(October 30, 2001)