

Conceptual Framework of the College of Education, Qatar University



Introduction

Qatar University is the flagship institution of higher education in the State of Qatar. The College of Education was the first higher education institution in the State of Qatar and remains the single entity for the preparation of educators. This unique position is one of honor as well as exceptional responsibility. The [vision](#) of the college reflects awareness of this role by asserting that:

The College of Education will be a leading institution in the preparation of education professionals through outstanding teaching, scholarship, and leadership in order to enhance the future of coming generations.

Its mission states:

The College of Education is committed to providing excellence in the initial and advanced preparation of education professionals by establishing a foundation in which life-long learning, teaching, research, and community partnerships are fostered. The college fulfills its commitment by providing:

- *To its members an educational, motivational, and supportive environment for both learning and teaching in a climate characterized by responsible freedom.*
- *To society highly qualified education professionals and on-going professional development, by supporting scholarly activities, and by sharing the responsibility of educational reform through effective partnerships.*

To realize its vision and fulfill its mission, the college is committed to:

- Honoring the history, culture, and values of Qatar and its people
- Recognizing and responding to current and emerging societal needs; locally, regionally, nationally and internationally
- Providing academic programs that challenge candidates and faculty to perform at international standards of excellence
- Approaching teaching and professional service as dynamic, social activities which reflect our commitment to, identification of, and contribution to the solutions for social problems

- Respecting diversity throughout all policies, practices, and programs and by preparing candidates to work in a diverse global community
- Promoting a community of practice that encourages and values collaboration as well as respect for the contribution of each stakeholder in education
- Accessing, modeling, and teaching the most current knowledge and skills in education and in technology
- Contributing to theory and practice in education through rigorous and substantive scholarship
- Fostering life-long learning in candidates and faculty members
- Requiring the highest standards of professional ethics in all persons and activities associated with the unit

The conceptual framework is summarized in the following statement:

Together we shape the future through excellence in teaching, scholarship, and leadership.

Developing the Conceptual Framework

The first step in developing our conceptual framework was to invite the unit's education partners and other stakeholders from the community (i.e., representatives from the Ministry of Education, the Supreme Education Council, and administrators and teachers from several Independent schools) to attend a meeting to discuss what we believed about teaching and learning and to draft the beginnings of a conceptual framework. As a group, we discussed the importance of alignment among the vision and the mission of the unit and the conceptual framework. Large and small group discussions invited the contributions of stakeholders related to educational theory and practice.

As part of this process, we developed a visual symbol of our conceptual framework. Various designs developed by a staff member of the unit were presented and compared. The design chosen by stakeholders incorporates the blue color that represents the College of Education in all publications for Qatar University, a plant indicating shaping/growth, and the Qatar University building architecture that symbolizes Qatar/Arabic culture. The arrow symbolizes our ongoing reach toward excellence today and in the future.

After this meeting, an initial draft of the conceptual framework was articulated based on feedback from participants and refined through many meetings of the faculty and staff of the college. This draft listed key references that were thought to be seminal works related to priorities identified by the stakeholder group. Although subcommittees were asked to research and reflect on different elements of the framework and thus examined extensive resources, all faculty members were asked to read key references and to contribute additional references that they felt would inform our deliberations. Among the references that all faculty members were asked to read were:

- Bransford, J., Brown, A., & Cocking, R. (2000). *How people learn*. National Academy Press: Washington, DC.

- Darling-Hammond, L. (2006). Constructing 21-century teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education* 57(3).
- Lesser, E. L. & Storck, J. (2001) Communities of practice and organizational performance. *IBM Systems Journal* 40(4),
- Darling-Hammond, L. & Bransford, J. (Eds). (2012). *Preparing teachers for a changing world: What teachers should learn and be able to do*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, John & Sons, Inc.

Each of the subcommittees reported to the Accreditation Steering Committee. Together the members approved an expanded draft that was sent to all faculty members and staff of the unit for review and feedback. Each department discussed and approved the document in a departmental meeting. The document was then sent to the Education Partners Committee, consisting of diverse stakeholders, for review and feedback. As a final step, the Accreditation Steering Committee approved the final document.

Three Pillars of the Conceptual Framework

The three pillars of the conceptual framework – teaching, scholarship, and leadership – are supported by eight unit learning outcomes. These outcomes are aligned with the Qatar National Professional Standards for Teachers and School Leaders ([QNPS](#)), which are the basis for educational licensure and advancement in Qatar (Table 1). The learning outcomes and standards are assessed throughout all programs through a rigorous assessment system and quality assurance process.

Table 1: Alignment of Unit Learning Outcomes and the Qatar National Professional Standards for Teachers and School Leaders

Qatar University College of Education Learning Outcomes	Qatar National Professional Standards for Teachers (2016)
TEACHING	
<p><i>Outcome 1: Content</i> Apply key theories and concepts of the subject matter in educational settings.</p>	<p>QNPS # 1. Planning for student progress and achievement. 1.1 Sets SMART learning objectives that reflect the taught 1.2 Selects a range of supporting learning resources to meet curriculum objectives 1.3 Caters for different groups of students (including Gifted and talented and ASEN students) in planning 1.4 Uses student data to plan for student progression 1.5 Selects flexible and innovative strategies and classroom activities.</p> <p>QNPS #3. Creating safe, supportive, and challenging learning environments. 3.1 Establishes classroom routines and high standards of behavior to support learning 3.2 Encourages students to take initiative and responsibility for their own behavior and learning. 3.3 Encourages students to have empathy and respect for others.</p>
<p><i>Outcome 2: Pedagogy</i> Plan effective instruction to maximize student learning.</p>	<p>QNPS # 1. Planning for student progress and achievement. 1.1 Sets SMART learning objectives that reflect the taught 1.2 Selects a range of supporting learning resources to meet curriculum objectives 1.3 Caters for different groups of students (including Gifted and talented and ASEN students) in planning 1.4 Uses student data to plan for student progression 1.5 Selects flexible and innovative strategies and classroom activities.</p> <p>QNPS #2. Engaging students and developing them as learners 2.1 Engages students in active and challenging learning Curriculum. 2.2 Uses a variety of activities and supporting learning resources. 2.3 Provides learning experiences matched to students' needs and interests. 2.4 Develops students' literacy and numeracy skills. 2.5 Develops students as independent learners. 2.6 Develops students' higher order thinking skills. 2.7 Implements the SEC curriculum and provides cross- curricular learning experiences.</p> <p>QNPS #3. Creating safe, supportive, and challenging learning environments. 3.1 Establishes classroom routines and high standards of behaviour to support learning</p>

	<p>3.2 Encourages students to take initiative and responsibility for their own behaviour and learning.</p> <p>3.3 Encourages students to have empathy and respect for others.</p> <p>QNPS #4. Assessing students' learning and uses assessment data to improve achievement.</p> <p>4.1 Prepares and documents all types of assessment</p> <p>4.2 Marks students' work regularly.</p> <p>4.3 Analyses and uses assessment data to support learning</p> <p>4.4 Provides constructive feedback to students about their work and assessments.</p> <p>4.5 Shares information about students with colleagues, to support students' learning.</p>
<p><i>Outcome 3: Technology</i> Use current and emerging technologies in instructionally powerful ways.</p>	<p>QNPS #2. Engaging students and developing them as learners</p> <p>2.1 Engages students in active and challenging learning Curriculum.</p> <p>2.2 Uses a variety of activities and supporting learning resources.</p> <p>2.3 Provides learning experiences matched to students' needs and interests.</p> <p>2.4 Develops students' literacy and numeracy skills.</p> <p>2.5 Develops students as independent learners.</p> <p>2.6 Develops students' higher order thinking skills.</p> <p>2.7 Implements the SEC curriculum and provides cross- curricular learning experiences.</p>
<p><i>Outcome 4: Diversity</i> Foster successful learning experiences for all students by addressing individual differences</p>	<p>QNPS #3. Creating safe, supportive, and challenging learning environments.</p> <p>3.1 Establishes classroom routines and high standards of behaviour to support learning</p> <p>3.2 Encourages students to take initiative and responsibility for their own behaviour and learning.</p> <p>3.3 Encourages students to have empathy and respect for others.</p>
<p>SCHOLARSHIP</p>	
<p><i>Outcome 5: Problem Solving</i> arrive at data-informed decisions by systematically examining a variety of factors and resources</p>	<p>QNPS #5: Demonstrating high professional practices and engaging in continuous professional development.</p> <p>5.1 Reflects critically on professional practice to improve performance.</p> <p>5.2 Develops self professionally and is involved in professional learning networks</p> <p>5.3 Keeps up to date with subject and educational knowledge.</p> <p>5.4 Demonstrating professional practices that reflect impact of professional development learning.</p> <p>5.5 Carries out the assigned duties and responsibilities.</p>
<p><i>Outcome 6: Scholarly Inquiry</i> Actively engage in scholarship in education.</p>	<p>QNPS #5: Demonstrating high professional practices and engaging in continuous professional development.</p> <p>5.1 Reflects critically on professional practice to improve performance.</p> <p>5.2 Develops self professionally and is involved in professional learning networks</p>

	<p>5.3 Keeps up to date with subject and educational knowledge.</p> <p>5.4 Demonstrating professional practices that reflect impact of professional development learning.</p> <p>5.5 Carries out the assigned duties and responsibilities.</p>
LEADERSHIP	
<p><i>Outcome 7: Ethical Values</i> Apply professional ethics in educational contexts.</p>	<p>QNPS # 6. Maintaining effective partnerships with parents and community.</p> <p>6.1 Communicates effectively with parents to improve students' learning and achievement</p> <p>6.2 Makes use of local partnerships to support students' learning and achievement.</p> <p>6.3 Prepares students to become local and global citizens.</p>
<p><i>Outcome 8: Initiative</i> Lead positive change in education.</p>	<p>QNPS # 6. Maintaining effective partnerships with parents and community.</p> <p>6.1 Communicates effectively with parents to improve students' learning and achievement</p> <p>6.2 Makes use of local partnerships to support students' learning and achievement.</p> <p>6.3 Prepares students to become local and global citizens.</p>

The conceptual framework drives all unit programs; it is the touchstone against which decisions are tested. All courses contribute toward candidate mastery of the concepts, knowledge, and skills articulated by the conceptual framework. It provides direction for programs, courses, teaching, candidate performance, scholarship, service, and unit accountability.

“Together”

The conceptual framework of the College of Education emerges from our belief that the purpose of education is twofold: to pass on cultural and social values, traditions, morality, religion and skills to the next generation and to empower individuals to actualize their full potentials in the intellectual and economic spheres. Such beliefs have been central to education throughout its history (Hodgkinson, 2006; Freeman, 2005; Kendall, Murray, & Linden, 2004; Postman, 1996; Goodlad, 1984). John Dewey, frequently referred to as the father of modern education, stated:

I believe that all education proceeds by the participation of the individual in the social consciousness of the race. This process begins unconsciously almost at birth, and is shaping the individual's powers, saturating his consciousness, forming his habits, training his ideas, and arousing his feelings and emotions. Through his unconscious education the individual gradually comes to share in the intellectual and moral resources which humanity has succeeded in getting together. He becomes an inheritor of the funded capital of civilization. The most formal and technical education in the world cannot safely depart from this general process. It can only organize it or differentiate it in some particular direction. (Dewey, 1897, p. 77)

This dedication to the culture and values of the society in which we live is articulated in *Unit Learning Outcome 7: Ethical Values*. The reference in this outcome to applying professional ethics in all educational contexts is understood to include the values and moral standards of the community in which we live and work. As an institution, we value our strong connection to the community and recognize our significant role in preserving its history, values, and traditions, yet we also realize our responsibility to prepare individuals with the knowledge and skills to participate in the global community. Woven throughout our programs are the values and goals reflected in the Qatar Nation Vision 2030. We believe the programs of the unit significantly contribute to achieving three of the four national goals articulated in this vision.

Economic Development

Development of a competitive and diversified economy capable of meeting the needs of, and securing a high standard of living for all [Qatar's] people, both for the present and for the future.

Human Development

Development of all [Qatar's] people to enable them to sustain a prosperous society.

Social Development

Development of a just and caring society based on high moral standards and capable of playing a significant role in global partnerships for development. (General Secretariat for Development Planning, 2010).

All sectors of Qatari society are developing and growing at a rapid rate. Building capacity and sustainability in education is a critical factor in supporting this growing nation and preparing human capital for the future workforce. While the unit is committed to preparing competent educators and school leaders, it is a shared responsibility among all who are interested and invested in the state's growth and the education of learners in the K-12 environment who will be Qatar's future leaders. Working in such synergy allows us to create a shared vision, a critical characteristic of effective educational systems (McCombs & Miller, 2007; Boyd, 1992; Nanus, 1992; Seeley, 1992), and to model for our candidates the important lesson that developing a shared vision among stakeholders may be directly linked to increased student learning (Newmann, Smith, Allensworth, & Bryk, 2001; Hallinger & Heck, 1996).

This strong commitment to involving stakeholders reflects the established educational principle that knowledge is socially constructed (Vygotsky, 1978; Berger & Luckman, 1966; Glassersfeld, 1995; Palincsar, 1998). It also creates a community of practice, clearly having the essential elements for a community of practice as described by Wenger (2007): (1) an identity defined by a shared interest, (2) a network through which members share information, and (3) practitioner participants, who have knowledge, skills, and resources to contribute to the common goal.

Acknowledging that communities of practice affect performance is important in part because of their potential to overcome the inherent problems of a slow-moving traditional hierarchy in a fast-moving virtual

economy. Communities also appear to be an effective way for organizations to handle unstructured problems and to share knowledge outside of the traditional structural boundaries. In addition, the community concept is acknowledged to be a means of developing and maintaining long-term organizational memory. These outcomes are an important, yet often unrecognized, supplement to the value that individual members of a community obtain in the form of enriched learning and higher motivation to apply what they learn. (Lesser & Storck 2001, n.p.)

The term *together* also reflects our recognition and respect for the diverse nature of Qatar's society and student population, in which multiple cultural, linguistic, and historical groups contribute to the shape and strength of the educational environment. The unit is committed to not only meeting the ethical requirements of non-bias in the selection of faculty and candidates, but also to develop in our candidates a "set of cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills and characteristics that support effective and appropriate interaction in a variety of cultural contexts" (Bennett, 2009, p.97). "The focus [in higher education] is shifting away from the mere composition of diversity within organizations [towards increasing] individuals' knowledge, skills, and abilities to understand different cultures in a deeper way, and interact effectively with people from a variety of cultural backgrounds" (Bennett, as cited in Haber & Getz, 2011, p.463). The unit is committed to teaching and modeling those attitudes and actions that support social justice and diversity (Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Hale, 2001; Foster, 1997; Fordham, 1996; Delpit, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1994).

Together for the college not only means the inclusion of stakeholders at all levels, but it also means that our programs explicitly address the educational needs of all students, including student with disabilities (student with Additional Education Support Needs, Supreme Education Council, 2010) and students of diverse ethnicities and cultural backgrounds. Each program specifically teaches the theory and effective practices for diverse classrooms and for students with exceptionalities. As stated by Banks and Banks (2001), *An important aim of teacher education in the first decades of the new century is to help [preservice] teachers acquire the knowledge, values, and behaviors needed to work effectively with students from diverse groups* (p. xii).

The unit's policies on special education, and especially its emphasis on inclusive education, are consistent not only from the laws of Qatar, but also with two foundational documents used internationally to inform special education programs—*The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action* (UNESCO, 1994) and the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (United Nations, 2006). Our programs are designed to be consistent with these seminal documents and with other current policies and practices. Changing interpretations of educational equity for students with disabilities (McGlaughlin, 2010), the relationship between general education and special education (Fuchs, Fuchs, & Stecker, 2010), and the evidence base for special education approaches (Cook, Tankersley, & Landrum, 2009)—also inform the college's conceptual framework, as do writings about special education in the Arab context (e.g., Al-Thani, 2006; Elbeheri, Everatt, Reid, & al Mannai, 2006). All candidates, whether in special education concentrations or general education concentrations are expected to have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to ensure that every student has opportunity to learn in effective, appropriate, and supportive environment.

Faculty members are required to honor all requests for accommodation from the disabilities office. In addition, faculty are encouraged, as much as possible, to infuse courses with strategies for educating diverse populations of candidates through active, student-centered learning (Kember, 2009; Lead, Stephenson, & Troy, 2003; Harden & Crosby, 2000) and multiple modes of instruction (Waldrip, Prain, & Carolan, 2010). Gellevij, Meij, Jong, & Pieters, 2002). The use of such approaches not only increases the effectiveness of our programs, but also affirms “...the pluralism (ethnic, racial, linguistic, religious, economic, and gender, among others) that students, their communities, and teachers reflect” (Niето, 2002, p. 29).

This commitment to diversity throughout our program is articulated in *Unit Learning Outcome 4: Foster successful learning experiences for all students by addressing individual differences.*

“We shape the future”

Another characteristic of a learning community is that ongoing reflection and openness to change allow it to respond to an evolving context and new challenges (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002; Southwest Education Development Laboratory, 1997). The unit is committed to remaining abreast of changing societal needs and innovations in pedagogy and resources. One of those changes that play an increasingly important role in education and in society in general is the use of technology. “Emerging technologies are leading to the development of many new opportunities to guide and enhance learning that were unimagined even a few years ago” (Bradsford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000). In recognition of the important role of technology in education today, Unit Learning Outcome 3 is: *Evaluate and use current and emerging technologies in instructionally powerful ways.*

Faculty members in the unit are encouraged and supported in their efforts to infuse their courses, as appropriate, with technology. Its use is consistent with such proven effective pedagogical strategies such as student-centered learning, multi-model instruction, real-world contexts, open-ended learning environments, and distributed learning (Bell & Winn, 2000; Brown, 2000, Land & Hannafin, 2000). The use of technology has been shown to encourage cognition (Sternberg & Preiss, 2005). As Jonassen stated, computer-based tools “function as intellectual partners with the learner in order to engage and facilitate critical thinking and higher-order learning (1996, p. 9).

Candidates must also be specifically taught the ways to use technology in their own classrooms, not only because increasingly it is part of state and national standards (International Society for Technology in Education, 2002; Education Institute, 2005), but also because the use of technology can contribute to student achievement – if it is chosen well and used thoughtfully (Cheung & Slavin, 2011; Agodini, Dynarski, Honey, & Levin, 2003; Schacter, 1999). For this reason, technology is a learning outcome that is infused throughout the curriculum of each program and carefully assessed. This commitment to effective use of technology for teaching and learning helps us prepare candidates for the future.

“Through excellence in teaching”

Excellence in teaching begins with a clear conception of how we learn and what is important to know. Four of the eight Unit Learning Outcomes specifically relate to excellence in teaching:

Outcome 1: Content

Apply key theories and concepts of the subject matter.

Outcome 3: Technology

Evaluate and use current and emerging technologies in instructionally powerful ways.

The following principles related to teaching and learning underpin the conceptual framework and all policies and programs that are derived from it.

- Humans construct knowledge based on prior knowledge.
- The natural and most effective method of learning is active engagement with the concepts and skills to be learned.
- To be valuable, school-knowledge must be transferable to other contexts and to authentic real-world problems.
- Reflection may improve personal learning and inform practice.
- Effective teachers and educational leaders need:
 - Knowledge about students; how they develop and how they learn
 - In-depth content knowledge related to their teaching/leadership field(s)
 - Pedagogical content knowledge
 - Pedagogical skills, demonstrated in practice
 - Knowledge about personal growth and professional practice
 - Dispositions that contribute to effective teaching and learning

The Nature of Learning

Humans construct knowledge and understanding based on what they already know (Cobb, 1994, Piaget, 1978; Vygotsky, 1978). Their previous beliefs, skills, and knowledge affect what they attend to and how they interpret, understand, and retain new information (Bradsford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000). The implications of this principle are that effective instruction must focus on the student and the ways in which the student is making sense of the information rather than on simply presenting information; instruction must be *student-centered* (Kember, 2009; Carlile & Jordan, 2005; Harden & Crosby, 2000; Rogers, 1999). Faculty members as teachers and models and candidates as future teachers are encouraged to move away from the paradigm of teacher as transmitter of knowledge and toward a student-centered model of instruction.

A part of student-centered learning is the active involvement of students in the learning process. Active learning has been shown to be comparable to lectures in helping students learn facts and information, but superior in developing thinking skills (Bonwell & Eison, 1991). Increasingly, educators are realizing the importance of active student engagement in their educational experiences (Paxman, Nield, & Hall, 2011; McKeachie, & Svinicki, 2006; Armstrong, 1983). Research suggests that not only does it improve motivation and learning, but it may also foster transfer, i.e., the ability of students to apply school-

acquired knowledge and skills in different contexts (Elmore, Peterson, & McCarthy, 1996). Courses in the unit are systematically examined to identify ways to structure student-centered learning experiences and active learning. Faculty are offered professional development opportunities to increase their proficiencies in teaching through student-centeredness and active learning, and candidates are specifically taught the theory and practice of these concepts, as well as given opportunities to engage in them as part of their own education. Increasing active learning throughout the unit is part of the college strategic plan.

The new science of learning is beginning to provide knowledge to improve significantly people's abilities to become active learners who seek to understand complex subject matter and are better prepared to transfer what they have learned to new problems and settings. Making this happen is a major challenge (e.g., Elmore et al., 1996), but it is not impossible. (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000, p. 13)

The unit recognizes the rate of change in today's world, and thus developing life-long learners among faculty, graduates, and the future students of our graduates is a central commitment. As noted in Bransford, Brown, and Cocking (2000), it is impossible today to convey to students at any level the complete set of knowledge they need to survive in and contribute to society. Education must rather seek to provide basic knowledge plus the ability to continue to ask and answer meaningful questions and pose and solve authentic, real-world problems. The goal of the unit is to graduate candidates who are themselves and can mentor their students in becoming self-sustaining, lifelong learners, who are creators, rather than just consumers, of knowledge.

Reflection and metacognition are also key characteristics of effective learners, and through meaningful reflection, teachers may inform practice (Gay & Kirkland, 2003; Milner, 2003; Loughran, 2002; Clift, Houston, & Pugach, 1990). Reflective teaching and learning are infused throughout our programs.

Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions

Knowledge about students.

The unit believes that the focus of education must always remain the students, so it is essential that our candidates understand how children grow and develop, acquire and use language, and differ in learning styles, prior knowledge and experiences, cultural worldviews, and individual needs. This knowledge about and understanding of students is thus not only taught in specific courses in human development, but is also woven throughout all courses so that candidates may understand why, as well as how, to foster environments and learning experiences to maximize the learning of all students. Our program not only draws from foundational theories in education (Dewey, 1887; Piaget, 1967; Vygotsky, 1978), but also from recent (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000) and emerging studies in education.

Content knowledge.

In a presidential speech to the American Educational Research Association, Shulman (1986) described the content knowledge needed by a teacher as:

We expect that the subject matter content understanding of the teacher be at least equal to that of his or her lay colleague, the mere subject matter major. The teacher need not only understand that something is so; the teacher must further understand why it is so, on what grounds its warrant can be asserted, and under what circumstances our belief in its justification.
p.9.

Although the extent of content knowledge needed for successful teachers is still disputed in research (Allen, 2003, Wilson & Floden, 2003), the unit seeks to hold its candidate to high standards in content knowledge so that they may not only know the information and concepts of their disciplines, but also understand at a deep and meaningful level.

Pedagogical content knowledge and pedagogical skills

As numerous research studies have stated (Shulman, 1986b; Grossman, 1990; Sesnan, 2000), pedagogical content knowledge, the specific strategies that support learning in the discipline, and pedagogical skills that enable the teacher to facilitate student achievement, are essential for the successful classroom. Although the coursework in the unit specifically includes pedagogical content knowledge and skills, this knowledge and these skills are best demonstrated in an authentic context. For these reasons, the unit is committed to early and extensive field experience. An appreciation of the importance of actual classroom experience dates at least from the time of John Dewey (1933), who asserted that the primary purpose of teacher education is to provide experiences for teacher candidates in actual classroom settings. In the field experience, candidates examine their own beliefs about teaching and learning (Kagan, 1992) and may experience significant changes in beliefs, attitudes, and effectiveness (Kennedy, 2006, as cited in Tuli & File, 2009). Research indicates that it is critical that pre-service teachers face the reality of the demands and complexity of teaching early so that they can make informed decisions as to whether teaching is the best career for them (Gold & Bachelor, 1988; Johnson, 2004; Arnett & Freeburg, 2008). In addition, pre-service teachers have expressed that university courses, without field-based experiences, are unable to duplicate the real-life experiences of teachers in the K-12 environment (Arnett & Freeburg, 2008) and that the field experience is the most valuable component of their teacher education experience (Arnett & Freeburg, 2008; Hill & Brodin, 2004; Haigh & Tuck, 1999). For these reasons, field experience is integrated throughout every program, increasing in time spent in the field, holding that such experience is an opportunity to learn, rather than just an opportunity to demonstrate what has been learned (Zeichner, 1996).

Dispositions for teaching.

Researchers have demonstrated for decades that certain attitudes, beliefs, values, and personality traits impact the effectiveness of a teacher (Taylor & Wasicsko, 2002; Demmon-Berger, 1986; Combs, 1974), although determining characteristics should be the focus is less clear (Taylor & Wasicsko, 2002). In developing our conceptual framework and tools for assessment, the unit focused on those characteristics that would contribute to an individual's likelihood to select and use strategies that would result in effective learning for all students, would lead to productive team work with colleagues and other stakeholders, and would be perceived by the community as demonstrating professionalism. To identify those dispositions, we referred the accepted lists for our community and our programs.

The dispositions for the programs in the unit were based upon the dispositions identified in the Qatar National Professional Standards for Teachers and School Leaders (Education Institute, 2007) for all programs; the Masters in Special Education also added dispositions from the Ethical Principles of The Council for Exceptional Children (2010). Throughout the programs, faculty members teach and model these dispositions, and expect their demonstration in class assignments and field assignments. Candidates self-assess and give evidence of these dispositions to increase awareness; supervisors and school-based mentors assess the candidates multiple times throughout their programs.

Dispositions for Bachelor of Education and Post Baccalaureate Candidates

1. Ensures that all students can learn at high levels and achieve success.
2. Supports the idea that students with special needs learn in different ways.
3. Recognizes that subject matter must be meaningful for all students.
4. Views language, literacy, and numeracy development as the responsibility of **all** teachers.
5. Creates supportive learning environments in which students' ideas, beliefs, and opinions are shared and valued.
6. Utilizes ICT skills in the planning, teaching, and management of student learning.
7. Conducts assessment in an ethical way.
8. Has enthusiasm for both teaching and the subject area.
9. Provides meaningful connections between the subject content and everyday life.
10. Supports independent as well as collaborative learning.
11. Develops research-supported teaching strategies.
12. Engages in reflective practices.
13. Uses data to plan and review student's learning experiences.
14. Utilizes online library as a resource as lesson plans are developed.
15. Selects strategies and resources that facilitate the development of students' critical thinking, independent problem solving, and performance capabilities.
16. Pursues opportunities to grow professionally and participate in life-long learning
17. Uses effective language in communicative situations and various social functions.
18. Shows respect for individual and cultural differences.
19. Provides care and support for students.
20. Provides a positive climate in the classroom and participates in maintaining such a climate in the school as a whole.
21. Collaborates with colleagues to give and receive help.
22. Demonstrates a commitment to the Education for a New Era reforms.

Dispositions for Masters in Education, Educational Leadership Candidates

1. A commitment to a school vision of high standards of learning
2. A commitment to making management decisions to enhance teaching and learning
3. A commitment to believing that all children and adolescents can learn and achieve success at high levels

4. A commitment to accepting responsibility for maximizing the learning outcomes of all students
5. A commitment to the proposition that diversity enriches the school
6. A commitment to acknowledging that children and adolescents learn in different ways and bring particular talents and strengths to learning
7. A commitment to promoting a safe, challenging and supportive learning environment
8. A commitment to ensuring that resource allocation decisions are directed at enhancing student learning
9. A commitment to critical self-reflection
10. A commitment to continuously examining personal beliefs and practices about teaching and learning
11. A commitment to using outcomes data to inform education and professional decision-making.
12. A commitment to accepting personal accountability for school outcomes

Dispositions for Masters in Education, Special Education Candidates

1. Maintaining challenging expectations for individuals with disabilities to develop the highest possible learning outcomes and quality of life potential in ways that respect their dignity, culture, language, and background.
2. Maintaining a high level of professional competence and integrity and exercising professional judgment to benefit individuals with disabilities and their families.
3. Promoting meaningful and inclusive participation of individuals with disabilities in their schools and communities.
4. Practicing collegially with others who are providing services to individuals with disabilities.
5. Developing relationships with families based on mutual respect and actively involving families and individuals with disabilities in educational decision making.
6. Using evidence, instructional data, research and professional knowledge to inform practice.
7. Protecting and supporting the physical and psychological safety of individuals with disabilities.
8. Neither engaging in nor tolerating any practice that harms individuals with disabilities.
9. Practicing within the professional ethics and standards of the profession; upholding laws, regulations, and policies that influence professional practice; and advocating improvements in laws, regulations, and policies.
10. Supporting the Education for a New Era reforms in Qatar.
11. Advocating for professional conditions and resources that will improve learning outcomes of individuals with disabilities.
12. Participating in the growth and dissemination of professional knowledge and skills.
13. Reflecting on, evaluating, and improving their professional practice as an ongoing process.

“Through excellence in...scholarship”

The unit envisions its faculty and its candidates as lifelong learners, problem-solvers, and producers of knowledge. Further, we expect our graduates to be able to mentor their students in these same skills. Two Unit Learning Outcomes directly relate to scholarship:

Learning Outcome 5: Problem Solving: Systematically examine a variety of factors and resources to arrive at data-informed decisions.

Learning Outcome 6: Scholarly Inquiry: Actively engage in scholarship by learning from and contributing to the knowledge base in education.

The unit’s vision of scholarship articulates the knowledge, skills, and dispositions we seek for our undergraduate and graduate students as consumers of research and as individuals who are able to translate research into practice. It also includes our expectation that our faculty be scholars and practitioners so that they model, as well as teach, the processes and ethics of research and reflection. We seek to graduate educators who, as action researchers, possess the ability to evaluate their own teaching skills and engage in the inquiry process, to offer explanations for what they are doing, and to generate living educational theories (Schön, 1983; Mcniff & Whitehead, 2009). We believe that educators must be inquirers and problem-solvers. They should collaborate, identify, scrutinize, collect evidence, and validate knowledge against stringent standards of quality and critique their performance through reflective teaching practices (Schön, 2005). We also expect our graduates to be leaders among their peers in their ability to translate evidence-based research into the classroom and make judgments about ethical practice. The programs within the unit not only provide candidates with opportunities to learn about and conduct research, but also the importance of viewing teaching as a profession and engaging in professional ethics. Faculty members in the unit are expected to teach and to model teaching scholarship and leadership scholarship as described by Boyer (1990).

- The scholarship of discovery that includes original research that advances knowledge.
- The scholarship of integration that type involves synthesis of information across disciplines, across topics within a discipline, or across time.
- The scholarship of application (also later called the scholarship of engagement) that goes beyond the service duties of a faculty to those within or outside the University and involves the rigor and application of disciplinary expertise with results that can be shared with and/or evaluated by peers.
- The scholarship of teaching and learning that the systematic study of teaching and learning processes. It differs from scholarly teaching in that it requires a format that will allow public sharing and the opportunity for application and evaluation by others.

“Through excellence in...leadership”

The unit expects all its candidates, whether serving in positions of administration or as classroom teachers, to be leaders. Two Unit Learning Outcomes specifically address leadership:

Outcome 7: Ethical Values

Apply professional ethics in all educational contexts.

Outcome 8: Initiative

Lead positive change in education

Ethical Values

There is little doubt that educational leaders face numerous pressures, conflicting goals and diverse ideas of the desired ends of education (Sheild & Sayani, 2005). These pressures are not limited to the traditional understanding of leadership that only defines leaders as those in formal positions of authority. Instead, leadership "...like energy, is not finite, not restricted by formal authority and power; it permeates a healthy school culture and is undertaken by whoever sees a need or an opportunity" (Lambert, 1995, p.33). School leaders assume a wide variety of roles that support school and student success (Harrison & Killion, 2007). The unit expects all its candidates, whether serving in positions of administration or as classroom teachers, to be leaders.

Leadership also challenges educators to embrace more than the fundamentals of educational administration. Leaders, whether in administrative or teaching positions, are constantly faced with dilemmas that demand more than a technical response, requiring them to grapple with ethical issues (Dantley, 2005). Clearly the most important aspect of leadership is demonstrating the qualities of ethical behavior. This requires leaders to engage in critical reflection that compels leaders to involve themselves personally in their own understanding of ethics and how they could deal with ethical dilemmas. Rather than focusing only on technical knowledge, all unit programs will provide opportunities for self-reflection on ethical behavior in all aspects of schooling (Dantley, 2005). The unit expects all candidates to embrace and practice such universal values as honesty and truthfulness, integrity, reliability, respect, fairness, pursuit of excellence, fairness – including impartiality and equity caring, and professionalism.

Professionalism for educational leaders requires proficient knowledge, skill, and care in a leadership role. The aspect of care entails a commitment to the values of the teaching profession, the embracing of the profession as a vital service to society, ethical behavior, adhering to the highest professional standards, and the belief that schools are for student learning.

Initiative

Effective educational leaders catalyze "commitment to and vigorous pursuit of a clear and compelling vision stimulating higher performance standards" (Collins, 2007, p. 31). Leadership requires a vision that provides meaning and purpose for schools. For educational leaders, vision is "a hunger to see improvement" (Pejza, 1985, p. 10) and "the force which molds meaning" (Manasse, 1986, p. 150). Educational leaders must translate the vision into reality and clearly articulate that vision to others. This requires communication skills and the involvement of all stakeholders. Mazzarella and Grundy (1989) state that school leaders interact well with others, and they know how to communicate. School leaders know that building and sustaining good relationships within and beyond the school is central to the school leader's role (Bryk & Schneider, 2002), and involving stakeholders at various levels is essential for school success.

Summary

In summary, our conceptual framework draws from shared knowledge-base of educators and from the contextual knowledge of the local community to establish a strong and focused foundation for the beliefs, values, principles, and structure of our programs and that we can:

Together, shape the future through excellence in teaching, scholarship, and leadership.

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