CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

LEADING TEACHER PROGRAM

The Leading Teacher Program was designed from its inception in the spirit of collegiality and mutual respect. This program was created through a collaborative effort of School of Education faculty, school district personnel and other community partners. It is built upon the Mission and Beliefs of the School of Education, a school that aspires to become Home of the Nation's Leading Teachers. The Mission and belief statements of the School of Education reflect a view of the teaching-learning process that emphasizes the importance of social negotiation in the construction of knowledge. Learning is assumed to occur when the ideas of one person co-mingle with the ideas of another (this can be true even when one person is alone, contemplating the ideas of an author or the comments of a colleague). The socially negotiated understanding is a view that is represented not only in the content of the Leading Teacher Program (LTP), but also in the learning environments of the LTP.

The implication of the view that knowledge is constructed through social negotiation is that everyone involved in the educational process is engaged in both aspects of the process, that of teaching and learning. The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future's report entitled What matters most: Teaching for America's future provided the central message that “success of society's quest for higher standards of learning is likely to be dependent on…teacher learning.” (Darling-Hammond, 1996). The Leading Teacher Program supports this notion by emphasizing life-long learning and self-reflection as integral components of the program.

The Leading Teacher Program (LTP) is based on a curricular infusion model that provides all education majors with significant preparation in adapting instruction to meet the needs of students with learning and behavior challenges. This model reflects best practice in collaborative partnerships and the knowledge and competencies necessary for educating students with disabilities in the nations' schools.

The conceptual framework is consistent with the standards and principles of the Pennsylvania Commonwealth Standards for Educational Professionals. The principles are in the Pennsylvania Code of School Law Chapter 49 and are used to evaluate teacher education programs in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

DOMAINS AND COMPETENCIES

The domains of the program refer to broad, interrelated areas of knowledge, skills, and dispositions requisite for beginning teachers. Embedded in the domains are INTASC standards, which have been translated into specific competencies that specify outcome statements for each domain. The Undergraduate and Graduate Leading Teacher Programs are aligned with the following domains and the competencies:
Domain I: Learning Theorist

Becoming a Learning Theorist - emphasizes an understanding of pedagogy and the cognitive and affective processes that will address learning needs of people of all ages.

Competencies

1. A teacher-leader understands how people of all ages learn and develop and is able to demonstrate the ability to provide learning opportunities that support their intellectual, social, and personal development.

2. A teacher-leader understands how people of all ages differ in their approaches to learning and is able to demonstrate the ability to create instructional opportunities that are adapted to diverse learners.

3. A teacher-leader understands the concepts of effective verbal, nonverbal and multimedia communication techniques to foster active inquiry and collaboration and is able to provide supportive interaction in the classroom.

Domain II: Curriculum Designer

Becoming a Curriculum Designer - emphasizes curricular decisions based on research theory, informed practice, and recommendations of the learned societies.

Competencies

1. A leading teacher understands the central concepts, curriculum approaches, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s).

2. A leading teacher plans instruction based upon knowledge of curriculum theory, teaching models, subject matter, students, community and curricular goals, demonstrating the ability to create learning experiences and opportunities that make the subject matter meaningful for people of all ages, races, ethnicity, gender, creed, abilities, health issues or sexual orientation.

3. A leading teacher understands individual and group motivation and behavior and is able to demonstrate the ability to create and modify a learning environment that encourages 1) active engagement in learning, 2) self-motivation, and 3) positive social interaction.

4. A leading teacher understands and is able to demonstrate the use of formal and informal assessment strategies as a continuous part of the instructional cycle, to evaluate and ensure that continuous intellectual, social, emotional, and physical development of the learner is facilitated.

Domain III: Expert in School Context

Becoming an Expert in School Context - explores the intellectual, ethical, cultural, economic, historical, political, and governmental influences upon schools including traditional and emerging perspectives.
Competencies

1. A leader teacher understands and demonstrates the knowledge of subject matter, students’ needs, the community, and curriculum goals.

2. A leading teacher demonstrates the ability to foster relationships with school colleagues, parents, and agencies in the larger community to support learning and well being for the total school community.

**Domain IV: Master Practitioner**

Becoming a Master Practitioner - develops competence in instructional strategies, technology, reflective practice, school-community-professional linkages and academic training.

Competencies

1. A leading teacher demonstrates uses of instructional strategies that encourage diverse learners of all ages and abilities to develop critical thinking, problem solving and performance skills.

2. The Teacher-leader applies technologies that support effective teaching and learning, including adaptive technologies and his/her professional development.

3. The Teacher-leader demonstrates reflective practice by evaluating the effects of his/her choices and decisions on individuals, groups, the school and the community.

4. The Teacher-leader has the formal and informal training and experience to demonstrate mastery of one or more academic areas or disciplines.

5. The Teacher-leader actively seeks opportunities to enhance professional growth in self and others, and affective/emotional growth in self and others.

**Domain V: Instructional Leader**

Becoming an Instructional Leader - emphasizes the leader and knowledge of self in relationship with the group and the relationship with the community and society.

Competencies

1. A leading teacher understands the concepts of leadership styles, a code of ethics linked to the democratic process and their relationship to followership and is able to demonstrate the ability to engage in shared leadership with team, group, or circle members.

2. A leading teacher understands the processes of planning, problem analysis, and problem solving and participatory decision-making and is able to demonstrate the ability to build consensus among team, group or circle members.
3. A leading teacher understands the concepts and processes of change agentry and is able to demonstrate the ability to initiate and manage change and growth in the classroom, school, and the total school community.

THEMES

The themes represent general knowledge, skills, and dispositions that are refined throughout the development of a “leading teacher.” The themes of leadership, technology, and diversity are infused in each domain to prepare “leading teachers” for service in the world's communities. The Undergraduate and Graduate Leading Teacher Programs are aligned with the following themes:

Leadership: A leading teacher is a life long learner inspiring a community of learners to pursue continuous improvement and growth.

Candidates for certification will be encouraged to develop the skills of reflection and critical judgment about their own teaching practice and the curriculum; develop positions on teaching and curricular issues that are reflections of best practice; demonstrate the ability to communicate their positions effectively so that children, parents, colleagues, and administrators understand and value their professional contributions; develop confidence about their role as a teacher; and engage in lifelong learning.

Diversity: A leading teacher is an advocate, creating learning experiences that demonstrate sensitivity, acknowledging students of all abilities and valuing human differences.

Courses and experiences in the GSLTP are designed to reflect the belief that all children have the right to learn and that it is the teacher's responsibility to facilitate that learning. Candidates for certification will have experiences with peers, faculty, teachers, and school children from diverse backgrounds and with diverse needs. Candidates will explore ways to create a learning environment that gives all children the right to learn and will demonstrate specific teaching methods that provide the opportunity for all children to learn.

Technology: A leading teacher is an architect building learning environments that acknowledge and incorporate the power of technology.

Candidates for certification will use technologies as a means of communicating their own learning, as well as a means of facilitating the learning of children in their classrooms.