

Conceptual Framework College of Education

Grounded in collaboration and connectedness to students, schools, communities, and society, the College of Education vision is to inspire lifelong learning and professional engagement through racial consciousness, social justice, and inclusion within a global context. Its mission is to prepare professionals through research and evidence-based practices who demonstrate excellence in their profession.

The College of Education seeks to graduate individuals with passion for and proficiency in content, with thoughtful and principled pedagogy, and a strong sense of educational purpose. Graduates possess the attributes, knowledge, and skills to promote the success of students, families, and schools. They see their own learning and the learning of others as occurring in a cycle of experience, reflection, and re-conceptualization. This learning occurs through a process of seeking new knowledge that fits into and changes existing understanding. Graduates understand that individuals are embedded in family, school, community, and society systems, and they seek to grow as individuals and foster changes to these systems to address injustices.

Graduates are racially conscious individuals who value multiple perspectives and aim to address injustices as successful members of a complex society. They work to form inclusive learning communities and use evidence-based practices. Graduates use culturally relevant strategies in their work. They guide and nurture individuals with whom they work to live and thrive in a racial, linguistically diverse global society.

Racial consciousness is exemplified by the ability to identify how race is a differentiating factor in outcomes for students. Critical Race Theory (CRT) is used as a framework to prepare professionals to become more racially conscious. It can be used to analyze systems, structures, and outcomes at multiple levels through a racial lens (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012) that can foster educators' capacity to practice social justice. The application of a racial equity lens as educators are developing knowledge and expertise in their fields of study (e.g., Hattie, 2012) prepares them to succeed in an increasingly racially complex society. For example, educational institutions benefit from understanding academic achievement disparities disaggregated by race in order to prioritize racial equity and implement strategies such as the Courageous Conversation about Race protocol (Singleton, 2015). Additionally, using CRT to frame organizational direction and positive change can communicate the beliefs and values of an institution (Bolman & Deal, 2013).

Teacher Preparation:

We understand that our vision must be coherent to all participants in professional education. We continuously consult the literature on existing frameworks on effective teaching (e.g., Danielson, 2013; Lampert, 2001; Fischer & Frey, 2008; Loewenberg, 2010; Hattie, 2012).

In addition to the general education literature, the Special Education program coursework is designed to address the complexity required to produce teachers prepared to work with students with academic and behavioral challenges in the P-12 setting. Following the guidelines set forth by the Council for Exceptional Children (McLesky et. al., 2017), the coursework has been aligned with high leverage practices in four key areas: collaboration, assessment, social/emotional/behavioral practices, and instruction. Coursework is also paired with focused field experiences designed to allow the practical application of course content (Leko & Brownell, 2011).

Educational Leadership:

The graduate-level Educational Leadership programs requires individuals to become proficient across a range of content areas: (a) leadership theory, (b) research methods, (c) systems and structures, and (d) ethics. The programs seeks to build transformational leaders (Bass, 1985) capable of leading change through vision and relationship. The programs requires individuals to become familiar with the research methods most appropriate to their programs of study, including quantitative (Cozby & Bates, 2015) and qualitative (Creswell, 2013) methods of inquiry. The programs work to ensure graduates possess a broad awareness of the systems and structures inherent to modern education. This requires a leader to consider situations from multiple frames of reference (Bolman & Deal, 2013) before acting on policy or procedure. The programs extend this analytic approach toward ethics with an intentional focus on promoting equity within all levels of education (Singleton, 2015). The programs are committed to developing educators with strong skills in racial equity leadership, instructional leadership, and experiential learning to advance the capacity of leaders who will eliminate predictable racial disparities through project based learning and learner-centered programming.

School Counseling:

The graduate-level Professional School Counseling Program is designed to prepare the individual for Minnesota state licensure as a K-12 professional school counselor in an appropriate school setting. Emphasis is placed upon the counselor's role as a counselor and consultant to children, teachers, and parents; as a human development and behavior specialist (Curtis, Van Horne, Robertston, P. & Karvonen, 2010), as a front-line mental health referral agent (Collins, 2014); and as a vital component in enhancing the academic success of all students through the maintenance and improvement of the learning climate in the school (Hernandez & Seem, 2004). The counselor learns appropriate use of appraisal and research instruments to supplement the counselor-consultant role.