Conceptual Framework

The University of South Florida Saint Petersburg College of Education’s programs and professional commitments are founded on an evidence-based perspective of knowledge in education. This knowledge base includes the scientific knowledge produced by academic disciplines and the wisdom of practice gained through service to students, parents, and community members. Three organizing themes guide the Unit’s programs: Knowledgeable Professionalism, Reflective Teaching, and Collaborative Leadership. The literature review which follows is organized around these themes.

Knowledgeable Professionalism

Strong professions are marked by a large, complex, rapidly growing body of professional knowledge requiring years of sustained study for mastery. Professional education that supports excellence in strong professions changes in response to social conditions, the production of new knowledge, and the evolution of scholarly norms. In the field of education, exemplary professional educational programs strive to develop the knowledge and dispositions of the students they serve and to inspire students’ professional and ethical growth. These programs use the opportunities created by social change and the demands of accreditation, licensure, and political forces as motivation to engage in inquiry and to build capacity to support new forms of learning. “This is the professional model,” (Goodlad, Soder & Sirotnik, 1990, p. 266).
We know that a scholarly knowledge base of teaching exists (Christensen, 1996; Cruickshank, 1990; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Hill, Rowan & Ball, 2005; McCutchen, Green, Abbott, & Sandards, 2009; Shulman, 1986a, 1987, 2004; Sullivan, 2005). We know that professional education programs respond to knowledge production and scholarly norms, rather than expediency. We know that in strong professions the arbiter of standards is the validation of research in practice, not the vagaries of the licensing agency (Grossman, 2008; Soder, 1990). We also know the professions can raise the conscious of their members and support the struggle for social justice (Ladson-Billings, 2009; Boykin and Noguera, 2011).

Current pressures from policymakers challenge this professional view of educator preparation and suggest that content knowledge alone is sufficient (Podgursky, 2006; Rotherman & Mead, 2004). Cochran-Smith and Zeichner’s (2005) AERA Research Panel report, however, provides strong evidence there is a substantial body of knowledge necessary to become an education professional of the highest quality. This evidence is confirmed in a study of teacher education sponsored by the National Academy of Education (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005). The faculty of the University of South Florida Saint Petersburg College of Education assert that by providing excellent professional instruction in content and pedagogy within the context of social justice, our Unit enhances the educational experiences of the children of the Tampa Bay region and the schools our candidates serve.

One promising vehicle for achieving this desired connection between knowledge production and teacher preparation program development is to provide teachers and school leaders with professional skills consisting of knowledge of content and pedagogical content knowledge called for as a result of research on teaching (Cruickshank & Metcalf, 1990; Hill, Rowan, & Ball, 2005; Mishra & Koehler, 2006). Shulman (2004) refers to this as the knowledge base of teaching that comprises both principles and strategies generated through research. Imig and Imig (2006) affirm that professional teacher preparation must happen in the context of the very complex and conflicting policy environment and conditions of
schooling.

For competent educational professionals, this knowledge base comprises requisite knowledge in four domains: 1) knowledge of content, 2) knowledge and beliefs of learners and learning; 3) pedagogical content knowledge, skills, and beliefs, including the ability to use computer technology to support cognitively demanding instruction; and 4) general pedagogical knowledge, particularly pedagogy of the profession of teacher education (Borko & Putnam, 1996; Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005; Cruickshank & Metcalf, 1990; Fueyo, Kooland, & Rasch, 2008; Roy, Vanover, Fueyo, & Vahey, 2012; Shulman, 2004; Wilkerson & Lang, 2007). Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005, p. 11) offer the following scheme to illustrate the interrelationships that define the profession of teaching.
Figure 1: A framework for understanding teaching and learning from Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005, p.11)
The Place of Research and Policy in the Lives of Teachers

_Those who fall in love with practice without science are like a sailor who enters a ship without a helm or a compass, and who never can be certain whither he is going._

(attributed to Leonardo da Vinci)

The Unit is committed to engaging candidates in a culture of inquiry in which educational professionals learn how to use research and policy to enliven their own thinking and to engage in productive dialogue about education with parents, fellow teachers, administrators, and policymakers. The curriculum supports an advocate’s role for the educator, using theory and practical experience to transform practice (Dewey, 1904; Hussler, Cassidy, & Cuff, 1986; Skrla, Scheurich, Garcia, & Nolly, 2004).

As engaged professionals, educators are expected to respond to policy statements, rules, regulations, and practices in ways that support students’ intellectual and ethical growth. Educational professionals have the responsibility to consider and evaluate the importance and consequences of policies, practices, and research evidence for themselves, their students, their schools, and the communities where they work and live (i.e., Goodlad, Mantle- Bromley, & Goodlad, 2004; Imig & Imig, 2006; Kennedy, 2006; Oakes, Quartz, Ryan, & Lipton, 2000). As critical thinkers and reflective learners, candidates are driven by the pursuit of knowledge with an emphasis on the teacher as a leader and as an agent for change (Boykin and Noguera, 2011; Cochran-Smith, 2006; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Darling-Hammond, et. al, 2005; Lieberman & Miller, 2004).

The Unit is committed to offering programs designed to help educators become thoughtful persons, active citizens, and reflective practitioners. As competent educators, candidates are expected to examine various types of scholarship and understand the role that scholarship plays in educational policymaking and practice. Critical analysis of the value-laden nature of educational policy statements is also an important part of candidates’ preparation programs (i.e., Cherryholmes, 1988; Giroux, 1988, 2001; Spring, 2004, 2013). Teachers and school leaders must make decisions regarding how to use research to defend
or revise their practice rather than simply accept research and policy based on its face value.

**Knowledge of Learners and their Development in Social Contexts**

A professional’s knowledge of learners and learning includes her or his understanding of how individuals learn, develop, and are motivated (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 1999; Brophy, 2010; Bruner, 1990; Comer, Haynes, Joyner, & Ben-Avie, 1996; Kamii & Housemen, 2000; Piaget & Inhelder, 1969; Vygotsky, 1986; and others). In fact, Borko and Putnam (1996) have noted that knowledge of students is “arguably the most important knowledge a teacher can have” (p. 675). In the Unit, in light of the perspective on educators’ knowledge presented earlier (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005), candidates are encouraged to explore all aspects of learning such as:

- What should be taught; why is it important and how this knowledge should be organized
- Who learns; how and why
- What kinds of classroom, school, and school-community environments enhance learning
- What kinds of evidence for learning may students, teachers, school leaders, parents, and others best use to guide the learning process (Bransford, Derry, Berliner, Hammerness, & Beckett, 2005, p. 41)

The Unit celebrates the diversity of our community and develops school professionals who engage in developmentally appropriate practice tailored to the needs of the vastly diverse group of learners who attend our local schools (Banks & Banks, 2013; Comer et al., 1996; Delpit, 2006; Eisner, 2004; Gilligan, 1993; Hollins & Oliver, 1999).

Teachers and school leaders are prepared to serve learners with special needs, those from a variety of ethnicities and cultures, and those whose first language is other than English. USFSP faculty assist candidates in developing strategies and enhancing opportunities for English Language Learners that enhance their general knowledge of how

The educator preparation unit is committed to preparing competent professionals who help all P-12 students develop the skills and dispositions (Wilkerson & Lang, 2007) that enable young people to create and participate in a democratic society. Teacher education candidates learn the importance of respecting each child and honoring that child’s family and community. Through discussion with peers and faculty, candidates also learn the importance of shared inquiry and develop the ability to respond to P-12 students’ intellectual and emotional needs. Candidates learn to evaluate teaching and leading in the context of social, educational, and political structures (Delpit, 2006; Goodlad, Mantle-Bromley & Goodlad, 2004; Jacobs & Duhon-Sells, 1994) and reflect on the role schools play in fostering a more democratic and just society.

**Knowledge of Subject Matter**

Knowledge of content refers to the knowledge professionals have related to subject matter in a discipline (McDiarmid, 1994; Shulman, 2004). This knowledge does not include how to teach; rather, it focuses on the content itself. A professional’s knowledge can include subjects in areas such as reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies. For instance, a professional teaching ecology would understand the carbon cycle and how it relates to similar concepts in ecology. Content knowledge is vital for a teacher to be effective in the classroom and plays a critical role with the implementation of the Common Core State Standards in Florida school districts. Without solid and deep knowledge of content (both conceptual and procedural), teachers cannot be effective in their teaching (Ball, 1997; Holt-Reynolds, 1999; Kennedy, 1998; Ma, 1999). As Shulman (2004) emphasizes

A teacher is a member of a scholarly community. He or she must understand the structures of subject matter, the principles of conceptual organization, and the principles of inquiry that help answer two kinds of questions in each field: What are the important ideas and skills in this domain? And how are new ideas added and
The content of school subjects is specialized, and one cannot assume that simply attaining a general education degree and a major in a content area will provide these types of knowledge (Bain & Mirel, 2006; Floden & Meniketti, 2005; Mishra & Koehler, 2006). While some pundits of education are calling for content knowledge as almost a sole, exclusive determiner of who can be licensed (Walsh, 2004), the University of South Florida Saint Petersburg faculty are committed to requiring candidate performance to be more inclusive and tied to demonstrating content specific pedagogy while exhibiting a broad repertoire of teaching strategies and skills. The Unit’s charge is to develop teachers and leaders who know the subjects they teach and are adept at instruction that crosses disciplines as required by the recent changes in Florida brought by the adoption of the Common Sore State Standards.

**Knowledge of Teaching**

Pedagogical content knowledge is an understanding of how to make a specific subject comprehensible to others (Shulman, 1986a, 1986b). In other words, professionals have a variety of strategies for teaching specific content. For example, a professional who is teaching reading would have strategies for teaching reading that may be similar to or different from strategies she or he uses to teach writing, science, and mathematics. This knowledge combines content and pedagogy to provide skills specific to teaching that are part of a teacher’s ability to plan to make instruction meaningful.

A professional’s general pedagogical knowledge includes teaching strategies that transcend particular subject matter (Borko & Putnam, 1996). General pedagogical knowledge includes having strategies for creating effective learning environments, developing routines for interacting with students, understanding the teacher’s role as a mediator of student learning, and having strategies to address classroom management. In conjunction with each of these four domains of knowledge, a professional has the beliefs, values, attitudes, self-knowledge, and ethics to reflect on and integrate each of them.
The development of pedagogical knowledge is closely associated with the teacher’s understanding of learning and development. Pacing, questioning, staging learning opportunities, recognizing the importance of learner response and assessing the level of student understanding are all skills that must be acquired for whatever the teaching task demands. Teachers and leaders must learn how to construct developmentally appropriate practice including the willingness to accommodate the cultural context of the classroom and the learners (Horowitz, et al, 2005; Wiggins & McTighe, 1998). They must also have the knowledge to use computer simulations and other pedagogical tools to support cognitively demanding learning.

Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) assert that one of the goals of professional preparation is to instill a commitment to inquiry and the motivation to build upon candidates’ initial knowledge-base. In education, instructional decisions are based on an expanding body of knowledge, deep reflection (LaBoskey, l993), skilled use of curriculum materials and technological tools, and the moral imperative of teaching all children (Goodlad, 1990).

**Candidate Commitment to P-12 Student Achievement**

Teachers and school leaders must be able to obtain, reflect upon, and, subsequently use student performance information to inform their decisions. Educators who use student data systematically and continuously gain knowledge and information they might use to improve the quality of the educational experience of students (Elmore, 2002). Further, by using student data, educators subject themselves to the discipline of measuring their success by the metric of students’ performance. Evidence suggests that teachers and leaders learn more deeply about the strengths of diverse learners, engage in more focused observation and documentation of student learning, and also participate in more collaborative inquiry when they use student performance data systematically to make decisions about their teaching (Ball & Cohen, 1999; Education Resources Group, 2001; Falk, 2001; Hamilton et al., 2008; McLaughlin & Zarrow, 2001; Wiggins, 1998).
Attention to student learning involves preparing teachers and leaders to explore the rich context in which students exhibit their knowledge. This professional commitment is mindful of the importance of structuring learning opportunities that reflect a culture of high expectations and consideration for the individual needs of learners, especially those who bring many challenges to the learning situation (Darling-Hammond, French, & Garcia-Lopez, 2002; Noguera, 2009; Peske & Haycock, 2006; Sanders & Horn, 1998; Skrla et al., 2004).

**REFLECTIVE TEACHING**

Excellent educational professionals constantly learn from their efforts, and they continually motivate themselves to improve their choices and actions. By reflecting on their work and evaluating the impact of their behavior on others, both individually and in collaboration with colleagues, committed educational professionals learn to become responsive to the unique educational and emotional needs of each individual student (LaBoskey, 1993; Pollard & Tann, 1987; Ross, Bondy, & Kyle, 1993, Tomlinson, 2000). They reflect critically on student, school, and community issues and make ethical decisions using a rich and developed professional knowledge base that combines research-based knowledge with school-based experience (Good & Brophy, 2000; Goodlad, 1990; Howey, 2006).

At a time when few classroom teachers had earned a bachelor’s degree, Dewey argued that there was a science of education that teachers might master through careful observation and experiential learning (Dewey, 1904, 1938; Seals, 2004a, 2004 b). He defined “reflection” as a three-step process that begins with defining classroom issues the teacher wishes to investigate and then proceeds to a means ends analysis and other forms of inquiry that seek to analyze the causes of the problem as well as potential solutions. This process ends with generalizations the teacher might draw upon when confronting similar problems in the future.

As Pollard asserts, reflective action “involves a willingness to engage in constant self
appraisal and development. Among other things, it implies flexibility, rigorous analysis, and social awareness” (Pollard 2005, p13). Reflection thus is a product of research, experience, and a commitment to social justice and ethical practice.

This conception of educational professionals as reflective practitioners can be found in a wide range of publications. The work of Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993), Fullan (1991, 2001), Ladson-Billings (1994), Levine & Trachtman (1997), Zeichner and Liston (1987), Lieberman and Miller (2004), Darling-Hammond (2006), and Wells (1993), among others, has analyzed and documented this role for educational professionals as advocates for their own and their student’s learning and as successful change agents in the context of social justice. Reflection is the cornerstone of knowledgeable professionals and collaborative leadership.

To promote reflection about pedagogy, teachers and school leaders need a range of tools to both permit and prompt asking important questions of the curricular process. Excellent professionals do more than apply research and other forms of knowledge to educational problems; they understand how to critically examine their work and to use these reflections to make better decisions (Spillane & Miele, 2007). They learn in and from the work they do (Lampert, 2010). A critical goal for colleges of education is to teach pre-service teachers and other educational professionals how to solve the problems that challenge them and how to learn from experiences. As LaBoskey asks, “If pre-service teachers do not learn to think while in school, it is fair to ask: ‘How are they to keep on learning?’” (LaBoskey, 1993, p. 11). All programs in the University of South Florida Saint Petersburg College of Education emphasize the role of the educational professional as reflective learner and practitioner through integrated classroom experiences.

**COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP**

Much of the current discussion of teacher and leader development emphasizes the importance of collaboration among a community of learners (Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, & Easton, 2010; DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many, 2010). Educational
professionals’ choices and actions are refined through sharing knowledge and expertise about their practice (Au, 2002; Cochrane-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Oakes, Franke, Quartz & Rogers, 2002; Spillane, 2006). Through this collaboration, teachers become leaders in both formal and informal ways. They might work with teacher candidates as the beginners learn to teach, serve as mentors to fellow teachers, or support others in the school community who strive to improve instruction and learn new practices. Such an instructional leader is one who is known for being an ethical and trustworthy person. He or she understands students and actively promotes the success of all students and members of the school community (Leithwood, Paten, & Jantzi, 2010). The instructional leader is a role model for students, teachers, and others.

Knowledgeable professionalism and a commitment to students’ welfare, as well as to the families and communities they serve, are all foundations of teacher leadership. In their study of teacher leadership, Lieberman and her colleagues (Lieberman & Miller, 2004) identify four domains of skill and expertise: 1) teacher as researcher, 2) teacher as professional, 3) teacher as curriculum and instructional leader, and 4) teacher as ethical decision-maker.

Teacher leaders [...] are committed for the long term; they do not intend to give up on their students or one another. They plan to continue to assume responsibility for the deepening of their own practice and that of their colleagues. They are determined to become the architects of vibrant professional communities in which teachers take the lead in inventing new possibilities for their students and themselves. (p. 92) Leaders must embrace change, build community through collaboration, and strive to create environments that support all as learners (DuFour, et al., 2010; Duke, 2004; Evans, 2000; Fullan, 2001).

In addition to the development of teacher leadership, the Unit is committed to preparing collaborative and ethical school leaders. This preparation takes into account three major areas: 1) The Role of the Instructional Leader as Change Agent, 2)
Collaborative Educational Leadership, and 3) Instructional Leadership Guided by Ethical Reasoning and Behavior.

The Role of Instructional Leader as Change Agent

Capable, conscientious instructional leaders are needed to support vibrant professional communities and authentic student learning. Because teaching is a collaborative practice, these leaders must have the knowledge and skill to lead teachers in planning instruction, identifying effective practice, and implementing effective change programs (Bolman & Deal, 2013; Fullan, 2001; Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson et al., 2010; Northouse, 2013; Orr & Orphanos, 2011). They must use data to lead improvement and support learning for all students (Vanover & Hodges, 2014). They must vigilantly respond to the needs of stakeholders and act out of a profound commitment to social justice (Skrla et al., 2004; Webb-Johnson, 2012). These instructional leaders must also respond to the calls for increased academic achievement for all students. To work effectively with students from diverse backgrounds, excellent instructional leaders must be flexible. They must be reflectively aware of their strengths, view diversity as a source of enrichment, and be open minded to new ideas and initiatives (Manning, 2000). These leaders must use every available opportunity to ensure diversity is embedded and celebrated in the classroom and the curriculum (Banks, 2005). These instructional leaders actively reject notions of student failure and serve as advocates for all students (Gay, 1995; Good & Weinstein, 1986; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Noguera, 2009; Scheurlich and Skrla, 2003).

Teachers are taking on increasingly larger and more meaningful leadership roles and responsibilities (Joyce & Showers, 2002). Marsh (2000) proposes that the idea of school leadership has become more inclusive and that teachers are major players in teams that “work from the middle rather than the top of the organization” (p. 127). Skilled instructional leaders must work to ensure that classroom teachers participate in numerous leadership functions within their schools (Spillane, 2006). Bolman and Deal (2013) assert that leadership, when it works well, enables people to collaborate to meet the needs of the
school community by working through shared visions, values, and goals. When these elements are in concert, everyone has a better chance to create and sustain better schools.

The centrality of student learning is irrefutable for the instructional leader (Northhouse, 2013). This fundamental fact is discussed in a wide range of state and national standards. In the words of the Council of Chief State School Officers, (1996):

A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth. (p. 12)

**Collaborative Instructional Leadership**

Instructional leaders must work together. Instructionally effective, caring, and just schools that celebrate the worth and achievement of all students are created through the collaborative effort of a professional community dedicated to serving student needs (Bryk et al., 2010; Newmann & Wehledge, 1995). This community is centered in the classroom, but extends outward to students’ families and neighborhoods (Pounder & Reitzug, 2002; Walker, 1996). The teacher’s role is to be involved in this local and extended community, to have the ability and knowledge to collaborate with others in the development of curriculum as a team member, to be a mentor to students, and to seek continuous professional renewal through scholarship. Administrators must be committed to empowering teachers to engage in this work and to provide the support needed to create a community within the school that is committed to the community surrounding the school.

**Instructional Leadership Guided by Ethical Reasoning and Behavior**

The instructional leader demonstrates high levels of ethical reasoning and models ethical behavior in the classroom and in the community (Fullan, 2001; Sergiovanni, 2007; Starrat, 2004). Leadership demands ethical behavior and concern for the development of young children in public schools as they grow into citizens (Smith & Fenstermacher, 1999). Ethical reasoning is affected positively through college courses and other interventions, especially when students begin to think differently based upon reflection and the personal
experiences of themselves and others (Elliott, 2006; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Rest & Narvaez, 1994). Ethical behavior includes attention to moral sensitivity, moral motivation, and moral character in addition to moral reasoning or judgment.

At the highest level, the instructional leader recognizes the primacy of moral behavior, honors collaboration and values diversity (DeVries & Kohlberg, 1990). As Northouse (2013) emphasizes, “Ethics is central to leadership because of the nature of the process of influence, the need to engage followers in accomplishing mutual goals, and the impact leaders have on the organization’s values” (p. 428).

The faculty of the College of Education of the University of South Florida Saint Petersburg assert through teaching knowledgeable professionalism, reflective practice, and collaborative leadership, we are creating educational leaders capable of meeting the challenges and opportunities of a diverse and changing world.
References


Boykin, A.W. and Noguera, P. (2011). Creating the opportunity to learn: Moving from research to practice to close the achievement gap. Alexandria, VA: Association for
Supervision and Curriculum Development.


In J. Sikula, T. Buttery, & E. Guyton (Eds.), Handbook of research on teacher education (2nd ed, pp. 38-52). New York: Macmillan.


Florida Department of Education. (2011). *Educator accomplished practices*. Tallahassee, FL:


Writing, 22, 401-423.


Orr, M. T., & Orphanos, S. (2011). How graduate-level preparation influences the


Rebora, A. (December 11, 2013). Noguera: Educators must be ‘guardians of equity.’


Shulman, L. S. (1986b). Paradigms and research programs in the study of teaching: A contemporary perspective. In M. C. Wittrock (Ed.), *Handbook of research on teaching* (pp. 3-36), New York: Macmillan.


