WESTERN
CONNECTICUT
STATE UNIVERSITY

Exhibit 1.5.c.1 WCSU Education Preparation Provider (Educational Unit) Conceptual Framework

Shared Vision and Theme of the Education Unit

A conceptual framework captures the shared vision of the Unit, guides the activities of faculty and candidates, and becomes the vehicle through which the Unit's goals are articulated to the broader community. A conceptual framework promotes cohesion within the Unit and becomes a base from which "continuous improvement, renewal and change can occur" (Dottin, 2001, p. 3).

The vision of the Western Connecticut State University (WestConn) Education Unit is reflected in the term **EDUCATOR** (**E**xpertise in content knowledge, **D**iversity, **U**nity, **C**lassroom and school leadership, **A**ttitudes, **T**echnology, **O**rganize knowledge and facilitate learning, **R**eflective practitioner) and the theme *Preparing educational professionals to facilitate student growth and achievement in the 21st Century.* The components of our Conceptual Framework underscore our belief that educational professionals in the new millennium must understand how to use information technologies and how to work effectively with the diversity of students found in public schools in order to prepare all students for success in a technological, multicultural, global society. Educational professionals must know how to work collaboratively with colleagues and communicate with a variety of constituencies in order to be classroom and school leaders capable of effecting change and ensuring quality educational programs for all students. They must be reflective practitioners who continually evaluate and modify their practice, not only to meet the learning and developmental needs of students, but also to keep pace with a rapidly changing society and world. The term **EDUCATOR** embodies the components of our Conceptual Framework and serves to remind us that we, the faculty, are first and foremost responsible for preparing the educators of the future.

The Development of the Conceptual Framework

The development of the Conceptual Framework over the past years has been an exciting professional endeavor for Education and Educational Psychology faculty. We began to look at the WCSU teacher and counselor preparation programs from new perspectives, using guidelines we received from attendance at Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) training sessions, and focusing on national standards and performance based assessments. We relied on both "bottom up" and "top down" processes to develop a Conceptual Framework that would articulate a shared vision for education programs at WCSU. We looked at our program to identify the common threads running through coursework, field experiences and practica and saw how current practice was aligned with national, state and institutional standards (e.g., NCATE, the Connecticut Common Core of Teaching and E&EP Department objectives). We

found new areas to address as a result of this investigative process. We realized that we needed (a) to identify the specific dispositions that we feel are important in teaching and counseling and to begin building into the program methods of assessing the development of these dispositions and (b) to identify and begin to design additional performance based assessments to use at transition points throughout the program. As a result of these efforts, our Conceptual Framework currently reflects the best of what our program has been in the past while describing our vision and hope for the future. We realize, however, that work on the conceptual framework is an ongoing process.

The University's Mission Statement, Principles, and Values

Western Connecticut State University serves as an accessible, responsive and creative intellectual resource for the people and institutions of Connecticut. We strive to meet the educational needs of a diversified student body through instruction, scholarship and public service. Western aspires to be a public university of choice for programs of excellence in the liberal arts and the professions by providing full-time and part-time students with the necessary background to be successful in their chosen careers and to be productive members of society. It accomplishes this by emphasizing:

- A strong liberal arts foundation
- Strong skills in communication, problem solving, and critical thinking
- Opportunities for experiential, cooperative, and internships experiences
- A strong background in information technologies
- Interdisciplinary programs
- A strong sense of commitment to public service
- A personalized learning environment

Our mission as a public comprehensive University is given life through the principles and values that guide us.

Fulfilling The Mission
PRINCIPLES
- Empowering students to attain the highest standards of academic achievement, public and professional services, personal development, and ethical conduct is our fundamental responsibility.
- Facilitating learning is our primary function, and it requires that our faculty be active scholars who have a lasting interest in enhancing instruction and that our curriculum be dynamic and include advanced instructional technologies.
- Preparing students for enlightened and productive participation in a global society is our obligation and is best fulfilled by developing the best possible academic programs and learning experiences.
- Promoting a rich and diverse cultural environment that allows freedom of expression within a spirit of civility and mutual respect is our abiding commitment
- Strengthening our partnership with the people and institutions of Connecticut is a benefit to both the University and the state and endows our teaching and scholarship with a special vitality and dedication.

VALUES
- Quality and integrity in all that we do, and a commitment to continuous improvement.
- Respect for the dignity and rights of each member of our University community.

The School of Professional Studies Mission Statement

The School of Professional Studies will be recognized for its unique and dynamic educational, applied research, and community service components, and will be the principle center for public sector higher education in the professional studies of teacher education, music performance, health and human services for the Western region of Connecticut. To achieve this mission, the School of Professional Studies and its academic departments with their degree and related programs will:

- Provide excellence and access to undergraduate and graduate education in teacher education, music, and health and human services that is built on a strong foundation in the liberal arts and sciences, and that values open communication, creative and critical inquiry, the expansion of performance-based experiential learning practice, and the role of technology in professional practice and teaching;
- Serve students who reflect the full diversity of the Western region of Connecticut, and who will upon graduation serve professionally as culturally competent advocates, active in the provision of high level professional services to the broad spectrum of the population in the Western region of Connecticut;
- Contribute to the quality and scope of liberal arts and sciences education at WCSU by offering courses appropriate for all students as well as through interdisciplinary, collaborative educational efforts with other units within the University;
- Contribute to the body of knowledge of the teaching, music, health and human service professions through the research and scholarly activities by the faculty, and will introduce students to research methods and practice;
- Contribute to the enrichment and leadership of professional communities, and will serve the professional and lay communities in a variety of ways including partnerships in the development of effective teaching, health and human service policies, research, community assessment and development;
- Respond to the institutional and regional community with regard to cultural life, education health and human welfare needs;
- And commit to the challenge of life long learning in response to changes in the teaching, music, health care and human service professions by offering continuing education for alumni, practicing professionals, and the lay community.

The Education and Educational Psychology Department's Mission Statement and Objectives (Revised Fall 2003)

The mission of the Education and Educational Psychology (E&EP) Department is to prepare candidates for careers in teaching and counseling professions. We believe in initiating and maintaining professional relationships with the broader educational community and are committed to the continuous support and development of cooperative projects and services with area schools and community agencies. We embrace the broader mission of Western

Connecticut State University to empower students to "…attain the highest standards of academic achievement…personal development, and ethical conduct". Candidates in our teacher and counselor preparation programs must achieve the following objectives:

- demonstrate academic competence in their selected fields,
- complete a general program of studies (in Education) in addition to a recommended content area major other than Education,
- know the historical, social, economic, political, comparative and philosophical foundations of education or school counseling,
- understand the variety of patterns of human growth and development
- value and infuse cultural diversity,
- demonstrate a proficiency in and working knowledge of the Connecticut Common Core of Teaching (with the embedded Connecticut Competency Instrument), Connecticut Common Core of Learning, Curriculum Frameworks K-12, the Connecticut Code of Professional Responsibility, and effective practices in the profession,
- demonstrate a spirit of inquiry, the use of critical thinking skills, and the habits of the reflective practitioner, and,
- demonstrate the ability to incorporate appropriately the use of technology in instructional practices.

Components (Themes) of the Conceptual Framework

E - EXPERTISE IN CONTENT KNOWLEDGE

Teachers must possess knowledge in order to transmit knowledge and facilitate learning. Knowledge of the facts, principles and concepts that comprise the subject matter that one is preparing to teach is a necessary, though not sufficient, condition for excellence in schooling (Murray & Porter, 1996; Shulman, 1987). Adequate disciplinary knowledge requires an understanding of how the discipline provides a way of knowing the world (Bruner, 1960; DeVries & Zan, 1995; Moon & Schulman, 1995; Murray, 1996; Schwab, 1968; Weimer, 2002).

The contemporary structure of disciplinary knowledge has taken what Kuhn (1970) called a "paradigm shift" or fundamental change in how we think about disciplinary knowledge to enable human knowledge to develop, arguing against a view of teaching and learning as primarily a matter of transmitting a fixed body of knowledge to passive students. Disciplinary knowledge is socially constructed, and our students come to school with their own prior knowledge that shapes how they think and learn the disciplines.

As Gardner (1999) argues, P-12 students need a curriculum and teachers who will help them to think like a historian, mathematician, and scientist. This goal requires an in depth knowledge of at least one discipline and an interdisciplinary perspective (Wiske, 1998) and is not merely designed to improve student scores on standardized tests (Murray 1996), but to provide programs to educate our candidates to enable P-12 students to apply this knowledge effectively in real world situations.

Connecticut has developed content standards for the P-12 curriculum. Since one can't teach what he or she does not understand, adequate disciplinary knowledge is fundamental to effective teaching and learning (Bruner,1960; 1971; Darling- Hammond, 2000; Gardner, 1991; 1999; Hoy & Miskel, 2005; Wilson, 2001; Wineberg, 2000). In order to be considered well educated, a person must be grounded in disciplinary knowledge (Darling-Hammond, 2000).

Candidates preparing to teach in elementary schools must be competent generalists who themselves have a high degree of competence in reading, writing, and mathematics, as well as a sound knowledge base in the natural, physical and social sciences. Candidates preparing to teach subjects at the middle and high school levels must be content area specialists; they must demonstrate both depth and breadth of understanding in the subject matter they are preparing to teach, and they must have an understanding of the modes of inquiry and epistemological frameworks of their discipline(s).

Individual disciplines are social constructions that have developed over time and are influenced by historical circumstances and events. While the disciplines are invaluable ways of knowing, they are simultaneously a constraint on how we know (Bruner, 1986; DeVries & Zan, 1995; Kuhn, Moon, & Schulman, 1995; Murray, 1996; Schwab, 1968; Stanley, 1992; Weimer 2002).

Advanced program requirements, aligned with SPA, NASM, or CACREP standards, provide a strong knowledge base in the professional field (e.g., educational leadership, school counseling) necessary for competent performance in P-12 educational settings (Norton, 2005). Effective counselors and educational administrators must have a firm grasp of the foundational knowledge of the professional field (Hoy & Miskel, 2005; Norton, 2005).

The competent educator has a professional responsibility to continue to expand his or her disciplinary and professional knowledge bases, embracing the concept of life-long learner. As Dewey (1938) noted, "The most important attitude that can be formed is that of a desire to go on learning" (p. 49). Educational professionals who are confident in their understanding of the subjects they teach and the services they provide bring a contagious enthusiasm to the school community that improves student well-being, student learning, and teaching (Hoy &Miskel, 2005).

D - DIVERSITY
Educational professionalism the 21st Century cannot effectively prepare P-12 students for participation in a global, multicultural society without themselves embracing attitudes and employing educational practices that value, respect and nurture the diversity found in the United States. Candidates in teacher and counselor preparation programs learn about the variety of diverse groups that comprise our nation and how to develop curriculum and teaching or counseling strategies that are maximally effective in helping these children grow and learn.

Teachers must understand how disability influences development and appreciate the impact of factors such as race, ethnicity, culture, language, and socioeconomic status on learning and school achievement in order to develop curriculum and choose teaching strategies that facilitate learning for all students (Haberman, 1991; Sigel, 1990). The Diversity component of the Unit's Conceptual Framework reflects the Council for Exceptional Children's (CEC) Content Standards, particularly Standards 3, 5, and 6.

Standard 3 states that "special educators understand that the beliefs, traditions, and values across and within cultures can affect relationships among and between students, their families, and the school community." Content Standard 5 states that "…special educators foster environments in which diversity is valued and individuals are taught to live harmoniously and productively in a culturally diverse world." Standard 6 states that "special educators match their communication methods to an individual's language proficiency and cultural and linguistic differences" (http://www.cec.sped.org),which not only apply to special educators, but are standards that may be extrapolated to include all educational professionals.

Danielson (1996, 2007) emphasizes the importance of teachers' sensitivity to students' cultural backgrounds, including relevant information of cultural traditions, religious practices, patterns of interaction, and instructional practices that impact students' learning. Darling-Hammond (2000) points out that the "effects of well-prepared teachers on student achievement can be stronger than the influences of student background factors such as poverty, language background, and minority status (p. 37)". We feel that this preparation must include the knowledge, skills, and dispositions required of culturally competent educational professionals and the development of awareness of one's own beliefs about and attitudes towards different groups and an understanding of how these beliefs and attitudes impact teaching and counseling (Sue & Sue, 2001). We embrace the recommendations of Sobel, Taylor, and Anderson (2003) who suggest that schools and universities develop partnerships in resolving the issue of teachers' abilities to practice culturally relevant and differentiated instruction.

Today's classrooms require teachers to educate students varying in culture, language, abilities, and many other characteristics (Gollnick & Chinn, 2002), creating classroom cultures where all students regardless of their cultural and linguistic background are welcomed and supported, and provided with the best opportunity to learn. Teachers create an environment of respect and rapport though their words and actions in their classrooms (Danielson, 2007). By honestly examining their attitudes and beliefs about themselves and others, teachers begin to discover why they are who they are, and can confront biases that have influenced their value system (Villegas & Lucas, 2002).

U - UNITY
Schools of excellence have a sense of community and value team building. A climate of collaboration and mutual support is paramount to the development of responsive, flexible P-12 educational settings that are equipped to meet the needs of all learners. Collaborative learning environments facilitate the development of teachers' own learning (Howey, 1996). The Teacher Education Programs at Western Connecticut State University encourage unity among teacher preparation candidates through the use of educational cohorts. During their senior year, candidates for certification in education are accepted in the Professional Semester in cohorts ranging in size from 15 to 25 students. These cohorts take classes together, share the same professors, and are involved in similar pre-professional experiences. The common elements in their programs give candidates an opportunity to experience first-hand the benefits of being part of a collaborative community and receiving support from peers and colleagues. When evaluating the Professional Semester experience, candidates comment favorably on their cohort experience and point to the positive impact it has had on their development in the affective as

well as the cognitive domain. This cohort experience is consistent with teacher standards that include an emphasis on collegiality (Yinger, 1999).

Teachers and other school professionals demonstrate unity through collaboration with colleagues, administrators, students, and their families to affect a positive school climate, examine student learning data, instructional strategies, curricula, and organizational structures1 to support continuous school and district improvement (The Connecticut Common Core of Teaching: Domain #6 Professional Responsibilities and Teacher Leadership (2010)).

C - CLASSROOM AND SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

Teachers have historically been expected to be leaders in their own classrooms. More recently, the school based management and instructional leadership initiatives of the past two decades have provided a vision of how the teacher's role might be broadened to include participation in building level and district level governance. We believe that preparation for classroom leadership is the one of the most important responsibilities of teacher preparation programs at the initial levels. However, we recognize that classroom teachers, through collaboration with colleagues in the school and the community, have the power to shape curriculum and influence educational policy, and we believe that it is the University's responsibility to nurture these capabilities in teacher candidates. For us, leadership comes from the ability to envision change and to communicate and work with others to solve problems and transform ideas into educational practice which they work in a variety of ways. The Unit's underlying theory of leadership is taken from the works of Burns (1978) and focuses on the constructs of transactional leadership, transformational leadership, and moral leadership.

Implementation of leadership theory is articulated as "instructional leadership" and presupposes that the teacher is an agent of change within schools. Candidates seeking initial certification will gain the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to become effective classroom leaders.

They will learn to maximize support for student learning by developing and demonstrating professionalism, collaboration with others, and leadership skills (The Connecticut Common Core of Teaching: Domain #6 Professional Responsibilities and Teacher Leadership (2010)).

Advanced candidates in graduate programs will be expected to demonstrate transactional leadership skills and to identify exemplars of transformational and moral leadership behaviors. Advanced candidates should also be able to demonstrate the capacity to understand group processes and the interrelationship of leadership and school culture (Peterson & Deal, 1998).

A - ATTITUDES

The Education and Educational Psychology Department at WestConn is committed to providing its Teacher Education and Counselor Education candidates with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that will equip them for their chosen professional careers. The acquisition of knowledge and skills does not guarantee that they will be used and applied. As Cantor (1990) puts it, "having" is not necessarily "doing." He believes that dispositions and their associated skills can be strengthened within effective teaching practices. Candidates' dispositions, therefore, are important for the implementation of their acquired knowledge and skills.

Dispositions should be integrated with both the knowledge base and development of skills (Diez, 2007; Schussler, Stooksberry, & Bercaw, 2010). Dispositions change as candidates progress

through their various programs (Rinaldo, Denig, Sherman, Cramer-Benjamin, Vermette, Foote, & Smith, 2009). It is imperative that dispositions be introduced, addressed, and assessed from the beginning of the candidates' programs (Shiveley & Misco, 2010; Jung & Rhodes, 2008).

Reflection is an important component of dispositional acquisition and should include frequent self-reflection and collaborative discussion with faculty and peers (Diaz, 2007). For example, candidates may be asked to reflect on a topic, cite dispositions that were addressed, and indicate which disposition needs to be focused on as a result of the reflection and new information.

Dispositions, according to NCATE (2003), are the (1) values expressed by a person as his or her beliefs, attitudes, and feelings; (2) commitments which lead the person to action in the future and which are motivating forces for those actions; and, (3) professional ethics that exist outside the individual, representing an ethical code by which the person tries to live and perform moral duties and obligations. In essence, dispositions are guided by beliefs and attitudes related to values such as caring, fairness, honesty, responsibility and social justice. The two professional dispositions that NCATE expects institutions to assess are *fairness* and the belief that all students can learn.

Educational professionals' dispositions influence their behaviors toward students, families, communities, and colleagues (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards). Those dispositions affect student learning, motivations, and development, as well as the professional growth of teachers and counselors. The E & EP Department consulted pertinent state and accrediting organizations' documents (Connecticut Common Core of Teaching 2010 (CCCT) and Code of Professional Responsibility for Educators), the National Education Association (NEA) Code of Ethics) the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium 2011 (InTASC), the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE)] and determined that the following values, commitments, and ethical principles have been established as dispositions that influence teachers' behaviors toward students, and that affect learning, motivation, and development:

1. Values that express the belief that all students can learn (CCCT), that diversity and the individual's differences and cultures are valuable (NCATE), that being passionate about teaching and learning, while maintaining a student-centered approach, and making instructional decisions based on students' well-being are worthwhile (CCCT);
2. Commitments: to create and maintain a safe, nurturing environment conducive to learning and positive social interaction (CCCT and InTASC Standard 3, Learning Environments), to be a reflective teacher, dedicated to the role of assessment in improvement of student achievement (CCCT and InTASC Standard #6), to addressing a variety of students' learning differences (InTASC Standard #2), to using technology effectively in the classroom (NCATE), and to maintain national, state, and local educational standards in the classroom appropriate to grade levels and disciplines;
3. Professional ethics which recognize, respect, and uphold the dignity and worth of students as individual human beings, and therefore deal justly, fairly, and considerately with students (Connecticut Common Core of Teaching Code of Professional Responsibility, and National Education Association Code of Ethics).

The following dispositions influence teacher behaviors toward communities and families:

1. Values: such as a willingness to establish rapport by maintaining and actively fostering trust and respect in relationships (InTASC Standards 9 & 10), to communicate effectively with all stakeholders in the teaching and learning process;
2. Commitments: to assist students' caregivers in developing the skills they need to raise and protect their children (National PTA Mission Statement), and become familiar with the school and community of the student teaching placement;
3. Professional ethics which maintain the confidentiality of all information pertaining to students and their families (Connecticut Common Core of Teaching and Code of Professional Responsibility for Educators).

The following dispositions influence candidates' behaviors toward University and school personnel involved with the formative and collegial aspects of the candidates' education:

1. Value collaboration with other teachers and fosters school relationships that support students' learning and well-being (InTASC Standard 10) in a team environment, which might involve an inclusive setting, reception of and acting upon constructive feedback in an accepting manner;
2. Commitments: to the attributes of being a leader and a change agent; collegiality, cooperation and collaboration, and maintaining the professional responsibilities and obligations of the teaching staff of the school in which the candidate is doing his or her field experiences;
3. Professional ethics: to assume responsibility and seek out opportunities for his or her professional development by continually evaluating the effects of his or her choices and actions on others (Connecticut Common Core of Teaching and Code of Professional Responsibility for Educators and InTASC Standard 9), and maintain the confidentiality of all information concerning colleagues obtained in the proper course of the educational process (Connecticut Common Core of Teaching and Code of Professional Responsibility for Educators). "…..one of the most important dispositions to be listed in educational goals is the disposition to go on learning" (Katz, 1993).

The Unit has selected seven (7) dispositions from among those described above that it expects successful candidates for certification to demonstrate. Successful candidates will demonstrate the following values, commitments, and professional ethics. Successful candidates will

1. Believe that all children can learn.
2. Respect diversity and promote understanding of varied cultural traditions, individual differences, learning strengths, and needs.
3. Demonstrate commitment to the profession of teaching, the success of their students, and school improvement.
4. Exercise sound judgment and ethical professional behavior.
5. Demonstrate fairness in promoting social justice, treating students fairly, maintaining confidentiality, and assessment.
6. Engage in reflection on practice.
7. Demonstrate leadership in support of student learning.

T - TECHNOLOGY
The early 21st Century has witnessed the transformation of the United States from an industrial

society to an information society. As a result, technology is playing an increasingly important role in educational practice and is becoming an accepted way of "communicating, informing and knowing"(Norton & Wiburg, 2003, p. 4). In order to prepare students in schools to succeed in school and beyond, candidates in teacher preparation programs must be able to apply information technology to instruction. According to Jefferson and Edwards (2000), "teachers are the key to effective and efficient technology utilization" (p.140). The use of technology is consistent with constructivist thinking in that it is one way that teachers can become facilitators of learning instead of transmitters of knowledge (Shelly, Cashman, Gunter, Gunter, 2002). Technology allows the teacher to create "active, multidimensional lessons that scaffold students' learning" (Oakes & Lipton, 1999, p. 218).

The learner of the 21st century expect a different learning environment and has new tools available that can be used to enhance the academic experience, in and out of the classroom (McGee & Diaz, 2009). Online courses demonstrate that candidates acquire levels of knowledge, understanding, and competencies equivalent to those achieved in similar programs offered in more traditional time periods and modalities (NEASC Standard 4.39).

Adoption of teacher work samples (Schalock & Myton, 2002) and the use of electronic portfolios (Rogers, 2003) in many of our programs represent a commitment to research related to information and media literacy. Our programs also emphasize updated awareness of programs, relationships with professional associations, and research into practices that will expand professional competence in locating, using, and evaluating emerging information and communication technologies.

The increasing availability of new technologies opens new possibilities for learners, parents, and educational professionals to broaden and deepen the conversations about new learning (Jonassen, Peck, & Wilson, 1999; Mills, 2010). Online learning and assessment must be as rich as the more traditional learning experiences.

ORGANIZE KNOWLEDGE AND FACILITATE LEARNING (PEDAGOGY)

Introduction
Competent educators and educational professionals understand that all students can learn. They understand learning is a dynamic process where students are active participants in the construction of new knowledge by building upon their own knowledge (DeVries & Zan, 1995; Moon & Schulman, 1995; Murray, 1996; Weimer, 2002; Resnick, 2010); and demonstrate professional responsibility in utilizing multiple strategies, methods, and techniques to create the environment necessary to maximize the learning potential of all students (Freiberg & Driscoll, 2000; Murray, 1996).

Pedagogy concerns itself with the theory and practice of teaching and learning. Teachers organize content knowledge when they develop curriculum and plan lessons, and, through the use of carefully-chosen and varied instructional strategies, they are able to facilitate learning for all students. Our understanding of how students learn and what constitutes effective instruction has grown exponentially during the past twenty-five years. The work of developmental psychologists has given us an appreciation of the capabilities of young learners (Brunner, 1968; Flavell, 1985) and the importance of social interactions and strategies such as scaffolding and modeling in instruction (Vygotsky, 1978). Learning is conceptualized as a constructivist,

interactive process in which the learner interacts with aspects of the learning environment (e.g., print and nonprint materials and the teacher) in order to build increasingly complex knowledge networks (Gagne, 1985). Consistent with the Connecticut Common Core of Teaching, we believe that sound pedagogy takes into account the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor development of the learner. Candidates in teacher and counselor preparation programs at Western Connecticut State University acquire knowledge of pedagogy through coursework, field experiences and pratica. Professional competence also entails a thorough grasp of research related to human development as it relates to teaching and learning. Of particular importance is the need to provide learning opportunities that are developmentally appropriate (Danielson, 2007; Freiberg & Driscol, 2000).

Pedagogical Content Knowledge

Effective educators must understand which examples of disciplinary content knowledge work best to teach the appropriate developmental level of students to understand a discipline. This form of understanding is pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1986, 1987), an understanding of how to make a specific subject comprehensible to others. Pedagogical knowledge is a key difference between expert and novice teachers is (Shulman 1986; Shulman, 1987; Wineberg, 2000).

The content methods courses in our initial teacher education programs focus on applying pedagogical content knowledge in their respective PK-12, K-12, or 7-12 settings according to the Connecticut endorsement grade ranges. Teachers and other educational professionals must also develop a sense of how the various disciplines are related in interdisciplinary knowledge (Bruner, 1986; Gardner, 1999).

Our teacher candidates demonstrate in-depth understanding of the content that they plan to teach and are able to provide multiple explanations and instructional strategies so that all students learn. They are able to reflect a thorough understanding of the relationship of content and content-specific pedagogy that are demonstrated in professional, state, and institutional standards; and present the content to students in challenging, clear, and compelling ways, using real-world contexts and integrating technology appropriately (NCATE Standard 1b).

Professional and Pedagogical Knowledge and Skills
Pedagogical knowledge refers to "general concepts theories and research about effective teaching, regardless of content areas" (NCATE glossary). Professional knowledge refers to "The historical, economic, sociological, philosophical, and psychological understandings of schooling and education. It also includes knowledge about learning, diversity, technology, professional ethics, legal and policy issues, pedagogy, and the roles and responsibilities of the profession of teaching." (NCATE glossary). The word "skills" in this area implies ability to use content, professional, and pedagogical knowledge effectively and readily in diverse teaching settings in a manner that ensures that all students are learning with an emphasis on the development of professional level competence, an outcome of a successful student teaching, practicum, or the internship experience.

General Concepts. Content and pedagogical content knowledge alone are not enough to produce an educator who can effectively create learning environments where disciplinary content is presented in meaningful and engaging ways for learners (Borko & Putnam, 1996;

Bredekamp & Copple, 1997; Danielson, 2007; Darling-Hammond, 1997; Felman-Nemser, 2001; Freiberg & Driscoll, 2000; Murray,1996). To develop the pedagogical understanding, skills, and dispositions needed to share their knowledge with students in beneficial ways, WCSU candidates complete rigorous programs including a gradual building of educational principles and practices in ways that develop skillful, reflective practitioners who can match instruction to learner needs, deliver interactive and engaging instruction, provide appropriate interventions, and use multiple methods of assessing students' acquisition of knowledge and skills as well as the level of achievement.

In each course syllabus, candidate learning outcomes and methods of assessment are linked to standards (Connecticut Common Core of Teaching 2010, InTASC, NBPTS, and appropriate SPA Standards). Teacher work samples (Schalock & Myton, 2002), are used as a core assessment in all initial preparation programs, and other capstone experiences are directly related to application of the most recent research related to teaching and learning (Murray, 1996; Peterson, 2001). WCSU advanced programs employ Capstone projects (MS in Education) and multiple portfolio development (EdD in Instructional Leadership Option for Initial Administrator and Supervisor endorsement) as demonstrations of content and pedagogical mastery.
During the Professional Development in Schools (PDS) semester, just prior to student teaching, Elementary education candidates are required to take individual content methods courses in the disciplines they will be teaching (Literacy, Math, Science, and Social Studies). WCSU secondary candidates take a full course in content methods for teaching the relevant discipline as well as a pedagogical methods course.

Candidates in initial programs are assigned to numerous clinical and field experiences (e.g., clinical observations, the PDS experience, and student teaching), beginning in their second year which offer candidates opportunities to apply what they have learned, evaluate, and reflect upon their effectiveness in using a variety of pedagogical techniques (Pugach & Johnson, 1995; Silva & Dana, 2001).

We ensure that each candidate has the opportunity to work with diverse student populations, including students with special needs. Field experiences are monitored closely by university supervisors, faculty, and cooperating teachers in collaboration with university professors, administrators, and school district personnel. The clinical and field experiences are embedded within the curriculum, with opportunities for candidates to work in partnership schools with masterful cooperating teachers and principals. Our cooperating teachers are evaluated and retained based upon student and university supervisor feedback, ensuring that our candidates have valuable productive experiences on P-12 learning.

Advanced professional programs guide candidates to fully appreciate that the choices of content knowledge and the principles and methods used to make that knowledge accessible to students will help to shape the future boundaries for human knowledge and understanding (Shulman, 1997).

Historical, Economic, Sociological, Philosophical, and Psychological Understandings of Schooling and Education. Through a variety of foundations and methods courses, candidates in our initial teacher preparation programs gain extensive exposure to research-based strategies and tactics to improve learning, while acknowledging the diversity of learner needs within a wide

range of socioeconomic environments and community contexts (Banks, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Sleeter, 2011).

Candidates explore the significance of professional knowledge and skills to their individual missions and professional goals within the larger societal aspiration for skilled, knowledgeable, and ethical learners who are eager to contribute to and to benefit from life in a free and just society.

R - REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONER

Dewey's view of inquiry (1938) and Schön's (1983) perspective of the reflective practitioner provide the theoretical foundation for the Unit's thinking about reflective practice. Since there is a strong belief that teachers should persist in on-going systematic inquiry in order to produce sound conclusions about their practices, a query or problem is at the heart of reflection. Expanding upon this concept, Schön (1983) distinguishes between reflection-in and reflection-on a teaching situation. The reflective practitioner not only thinks about and responds to what is taking place (reflection-in), but also takes the time to draw upon past experiences to plan for future ones (reflection-on). Through reflective practice, teachers continually improve their professional abilities. Inquiry and reflection are included in courses throughout the program.

To be a reflective practitioner within the context of community-responsive education, relationships of respect become the foundation for intellectual and social interactions, creating an educational an educational process in which the needs of all stakeholders are acknowledged and respected (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Schon, 1987). The complex decisions regarding teaching, learning, and student development require extensive reflection as a core component of professional practice (Wilen, Ishler, Hutchinson, & Kindsvatter, 2000).

> *Reflecive Practice* can enable practitioners to learn from experience about themselves, their work, and the way they relate to home and work, significant others and wider society and culture. It gives strategies to bring things out into the open, and fram appropriate and searching questions never asked before. It can provide relatively safe and confidential ways to explore and express experiences otherwise difficult to communicate. It challenges assumptions, ideological illusions, damaging social and cultural biases, inequalities, and questions personal behaviors which perhaps silence the voices of others or otherwise marginalize them (Bolton, 2010, p.3).

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