

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHER EDUCATION THE UMBC DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

### THE DEPARTMENT MISSION...

#### ***"PREPARING TEACHERS COMMITTED TO THE SUCCESS OF ALL STUDENTS"***

The mission of UMBC's teacher education programs is ...*"preparing teachers committed to the success of all students"*. The UMBC teacher education programs, initial and advanced, promote the overall mission by fostering rigorous conceptual understandings, robust critical thinking, and reflective leadership skills for success in a diverse and dynamic world.

### THE DEPARTMENT VISION...

#### ***"Promoting educational excellence in teacher education through research, teaching and service in partnership with UMBC professional development schools"***

Teacher candidates completing the UMBC teacher education programs have in-depth academic foundations and realize that teaching is a personal and ongoing professional development process that mirrors the P-12 teaching and learning process. Beyond the commitment to the success of their students, UMBC teacher candidates successfully completing the programs are engaged in the continuing improvement of P-12 learning environments, advancing pedagogical practice, and shaping public policy.

### THE MAJOR TENETS AND INTEGRATING THEMES:

The conceptual framework of the UMBC Department of Education is built upon two major tenets. These **tenets** are "academic strength" and the idea of a "professional development continuum." The tenets are connected through seven "integrating curriculum themes." These themes represent contemporary and critical issues of schooling and are aligned with the professional standards for excellence in teacher preparation developed by INTASC, NCATE, ACEI, MSDE as well as all other NCATE aligned professional organizations.

#### **Tenet #1 - Academic Strength**

UMBC teacher candidates develop teaching competencies through strong academic preparation. Strong academic preparation includes three major components - a background in the liberal arts, in-depth mastery in a content area, and extensive professional knowledge and experience. This is accomplished through the General Foundation Requirements (GFR's) of the University, the requirement of an academic major for all teacher candidates, and a rigorous professional program that integrates the three components.

#### **Tenet #2 - Professional Development Continuum**

UMBC teacher candidates construct their understandings of teaching from personal experiences across their career. Essential pedagogical and content knowledge as well as dispositions are developed across time. The UMBC teacher education programs develop professional teaching competencies through thoughtfully sequenced academic and pedagogical inquiries in courses with other professionals in variety authentic learning contexts.

#### **Integrating Curriculum Themes**

Seven integrating curriculum themes link the two major tenets across programs. The integrating themes are:

1. inquiry, research, and reflection;
2. diverse learners in diverse schooling and community contexts;
3. professional dispositions related to respect, attitudes, valuing, belief systems and global perspectives;
4. technology enhanced learning, instruction, evaluation, research, and record keeping;
5. teaching for understanding;
6. ongoing performance assessment;
7. collaboration for learning, teaching, schooling, and teacher education.

## **Description and Rationale for Integrating Curriculum Themes**

The integrating curriculum themes included in the conceptual framework serve to link all coursework and experiences of the UMBC teacher candidates. Through exposure to these themes in a variety of contexts, the candidate's understanding of these themes is enhanced, clarifying the candidate's disposition to each.

### **Theme #1 Inquiry, Research, and Reflection**

Beginning with the first courses in the program, teacher candidates are asked to explore a variety of questions related to schooling, collect and analyze information, and reflect on the information obtained. Through the observation and recording of events that take place in the schools, library research on related topics, analysis of the information obtained, and thorough class discussion of the issues, the teacher candidate gains the knowledge and formulates the dispositions that are important to success as a teacher. As the candidate progresses through the program, increasingly complex ideas and situations are explored. In the methods courses, there is an expectation that each lesson developed and taught by the candidate is critiqued by the candidate, the instructor, and, in some cases, by peers. Possible modifications to improve the lesson are discussed. In some cases, a videotape of the lesson is made and the candidate has the opportunity to view the tape alone and reflect on the success of the lesson. In some cases, the candidate's peers may also view the lesson and provide individual written and oral feedback. These experiences are carried out in a collegial manner and are viewed by candidates as a positive, non-threatening way to receive a critique of their teaching. Experiences such as these are important to the candidates since they become used to the evaluative process. Consequently, they feel more comfortable when they are observed, and evaluated during student teaching and internship experiences. Candidates are continuously encouraged, and required, to reflect on the lessons they have taught and the experiences they have had to reflect on their dispositions related to a variety of issues and improve their effectiveness. To aid them in this process, evaluative instruments have been devised to focus reflections on the multitude of important elements that are part of the characteristics of a successful teacher. These instruments will be discussed in detail in the evaluation section of this report.

### **Theme #2 Diverse Learners in Diverse Schooling and Community Contexts**

As previously discussed, the PDS relationships established with school systems in the metropolitan area are with schools that are truly diverse. There are diverse student populations in virtually all of the schools. Some of the schools are in the inner city, some are in suburban areas and most are in "high need" schools that will benefit from the relationship with UMBC. The teacher candidates also benefit from multiple experiences in very different settings. In this way, they get a realistic picture of the challenges that they will be facing as new teachers.



### **Theme #3 Professional Dispositions**

The experiences provided in the campus work and the field work that are required of all candidates effectively introduce them to perspectives related to their belief systems, values, and attitudes that they have often not considered before. Many of our candidates have had relatively little experience with other cultures, socio-economic, or racial groups. The experiences that we provide give them the opportunity to be involved with these diverse groups and to build an appreciation and respect for them. This is true of our candidates who are only a year or two removed from high school as well as our non-traditional candidates who are in their thirties or forties or older. In some cases, this latter group benefits the most since their initial values, developed over many years, are greatly in need of reexamination and reflection. Often, the stereotypes that have been cultivated over the years by both groups begin to be questioned based on their observations and through discussion with their instructors and peers.

### **Theme #4 Technology Enhancement**

As the technology revolution reaches the classrooms in the public schools, all teachers must gain competence in the use of these new aids that enhance the learning process. Many of our traditional candidates come to us with partially developed skills in the use of technology, while, in many cases, our non-traditional candidates have had little or no experience with the use of computers or other technology. Both groups soon realize, from in-school experiences, that the students that they will be teaching are often quite advanced in the use of a variety of technologies. Before the skills of our teacher candidates can be adequately developed, it is necessary that all education faculty members develop their proficiency in these areas. This goal is currently coming to fruition, but, realistically, another year is needed for faculty members to reach the desired level of proficiency. With these skills developed, education faculty can model, in their lessons, the use of technology that they will require the candidates to use. While this upgrading of skills is occurring, our candidates will not be adversely affected since they will have the opportunity to see and use technology both on campus and in the schools.

### **Theme #5 Teaching for Understanding**

From the time our candidates enter the elementary certification program, the necessity of teaching for understanding is stressed. The initial conception of the learning process held by many of the candidates early in the program is that students are simply the receivers of information and that they assume a passive role in the learning process. Candidates learn to view the learners as active participants in the learning process, with emphasis being placed on constructivist learning. Candidates learn to construct activities that engage students in the learning process by promoting inquiry, gathering information, analyzing and organizing data, testing hypotheses, and reaching conclusions based on their deliberations. An emphasis is also placed on generalizing the application of knowledge and skills learned in a variety of situations. This approach to student learning is stressed throughout the program and use of this approach is assessed in the field experiences and internship.

## Theme#7 Ongoing Performance Assessment

### **Information and Assessment Systems**

The Department of Education at UMBC, with the involvement of its professional community is piloting the **Information and Assessment Systems** (IASs, <http://education.umbc.edu>) to ensure continual improvement of candidate performance, program quality and unit operations. The IASs documents both qualitative and quantitative performance data through three integrated production systems: 1) Student Information System, 2) Performance Assessment System, and 3) Electronic Portfolio System.

We are delighted to have the opportunity to share with you our working progress of two production systems of the IASs: the **Performance Assessment System** and the **Electronic Portfolio System**. The two systems are designed to address NCATE unit standard 1 (Content, Pedagogical and Professional Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions, and Student Learning), unit standard 2 (Assessment System and Unit Operation), program standards (Early Childhood, Elementary, English, Math, Science, and Social Studies), and State standards (The Redesign of Teacher Education and Maryland Teacher Technology Standards). They are used to document and enhance performance at each of the five critical stages across the developmental sequence of the teacher education program: 1) Program Entrance Assessment, 2) Course and Field Experience Assessment, 3) Clinical Practice Assessment, 4) Program Exit Assessment, and 5) Post Graduation Assessment.

With the innovative adaptation of cutting edge technologies and the strong support from the UMBC education community, we plan to fully implement the two systems at both the unit and program levels (Early Childhood, Elementary, ESOL and Secondary Education at the undergraduate and graduate levels) by 2002-2003 academic year; and expect to implement all three production systems of the IASs by 2003-2004.

### **Performance Assessment System**

As part of the IASs, the **Performance Assessment System** (Fig. 1) consists of dynamic and integrated dual tracking pathways that provide comprehensive data on candidate performance, program quality and unit operations. **Candidate Assessment** emphasizes measurements of our teacher candidates' knowledge, skills, and dispositions, and will examine the impact of our teacher candidates' work on learning of children in P-12 settings. **Program and Unit Assessment** emphasizes efficacy in aligning instruction and curriculum with professional, state and instructional standards; efficacy of courses, field/clinical experiences and programs; and efficacy of candidates' content, pedagogical and professional proficiencies that lead to student learning.

Decisions about candidate performance are based on **multiple sources, multiple assessments with multiple indicators** made at each of the five critical stages across the developmental sequence of the teacher education program (Table 1). Assessments at the first few stages focus primarily on content, pedagogical and professional knowledge and skills as measured by Praxis test scores, GPA on all coursework, and professional ePortfolio development. A **triangulated candidate evaluation** was designed to assess candidate's field experience and clinical practice through clinical instructor, university supervisor and candidate's reflective assessments; and to



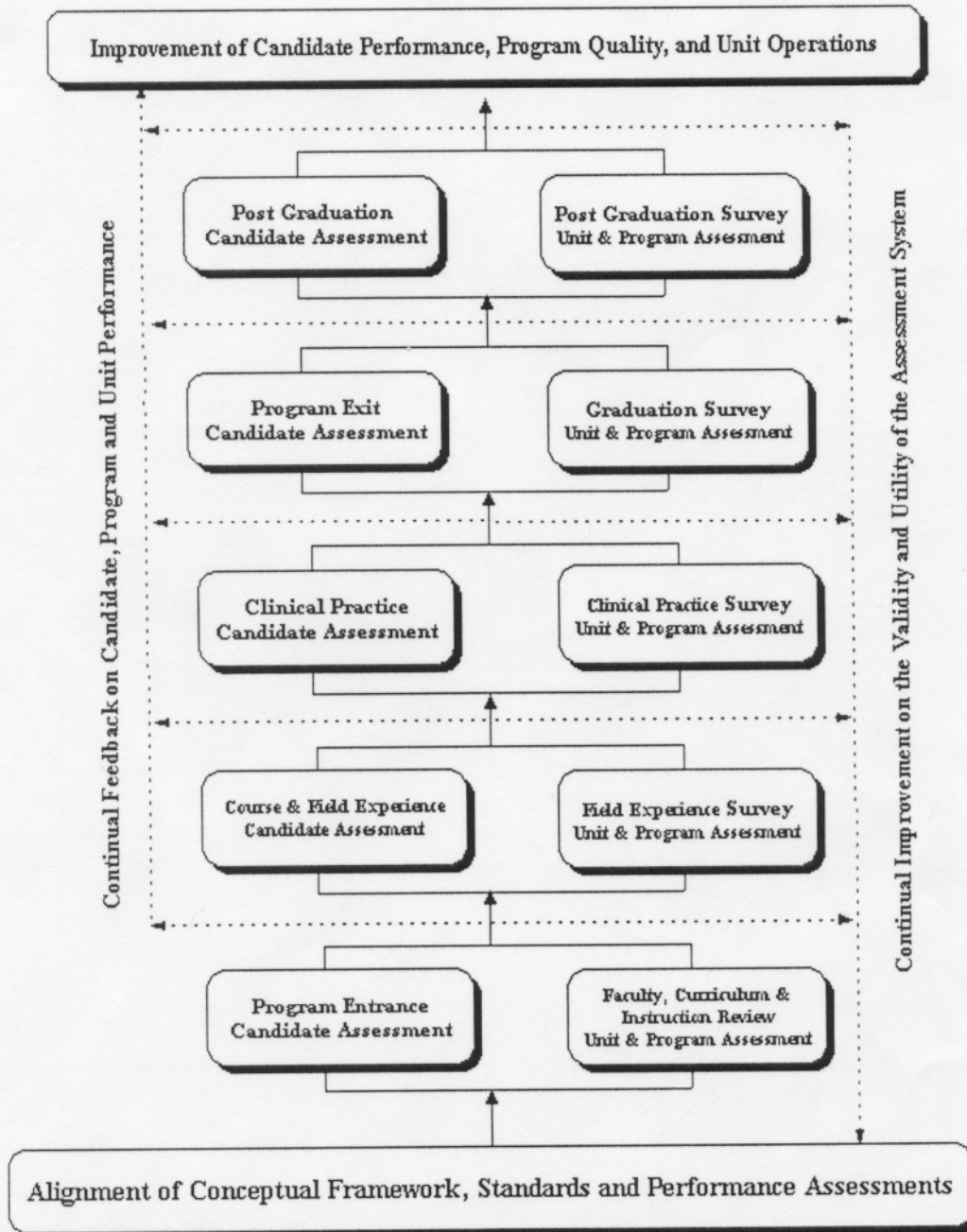
provide students with continual feedback on all three areas of knowledge, skills, and dispositions. A **triangulated program and unit evaluation** was also designed to assess the efficacy of faculty, curriculum, instruction and candidate performance through the clinical instructor, university supervisor and teacher candidate. Assessments near completion of the program and later stress content, pedagogical and professional skills and dispositions. The different

Fig. 1

# Performance Assessment System

UMBC Department of Education

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**Table 1**  
**Performance Assessment System: Measures at Each of the Five Developmental Stages**

Critical Developmental Stage	Measures	Knowledge	Skills	Dispositions	Student Learning	Proficiency Expectations 2002-2003	Proficiency Expectation 2003-2004	Proficiency Expectation 2004-2005
<b>1. Admission Assessment</b>								
	Pass Praxis I	♦				80%	90%	100%
	Minimum Overall GPA of 2.75	♦				100%	100%	100%
	Professional Development Plan	♦		♦		100%	100%	100%
	Education Foundation Courses	♦				80%	90%	100%
	Candidate Interview	♦		♦		100%	100%	100%
	Online Application	♦				100%	100%	100%
<b>2. Course and Field Experience Assessment</b>								
	Minimum Overall GPA of 2.75	♦				100%	100%	100%
	Continuing Advisement	♦		♦		100%	100%	100%
	Criminal History Disclosure			♦		100%	100%	100%
	Developmental ePortfolio	♦	♦	♦	♦	60%	80%	100%
	Survey of Field Experience	♦	♦	♦		100%	100%	100%
<b>3. Clinical Practice Assessment</b>								
	Minimum Overall GPA of 3.0	♦				100%	100%	100%
	Continuing Advisement	♦		♦		100%	100%	100%
	Developmental ePortfolio	♦	♦	♦	♦	60%	80%	100%
	Surveys of Clinical Practice	♦	♦	♦		100%	100%	100%
<b>4. Program Exit Assessment</b>								
	Minimum Overall GPA of 3.0	♦				100%	100%	100%
	Coursework Evaluation and Licensure Application	♦				100%	100%	100%
	Pass Praxis II	♦				80%	90%	100%
	Showcase ePortfolio	♦	♦	♦	♦	50%	75%	100%
	Maryland Technology Standards	♦	♦	♦	♦	60%	80%	100%
	Candidate Graduation Surveys	♦	♦	♦	♦	100%	100%	100%
<b>5. Post Graduation Assessment</b>								
	Survey of First Year Practice – to Program and Graduates Survey - to	♦	♦	♦	♦	60%	85%	100%
		♦	♦	♦	♦	60%	85%	100%

emphases of assessment are consistent and coherent with the UMBC Conceptual Framework for Teacher Education.

The unit, with the involvement of our faculty, teacher candidates and professional community, is conducting studies and cyclical data reviews to establish fairness, accuracy and consistency of its performance assessment procedures and rubrics for determination of candidate, program and unit performance. Content, construct and criterion-related validities and reliabilities of the assessment system will be continually tested with cutting edge information technologies and advanced analytic techniques to form a stronger relationship between performance assessment and candidate success. Plans for improvement of program quality, unit operations and candidate performance will be developed through collaborations among candidates, faculty and members of the professional community.

### **Electronic Portfolio System**

As part of the IASs, the **Electronic Portfolio System** (EPS, Fig. 2) is a dynamic and context sensitive system designed to facilitate the documentation of knowledge, skills, dispositions and student learning; and to demonstrate standards-based proficiencies across the five developmental sequences of the teacher education program (Table 1). The three benchmarks of **Developmental ePortfolio**, **Showcase ePortfolio** and **Professional ePortfolio** are closely associated with the critical transitions from **university student to teacher candidate** and **teaching professional**.

Developmental ePortfolio serves as a consortium for a teacher candidate to collect, select and reflect on evidence and documentation throughout the teacher preparation program, particularly during field and clinical practice. As a program exit criterion, students are required to prepare a showcase portfolio for both oral and online presentation to the portfolio committee. The Showcase ePortfolio is a "best evidence" collection of documentation and artifacts demonstrating competencies on the standards and on the candidate's professional growth. Candidates are expected to reflect on each of the artifacts, and validate why and how the artifact demonstrates growth or competence. Professional ePortfolio is useful in documenting and demonstrating quality performance and continual professional growth. The Department of Education provides all UMBC graduates with a wide variety of support services, including hardware, software access, training, publishing (via CD Rom and the Internet) and hosting of their Professional ePortfolio.

Candidates and graduates are expected to address the following four areas in their ePortfolio:

- 1) Personal and Professional Information (Personal Information, Professional Information, Field Experience & Clinical Practice, Site Descriptions)
- 2) Philosophy & Dispositions (Philosophy and Dispositions, Professional Development Plans, and Progress Journal)
- 3) Standards-Based Achievements (INTASC Proficiency, Maryland Teacher Technology Proficiency, and Professional Standard-Based Proficiency)
- 4) Credentials and Achievements (Resume, Professional Credentials and Achievements)

### **Improving Candidate Performance, Program Quality and Unit Operations**

Actions for full implementation of our **Information and Assessment Systems** and plans for improvements are in vigorous progress. We feel encouraged and privileged to be able to maximize the use of cutting edge technology in facilitating the assessment endeavors that are aimed to enhance candidate performance, program quality and unit operations.

### **Theme #7 Collaboration for Learning, Teaching, Schooling, and Teacher Education**

Collaboration, cooperation, collegiality, and mutual respect are viewed as essential elements in providing productive experiences for our teacher candidates. The contributions that teachers in the PDS schools make are invaluable. These contributions go beyond providing enriching experiences for the teacher candidates. The establishment of a close working relationship makes possible the free exchange of ideas



and concerns. Instruments have been developed that allow the teachers in the PDS to evaluate all aspects of the program. The results of these analyses have made it possible to significantly improve the experiences of the candidates. They are also encouraged to suggest ways in which the University can provide support for PDS faculty and staff.

Although the structures and modes of operation differ with each PDS, there is agreement between the University and the PDS partners on the general goals of the relationship and the responsibilities that are assumed by each member. These decisions and all subsequent decisions are reached through collaboration. In preparing teacher candidates, the activities in which they will engage are jointly planned by representatives from both groups. When appropriate, members of the University faculty from Arts and Sciences may participate.

An important component of the collaboration is the continuing professional development of the school staff as well as the teacher candidates. Professional development needs of the faculty and candidates are jointly identified and addressed. Some needs may be related to state mandates, or to improve the supervisory skills needed to more effectively aid teacher candidates, provide a vehicle for engaging in research, or simply the desire to learn more about a particular topic. A critical component of the responsibilities of all participants in the PDS is performance assessment. This includes assessment of the teacher candidate, the cooperating teacher, the university supervisor, and the certification program. The collected data and other information is used to assess the effectiveness of all aspects of the program.

Ultimately, the success of the program must be based on the effect of the teacher candidates on student achievement. This includes their success in having the students meet state learning outcomes, as well as the success of the students on teacher made tests or other activities. While a critically important outcome of the PDS relationship is the provision of a supportive environment in which the teacher candidates can practice the skills that will make them a successful teacher, it must never be forgotten that the primary beneficiaries of the relationship must be the students in the PDS. The result of the relationship between University and school must be one in which students receive an educational experience that is of higher quality, or certainly no lesser quality that they would receive if the PDS relationship was not present. To borrow a term from the medical profession, "Do no harm."

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