NU College of Education
**Conceptual Framework**
Revised: September 2018

## Introduction

This conceptual framework for education preparation is an on-going, living document undergirding all certificate and degree programs within the Northwest University (NU) College of Education (COE). The framework is informed by the NU mission and philosophy, Washington State teaching standards, and a broad research base, both empirical and theoretical.

The Northwest University motto - *Carrying the Call with Heart, Head, and Hand* - inspires members of the community to serve. We desire graduates who have a calling (or vocation) aimed at holistically serving others with passion, reflective and critical thought, and professional action. This service ethic requires our graduates not only to self-reflect and to acquire knowledge and skills needed to improve, but also to put those skills into action. Learning that does not transform practice is meaningless, and we strive to create educators who intentionally and systematically gather information about their students and then use it to adapt their own teaching practices. Furthermore, we expect them to equip their own students to do the same. Educators are at their most effective when they give their students the metacognitive skills that they use themselves. With that in mind, the COE conceptual framework identifies solidly with the "other," the student-learner, by building on three dispositions. We strive to be, and to prepare Educators to be, educators who are:

1. Holistic Educators - exhibiting sensitivity informed by student background and situation;

2. Adaptive Educators - demonstrating flexibility directed by student aptitude;

3. Student-Learner Focused Educators – evaluating performance by reflection on evidence of student learning;

The Northwest University College of Education students, staff, and faculty use ongoing formative assessments in their efforts to become well-rounded educators in the service of others. These assessments encourage and compel us to analyze student learning results in order to improve our own practice. The overall assessment system incorporates the knowledge, skills, and dispositions which we, as educators, need to fulfill our mission: creating educators focused on student learning. The following discussion expands on these three tenets, outlining them in detail and undergirding each one with research. The conceptual framework ends with an overview of the desired candidate proficiencies.

**Holistic Teaching**

In *The Courage to Teach*,

[1] Parker Palmer reminds us that we teach who we are. When we are at our best, there is no division between our personal selves and our professional selves, and the former necessarily informs and shapes the latter. According to Palmer, "as I teach, I project the condition of my soul onto my students." In this sense, the act of teaching cannot be separated from rest of our lives, and the way we are in the classroom is a function of the way we are in the fullness and richness of our "outside" lives. In fact, Palmer claims, any distinction between our "classroom" lives and our "outside" lives is false, and any serious attempt to understand teaching must begin with the acknowledgment that our lives do not divide into easy categories. The personal and the professional are so interrelated that they cannot be considered separately from each other.

If this is true for educators, it is certainly true for students. Any serious attempt to teach a student must begin with the acknowledgement that the student's "outside" life – her family structure, socioeconomic level, cultural expectations, linguistic background, religious beliefs, and a host of other factors – inform and shape her classroom experience. Our students do not learn in a vacuum. On the contrary, the classroom is a place of rich interaction between students' lived experiences, course content and curricula, and the educator's full self. Unless we begin by recognizing and responding to the complex fullness of our students, any learning systems we erect or activities we undertake will be operating at half-power. To teach effectively, we must teach holistically.

It is not enough, however, merely to recognize a student's fullness; we must respond to it, as well. Nel Noddings[2] claims that education is, fundamentally, an act of caring. But care, she asserts, requires both recognition *and* response:

> [Caring] is not merely diagnostic, measuring the cared-for against some pre-established ideal. Rather, it opens the career to motivational displacement. When I care, my motive energy begins to flow toward the needs and wants of the cared-for…I must take into account the feelings and desires that are actually there and respond as positively as my values and capacities allow.

Many educators have attempted to respond to their students' fullness. For example, in *Their Highest Potential*, Vanessa Siddle Walker[3] chronicles a black school (Caswell County Training School - CCTS) as it was built and flourished and, later, as its students transitioned to integrated schools in response to Brown v. Board of Education and the civil rights legislation of the 1950s and 60s. Siddle Walker's historical account mainly highlights what was lost as students moved from the deep community and holistic education of CCTS and transitioned as outsiders into racially integrated academic institutions, a loss powerfully summarized by a former CCTS elementary teacher:

> We took an interest in the child. For instance, if some of the kids came to school and didn't have clothes to put on, we would go and buy them for them – like for some of the kids in my class. [I would] just take my own money. I've done that …At that time, we didn't have a cafeteria. And there was a little store, Mr. Lee's store, and the kids could go out there and get crackers. And, of course, if they didn't have the money, we would just let them have the money. It wasn't but a nickel or a dime or something. So, we were interested in the whole child.

"Teaching," Siddle Walker concludes, "was a worthy occupation and equivalent to a religious calling. Their job [the teachers at CCTS] did not separate the teaching from the taught. They were teaching subject matter to human beings. They were to be interested in 'the whole child'" In fact, educators were required to show up at the churches where the families of their students attended, in order to get to know families and their situations. The school principal actually adopted speaking styles that mirrored a black southern preacher so that he could better connect with the parents of his students.

The teachers and administrators at CCTS knew that to teach a child academically meant paying attention to her fullness, recognizing and responding to her academic, personal, and social needs. In fact, John Dewey[4] argues that the social contexts of education are as, if not more, important than the academic:

> I believe that the school is primarily a social institution. Education being a social process, the school is simply that form of community life in which all those agencies are concentrated that will be most effective in bringing the child to share in the inherited resources of the race, and to use his own powers for social ends. I believe that education, therefore, is a process of living and not a preparation for future living.

Good teaching involves recognition of and response to social reality, and these two activities undergird every aspect of our preparation programs.

*Recognizing Students' Fullness*

When we take the time to uncover and understand the richness of students' lives, what we discover has the power to change our perceptions. In one particularly powerful example, Shirley Brice Heath[5] noticed that African American students were often nonresponsive to the questioning of their white teachers. One teacher, speaking about her black students, lamented, "They don't seem to be able to answer even the simplest questions. I would almost think some of them have a hearing problem; it is as though they don't hear me ask a question. I get blank stares to my questions. Yet when I am making statements or telling stories which interest them, they always seem to hear me." Brice Heath's work highlighted that the ways in which the black parents of Trackton interacted with their children (i.e., using statements or commands instead of questions) had limited their children's capacity to respond in an educational setting with white teachers. Different styles of communication, based on socio-cultural experience, were limiting the academic progress of the students at Trackton.

Socio-cultural experience is not exclusively a function of race, however. Jane Roland Martin[6] argues that we need to rethink the ways in which we do schooling, particularly by differentiating for gender. Arguing against the Platonic notion of "gender-blind" education, where we believe gender makes no difference, or the Rousseauian notion of "gender-bound" education, where gender makes all the difference, Roland Martin advocates an equality of educational experience which requires "gender-sensitive" education. She contends that due to their different cultural experiences, men and women come to the classroom differently and that, if we are to educate with equity, we must recognize those differences.

When we fail to recognize students' fullness, we run the risk of seeing and treating them primarily as members of a group. While group membership is important, it is not necessarily a determining factor in understanding individual students' in all their complexity. For example, Claude Steele's[7] study of difference in the classroom finds that because of what he calls "stereotype threat," the level of anxiety for certain students in certain situations causes them to underperform, e.g., women in a science class or black students on standardized test. Steele finds, again, that students' abilities to perform academically and to learn are profoundly affected not only by their cultural backgrounds but also by the stereotypes that they have internalized. In this sense, though recognizing group membership can have a positive impact on student learning, it can also become a limiting factor. With this in mind, James Banks[8] reminds us that we should not only pay attention to underserved groups of students, such as women and students of color, but also the spectrum of differences within those groupings which impact learning readiness. To know our students' fullness, we must account for their group membership, but we must not lose sight of their individuality. Our students simultaneously reflect and transcend demographic, social, and cultural categories.

*Responding to Students' Fullness*

As stated earlier, Noddings reminds us that effective, caring educators must 1) recognize the full complexity of their students, and 2) respond to this recognition by developing sensitive pedagogy aimed at the learning of all students across difference. Good educators know their students individually, understand through research and family interaction the backgrounds and realities of underserved populations, and use this holistic knowledge of the student to adjust their pedagogy (including interactional style) to optimize student learning and performance.

For example, Bryce Nelson[9] documents an experiment in progressive education undertaken by the Seattle Public Schools in the early 1900s under the direction of Superintendent Frank Cooper. "Between 1911-1912 and the American involvement in World War I," Nelson reports,

> the school board, the superintendent, principals, and teachers all acted toward students
> with an increased sense of a parental role. Certain expectations for student health,
> morality, citizenship, and civility were now taught and enforced …influencing almost
> all aspects of a student's life, including things well outside the formal curriculum. …For
> students who were hungry, dirty, ill, delinquent, or dependent, the schools offered a

variety of child welfare services, including a medical clinic and two parental schools for total custodial care of wayward youths.

It is, of course, arguable whether schools should be responsible for student health or serve as "child welfare services," but the mantra of Siddle Walker describing the schooling experience at CCTS rings true here; to educate well, we must educate the whole child. Dewey agrees:

> Much of present education fails because it neglects this fundamental principle of the school as a form of community life. It conceives the school as a place where certain information is to be given, where certain lessons are to be learned, or where certain habits are to be formed. The value of these is conceived as lying largely in the remote future; the child must do these things for the sake of something else he is to do; they are mere preparation. As a result they do not become a part of the life experience of the child and so are not truly educative. I believe that moral education centers about this conception of the school as a mode of social life, that the best and deepest moral training is precisely that which one gets through having to enter into proper relations with others in a unity of work and thought.

Effective educators understand not only that a number of factors affect students but also that holistic teaching must also move beyond a sole focus on academics. Moral education (that is, helping students to enter into proper – or healthy – relationships with one another), emotional education (that is, helping students as they develop self-identity), and academic education all converge within the confines of the classroom. In order for educators to teach well, they must recognize and address these realities in their pedagogies and curricula.

Preparing effective educators is both an art and a science. The outline above, including the research cited here and the large body of literature that continues the conversation, has helped us to situate the Northwest College of Education and, thus, our education programs, around preparing educators who focus on the whole student. This means preparing educators who have the knowledge, skill, and desire to see their students as full, complex, and dynamic individuals. This also means preparing them to transfer their knowledge of their students into effective, engaging, and appropriate instructional strategies. The final measure of our candidates' success in holistic teaching lies in how well they are able to adjust and adapt their instruction to meet their students' needs, both as members of demographic groups and as individuals. Our candidates are successful when their students' learning needs are met. With that in mind, let us turn our attention to adaptive teaching.

## Adaptive Teaching

In *The Republic*, Plato10 argues that "there are diversities of natures among us which are adapted to different occupations…[therefore] we must infer that all things are produced more plentifully and easily and of a better quality when one man does one thing which is natural to him and does it at the right time, and leaves other things." Though Plato was advocating a stratified social system that most today would find repugnant, his basic observation and its implications hold

true: *Each of our students is equipped differently, and education that recognizes and responds to these differences will be more effective.*

This position – that adaptive education is the most effective – has long been recognized in Western education. In the 5th century, St. Benedict[11], writing on how best to educate young monks, urged each abbot to

> adapt himself to a variety of characters.
> One he must coax, another scold, another persuade,
> according to each one's character and understanding.
> Thus he must adjust and adapt himself to all
> in such a way that he may not only suffer no loss
> in the flock committed to his care,
> but may even rejoice in the increase of a good flock.

Benedict's injunction resonates even today. Instruction must be shaped to fit the "character and understanding" of each student. It is the educator's job to "adjust and adapt" herself, so that she may "suffer no loss in the flock committed [her] care." Benedict's language, written more than 1500 years ago, bears a striking resemblance to the "No Child Left Behind" mantra of today. And though the ends of Benedict's training differs wildly from today's culture of high stakes assessment, both are guided by the belief that adaptive instruction keeps people "in the fold," so to speak. Because each student is equipped differently, adapting instruction to each students' unique "character and understanding" is an issue of social justice. The dominant modes of instruction may serve to disenfranchise certain students. Unaddressed, this can create an educational second-class of students who are perpetually and systematically underserved.

Paulo Freire[12] recognized this. In his scathing critique against the "banking model" of education, Freire claims the instructional models of the dominant culture – lecture based, top down delivery of static and impersonal course content – are, in fact, imperializing and colonizing forces. Instead of liberating, these methods bind and restrict. Knowledge is a commodity which is "owned" by the powerful, and this perhaps unintentional lesson is reinforced by the instructional strategies used in classrooms. Instead, Freire argues for instructional strategies that account for the existing knowledge base of the students and that create space for students to become producers, and not merely consumers, of knowledge. Requiring students to fit themselves into a rigid pedagogical box is unjust in the moment, and it perpetuates future injustices. On the other hand, adapting instruction to the students is a democratizing act. In engages and empowers.

Though Freire's beliefs have been legitimately criticized for de-emphasizing a core or common knowledge base, his advocacy of adaptive instructional methods must not be forgotten. Teaching effectively involves understanding the learners in the room and adjusting instruction – and even curriculum - accordingly. As Dewey would say, teaching well (in fact learning and understanding) means being able to connect content with the learner in a way that relates with his or her experience: in ways that are meaningful to the learner. This involves understanding the

ways each student learns, his or her aptitudes for learning, and the specific content that will most effectively promote the desired learning targets. A master educator is able to adjust and adapt both instruction and curriculum according to student need without sacrificing or disregarding learning targets, mandated or otherwise. These are the educators that the Northwest University preparation program seeks to create.

*Student Learning Styles/Aptitudes*

Perhaps the most famous advocate of multiple intelligences, Howard Gardner[13] championed the notion that not all students learn by the same means. In other words, the ways in which students accumulate knowledge and skills vary according to experience and learning style. Consisting of a broad list of eight "intelligences" (or learning styles), ranging from students who learn best linguistically (in words: e.g., through books, writing, stories, etc.) to those who learn most easily spatially (in images and pictures: e.g., art, video, illustrated books, etc.), multiple intelligences theory contends that different students hold more or less fluency in different learning styles. Here, again drawing our cues from student aptitude and propensity, effective educators adapt their pedagogy across a spectrum of student difference. "MI theory," Armstrong[14] argues,

> provides a way for all teachers to reflect on their best teaching methods and to understand why these methods work (or why they work well for some students but not for others). It also helps teachers expand their current teaching repertoire to include a broader range of methods, materials, and techniques for reaching and ever wider and more diverse range of learners.

While we recognize that MI Theory is not specifically supported by research, the concept of differentiation based on student aptitude is an essential component to good teaching.  Good educators not only adapt their instruction, but they adapt their assessment, as well. Musial et al.[15] argue that educators must also *assess* student learning in light of the nuanced ways in which different students learn.

> You already realize that students will arrive in your classroom with a variety of abilities, a broad range of experiences, and unique ways of communicating. And, as you will discover as you move through your studies, differentiation of instruction attempts to meet the needs of learners based on an understanding of specific characteristics, such as learning disabilities or exceptional talents. The psychological and social foundations of education tell us that before we can assess a student's competence in a content area, we need to "size up" the student.

Effective educators recognize the developmental, social, motivational, and intellectual aptitudes that affect how each student learns and expresses understanding, and they craft their assessments accordingly. Marzano[16] and Hattie[17] remind us that educators who differentiate use not only a variety of visual or verbal instruction but also a variety of assessments to measure student progress.  By understanding individual students, effective educators are able to suggest learning activities that will 1) allow for optimum student learning and performance and 2) assess those

performances in ways that are authentic for each student.

*Adjusting Curriculum to Standards with the Student in Mind*

While research has made clear that differentiation in both instruction and assessment is foundational to broad student learning, it is clear that consistent learning standards are equally as important. Carol Ann Tomlinson[18] posits that "what we call differentiation is not a recipe for teaching. It is not an instructional strategy. It is not what an educator does when he or she has time. It is a way of thinking about teaching and learning. It is a philosophy. As such, it is based on a set of beliefs." These beliefs, however, do not preclude maintaining consistent learning standards for all students. On the contrary, Tomlinson argues, "curriculum tells us *what* to teach; differentiation tells us *how.*" In other words, effective educators are willing and able to work with a standards-based curriculum, but they adjust how they teach it based upon the student-learner in front of them. In fact, Tomlinson argues, "any educational approach that does not invite us to teach individuals is deeply flawed."

Because individual students have unique aptitudes and inclination, and because standards are, by their very nature, fixed and consistent, the only way to help students reach these standards in a just and equitable fashion is though differentiation.[19] Standards, while stable across schools or districts, must be approached from different routes or through different means for different student. This means promoting curriculum and pedagogy that create connections between disciplines, between students' lives and course content, and between the home and the school. Although the learning goal is the same for each student, the method by which students reach those goals are as varied as the students themselves.

The middle school classroom provides an excellent example of the need for differentiation. Educators must be willing to radically adjust bell schedules, classroom activities, and pedagogic styles based upon the developmental and cognitive changes and realities of their students. These developmental changes often include a budding resistance to authority. One adaptive solution to this is to include middle-school students in the curriculum planning process. This raises legitimate questions, however, particularly in light of state mandated learning targets and standards. If students control the curriculum, how are standards maintained?

By way of an answer, Brown and Knowles[20] share the following example:

> One team of teachers decided to change the way they used the state content standards. These teachers showed the students the standards and had them create units using those standards. Students and teachers worked together to create learning activities and ways of assessment. The project was successful. When achievement tests scores came back, they were higher than in previous years.

Good educators teach toward standards, but they adjust curriculum with specific students in mind. To allow for strong and lasting student learning, effective educators must, as Dewey argues, connect content to the experience of each individual student. Training practitioners to

recognize student learning styles and to adjust standards-based curriculum accordingly equips them to increase student engagement and learning. In short, the educator adapts practice to serve the student-learner without losing the directive of guiding learning targets and standards.

## Learner-Focused Teaching

The idea that education ought to be focused on the individual learners' needs and interests has deep historical roots. In the 1st century A.D., Quintilian, a Roman orator, explicated his position on the proper education of young orators:

> It will be necessary, above all things, to take care lest the child should conceive a dislike to the application which he cannot yet love, and continue to dread the bitterness which he has once tasted, even beyond the years of infancy. Let his instruction be an amusement to him; let him be questioned and praised; let him never feel pleased that he does not know a thing; and sometimes, if he is unwilling to learn, let another be taught before him, of whom he may be envious. Let him strive for victory now and then, and generally suppose that he gains it; and let his powers be called forth by rewards such as that age prizes.[21]

This position, generally referred to as Quintilian's Doctrine of Interest, acknowledges the importance of engaging the learner. Although the bulk of Quintilian's work is devoted to the technical aspects of teaching oratory, this passage, which is from the first chapter, sets an important tone. For Quintilian recognized that unless the educator has made a concerted effort to authentically engage the student, the student will come to "dread the bitterness" of instruction. In modern terms, when educators fail to engage students by focusing on their concerns and interests, students may begin to hate school. Focus on what is innate to the student, and he will thrive.

Rousseau agreed with this position. A Romantic, Rousseau believed that learning emerges from student. That is, a student's innate nature is to learn, to explore, to grow. Instead of school being a place where students are filled with knowledge from the outside, school ought to be a place where students' natural inclinations are allowed to flourish:

> We begin to learn when we begin to live; our education begins with ourselves, our first teacher is our nurse…The only habit the child should be allowed to contract is that of having no habits; let him be carried on either arm, let him be accustomed to offer either hand, to use one or other indifferently; let him not want to eat, sleep, or do anything at fixed hours, nor be unable to be left alone by day or night. Prepare the way for his control of his liberty and the use of his strength by leaving his body its natural habit, by making him capable of lasting self-control, of doing all that he wills when his will is formed.[22]

Though Rousseau's extreme Romanticism is untenable in most contemporary school settings, his call for teachers to focus on the learner as the center of all educational endeavors continues to challenge us today. We seek to prepare educators who place their students, not their subjects, at the heart of their classrooms, and who recognize that the innate desires and interests of their

students are worthy of time, consideration, and exploration. This does not necessarily mean that external standards are abandoned; on the contrary, the most effective classroom is the one in which the students' internal desires and external standards are brought into harmony.

John Dewey outlined just such a harmony:

> The question of method is ultimately reducible to the question of the order of development of the child's powers and interests…[too often,] the child is thrown into a passive, receptive or absorbing attitude. The conditions are such that he is not permitted to follow the law of his nature…I believe that these interests are neither to be humored nor repressed. To repress interest is to substitute the adult for the child, and so to weaken intellectual curiosity and alertness, to suppress initiative, and to deaden interest. To humor the interests is to substitute the transient for the permanent. The interest is always the sign of some power below; the important thing is to discover this power. To humor the interest is to fail to penetrate below the surface and its sure result is to substitute caprice and whim for genuine interest.

Though educator evaluation has historically been based upon educators' knowledge, technique and performance in the classroom, Dewey reminds us that teaching does not primarily rest in practiced technique or content knowledge, but in the ability to engage a child in their own learning. Here, in Dewey's view, student-directed teaching neither "humors, nor represses" student interest. Often, when we evaluate pedagogic expertise based upon educator performance, student interest is left by the way side. We instead focus on the energy of the adult, the technique of the adult, and the knowledge of the adult. In doing so, the learner becomes a passive receptacle, or as Dewey says, we "substitute the adult for the child," deadening curiosity and alertness. To be sure, there exists ample anecdotal evidence of the bored student attending to an educator, supplying meaningless content (at least to the student).

On the other hand, Dewey warns us that we must not simply "humor" the surface interests of the student. Student-directed teaching is not teaching that is driven by student whim, but instead teaching that takes seriously student aptitude and interest, and which seeks to understand the "permanent" below the interest, the power that can drive both student learning and student engagement. From this balance, we seek to measure educator performance for our candidates not simply on technique or knowledge, though these are important indicators, but more profoundly by evidence of student learning. In other words, if the student can demonstrate understanding, then our candidates have taught effectively. If not, this lack of evidence should move candidates to reflect upon their own practice, making adjustments designed to engage students and attain desired learning results. Under this view, three salient threads of understanding and practice guide our educator preparation: Student Interest, Student Voice, and Visible Evidence.

*Student Interest*
Barbara Bartholomew[23] poses a vexing problem: "Those who have tried to ignite learning under challenging conditions know that – like building a fire in a damp woods – it is neither easy to

spark a flame nor simple to sustain it." She continues:

> Sustaining an interest in learning involves complex personal skills. It requires finding out what others value and empowering them to explore and build upon their dreams. It may mean helping students find the courage to take a risk or overcome habits that undermine progress. It can also involve treading on deeply personal terrain that may house pockets of emotional pain.

Processes that train educators who want to listen to students, who seek to help create safe spaces for students to learn, who exemplify for their students fairness and equity, who give students feedback and work with them to create "roadmaps to get there," and who regularly offer encouragement are the fundamentals of sound preparation programs. Educators with these aptitudes have developed crucial learner-focused practices and have fostered dispositions that not only spark students' interest but fuel the fire of their learning, as well.

*Student Voice/Metacognition*
The current Washington State Professional Certification handbook[24] lists the following standard and criterion as a necessary part of being a master educator. Standard I, criterion b: "Effective teaching [is teaching which uses] a variety of assessment strategies and data to monitor and improve instruction."

Obviously, the successful educator must possess this crucial skill or aptitude. This effectiveness is not measured solely by the educator's performance, however. On the contrary, many of the criteria used to assess "effective teaching" in this regard rely on what students, not educators, do:

- *Students* use a variety of assessment tools and know how those tools measure their performance of the learning targets;
- *Students* understand the scoring criteria being used, and that the assessment tools being used are fair and equitable;
- *Students* keep and review with their educator records of their learning progress to identify their own specific needs for growth;
- *Students* regularly use their work to examine and reflect on their achievement of learning targets. Students set individual goals and outline the steps required to reach those goals;
- *Students* are regularly guided through strategies to monitor, evaluate, and self-regulate their process of learning and express it verbally and in writing.[25]

As a result of effective teaching, students can articulate what worked, what did not, and what they need to do differently next time. Here, student learning moves beyond simple educator evaluation, to what we might call "student voice."

Student voice is more than just student opinion. Instead, it is the student's own metacognitive acknowledgment, articulation, and reflection on his or her own learning. According to OSPI,

"student voice is a particular type of evidence or artifact. It refers to evidence of learning from the student's perspective(s)."[26] Similarly, Wiggins and McTighe[27] argue that "in daily life, our capacity to accurately self-assess and self-regulate reflects understanding. Metacognition refers to self-knowledge about how we think and why, and the relations between our preferred methods of learning and our understanding (or lack of it)." Musial et al.[28] continue this train of thought, claiming that "as students gain knowledge and understanding, their learning will be enhanced if they also acquire metacognitive skills. Metacognition…includes the skills of reflecting on one's thought processes."

There is a growing empirical research base to support the value of metacognition. Armstrong reports that

> Recent research in cognitive psychology applied to education has supported the notion that children benefit from instructional approaches that help them reflect on their own learning processes…When children engage in this kind of metacognitive activity, they can select appropriate strategies for problem solving. They can also serve as advocates for themselves when placed in new learning environments.[29]

This part of effective teaching helps the student learner understand the learning targets for any given assignment or lesson, consider appropriate methods of assessment and measures of learning, and develop individualized strategies in cooperation with the educator. Again, Musial et al. contend that, "encouraging students to share different approaches to a problem with each other is another effective way to help students learn from their errors and from the work of others." Thus, student voice becomes a method of not only one student thinking about his or her own learning, but a way of sharing strategies with fellow students which may add to their repertoire of learning.

The educator who is focused on student voice is focused on enhancing the students' abilities to think about their own thinking, to assess their own learning, and then to strategize goals and avenues for future growth. This allows the students to become increasingly active and responsible for their own learning. Furthermore, this evidence of learning, communicated through work artifacts and dialogue with educators, provides the foundation upon which educators build reflective practices. But, in order for educators to use evidence of student learning as a tool for their own improvement, student learning must first be made visible.

*Making Learning Visible*
A key element in promoting learner-focused instruction involves making thinking/learning visible:
> Thinking happens mostly in our heads, invisible to others and even to ourselves. Effective thinkers make their thinking visible, meaning they externalize their thoughts through speaking, writing, drawing, or some other method. They can then direct and improve those thoughts. Visible thinking also emphasizes documenting thinking for later reflection.[30]

Educators who equip students to make their thinking and learning visible to both themselves, to their peers, and to their teachers are able to evaluate their pedagogies for effectiveness based not solely on their own performance but primarily on evidence of student learning. Without making student thinking and learning visible, practitioners are apt to continue teaching in favored, comfortable ways. These methods may connect with some students, but not with others. Furthermore, by helping students to make their thinking visible to themselves, educators increase the possibilities of creating life-long-learners: students who maintain throughout their lives the critical thinking skills necessary to solve problems.

Metacognition and visible thinking are closely related:

> As educators require students to describe what's going on "inside their heads," students become aware of their thinking processes. Similarly, as they listen to their classmates describing their metacognitive processes, they develop flexibility of thought and an appreciation for the variety of ways to solve the same problem. Educators, too, may share their thinking by making their inner dialogue external. Verbalizing questions they are asking themselves about ways to solve problems and sharing their lesson plans and how they check their own accuracy are ways educators can model their metacognitive processes to students.[31]

Ultimately, we prepare educators who are focused on student learning - who measure their own performance based upon evidence of student learning. Our true aim is that our educators will use evidence of student learning to improve their own practice *in order that their students may learn even more.* Our intent is to instill into our candidates a way of life, a way of relating student learning and their own practices. This student-leaner focus requires the candidate to become familiar with a variety of assessment tools by which to measure student understanding, to seek varieties of student evidence by which to evaluate and adjust their own teaching, and ways to help their students not only identity the learning targets for a particular lesson, but gauge their progress toward those targets as well.

## Candidate Proficiencies

1.  **Holistic Teaching**

    a.  Candidates **identify** the influences of cultural background and situation for each student;

    b.  Candidates **demonstrate** culturally responsive pedagogy aimed at the holistic learning of all students;

    c.  Candidates **equip** students to appropriately engage their unique backgrounds in their own academic, social, and emotional development.

2.  **Adaptive Teaching**

    a.  Candidates **identify** the different ways in which students acquire, demonstrate, and reinforce content knowledge and procedures;

    b.  Candidates **demonstrate** differentiated teaching, adapting instruction where appropriate to meet student needs while remaining aligned with learning standards;

    c.  Candidates **equip** students to adjust their own learning strategies and practices in order to overcome learning obstacles.

3.  **Learner-Focused Teaching**

    a.  Candidates **identify** a variety of assessment tools through which to monitor and promote positive impact on student learning;

    b.  Candidates **demonstrate** reflective instruction, analyzing student work in order to further develop their own pedagogical practices;

    c.  Candidates **equip** students to reflect on their own learning by identifying learning targets and their progress toward them.

# References

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