Learning,
Leading,
Lighting the Way:

Cultivating Reflective Analytical Professionals--
A Conceptual Framework for
Preparing Future Leaders
in Education

University of Connecticut

Neag School of Education

Learning, Leading, Lighting the Way.

University of Connecticut
Neag School of Education

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Dean

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEAN'S MESSAGE

*A*ll educator preparation programs at the University of Connecticut serve towards a common goal: cultivate future educators who will meet the challenges of the ever changing world. In order to do that, it is critical that we establish a shared vision which guides our curriculum, instruction, research, and public service, which is the development and support of the reflective analytical professional in all programs. This newly revised Conceptual Framework will serve as a vehicle to articulate the underlying structure for our educator preparation programs. It gives conceptual meaning to our operations and provides guidelines for our teaching, learning, leadership, and other activities related to institutional accountability. It unifies our faculties in education and in arts and sciences, students, school partners, and community at large. Specifically, it affects us in the following manner:

- Faculty members use it to establish course and program learning outcomes, to align their instructional activities with professional standards, and to generate research agendas.
- Students use it to gain clear understanding of program learning outcomes and institutional expectations.
- School partners use it to guide our students and faculty to design clinical experiences.
- Alumni and members of our community at large use it to see the big picture of our existence.

While Epictetus (ca. 55 –ca. 135) taught us that "only the educated are free," we can only reach the mind of free by possessing the ability of "conducting multiple daily reflections" as suggested by Confucius (551 BC-479 BC). I hope that our community continues to find this document helpful in guiding our pursuit of cultivating reflective analytical professionals.

Richard L. Schwab, Ph.D.

Dean

May 5, 2008

学而不思则罔，思而不学则殆。

<div align="right">孔子《论语》（为政篇，2-15）</div>

Learning without reflection is labor lost; reflection without learning is perilous.

<div align="right">Confucius *Analects* (On Governance, 2.15)</div>

INTRODUCTION

History and Context of the Institution

The University of Connecticut is a premier public research university. Established in 1881 with a class of 12 students, the University of Connecticut has grown into a nationally ranked university with more than 21,000 undergraduate students, 7,800 graduate and professional students, 1,200 full-time faculty members, and 178,500 alumni. *U.S. News and World Report,* in its annual survey of the best colleges and universities in the United States, ranks the University of Connecticut among the best public universities in New England and among the top 25 public universities in the country.

The University of Connecticut encompasses 14 Schools and Colleges, offering seven undergraduate degrees in more than 100 majors, 16 graduate degrees in 90 fields of study, and graduate professional programs in Law, Medicine, and Dental Medicine. According to *Peterson's Competitive College Guide,* admission to the University of Connecticut is very competitive, and the University consistently attracts and accepts some of the nation's most talented students.

The University faculty members are among the most impressive scholars in the United States, and are recognized throughout the world as leaders in education, research, and scholarship. Ninety-one percent have a Ph.D. or other terminal degrees in their field.

The University's research activities advance knowledge in a range of academic disciplines. In fact, the University of Connecticut stands among the country's leading institutions with respect to the breadth and contributions of its research. The Carnegie Foundation classifies the University of Connecticut as a Research I University, one of only two public universities in New England holding

this distinction. In terms of research funding in 2005, the University of Connecticut is ranked in the

top 43 public universities by the National Science Foundation.[1]

The University of Connecticut's flagship campus is located on a 4,000-acre setting in Storrs,

Connecticut. The campus includes pastures, hilltop cornfields, and picturesque barns, charming

reminders of the area's agricultural origins of more than a century ago. The University's facilities

have been undergoing a huge transformation, thanks to a twenty-year, $2 billion commitment from

Connecticut's state legislature. The program has resulted in the renovation and renewal of virtually

every part of campus, included the transformation of the University's academic core into a

pedestrian campus.

Special Characteristics of the Institution

The University of Connecticut is a land and sea grant, public research university. The

Carnegie Foundation has historically classified the University of Connecticut as a "Research I

University"; under the new classification system, the University is a "Doctoral/Research University -

- Extensive," the highest classification of the Carnegie Foundation. The University of Connecticut

is fully accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. The flagship public

higher education institution in the state, the University of Connecticut is committed to excellence in

teaching, scholarship and research, and service to the state and the nation.

History of the Neag School of Education

The University of Connecticut was founded in 1881 as the Storrs Agricultural School. In

1893, the Connecticut State legislature designated what then became the Storrs Agricultural College

the recipient of federal land-grant funding, replacing Yale University. The first summer program for

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[1]National Science Foundation (2007). *Federal Science and Engineering Support to Universities, Colleges, and Nonprofit Institutions: FY 2005.* Table 19 Federal obligations for science and engineering research and development to the 100 universities and colleges receiving the largest amounts, ranked by total amount received, by agency: FY 2005. Retrieved and analyzed from HTTP://WWW.NSF.GOV/STATISTICS/NSF07333/TABLES/TAB19.XLS, on May 1, 2008.

classroom teachers was organized by Professor Rufus W. Stimson in 1897, attracting secondary school teachers from around the state. In 1933, the college became Connecticut State University, followed by the change to the University of Connecticut in 1939. As part of the 1939 reorganization of the University, the School of Education was formally created, along with the Schools of Business and Home Economics, the College of Arts and Sciences, and the College of Agriculture. The Graduate School was established in 1940, and in 1943 the doctoral degree program was authorized. In the 1950s, the School of Physical Education was created, and it was then merged with the School of Education in 1972.

In the mid-1980s, the School of Education undertook a major reform of its teacher education program. The result of this reform was the creation of the nationally recognized Integrated Bachelor's/Master's [IB/M] Degree Program, which remains one of the nation's premier teacher education programs. In addition to being an exemplary program and at the forefront of research on effective teacher education programs, the IB/M Program is also the third largest producer of teacher education graduates in the state of Connecticut.

Since the beginning of the 1990's, the School of Education's administrator preparation program has "earned a reputation as the top administrator preparation program in the state."[2] The program also "represents a strong model of what a university can do to prepare principals within a conventional program structure and with limited resources… [It] is working to integrate coursework and field experiences to develop school leaders who are better prepared to use data in order to organize change and improve instruction."[3]

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[2] LaPointe, M., Pecheone, R., Flessa, J., & Cohen, C. (2007). University of Connecticut's administrator preparation program: Continuously improving the development of principals. In LaPointe., M., Darling-Hammond, L., & Meyerson, D. (Eds). *Preparing school leaders for a changing world: Case studies of exemplary programs*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University, Stanford Educational Leadership Institute. P. 68.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 68.

The School of Education received an incredible vote of confidence in 1999 when Ray Neag, an alumnus of the University, committed $21 million to the School of Education for faculty and program support and development. Mr. Neag's transformational gift to the School, which now bears his name, was the largest ever given to a school of education nationally, as well as the largest single gift to a public university in New England. As the deferred gift's endowment matures, the funds it generates will be used to support scholarships, graduate assistantships, faculty and staff development activities, and venture capital to initiate new outreach activities.

The Neag School of Education has been accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) since 1954, one of the first group of institutions accredited by the organization. Its School Counseling program is accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), and the master's degree and the sixth-year certificate programs in School Psychology are approved by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP). Its doctoral program in School Psychology is accredited by the American Psychological Association (APA).

From 1997 to 2008, the Neag School of Education rose from nationally unranked to the top 21 Graduate School of Education by the *U. S. News and World Report*. In 2008, four of the Neag School's programs were ranked within top 20 in the nation: Elementary Education, Secondary Education, Curriculum and Instruction, and Special Education.

Defining the Professional Education Unit

The "Professional Education Unit" (the "Unit" here-and-after) at the University of Connecticut (UConn) refers to the administrative body at the University "with the responsibility for managing or coordinating all programs offered for the initial and advanced preparation of K-12 school teachers and other school professionals, regardless of where these programs are

administratively housed."[4] Specifically at UConn, it refers to the Neag School of Education, which

has the responsibility for managing and coordinating the following programs:

- The Integrated Bachelor's and Master's Program (IB/M--Initial preparation for K-12

  school teachers and professionals in elementary education, secondary education,

  including agriculture, English, mathematics, science, social studies, world languages,

  special education, and language and speech pathology).

- The Teacher Certification Program for College Graduates (TCPCG—Initial preparation

  for 7-12 school teachers in special education and in secondary education, including

  agriculture, English, mathematics, science, social studies, and world languages).

- The Dual Bachelor Degree Program in K-12 Music Education.

- Remedial Reading Teachers and Consultants.

- UConn Administrator Preparation Program (UCAPP).

- Executive Leadership

- School Counseling.

- School Psychology.

In addition to the faculty at the Neag School, the unit includes content faculty from the

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, and the

School of Fine Arts, and other educational partners in Connecticut, such as professional

organizations, and local and state educational agencies. The Unit's conceptual framework is aligned

with the mission of the University, and national and state professional standards. This document

articulates "the underlying structure in the Unit that gives conceptual meaning to the Unit's

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[4] National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (2008). *Professional Standards for the Accreditation of Teacher Preparation Institutions*. Washington: Author. (p. 92)

operations through an articulated rationale and provides direction for programs, courses, teaching, candidate performance, faculty scholarship and service, and unit accountability."[5]

DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The unit's *Conceptual Framework* remains very much a living document and a work in progress. Originally articulated in preliminary form in 1985 as part of the creation, design, and implementation of the unit's Integrated Bachelor's and Master's Degree Program (IB/M), the *Conceptual Framework* has continued to be discussed and modified by the faculty on a regular basis. The last revision took place in 2002, during the re-accreditation process of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education. This version was revised in the 2007 and 2008 academic year. It presently encompasses all of the educator preparation programs in the Unit, including the advanced teacher, administrator, school counselor, and school psychologist preparation programs. All faculty members have had opportunities to provide input about how the *Conceptual Framework* should be implemented across the entire Unit. The on-going responsibility for the maintenance and review of the *Conceptual Framework* rests with the Unit's Accreditation Steering Committee (see Appendix I: *Roster of Accreditation Steering Committee Members*). The *Conceptual Framework* is circulated as a separate, stand-alone document and is available on the website of the Neag School for use by the Unit's faculty, candidates, and partners in the public schools.

VISION AND MISSION OF THE INSTITUTION AND UNIT

University of Connecticut Mission

In 2006, UConn Board of Trustees adopted a revised institutional mission statement. The new mission states[6]:

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[5] *Ibid*. P. 85.

The University of Connecticut is dedicated to excellence demonstrated through national and international recognition. As Connecticut's public research university, through freedom of academic inquiry and expression, we create and disseminate knowledge by means of scholarly and creative achievements, graduate and professional education, and outreach. Through our focus on teaching and learning, the University helps every student grow intellectually and become a contributing member of the state, national, and world communities. Through research, teaching, service, and outreach, we embrace diversity and cultivate leadership, integrity, and engaged citizenship in our students, faculty, staff, and alumni. As our state's flagship public university, and as a land and sea grant institution, we promote the health and well-being of Connecticut's citizens through enhancing the social, economic, cultural and natural environments of the state and beyond.

Mission of the Professional Education Unit

The mission of the Unit is aligned with that of the Neag School of Education. It is to develop candidates with strong ethical standards who become teachers and leaders dedicated to improving education for all children, and by doing so, will strive to improve and enhance the quality of life in the ever changing society.

PHILOSOPHY, PURPOSES, GOALS/INSTITUTIONAL STANDARDS

The unit achieves its mission by solidifying a strong professional knowledge base, modeling evidence-based professional practice, committing to inquiry, demonstrating leadership, and embracing diversity.

The unit has built educational programs grounded in a clearly articulated and carefully designed model of professional preparation in order to inform, assess, and enhance educational theories as they relate to the on-going improvement of professional practices. The faculty and administration of the unit are dedicated to ensuring that all candidates are provided with a full range of carefully sequenced inquiry experience that balance theory with practice, research with

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[6] University of Connecticut (2006). Mission Statement. Retrieved from http://advance.uconn.edu/2006/060424/06042407.htm on April 25, 2008.

application, and classroom experiences with clinical practice. Collaboration among public schools, departments within the unit, and university programs are stressed.

In addition to formal coursework, which infuses multicultural and diversity education into the curriculum, the unit requires all candidates to have clinical experiences in diverse settings.[7] Thus, the unit prepares its candidates for the multicultural public school settings in which they are likely to work. Toward this end, faculty and candidates from underrepresented groups are actively recruited by the unit's programs. Finally, all programs in the unit are committed to the integration of technology in educational settings as a means of improving learning and achievement for all students.

Models and Principles Adopted

The unit has adopted and is committed to various national and state professional standards and practices in all program areas, such as the Connecticut educational standards,[8] Holmes Partnership principles,[9,10] the National Network for Educational Renewal philosophy,[11] Teachers for a New Era research agendas,[12] the American School Counselor Association's National Model,[13] the lessons learned from the *Best Practices for School Counseling in Connecticut*,[14] and the principles articulated by the University Council for Educational Administration.[15] The Unit has also incorporated recent

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[7] Neag School of Education. (2006). *Diversity Plan.* Storrs: University of Connecticut.

[8] Connecticut State Board of Education. (1999). *Connecticut's commitment to excellence in teaching: The second generation.* Hartford, CT: Author. Connecticut State Board of Education. (1999). *Connecticut's common core of teaching.* Hartford, CT: Author. Connecticut State Board of Education. (1999). *Connecticut's common core of learning,* Hartford, CT: Author.

[9] Holmes Group, The. (1986). *Tomorrow's teachers.* East Lansing, MI: Author. Holmes Group, The. (1990). *Tomorrow's schools.* East Lansing, MI: Author. Holmes Group, The. (1995). *Tomorrow's schools of education.* East Lansing, MI: Author.

[10] Cordeiro, P. (Ed.). (1996). *Boundary crossings: Educational partnerships and school leadership.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

[11] Goodlad, John I., *Educational renewal: Better teachers, better schools* (pp.72-93). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1994).

[12] Teachers for a New Era (2001). *Prospectus.* New York: Carnegie Corporation of New York.

[13] American School Counselor Association (2002). *The ASCA national model: A framework for school counseling programs.* Alexandria: Author.

[14] Connecticut School Counselor Association, Connecticut Association of School Counselor Education and Supervision, & Connecticut State Department of Education (2001). *The best practices for school counseling in Connecticut.* Hartford: Author.

[15] See: http://www.ucea.org/

research findings[16,17] in the effects of educator preparation, characteristics of educators, diversity, accountability processes, and other pedagogical models. Such commitments are further reinforced by on-going programmatic assessment and evaluation, including feedback from current and past candidates, practitioners in the field, and faculty at other institutions.

KNOWLEDGE BASES

Reflective Analytical Professionals

The unit subscribes to the belief that educators must be reflective analytical professionals. The art of educating the future generations and providing leadership in educational settings and orchestrating educational changes are complex activities which require the selection and preparation of individuals with these special skills, knowledge and attitudes. The principal goal of professional education programs in the Unit is to identify such individuals and foster their development as reflective analytic professionals[18].

A reflective analytic professional is defined as an interactive decision maker who is able to formulate situation-specific decisions rooted in professional knowledge and research. This professional is skilled with respect to problem-solving abilities, creative and critical thinking skills, and the understanding of inquiry-based learning, and is familiar with the social and organizational context of public schooling in our society.[19] The reflective analytic professional educators have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to work with students from diverse backgrounds. They are

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[16] Cochran-Smith, M., & Zeichner K. M. (Eds.) (2005). *Studying teacher education: The report of the AERA panel on research and teacher education.* New York: Routledge.

[17] Richardson, V. (Eds.) (2001). *Handbook of research on teaching* (4th Edition). Washington, DC: American Education Research Association.

[18] Copeland, W., Birmingham, C., de la Cruz, E., & Lewin, B. (1993). The reflective practitioner in teaching: Toward a research agenda. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 9*(4), 347-359.

[19] Reagan, T., Case, C., & Brubacher, J. (2000). *Becoming a reflective educator: How to build a culture of inquiry in the schools* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

leaders with a life-long commitment to the profession of education and to the improvement of society.[20]

The programs in the Unit prepare reflective analytical professional educators by engaging them in appropriate learning experiences that range from classroom forums, research projects, leadership assignments, and clinical experiences. Advanced programs foster research and scholarly activities and shape these research activities into clearly discernible lines of inquiry relevant to improvement in the education professions. The programs are designed to produce intellectual leaders, scholars, and practitioners for the education professions. In these roles, the candidates would ultimately contribute to the solution of societal problems.

An important feature of the reflective analytic professional educator is their concern not merely with the use of new knowledge, but with the *creation* of knowledge.[21] Given the University of Connecticut's status as a major research university, the faculty is considered an institution of researchers and educators who, with candidates, are devoted to the creation, assessment, and advancement of knowledge, and most importantly, the translation of research into practice. Knowledge creation and translation to practice are both essential and integral components of the Unit's mission. Such a mission guides the purposes, processes, and outcomes of the programs, and contributes to the foundation of the Unit's conceptual framework.

CANDIDATE PROFICIENCIES: KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND DISPOSITIONS

The conceptual framework that permeates the Unit programs is the development and support of the reflective analytical professionals in the field of education. It is defined by three themes: Learning,

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[20] Norlander-Case, K., Reagan, T., Campbell, P., & Case, C. (1998). The role of collaborative inquiry and reflective practice in teacher preparation. *The Professional Educator, 21*(1), 1-16. Norlander-Case, K., Reagan, T., & Case, C. (1999). *The professional teacher: The preparation and nurturance of the reflective practitioner.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

[21] Goodlad, J. (1997). *In praise of education.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Leading, and Lighting the Way. All of these themes serve as the unifying link that connects the

various elements contributing to the mission of the Unit. As the model in Figure 1 indicates, these

three themes form a continuous cycle: Learning contributes to leading, and leading contributes to

the eventual lighting the way for the field of education by reflective and analytical professionals.

More importantly, however, the advanced stage of lighting the way will also inform future learning.

FIGURE 1

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK MODEL

Lighting the Way

Inspiration and Diversity

**Reflective
Analytical
Professionals**

Leading

Inquiry

Leadership

Learning

Professional
Knowledge Base

Evidence-Based
Professional
Practice
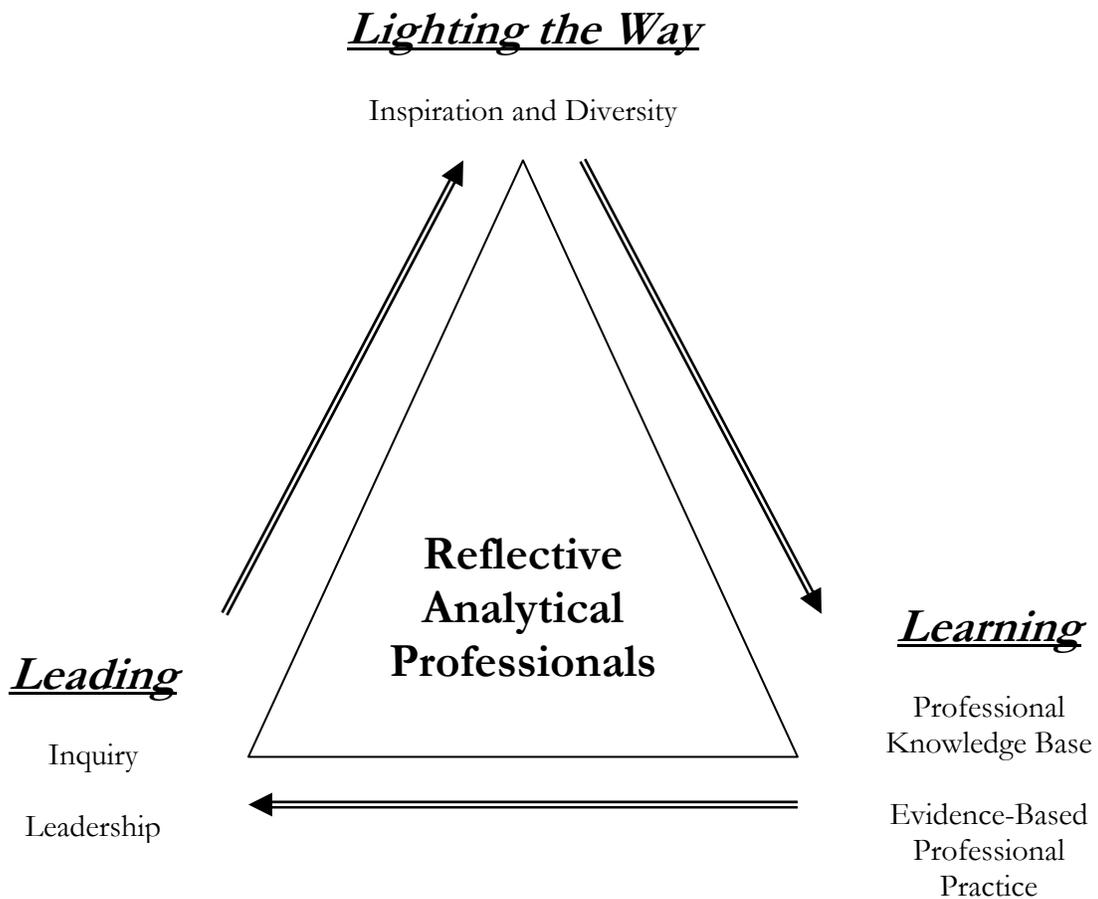
Statement on Technology

Because the Unit recognizes the critical role that technology plays in the development of human knowledge and advancement, it is committed to provide up-to-date technology to its candidates. In return, the candidates are expected to apply appropriate technology in their teaching, learning, and professional activities. In all of the following themes, technology is an implicit requirement as it is imbedded in all programs in the Unit. Candidate competencies in using technology are demonstrated by their assignments, such as project web design, electronic portfolio, and electronic communications.

Theme One: Learning

The Unit defines learning by expecting our candidates to possess a strong professional knowledge base and skills for implementing evidence based professional practice.

Element One: Professional Knowledge Base

The course work, seminars, and field experiences emphasize the development of expertise in their subject area. These activities ensure an understanding of both the theoretical and practical dimensions of the profession, working in culturally and linguistically diverse settings. They address the needs of exceptional children, and the use of appropriate technologies, in a spectrum of teaching and learning environments to best promote student learning. A solid professional knowledge base is a necessary precondition for professional practice.[22] Further, such a knowledge base helps to ensure that practicing professionals become lifelong learners committed to maximizing their professional competence and effectiveness.

All candidates in the Unit's educator preparation programs are expected to demonstrate not only a depth of competence in a particular content area, but also a breadth of understanding related

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[22] Shulman, L. (1987). Knowledge and teaching: Foundations of the new reform. *Harvard Educational Review, 57*(1), 1-22. Shulman, L. (1986). Those who understand: Knowledge growth in teaching. *Educational Researcher, 15,* 1-22.

to human cultural and intellectual experience. Throughout the University, diverse course offerings are made available to candidates in all of the disciplines to facilitate the development of both knowledge depth and breadth. The Unit ensures that rigorous subject area requirements for certification are in full compliance with Specialized Professional Association (SPA) standards and recommendations, and in most instances, should exceed those requirements.

Element Two: Evidence-Based Professional Practice[23,24, 25]

Well-prepared educators possess a deep understanding of the theoretical and practical dimensions of professional practice. They also have the ability to integrate theory and research into their professional practice. Further, a comprehensive knowledge of professional practice includes candidate knowledge of, and familiarity with, relevant professional "codes of ethics," an understanding of moral and ethical decision making, and professional behaviors in accordance with ethical norms of the profession.[26] At the heart of such a knowledge base is the practice of critical evidence-based reflection. All candidates in the Unit acquire the needed skills to make decisions based on evidence collected from clinical sites and published research.

In doing so, they develop an appreciation for the value of evidence-based practice. This synthesis and integration of theory and research occur in clinical experiences that provide candidates with opportunities for analysis and reflection. In these experiences, learners are challenged to self-assess their ideas and beliefs as they translate theoretical concepts and research findings into practice.[27]

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[23] Creswell, J. (1994). *Research design: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

[24] Erlandson, D., Harris, E., Skipper, B., & Allen, S. (1993). *Doing naturalistic inquiry: A guide to methods*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

[25] Hitchcock, G., & Hughes, D. (1989). *Research and the teacher: A qualitative introduction to school-based research*. London: Routledge.

[26] Strike, K., Haller, E., & Soltis, J. (1988). *The ethics of school administration*. New York: Teachers College Press. Strike, K., & Soltis, J. (1998). *The ethics of teaching* (3rd ed.). New York: Teachers College Press.

[27] Confrey, A., & Atkinson, P. (1996). *Making sense of qualitative data: Complementary research strategies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Theme Two: Leading

Leading means instilling in candidates a commitment to inquiry and to transformative leadership and to moral leadership.

Element One: Inquiry[28]

The commitment to inquiry as part of professional practice is integrated into all programs in the unit.[29] Throughout their programs, candidates are encouraged to develop intellectual habits of inquiry in courses, field experiences, seminars, and in the creation of different types of research products throughout their programs. Thus, candidates are provided with the opportunity to become both intelligent and informed consumers of research and producers of new knowledge. In this way, they inform professional practice with evidence resulting from their empirical investigations. Providing instruction in the understanding of methods of research creates a practitioner who has the capacity for research in practical settings, thus creating growth within the profession.

Element Two: Leadership[30]

The Unit believes that leadership refers to a commitment to transformative and moral leadership, a process embedded in professional practice. It involves a commitment to transform educational practice and embrace moral values. The Unit seeks to prepare professionals whose behavior and example will promote positive social and educational changes. Candidates are prepared to initiate structure, identify educational goals, have an understanding of interpersonal relationships, and utilize leadership techniques in influencing and affecting others and their activities.[31] Candidates

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[28] Hubbard, R., & Power, B. (1993). *The art of classroom inquiry: A handbook for teacher-researchers.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

[29] Martinello, M., & Cook, G. (1994). *Interdisciplinary inquiry in teaching and learning.* New York: Merrill.

[30] Sergiovanni, T. (1996). *Leadership for the schoolhouse: How is it different? Why is it important?* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. Smith, S., & Piele, P. (Eds.). (1997). *School leadership: Handbook for excellence* (3rd ed.). Eugene, OR: University of Oregon. Smith, W., & Fenstermacher, G. (Eds.). (1999). *Leadership for educational renewal: Developing a cadre of leaders.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

[31] Poetter, T., & Badiali, B. (2001). *Teacher leader.* Larchmont, NY: Eye on education.

must be knowledgeable of the behavior displayed by individuals and organizations, and be capable of developing policies and practices that reflect these understandings. Carefully planned and sequenced clinical and field experiences are vehicles to ensure that candidates have ample opportunities to practice what they have learned in classrooms. The ultimate goal, which is internalized through their preparation, is leadership to effect growth and development within the candidates' chosen profession in particular, and in American democracy in general.

Theme Three: Lighting the Way—Inspiration and Diversity[32,33,34]

Light the Way is defined by candidates embracing diversity and succeeding in meeting the challenges posed by the ever-changing world. In doing so, the Unit expects the candidates to inspire and motivate learners and practitioners to promote equity and human rights

With the above mentioned professional knowledge and skills, the Unit inspires its candidates to become educational leaders who are capable of lighting a fire in future leaders and practitioners so that they are passionate about equity and human rights. The breath of diversity in American society requires that educators possess interpersonal skills and a complex knowledge base of student diversity, and that they are familiar with effective practices for serving diverse populations in inclusive settings. Such preparation and learning involves course work, but also requires an extensive range of field experiences dealing with various diverse populations and communities.[35] To this end, candidate electronic portfolios are reviewed to ensure issues relating to diversity are infused throughout the programs.

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[32] Cummins, J. (1996). *Negotiating identities: Education for empowerment in a diverse society.* Los Angeles: California Association for Bilingual Education.
[33] Grant, C. (Ed.). (1992). *Research and multicultural education: From the margins to the mainstream.* London: Falmer Press
[34] Kameenui, E., & Carnine, D. (1998). Effective teaching strategies that accommodate diverse learners. Columbus, OH: Merrill.
[35] Nieto, S. (1996). *Affirming diversity: The sociopolitical context of multicultural education* (2nd ed.). White Plains, NY: Longman.

The Unit continues to seek and maintain support from grants in areas relating to widening the pipeline of candidates from diverse backgrounds. Further, the Unit continues to co-sponsor conferences, seminars, and speakers on issues of diversity.[36]

The Unit has worked hard to build a caring and collaborative culture that is inclusive and respectful of diversity. The Unit has a long history as an open organization that welcomes all groups, including historically under-represented ones. In order to build and maintain such a culture, constant attention is paid to monitoring the attitudes and feeling of faculty, staff, and students regarding the openness of our culture to issues of diversity. This includes formal and informal means of gathering information.[37]

The Unit believes that only through such integrated learning and leadership practice could it expect its candidates to serve as leaders in the field of education. It is the quality of such educational leaders that will guide and light the way for students and colleagues in their pursuit of becoming productive citizens and successful in meeting the challenges posed by the ever changing world.

ASSESSING CANDIDATE SUCCESS

The Neag School's Assessment Plan cited the policy statement of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) that "[i]n a teaching-learning university, assessment is focused on describing very explicit outcomes expected of the students and adopts reliable and valid procedures for assessing this achievement." The Unit embraces this notion of learning and assessment. The Unit believes that "assessment is crucial for helping people learn," it "is needed for effective teaching," and "for a quality learning environment."[38]

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[36] Neag School of Education. (2006). *Diversity Plan*. Storrs: University of Connecticut.
[37] *Ibid*.
[38] Neag School of Education (2008). *Assessment Plan*. Storrs: University of Connecticut. Pp. 1-2.

The Unit bases its assessment plan on the *Conceptual Framework* while aligning its strategies with national and state standards of various programs. "An essential feature of the assessment plan is that it manifests differently for each program. Thus, while there is a general assessment system for the [Unit], there are multiple assessment strategies that reflect the different foci and needs of our programs."[39] The Unit assessment system "employs multiple measures of assessment to monitor candidate progress at various key points of their educational processes." [40] The Unit has identified transition points at program admissions, mid-program (major points prior to entering clinical practice, when appropriate), program completion, and post graduation follow-up. The Unit considers the mid-program and program completion to be most important. The specific timing and nature of the evaluations does differ slightly by program. The specifics for each program are detailed in each program's assessment plan. A summary of major assessments for the Unit is presented in Table 1. The Unit embeds its *Conceptual Framework* in each of the key transition points. Each point is addressed by the elements articulated in the Conceptual Framework and various data collection and reporting schedule are displayed in Tables 2 and 3.[41]

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[39] *Ibid*, Pp. 9-10

[40] *Ibid.*, Pp. 9-10.

[41] *Ibid*, with slight modification.

TABLE 1

MAJOR ASSESSMENTS BY KEY POINTS

Key Components	Types of Assessments	Sources of Information
1. **Admissions**	Demographics GPA SAT, PRAXIS I or other test data References Interviews, personal statements, etc. *(varies)* GRE or MAT *(graduate only)*	Transcripts Transcripts Applications Reference forms Program personnel Test vendors (*e.g.,* ETS)
2. **Mid-Program**	Coursework Course grades Projects, tests etc. E-portfolio Student evaluations Mid-cycle Evaluation	Plans of study Faculty/PeopleSoft Faculty Taskstream Institution Research Faculty
3. **Program Completion**	Applications Test Scores *(Praxis II)* E-Portfolio Inquiry Project *(teacher ed only)* Surveys Thesis (*Grad only*) Certification/license End-of-Program Evaluation	Student ETS/Student/Assessment Office Taskstream Field Supervisors, Assessment Office Advisors Major advisor/Grantee Faculty
4. **Post Graduation**	Surveys of Graduates Surveys of Employers PreK-12 Student Outcomes (*e.g.,* state new teacher induction study, Program completer tracking study)	Assessment Office Assessment Office Assessment Office

TABLE 2
ALIGNMENT OF CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK TO KEY COMPONENTS

Theme	Element	Key component
Theme One: Learning	Element One: Professional Knowledge Base *… ensure an understanding of both the theoretical and practical dimensions of the profession, working in culturally and linguistically diverse settings…*	Admissions Mid-program
	Element Two: Evidence-Based Professional Practice *... ensure a deep understanding of the theoretical and practical dimensions of professional practice and integrate theory, research, and practice…, a comprehensive knowledge of professional practice includes student knowledge of, and familiarity with, relevant professional "codes of ethics," an understanding of moral and ethical decision making, and professional behaviors in accordance with ethical norms of the profession.*	Mid-program Program completion
Theme Two: Leading	Element One: Inquiry *… provide the opportunity to become both intelligent and informed consumers of research and producers of new knowledge, informing professional practice with evidence resulting from empirical investigations.*	Mid-program Program completion
	Element Two: Leadership *(facilitate) …leadership to effect growth and development within the student's chosen profession in particular, and in American democracy in general.*	Program completion Post-graduation
Theme Three: Lighting the Way	Element One: Inspiration and Diversity *… inspire our candidates to become educational leaders who are capable of lighting a fire for future leaders and practitioners so they are passionate about equity and human rights.*	Program completion Post-graduation

TABLE 3
ALIGNMENT OF KEY ELEMENTS TO
ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Key Components	Assessment Activities[*]							Conceptual Framework Element
	A	B	C	D	E/F	G	H	
1. **Admissions**	X		X			X	X	Professional Knowledge Base … *ensure an understanding of both the theoretical and practical dimensions of the profession, working in culturally and linguistically diverse settings…*
2. **Mid-program**		X	X	X		X	X	Professional Knowledge Base *(see above)* Evidence-Based Professional Practice *... ensure a deep understanding of the theoretical and practical dimensions of professional practice and integrate theory, research, and practice…, a comprehensive knowledge of professional practice includes student knowledge of, and familiarity with, relevant professional "codes of ethics," an understanding of moral and ethical decision making, and professional behaviors in accordance with ethical norms of the profession*
3. **Program completion**	X	X	X	X		X	X	Evidence-Based Professional Practice *(see above)* Inquiry … *provide the opportunity to become both intelligent and informed consumers of research and producers of new knowledge, informing professional practice with evidence resulting from empirical investigations* Leadership *(facilitate)* …*leadership to effect growth and development within the student's chosen profession in particular, and in American democracy in general.* Inspiration and Diversity … *inspire our candidates to become educational leaders who are capable of lighting a fire for future leaders and practitioners so that are passionate about equity and human rights.*
4. **Post-graduation**	X	X	X		X	X	X	Inquiry *(see above)* Leadership *(see above)* Inspiration and Diversity *(see above)*

A-H refer to assessment activities earlier mentioned (A=U.S. News and World Reports, B=NEASC Reports, C=Neag Program Reports, D=Neag/TNE Reports, E=Neag/TNE Alumni Survey Reports, F=Neag/TNE Employer Survey Reports, G=Accreditation Reports, H=Systematic/Ad Hoc Assessment Activities).

SUMMARY

In summary, the collaborative components that form the Professional Education Unit at the University of Connecticut are committed, through careful planning, delivery, and assessment of their curricular and programs, to cultivating future educational leaders as reflective analytical professionals. Armed with the tools of technology, such future educators will have a strong professional knowledge base, possess skills of implementing evidence-based practice, exercise inquiry to achieve leadership by embracing diversity and inspiring the future generations. Because "only the educated are free,"[42] the Unit firmly holds it true, through critical reflection, that the access to quality education is a basic human right.

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[42] Epictetus (ca. 55 – ca. 135). *Discourses*, Book Two, Chapter One.

APPENDIX I

ROSTER OF THE ACCREDITATION STEERING COMMITTEE

Name	Title
Michael Alfano	Director, Teacher Certification for College Graduates
Thomas DeFranco	Associate Dean
Mary Anne Doyle	Chair, Curriculum and Instruction
Michele Femc-Bagwell	Coordinator, UConn Administrator Preparation Program
Gary Hendrickson	Director, Technology Services
Orville Karan	Coordinator, School Counseling
Thomas Kehle	Coordinator, School Psychology
Marijke Kehrhahn	Director, Teacher Education and Teachers for a New Era
Barry Sheckley	Chair, Educational Leadership
Yuhang Rong (Chair)	Assistant Dean, NCATE Unit Coordinator
Mary Yakimowski	Director, Assessment