The mission of Western Washington University is to:

…serve the people of the State of Washington, the nation, and the world by bringing together individuals of diverse backgrounds and perspectives in an inclusive, student-centered university that develops the potential of learners and the well-being of communities.

Aligned with Western’s mission statement is the Woodring College of Education vision – fostering community relationships and a culture of learning that advance knowledge, embrace diversity, and promote social justice; and our conceptual framework that is represented by our unifying theme – preparing thoughtful, knowledgeable, and effective educators for a diverse society.

Woodring’s conceptual framework guides teaching and learning for all initial and advanced professional education programs in the College including programs leading to initial teacher certification, the advanced preparation of teachers, and the licensure of other school professionals in the roles of administrators and school counselors.

Woodring’s conceptual framework is derived from elements of our mission. We seek to:

- Model best practices in teaching and learning which in turn, lead graduates to use best practices in their professions;
- Cultivate student competence through extensive field experiences with exemplary practicing professionals;
- Construct, transform, and convey knowledge by integrating research, theory, and practice;
- Act with respect for individual differences;
- Develop collaborative partnerships that promote the learning and well-being of individuals, families, and the community; and
- Evaluate processes and outcomes to assure continual program improvements.

Our framework requires candidates to engage in ongoing reflection about core teaching and learning concepts and to continuously review the professional knowledge base. Faculty members also adhere to the values represented in the mission and conceptual framework guided by feedback from reviews.
by Professional Education Advisory Boards (PEABs), by program department consideration of benchmark data, candidate exit questionnaire responses, and informal advisory conversations with candidates.

The conceptual framework also provides a description of educational practice that school personnel candidates are expected to demonstrate. As such, it highlights the interaction between knowledge, dispositions, and skills that are deemed essential for an effective professional in diverse social and cultural environments.

Underlying our conceptual framework is our commitment to enhancing the role of education in society. We believe that the moral purpose of education is to “make a difference in the lives of students regardless of background and to help prepare citizens who can live and work in increasingly diverse and complex societies” (Fullan, 2002, p. 36).

**Conceptual Framework: Individual Components**

**Thoughtful Professional Practice**

A core concept anchoring our conceptual framework is the belief that candidates who reflect on the impact of professional practice are better prepared to recognize when instruction needs to be diversified, augmented or simply changed. Candidates in teacher preparation, school administration, and school counseling programs engage in processes to learn how to create educational communities in which all students learn through active, collaborative inquiry. To do this, they must have similar learning opportunities themselves (Wells, 2003).

Collaborative and reflective practice is supported and modeled by faculty members who participate in on-site school-based field experiences where they probe candidates’ thoughts about real-time student learning successes and challenges. Examples include Elementary and Secondary Program faculty who meet with their candidates in school settings and by K-12 personnel who meet with candidates on campus. These reflective opportunities are embedded in just-in-time, hands-on learning in which candidates build on prior knowledge.

The term *thoughtful* also emphasizes our commitment to preparing educators who are deliberative about the decisions they make. Thoughtful educators value flexibility and reciprocity in the learning-teaching process and adapt instruction to meet student needs as they respond meaningfully to student
contributions. They also value critical thinking and self-directed learning and demonstrate this by reflecting on the extent to which students accept learning challenges and are accountable for defined learning targets. Our candidates are expected to learn how to use direct student observation and research sources as tools to help them monitor teaching/learning outcomes as they reflect on and revise classroom practice.

The term *thoughtful* also represents our undertaking to prepare educators who possess dispositions that support the learning and well-being of all students. Central to these dispositions is the belief that each student can learn and a commitment to equity and social justice. We expect candidates to persist in helping each student achieve success and seek information from students to gauge the degree to which they understand the learning target, how close or far they are from reaching the learning target, and what resources or strategies are necessary to help them make progress toward the learning target. In this sense our candidates acknowledge the importance of student voice.

*Thoughtful* educators are caring professionals who appreciate and value human diversity and show respect for students’ varied talents and perspectives. They are committed to the expression of democratic values in schools and classrooms and take responsibility for creating inclusive, safe, and supportive learning environments that value the abilities and perspectives of all students. The thoughtful educator understands issues related to sustainability education and takes responsibility for contributing to the well-being of the current generation while at the same time helping to ensure the well-being of future generations.

**Knowledgeable: Best Practices and Innovative Technology**

A critical aspect of our College’s mission and the knowledgeable element of our framework is our intent to: “Model best practices in teaching and learning which in turn, lead graduates to use best practices in their professions.” Best practices include the use of research-based instructional strategies, academic content area expertise, and effective technology. Modeling best practice requires faculty to participate in continuous professional development. Woodring sponsors faculty involvement in professional organization conferences and in College supported activity such as Critical Conversations, writing for the College’s Journal of Education Controversy, and the Center for Education Equity and Diversity events.

Candidates observe faculty who are knowledgeable about and utilize current technology and media as they progress through programs and then work toward master of current instructional
technologies themselves. When candidates see technology integrated throughout their programs, they learn from first-hand experience the powerful impact it has on teaching and learning.

**Knowledgeable** emphasizes our commitment to preparing educators who possess strong content knowledge, a repertoire of pedagogical practices – including specific content pedagogy – and professional knowledge. The knowledgeable educator has an understanding of central concepts, tools of inquiry, and the structure of subject matter to create learning experiences that make subject matter meaningful to students. The knowledgeable educator understands and applies the general concepts, theories, and research about effective teaching, regardless of content area. Candidates must also understand concepts related to learning principles, assessment and evaluation procedures, diversity, technology, professional ethics, legal and policy issues, education for sustainability, and the roles and responsibilities of the profession.

**Effective: Rigorous Standards and Assessment**
A third component in Woodring’s conceptual framework is the understanding that candidates must demonstrate that they meet rigorous academic and professional standards for what educators should know and be able to do. Teacher candidates are required to complete academic content in an endorsable area. Other school professional candidates must have a baccalaureate degree and an academic background appropriate to the level of specialization. All candidates complete professional program requirements. Our candidates’ effectiveness is evaluated by the impact they have on P-12 student learning and other transition point information. We have developed program assessments that yield evidence-based exhibits of our candidates’ impact in classrooms and schools.

The **Woodring Assessment System** supports the ongoing improvement and accountability of our programs and operations. This assessment and accountability system is driven by our belief in continuous improvement as evidenced in:

- Assessment plans that align programs with standards and assessments and identify data collected at major transition points;
- A schedule for collecting and reporting data;
- Information systems used to collect, manage, and report data;
- State-mandated and program-level assessments;
- Clinical experience assessments;
- Exit and graduate follow-up surveys; and
- Use of data for program improvement described in the Closing the Assessment Loop process and evidenced in the summary report.
Effective emphasizes our commitment to preparing educators with the skills to have a positive impact on the learning of all students. The effective educator uses content, pedagogical, and professional knowledge effectively and readily in diverse teaching settings to ensure that all students learn. He or she creates a learning environment that encourages students to develop positive self-motivation and social interaction skills while they are actively engaged in learning.

The effective educator uses a variety of tools and student voice to enhance learning, including curriculum, technology, and research-based strategies. Our candidates are expected to establish respectful and collaborative relationships with families and other professionals to support student learning and well-being.

Effective practice is also characterized by a variety of formal and informal assessments to enhance knowledge of learners. Formative and summative strategies are used to obtain information about student progress and to modify teaching and learning strategies. Woodring’s candidates systematically gather evidence of the effects of classroom practice on student learning, development, and well-being, and they reflect on this evidence in order to improve professional practice.

Professional Educator
The term educator communicates the range of professional roles of our candidates as school personnel. It is an inclusive term that describes administrative and school counselor positions as well as those of classroom teachers. The educator assumes roles that extend beyond the classroom and school to include responsibilities for connecting to parents and other professionals. Educators participate in schools as learning organizations, and use community resources to foster student learning and well-being.

Professional educators advocate for curriculum, instruction, and learning environments that meet the diverse needs of each student. Woodring candidates are introduced to content related to social equity and the differentiation of instruction early and often in the professional course sequence. Consistent with our conceptual framework, the educator is a professional who understands and fulfills the responsibilities of the profession as defined in state, national, and institutional standards. We believe the educator’s professional development is a dynamic process extending from initial preparation over the course of an entire career. As such, educators are responsible for planning and pursuing their ongoing learning and reflection with colleagues and through their practice. They are
also expected to examine the personal contributions they might make to the knowledge base of the profession.

**Honoring a Diverse Society**

WCE embraces an inclusive approach to learning and teaching that requires all students to experience equitable and caring learning environments. Our conceptual framework exemplifies our belief that professional education programs must include strong emphases on the development of **candidate knowledge**, **dispositions**, and **skills** that support the learning and well-being of each student. The intent is to address diversity and the interconnected nature of society and the environment in all components of our professional education programs, both initial and advanced. Our evidence-based standards for teachers, school leaders, and school counselors ensure that diversity content and assessments of candidate knowledge, dispositions, and skills related to diversity are emphasized at key points of our program and are integrated into program course work, **clinical assignments** and experiences.

The final phrase in the conceptual framework, for a *diverse society*, emphasizes our commitment to preparing educators to support the learning and well-being of all students in increasingly diverse schools and classrooms. Our definition of diversity is inclusive of all diverse populations including, but not limited to, those who have experienced systemic social injustices based on their ethnicity, race, gender, age, disAbility, sexual orientation, language, socio-economic status, or religion. This definition also recognizes the interconnectedness among issues of diversity and those of environmental, economic, and social justice. We embrace an inclusive approach to learning and teaching that mandates working with all students in an equitable and caring manner. This aspect of our conceptual framework ensures that our vision — fostering community relationships and a culture of learning that advance knowledge, embrace diversity, and promote social justice — is firmly embedded in all of our educator preparation programs.

**Learning Communities**

The implication of the conceptual framework is that our professional education programs should work to transform both ourselves and the educational contexts where we work into robust learning communities that support active inquiry. It is our understanding that today’s institutions must respond to society’s need for **thoughtful, knowledgeable, and effective educators** with collaborative approaches toward learning, teaching, and action research. We therefore endeavor to create a culture of learning in which P-12 students, school practitioners, university faculty, candidates,
and constituents in the larger community are continuously learning together. Woodring’s learning community includes cross-campus relationships with faculty who deliver course content in academic disciplines in the colleges of Fine and Performing Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, and Sciences and Technology. Academic discipline faculty members meet with College of Education members each quarter to assure alignment with State, NCATE and College priorities.

**National and State Standards**
Woodring’s conceptual framework translates the vision and mission of the Woodring College of Education into curricula, instructional strategies, field experiences, clinical practice, assessment, and evaluation. It makes explicit the professional knowledge, dispositions, and skills we expect of our candidates, and aligns these proficiencies with national and state standards. The conceptual framework drives College programs for the preparation of educators who support the learning and well-being of all students who live in a diverse and interconnected society. The educators who graduate from our programs recognize that the professional practice of teaching must account for the interconnectedness of environmental, economic, and social justice issues.

In defining our conceptual framework, we draw on the research base and wisdom of practice embodied in national and state standards. Washington State’s Standard V: Knowledge and Skills and NCATE standards combined with the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards for school administrators and the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Programs (CACREP) standards for school counselors, comprise the proficiencies for teachers and other school personnel prepared at Western Washington University. Aligned with state standards, these proficiencies serve as the basis for assessment of candidate performance and represent the knowledge, dispositions, and skills our candidates are expected to demonstrate upon program completion.

Consistent with both national and state standards, Woodring College of Education views the educator as an individual who is reflective, inquiry-oriented, and respectful of both cultural diversity and individual differences. This educator is able to communicate effectively, is proficient in subject matter, and is able to select from a wealth of practices best suited to the students and educational context. Above all, this educator is committed to the learning and well-being of each student. These qualities and proficiencies are represented by our conceptual framework unifying theme – *preparing thoughtful, knowledgeable, and effective educators for a diverse society.*
References

Approval standards for performance-based preparation programs for teachers, administrators, and educational staff associates, WAC Chapter 181-78A (2010).


Conceptual Framework

Knowledge Base Bibliography 2010

Our conceptual framework is informed and substantiated by a knowledge base derived from empirical research, disciplined inquiry, theory, and the wisdom of practice. Developed by faculty, candidates, and our P-12 school partners, this knowledge base bibliography catalogues the published research relative to our definitions of thoughtful, knowledgeable, effective, and diverse society. Some of the resources cited in our knowledge base are derived from our P-12 school partnerships and from our colleagues in departments across the University. Working together, we identified research and best practices that undergird the professional certification standards and performance indicators. Other resources cited in our knowledge base were identified by candidates in our Master in Teaching program through a required course in research and writing. Some resources were suggested by our faculty as they developed standards-based program curriculum and assessments. We conceive our conceptual framework knowledge base as a “living document” that is constantly growing and evolving.

Thoughtful Educators


**Knowledgeable Educators**


**Effective Educators**


Tomlinson, C. *Fulfilling to promise of the differentiated classroom*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.


**Diverse Society**


