

Guiding Principles

Department of Secondary Education Woodring College of Education Western Washington University

What we do:

- Prepare teachers who are committed to a just, sustainable future for all generations
- Prepare teachers who are able to engage in systems thinking
- Provide tools and experiences to develop teachers who are change agents who can understand and work within existing structures to transform systems
- Hold and nurture space for the development of communities of learners
- Foster creativity and mindfulness
- Engage in respectful community dialog given a variety of viewpoints and perspectives
- Create contexts in which everyone can express their experiences with confidence, knowing they will be heard with sensitivity

We believe:

- Teaching and learning are collaborative and are built on critical inquiry processes
- Learning is a reciprocal, on-going process, requiring openness to new ideas
- Effective democratic teachers build on the valuable knowledge and assets students bring to the learning process
- In honoring and supporting the young people of our communities, enabling them to fulfill their essential role in creating sustainable societies.
- In recognizing that all beings are interdependent and every form of life has value regardless of its worth to human beings.
- In promoting social and economic justice, enabling all to achieve a secure and meaningful livelihood that is ecologically responsible

We center SOCIAL JUSTICE with the assertions that:

- Systems of power and privilege give rise to inequities in society
- Justice requires a critical analysis of social, cultural and institutional systems and how they contribute to inequity
- Critical self-reflection helps us understand the beliefs and positions we hold, our world view, and where those perspectives come from
- Staying open to other points of view, and understanding and valuing the lived experiences of others is a central requisite of working toward a more just society

We promote the development of critical inquiry by:

- Helping teacher candidates develop curiosity and the need to know
- Building powers of deep observation, listening, and interpretation
- Engaging school and community members in action research
- Using critical inquiry as a pedagogical tool
- Conducting inquiry at all levels – personal, classroom, systems

Candidates who thrive in our program possess and continue developing abilities to:

- Display curiosity and open-mindedness toward the life experiences and perspectives of others
- Listen to and observe student thinking
- Demonstrate intercultural understanding
- Employ critical consciousness
- Engage with and appreciate ambiguity
- Acknowledge and adapt to the tensions of critical communities and democratic processes
- Have an assets-based approach to students and to one another as colleagues
- Be flexible and ready to adapt when needed