

General Information

This handbook is provided as a guide to the Early Childhood Education Program at Augusta State University. It is not intended to replace the students' responsibilities to keep up with the timetables, forms and procedures during the program. All information contained in this handbook is subject to change at any time.

A. Georgia Teacher Education Program

The primary purpose of Georgia's Teacher Education Program is to develop the essential professional knowledge and skills of students who wish to enter the profession of teaching. To achieve this purpose, a carefully planned sequence of laboratory experiences is provided. This sequence includes participation in various classrooms and culminates in full-time teaching under the direction of a master teacher and a university coordinator.

In Georgia, each teacher-training institution plans its own Teacher Education Program within the guidelines established by the Professional Standards Commission. The Augusta State Teacher Education Program is approved by the Professional Standards Commission.

Students completing a bachelor's degree program will be issued initial certification by the Professional Standards Commission if they meet all the certification requirements, are recommended by the School of Education, and attain a satisfactory score on the state teachers' exam in the teaching field.

B. Augusta State University Teacher Education Program

The overarching theme of Augusta State's College of Education teacher preparation program is *Understands for Teaching and Teaching for Understanding*. The theme reflects the following propositions: 1) that understanding - meaningful knowing - is pivotal to effective teaching, 2) that understanding for teaching is a distinctive type of such meaningful knowing that must be cultivated if teachers are to succeed at helping students learn, and 3) that teaching for understanding is represented in distinctive, deliberately planned approaches to instruction and assessment. For each program the ten INTASC principles are used as the basis for determining course and curriculum objectives and performance assessment indicators. In undergraduate courses dealing with specific subject matter, the National Standards and Georgia Quality Core Curriculum Standards in that content area are used as the framework for considering the skills and understandings to be addressed with youngsters. Performance assessments in all courses and field experiences are grounded in these principles and standards; and reflect the four cognitive/performance dimensions of understanding noted above.

Conceptual Framework Principles

All teacher preparation programs are shaped and guided by a set of principles which describe what students should know and be able to demonstrate at the end of their coursework and field

experiences. Adopted from the work of the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) the following principles are performance-based standards for beginning teachers.

Conceptual Framework Principles

Students will:

- 1. Understand the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) and be able to create learning experiences that make these aspects of subject matter meaningful for learners.***
- 2. Understand how students learn and develop and be able to provide developmentally appropriate learning opportunities that support their intellectual, social and personal development.***
- 3. Understand how students differ in their approaches to learning and be able to create instructional opportunities that are adapted to diverse learners.***
- 4. Understand and use a variety of instructional strategies to encourage the learner's development of critical and creative thinking, problem solving, and performance skills.***
- 5. Use an understanding of individual and group motivation and behavior to create a learning environment that encourages positive social interaction, active engagement in learning and self-motivation.***
- 6. Use knowledge of effective verbal, nonverbal, and information technology techniques to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction in the classroom.***
- 7. Plan instruction based upon knowledge of subject matter, the learners, the community and curriculum goals***
- 8. Understand and use authentic assessment to evaluate and ensure the continuous intellectual, social and physical development of the learner.***
- 9. Be a reflective practitioner who continually evaluates the effects of his/her choices and actions on others (students, parents, other professionals in the learning community) and actively seek the opportunity to grow professionally.***
- 10. Foster relationships with school colleagues, parents, and agencies in the larger community to support the learning and well-being of all students.***

The Conceptual Framework Principles are exhibited in classroom practice as described below.

Conceptual framework principle/ descriptors of exemplary practice	Sample indicators of needed intervention
<p>1. Inquiry and the disciplines: Teacher displays solid content knowledge and makes connections across the disciplines. Teacher's plans and practices show an understanding of relationships among topics and concepts. Investigation and inquiry related to concepts and topics are present as the teacher links students' knowledge and experience to content learning. Teacher engages students in lessons that require higher level thinking and application of concepts and topics while students are cognitively engaged in activities and projects to enhance understanding of content learning. Appropriate resources are used to support content learning.</p>	<p>1. Inquiry and the disciplines Teacher makes frequent content errors or does not correct errors students make. Teacher displays no knowledge of connections across the disciplines. Teacher displays a lack of understanding of relationships between concepts and topics and a lack of prerequisite knowledge important to student learning of the content. Teaching is didactic and requires little to no inquiry on the part of students, who act in a passive role. Resources are limited to the continuous use of the text as the primary source of instruction.</p>
<p>2. Developmental appropriateness: Teacher displays understanding of typical developmental characteristics of the age group as well as exceptions. Teacher displays a variety of approaches to learning based on students' developmental needs intellectually, socially and personally. Teacher recognizes the knowledge and skill students bring, and builds upon this.</p>	<p>2. Developmental appropriateness: Teacher displays a consistent lack of understanding of developmental characteristics of the age group. Approaches to learning are not based on students' needs. No attempt is made to build upon knowledge and skills students bring to learning.</p>
<p>3. Varied approaches to learning: Teacher uses the variety of approaches students bring to learning within planning and instruction. Teacher displays flexibility and responsiveness to the diverse needs of learners. Teacher displays the ability to plan, implement or adapt instruction to meet a variety of students learning styles, abilities or other needs. Teacher displays knowledge of the interests or cultural heritage of groups of students and recognizes the value of this knowledge.</p>	<p>3. Varied approaches to learning: Teacher adheres rigidly to an instructional plan, even when change will clearly improve a lesson. Teacher ignores student interests or questions, or blames students for lack of success. Teacher is unfamiliar with different approaches students bring to learning such as learning styles or modalities. Teacher displays little attention to students' interests or cultural heritage and does not see this as valuable.</p>
<p>4. Thinking skills: Teacher asks questions which require students to formulate multiple answers. Students are engaged in true discussion and have the opportunity to make unsolicited contributions. Teacher plans and implements lessons which require students to use critical and creative thinking. Teacher engages students in problem solving activities. Teacher links student prior skills, knowledge and understanding to thinking skills development to foster understanding.</p>	<p>4. Thinking skills: Teacher directions, procedures and questions are confusing to students. Interaction between students and teacher is predominantly recitation style, with the teacher mediating all questions and answers. Questions are focused on "one correct answer." Few students participate in the discussion. Students are not actively and cognitively engaged in learning. Feedback related to learning is limited or non-existent. The lesson has no clearly defined structure and</p>

<p>Assessment requires student performance of knowledge and understanding and feedback is consistently given to students. The lesson is coherent and allows time for student reflection.</p>	<p>makes no linkages to students' prior knowledge or skills.</p>
<p>5. Learning environment: Teacher demonstrates caring and respect for students. Student interactions are positive and built into instruction. There is a sense of community, collaboration and belonging for students. Students demonstrate, through active participation, enthusiasm for learning. Students demonstrate self-motivation and pride in work. The classroom conveys high expectations for student learning. Teacher is alert to student behavior and encourages student ownership of behavior and problem solving when issues arise. Teacher response to student behavior is appropriate and based on student's needs while respecting student dignity. Responses to behavior problems are appropriate and successful.</p>	<p>5. Learning environment: Students are confused as to what standards of behavior are. Student behavior is not monitored and teacher is unaware of what students are doing. Student interactions are very limited and not encouraged. Students depend on the teacher and extrinsic factors such as grades, reward or punishment for motivation for learning and positive behavior. Teacher response to misbehavior is inconsistent, overly repressive, or does not respect student dignity.</p>
<p>6. Communication and information technology: Teacher creates an environment of respect and rapport. Teacher communicates clearly and accurately. Teacher uses questioning and discussion techniques. Students collaborate with each other while engaged in a variety of learning experiences. Students conduct research using a variety of resources, including technology. Teacher and students use technology as a tool for learning.</p>	<p>6. Communication and information technology: Teacher's instruction and directions are unclear or confusing. Teacher uses lecture/direct instruction as predominant means of instruction. Students rarely communicate with each other about learning. Available technology is seldom used. Teacher is rude or sarcastic to students and students are rude or sarcastic with each other.</p>
<p>7. Instructional base: Teacher develops long- and short-range curriculum goals which show a well-developed understanding of the content and interconnections within the discipline. Teacher understands the learning strengths and weaknesses of the students and uses this understanding to fashion a variety of learning activities. Teacher is familiar with the community's demographics and resources. Teacher uses the GPS and national standards when planning.</p>	<p>7. Instructional base: Teacher fails to make coherent lesson plans or makes plans that have activities with no links to curriculum goals. Teacher consistently makes mistakes in content. Teacher fails to make connections within the discipline (e.g., biology with chemistry, grammar with writing). Teacher has no understanding of GPS or national standards and how they relate to the classroom curriculum.</p>
<p>8. Assessment: Teacher uses a variety of assessments, choosing the type most appropriate for each instructional activity. Teacher develops evaluation plans/rubrics which both teacher and students can use for assessment. Assessment is authentic and guides further learning. Teacher uses authentic assessment strategies which simulate real world experience and focus on learning outcomes for students, intellectually, socially and physically. Teachers and students assess how well students work together to achieve learning goals. Teacher understands state testing requirements and integrates the objectives into the larger goals of classroom instructional activities.</p>	<p>8. Assessment: Teacher uses primarily objective tests that do not measure higher-level thinking skills. Teacher has a mismatch between learning and testing (e.g., uses true/false questions to test higher-level thinking skills, uses essay tests to test instruction that was mainly drill and practice). Teacher uses primarily drill and practice to teach state testing objectives without relating the skills to real-world examples.</p>
<p>9. Reflective practice: Teacher reflects on instructional activities and evaluates their effect on student learning. Teacher thinks of alternative strategies when something has</p>	<p>9. Reflective practice: Teacher consistently uses activities that aren't effective. Teacher cannot explain what went wrong with an activity and how to correct the problem.</p>

<p>not worked well. Teacher considers student needs, parent concerns, and best practices when planning and evaluating instructional goals and activities. Teacher reads professional journals and attends conferences whenever possible.</p>	<p>Teacher seldom seeks input from other teachers or from journals or other resources. Teacher fails to consider how parents or the community might react to an activity. Teacher is unable to explain more than one way of teaching a concept.</p>
<p>10. Relationships with others: Teacher develops and maintains a collegial relationship with other teachers. Teacher seeks ideas from colleagues. Teacher uses community resources to enhance student learning. Teacher communicates with parents in various ways. Teacher takes responsibility for all students on the campus.</p>	<p>10. Relationships with others: Teacher is consistently critical of peers and parents. Teacher does not collaborate with peers. Teacher does not communicate with parents. Teacher fails to use community resources. Teacher is concerned only with students in his/her classes.</p>

It takes a collaborative effort between the university and the CSRA public school community to help teacher preparation students achieve these goals. This Program Handbook will aid all stakeholders in understanding their responsibilities in this process and the College of Education's and Professional Development School Partners' vision of early childhood teachers.

The Professional Development School Initiative is an emergent collaboration of the Central Savannah River Area P-16 Council which involves five county school districts and Augusta State University. The six school districts; Burke, Columbia, McDuffie, Jefferson, Warren, and Richmond Counties, represent considerable diversity in size, socio-economic characteristics, social and cultural variety, and student achievement. They are each a part of the cohort of elementary Professional Development Schools (PDS).

The purposes of the PDS initiative are to 1) create a sustainable network of schools through which the schools, as full collaborating partners with the university, prepare new teachers; 2) support teaching practices that promote and assist all students achieving to high standards; and 3) sustaining teaching excellence through experienced teachers' and university faculty members' continued professional development. The Professional Development Schools initiative seeks to cultivate a network of energetic learning communities, coherence across the academic and lab components of the educator preparation curriculum, and a shared commitment to educational excellence across institutional boundaries.