



The Transforming Practitioner

Conceptual Framework

Professional Education Unit
Tift College of Education
Mercer University

***The Transforming Practitioner:
To Know, To Do, To Be***

THE TRANSFORMING PRACTITIONER: TO KNOW, TO DO, TO BE

Overview

Theme

The Professional Education Unit's Conceptual Framework is the underlying foundation for its teacher education and educational leadership programs and is organized around the theme, "**The Transforming Practitioner**," at both the initial and advanced levels of study.

"**The Transforming Practitioner**," a living link in the educational process, is an educator who is changing internally through understanding, practicing, and reflecting such that, individually and collaboratively, he or she implements for all learners appropriate and significant life-changing experiences that effectively provide for the needs of the individual, actively engage students in the learning process, and promote life-long learning. (The term "Transforming Practitioner" is used throughout this document when referring to issues, theory, principles, characteristics, etc. that are common across all programs. When reference is made specifically to the educational leadership program, the term "Transformational Leader" is used.)

The Conceptual Framework

Within the context of a distinctive Baptist heritage, the [Quality Enhancement Plan](#) of Mercer University ("The Engaged University: Learning Together"), and the knowledgeable blending of theory and practice, the Professional Education Unit has chosen **To Know, To Do, and To Be** as organizing principles of the Conceptual Framework that under girds its teacher education and educational leadership programs at Mercer University.

The Conceptual Framework principles, **To Know, To Do, and To Be**, prepare the candidate to adapt to and meet the needs of a current and changing society while highlighting the Baptist tradition of promoting mediation, settlement, compromise, and understanding in the classroom, in the school system, and in the community. Preparing the candidate to be a Transforming Practitioner is vital to successful educational practice in increasingly diverse settings. Blending theory with field experiences helps to actualize this preparation both for teachers and educational leaders.

Teachers and educational leaders who are Transforming Practitioners must embrace the processes of **understanding, practicing, and reflecting**, which are indeed vital components of transformation. Each of these three processes is important and meaningful in itself, but the three are also interconnected in very real ways. **Understanding** informs practice. The wisdom developed through **practice** increases and modifies understanding and, ideally, leads to rich and meaningful reflection. **Reflection** causes teachers and educational leaders to enhance their levels of understanding and to make substantive as well as subtle changes in their practice. These processes of understanding, practicing, and reflecting are themes that are infused in and richly woven throughout the principles of the Conceptual Framework: To Know, To Do, and To Be. Moreover, The Transforming Practitioner demonstrates the following three characteristics in classrooms and other school settings: **engagement** of students in learning, the ability to work with a **diversity** of students in meaningful and respectful ways, and the ability to be involved in effective **collaboration** with students, other educators, parents, and the community.

History of Development of the Conceptual Framework

The "To Know," "To Do," and "To Be" principles were first embraced by the Professional Education Unit faculty in 1996. During fall 1999, the faculty critically examined the Conceptual Framework, refining the meanings of "To Know," "To Do," and "To Be" and condensing the

descriptors of each principle several times until there was agreement on three descriptors for each of the principles. Further discussion led to a more encompassing theme, “Preparing the 21st Century Teacher,” that incorporated the reflection and decision-making abilities necessary for successful mediation in a culturally diverse world and provided a knowledge base and a set of field experiences that would enable an educator to adapt effectively to a changing and technologically advanced society, to new and innovative teaching pedagogy and resources, and to the continuing diverse needs of children. Faculty members approved the new theme and revised Conceptual Framework in late fall 1999.

In March 2000, the unit reviewed the theme of the Conceptual Framework again with input from an outside consultant. Critical attention was given to the global dimensions of the theme, “Preparing the 21st Century Teacher” – a theme that created difficulties in defining what it meant in general, what it meant in terms of the Mercer graduate, and what outcomes could be delineated succinctly. Reflecting again on the visions and missions of Mercer University and the Professional Education Unit, faculty members re-examined the Baptist heritage of the institution, the Paideia ideal, and the principles of Jesse Mercer, the founder of the University. Combining their understanding and knowledge with the realities of what unit faculty members believe and with the strengths and characteristics of Mercer University graduates, faculty members moved toward a more specific Conceptual Framework that would describe the uniqueness of educators prepared at Mercer University. Rich reflection and discussion led to the theme, “**The Transforming Practitioner.**” Review then was made of the outcomes of the Conceptual Framework. Having further condensed the outcomes in fall 1999, the faculty revisited a prior list of more specifically written and demonstrable outcomes. The faculty discussed and approved the theme and the outcomes at its faculty meeting in March 2000. The faculty revised the framework in 2005 to make more explicit the professional dispositions it values. Following the faculty’s articulation of a set of seven dispositions and the piloting of a dispositions assessment, the faculty approved the addition of an eighth disposition in spring 2006, based on the recommendation of an ad hoc committee that studied the data, the assessment process, and recent literature on the topic.

As the Conceptual Framework is a living document, it is often revisited and richly discussed by unit faculty members and students, faculty members from various departments across the University, and members of the Site-Based Councils on Professional Education. Research on transformative educators has expanded in breadth and depth during the past five years, and the Professional Education Unit has thoughtfully integrated more current research into the Conceptual Framework’s knowledge base.

Visual Model of the Conceptual Framework



The Transforming Practitioner

Above is the visual model that the Professional Education Unit has adopted to depict the major facets of the Conceptual Framework. The black and orange colors of the model reflect the heritage of Mercer University and Tift College of Education. The model is framed and supported by an outer black circle containing the words “Understanding,” “Practicing,” and “Reflecting.” Teachers and educational leaders who are Transforming Practitioners must embrace the processes of *understanding*, *practicing*, and *reflecting* as vital components of transformation. The black circle serves to illustrate the infinite and interconnected nature of these crucial processes.

The three principles of the Conceptual Framework -- To Know, To Do, and To Be -- serve to define the vertices of the orange triangle. The triangle, known to be the strongest polygon and thus frequently employed in the construction of bridges and buildings, was chosen to depict three important characteristics of classrooms and other school settings—“Engagement,” “Diversity,” and “Collaboration.” The Transforming Practitioner must appreciate, honor, and nurture these characteristics by demonstrating engagement of students in learning, the ability to work with a diversity of students, and the ability to be involved in effective collaboration with students, other educators, parents, and the community. In order for a triangle to remain strong, all three sides must remain strong. In a similar fashion, in order for a Transforming Practitioner to remain strong, he or she must continually become stronger in the areas of engagement, diversity, and collaboration. Doing so will not only cause Transforming Practitioners to become more effective educators, but it will also enable them to effect transformation in their students.

In the center of the visual model, so as to depict the theme and the “heart” of the Conceptual Framework, is the word “Transforming.” Written in a circular fashion to indicate a sense of infinity, “transforming” is viewed as a continuous and lifelong process; indeed, transformations often lead to other transformations. Tift College of Education faculty members expect that candidates completing initial and advanced programs in teacher education, as well as programs in educational leadership, will seek to transform — to grow, to change, to develop, to enrich themselves —throughout their careers and lives, while also continually making humanistic and concerted efforts to effect transformation within P-12 students.

Vision and Mission of the Institution and Unit

Mercer University Mission Statement

Mercer University is a faith-based institution of higher learning that seeks to achieve excellence and scholarly discipline in the fields of liberal learning and professional knowledge. The University is guided by the historic principles of religious and intellectual freedom, while affirming religious and moral values that arise from the Judeo-Christian understanding of the world.

Mercer University Goals

- To offer undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs based upon a strong liberal arts foundation.
- To support a highly qualified faculty that is student and teaching oriented and is engaged in scholarly, research, and professional activities.
- To foster independent and critical thinking and a continuing interest in learning.
- To foster intellectual and spiritual freedom in an environment that encourages tolerance, compassion, understanding, and responsibility.
- To offer a variety of intellectual, cultural, recreational, and spiritual activities designed to enlarge capacity for improved judgment and moral, ethical, and spiritual growth.
- To encourage the enrollment of qualified persons from diverse backgrounds and situations.

- To contribute campus resources in partnership with other institutions and agencies to improve the educational, social, and economic development of the community.
- To administer services efficiently and effectively to support the University's instructional, research, and public service programs.

Mercer University Vision

One of the finest private universities in the Southeast, Mercer University will be nationally renowned for providing a dynamic, diverse, and rigorous education where every student matters and learns to make a difference.

Mercer is held together in conversation by a love of learning, our respect for each other, and excellence within our disciplines. We celebrate our Baptist heritage, a tradition that insists on an open search for truth, religious freedom, and service to others.

Achieving this vision will take widespread collaboration and responsible stewardship as we:

- Foster a lively and inclusive intellectual, social, and spiritual community;
- Engage students in challenging, holistic, and transformational learning throughout the University;
- Infuse liberal learning in professional programs and connect undergraduate students to graduate and professional programs;
- Cultivate the virtues of practical wisdom and civic leadership;
- Emerge as the premier source of professional leadership in the Southeast;
- Attract and nurture outstanding staff and creative educators who are also first-rate scholars and practitioners;
- Make contributions on the frontiers of knowledge through distinctive research agendas;
- Transform communities locally and globally through University-community partnerships, service-learning, and volunteerism; and
- Become an international center for dialogue and inquiry about faith perspectives.

Unit Mission

The Tift College of Education's mission is built upon Mercer University's mission as well as the Conceptual Framework theme. The Transforming Practitioner embodies and carries out the guiding principles of the University's mission: search for truth, independence of thought, diversity of viewpoints, and ethical and moral decision-making. The Transforming Practitioner also embodies the unit's mission: blending theory with practice.

Tift College of Education, established in 1995 as the School of Education, was renamed in 2001 to honor the legacy of Tift College and the Tift family. The College is committed to preparing candidates to serve as teachers and educational leaders in the schools of our state, nation, and world and is committed to the pursuit of excellence in every aspect of educator preparation.

The mission of the Tift College of Education is to prepare students to blend theory with practice, to think critically, and to interact effectively in a technologically complex, global society. To accomplish this mission, the Tift College of Education offers undergraduate and graduate degree programs and educational services designed to meet the needs of diverse students and of the professional education community. The following Tift College goals support the mission:

- Reflect an understanding of education as a broad and lifelong process under girded by the tradition of liberal learning.
- Provide and promote academic programs that will respond effectively to geographic, professional, and cultural communities.

- Cultivate a community of learning characterized by tolerance, compassion, mutual respect, and personal, social, and environmental responsibility.
- Provide an academic environment that enhances the ability and faculty to synthesize theory and practice.
- Develop a knowledge base and skills that enable students to interact effectively in a diverse, technologically-complex society.
- Create an environment for the development of critical thinking skills.
- Consider viewpoints other than one's own, including viewpoints associated with other cultures and traditions.
- Commit to live as an engaged and informed citizen.
- Reflect on one's life and learning experience.
- Develop a respect for intellectual and religious freedom.

Unit Vision

At Mercer University, the Tift College of Education (the Professional Education Unit) envisions the preparation of effective teachers and educational leaders who are willing to grow and to change—to *transform*—continually throughout their careers, while also seeking to stimulate and facilitate transformation within their students. Teachers and educational leaders who appreciate the importance of personal and professional development view transformation as a vital and exciting part of living, and such teachers and leaders have the power to effect change in students, thereby transforming them and helping them to become life-long learners who can apply their knowledge meaningfully and responsibly in a continually changing world. Needs of students are increasing and becoming more varied. Additionally, knowledge is not stagnant, but is forever increasing. An educator who knows only what is known today, who cannot adapt to the changing world, and who lacks the abilities to reflect, collaborate, and think critically will be unable to provide transformational learning experiences that will allow students to respond to tomorrow. The education process should provide the means for transforming students to be responsible learners who continue to grow and change and use their knowledge in meaningful ways in society. In short, Tift College of Education faculty members share a vision that the most effective teachers and educational leaders are “Transforming Practitioners”; they seek not only to effect transformation within themselves, but also to link the student and the learning process and to transform the lives of all students.

The Unit's Philosophy, Purposes, and Goals

Philosophy

Within the context of its general mission and vision, Tift College of Education's philosophy is based upon a shared view of preparation of teachers and educational leaders. The Professional Education Unit at Mercer University views teachers and educational leaders as Transforming Practitioners who are changing through *understanding, practicing, and reflecting*, processes that are infused in and richly woven throughout the principles of the Conceptual Framework: To Know, To Do, and To Be.

The Transforming Practitioner embraces personal and professional transformation continually throughout his or her career, while also seeking to stimulate and facilitate transformation within his or her students. Furthermore, The Transforming Practitioner appreciates and nurtures *engagement* in the teaching/learning process, strives for meaningful *collaboration* with a variety of stakeholders, and appreciates and honors *diversity* in people.

The Transforming Practitioner must **Know** the foundations of the education profession, content bases for curricula, and characteristics of diverse learners. The well prepared candidate possesses knowledge that will allow for effective facilitation of learning at the appropriate grade

and cognitive levels. If learning potential of students is to be maximized, an educator's knowledge base must be comprehensive and should include understanding of the characteristics of diverse learners; historical, philosophical, sociological, legal, and developmental foundations; and a rich body of strong content knowledge. If educators and educational programs are to provide for meaningful learning that enables students to link information to prior knowledge and to other knowledge, content knowledge must be an integral part of the program of study and should build on a comprehensive liberal arts background. Research indicates that Transforming Practitioners must value, possess, and have understanding of a variety of types of knowledge. Knowledge of the foundations of education, content, pedagogy, and characteristics of diverse learners serves as a basis for becoming a Transforming Practitioner and provides the impetus for planning for and engaging students in transformational learning experiences. Indeed, a critical base of knowledge is necessary as a foundation for making the choices and decisions that are required in today's classrooms (Reagan, 1993; Schulman, 2004). A deep understanding of methods, strategies, and techniques developed through the study of appropriate pedagogy and participation in field experiences enables the Transforming Practitioner to adapt materials, technology, curriculum, and instruction as necessary to meet the needs of a diverse student population.

The Transforming Practitioner must **Do** the work of a professional educator in planning and implementing well integrated curricula using developmentally appropriate and culturally responsive instructional strategies, materials, and technology. Thus, the candidate is an effective communicator who is able to create an environment that is responsive to a diverse student population and that promotes active learning, positive self-concept, and an appreciation for diversity. Knowledge of and ability to use strategies, materials, and technology appropriately are critical for educating a diverse student population, for encouraging students' engagement in learning, for facilitating students' construction of knowledge, and for addressing the changing needs of students, curricula, and learning outcomes. Modeling, role-playing, and appropriate and varying field experiences provide opportunities for learning, developing, and enhancing these abilities and skills. The Transforming Practitioner is a competent leader of learning who considers a primary responsibility of the educator to be that of building upon prior knowledge and experiences of learners and who, in the spirit of Dewey (1944) and Vygotsky (1978), uses approaches that capitalize on learners' knowledge and experiences for effective learning. The Transforming Practitioner grows in his or her abilities to blend theory and practice and to plan, implement, and assess curricula and instructional practices through an interweaving of courses and practical experiences that are carefully planned and delivered by Tift College of Education faculty.

The Transforming Practitioner must **Be** a reflective, collaborative, and responsive decision-maker, facilitator, and role model within the classroom, school, community, and global environment. The most effective educators believe in their own efficacy; that is, they consider themselves to have the power to effect meaningful learning. They believe that all students can achieve when provided with proper support and guidance from knowledgeable and caring adults. Metacognitive, reflective, collaborative, and responsive abilities are crucial in order for the Transforming Practitioner to make appropriate and effective decisions related to the application of pedagogical knowledge (Ambach, 1996; Cochran & Jones, 1998; Shulman, 2004) and the planning, implementation, and assessment of appropriate and stimulating curricula (Goodson, 2003; Posner & Rudnitsky, 2006; Shulman & Shulman, 2004). The Transforming Practitioner utilizes critical thinking and reflection that allow for responsiveness to and collaboration with students, colleagues, administrators, parents, schools, business representatives, and community members. Teachers and educational leaders are continually called upon to make responsive decisions; to reflect on, analyze, and evaluate their performance and effectiveness in planning for instruction, implementing lessons, and assessing

learning; and to reflect on and critique their knowledge base and their performance as role models.

Truly, Transforming Practitioners are role models who are respectful of the thoughts and beliefs of others and display **dispositions** associated with the calling and service of educating.

Research has indicated that among such dispositions are attitudes that focus on the achievement of diverse learners (Suarez, 2003), grounded in an appreciation for diversity and an advocacy for students (Dee & Henkin, 2002). Other dispositions that educators consider to be relevant include intrinsic motivation, passion for teaching and learning, desire to form and maintain helping relationships with students, commitment to social justice, creativity, problem solving, and divergent thinking (Mullin, 2003). Furthermore, caring teachers and educational leaders engage in and promote collaboration and positive social interaction (Root, Callahan, & Sepanski, 2002) and are disposed toward reflection, integrity, and self-improvement (Ertmer, 2003). Teacher educators are responsible for serving as role models and providing feedback that attempts to shape the professional dispositions of candidates, engaging in what Sockett (2006) refers to as “a process of moral education” (p. 9).

Certainly, dispositions of effective teachers and educational leaders are quite numerous and are addressed directly and indirectly throughout the Professional Education Unit’s Conceptual Framework. Desirable dispositions are carefully and inextricably associated with understanding, practicing, and reflecting (processes in which Transforming Practitioners are continually involved) as well as with engagement, diversity, and collaboration (characteristics of classrooms and other school settings that are honored, appreciated, and nurtured by Transforming Practitioners). However, in order to streamline the list of desired dispositions and to facilitate the assessment process (Dottin, 2006; Diez, 2006), Tift College of Education faculty members synthesized and consolidated their research to develop a discrete list of dispositions that seem to be most closely connected with transformation:

- respect,
- responsibility,
- flexibility,
- collaboration,
- reflection,
- commitment to life-long learning,
- belief in teacher efficacy, and
- effective communication.

Transforming Practitioners demonstrate strong content knowledge and are open to expanding their **understanding** of knowledge through continual learning and professional development. Development of understanding facilitates educators’ abilities to be adaptive and continually transforming, thus leading them to provide opportunities and means for students to transform in ways that will enable them to apply their learning to life meaningfully, responsibly, and with character and integrity. Indeed, understanding of the foundations of education, content, pedagogy, and characteristics of learners serves as a basis for becoming a Transforming Practitioner and provides the impetus for planning for and engaging students in transformational learning experiences.

As the classroom is an evolving organism, Transforming Practitioners must be able to plan, teach, and assess in manners that ensure successful learning experiences for all students. This demonstrates the framework process of **practicing**. For this continuous interaction of teaching, learning, and assessment to occur, educators must develop abilities to plan and implement appropriate lessons that reflect philosophical and pedagogical theories of learning. Teachers’ and educational leaders’ belief systems that focus on active student participation are essential if

deep learning is to occur (Sfard, 1998). When standards-based planning is connected with lessons that promote active learning, the stage is set for effective and meaningful educational practice.

Guided by the framework process of **reflecting**, Transforming Practitioners view teaching as a reflective process. To be reflective, one must be willing to think about (reflect upon) his or her teaching methods and activities systematically and actively (Moallem, 1997) and use information learned to improve the teaching and learning process (Brophy & Evertson, 1976). John Dewey (1933) defined “reflection” as “the active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in light of the grounds that support it.” Tift College of Education teacher candidates and educational leader candidates are encouraged through their coursework and field experiences to engage in the process of reflection by (1) considering the actions taken in their teaching and leadership practices, (2) critically examining the consequences of those actions, (3) evaluating and analyzing their beliefs upon which they base their behaviors, and (4) taking an active role (proactive approach to teaching and leading) in acquiring new knowledge that will not only help them to modify and adapt their methods but will inform their overall practices in teaching and leading (Eby, 1998).

Tift College of Education candidates are also encouraged to take time to reflect on their experiences in educating and ask themselves challenging questions about the appropriateness and success of those efforts. By doing so, teachers and school leaders are being thoughtful and critical of their own work (Parker, S., 1997). It is the hope of the Tift College of Education faculty that, through self-examination processes, Transforming Practitioners will use reflective knowledge to bridge the gap between teaching and learning and adjust content, teaching practices, and leadership efforts to meet the individual needs of learners.

Transforming Practitioners honor, appreciate, nurture, and demonstrate **engagement** of students in the learning process. To facilitate engagement, teachers and educational leaders make use of a variety of strategies that provide guidance to students as they construct their own knowledge and develop a sense of ownership of learning. Engagement promotes in learners the processes of critical thinking, problem solving, inquisitiveness, and development of character. Transforming Practitioners endeavor to design learning environments in which students’ beliefs are exchanged, defended, converted, and assessed. Such environments provide dynamic contexts for engaged learning.

Transforming Practitioners honor, appreciate, nurture, and demonstrate **collaboration** through positive interaction with both the internal and external community. Collaboration is evidenced through engagement with fellow candidates, faculty, students, school-based educators, parents, and the community. Collaboration between and among individuals is an essential ingredient in teaching and learning and is at the heart of the transformational process.

Transforming Practitioners honor, appreciate, nurture, and demonstrate the ability to address **diversity** in the classroom. The Transforming Practitioner uses knowledge of and sensitivity to diversities of people to create environments, design curricular goals, and plan for and employ instructional and assessment methods and resources.

Belief and Action Statements: Professional Commitments

As a part of its philosophy, the Professional Education Unit has agreed upon the following Belief and Action Statements, which serve to focus the Tift College of Education faculty on the needs of candidates in the teacher education and educational leadership programs, as well as the needs of learners whose care and education are entrusted to these candidates. Tift College of Education faculty members are professionally committed to bringing these Belief and Action Statements to fruition.

1. Transformation is a holistic process unique to each individual.

2. Effective teachers and educational leaders provide for transforming learning experiences that actively engage students in their own learning.
3. Educators are effective facilitators of learning based on what they believe, what they know, what they are able to do, and how they think and act.
4. Effective teachers and educational leaders understand schooling and the educational process.
5. There is a base of content knowledge all teachers and educational leaders must learn. This knowledge is built on prior knowledge, is expanded appropriately, and is linked to all other knowledge.
6. Teachers and educational leaders teach from the overflow of their own knowledge. In order for an educator to build on prior knowledge, to link specific knowledge to other knowledge, and to expand current knowledge, he or she must have a content knowledge base greater and broader than that of his or her students and a comprehensive knowledge base that includes a broad liberal arts foundation and more advanced study in one or more academic disciplines.
7. There exists a current and expanding set of effective materials, strategies, methods, and technology for facilitating learning by all students. Effective teaching occurs when content, materials, strategies, methods, technology, and communication are congruent with and responsive to the developmental levels of students, to characteristics of learners, and to the cultural, racial, ethnic, and gender needs of students, and are effectively utilized.
8. Teachers and educational leaders make critical decisions continuously and in every facet of the educational process. Reflection, problem solving, and critical thinking abilities are crucial for effective decision-making.
9. Teachers and educational leaders are role models for others and as such are professionals who effectively collaborate and contribute to the education profession at various levels: classroom, school, community, state, and national.

Purposes

The purposes of the Professional Education Unit at Mercer University stem from its vision, its mission, its philosophical beliefs, and its professional commitments. Tift College of Education collaborates with other departments across Mercer University, as well as with partner school systems and practicing professionals in the field, with the aim of preparing teachers and educational leaders who are Transforming Practitioners. Through the interwoven processes of **understanding**, **practicing**, and **reflecting**, The Transforming Practitioner comes **To Know** the foundations of the education profession, content bases for curricula, and characteristics of diverse learners; **To Do** the work of a professional educator in planning and implementing well integrated curricula using developmentally appropriate and culturally responsive instructional strategies, materials, and technology; and **To Be** a reflective, collaborative, and responsive decision-maker, facilitator, and role model within the classroom, school, community, and global environment.

Additionally, our purposes incorporate goals of preparing teachers and school leaders who honor, appreciate, nurture, and demonstrate three essential characteristics of Transforming Practitioners: **engagement** of students in learning; the ability to be involved in effective **collaboration** with students, other educators, parents, and the community; and the ability to work with a **diversity** of students.

Goals

Embodied within the Professional Education Unit's Conceptual Framework, the following goals for The Transforming Practitioner are defined:

- I. **TO KNOW the foundations of the education profession, content bases for curricula, and characteristics of diverse learners.**
 - a. Demonstrates knowledge of the philosophical, historical, sociological, legal, and psychological foundations of education.
 - b. Demonstrates expertise in the content bases for curricula, the appropriate use of technology, good communication skills, and effective pedagogy.
 - c. Shows understanding of and respect for the characteristics, cognitive and social developmental stages, emotional and psychological needs, and learning styles of diverse and special needs learners.
- II. **TO DO the work of a professional educator in planning and implementing well integrated curricula using developmentally appropriate and culturally responsive instructional strategies, materials, and technology.**
 - a. Plans, implements, and assesses well-integrated, developmentally appropriate, and culturally responsive lessons that are well grounded in pedagogical and psychological theory.
 - b. Individualizes, differentiates, and adapts instruction to meet the needs of diverse and special needs learners.
 - c. Uses a wide variety of teaching methods, strategies, technology, and materials.
- III. **TO BE a reflective, collaborative, and responsive decision-maker, facilitator, and role model within the classroom, school, community, and global environment.**
 - a. Believes in his or her own efficacy as an educator and uses feedback, reflection, research, and collaboration to enhance teaching performance, revise and refine instruction, make decisions, develop and modify instruction, and grow as a professional.
 - b. Models understanding, respect, and appreciation for diverse educational, cultural, and socioeconomic groups; a willingness to consider diverse opinions and perspectives; and concern for community and global awareness.
 - c. Models positive and effective interpersonal skills when interacting with learners, parents, other educators, and members of the community.

Knowledge Bases

***The Transforming Practitioner:
Changing Internally through Understanding, Practicing, and Reflecting***

The Professional Education Unit's Conceptual Framework theme, "The Transforming Practitioner," is supported by a strong knowledge base grounded in solid tested research. As discussed by Henderson and Hawthorne (2000), willingness and ability to transform are crucial components of the educational process. The most effective educators, including teachers and educational leaders, are those who consider transformation to be a natural and exciting aspect of living. They honor and appreciate growth, change, and continual personal and professional betterment. As they progress through their careers, they effect transformation within themselves continually; such transformation is supported by a cornerstone of knowledge. Knowledge, a source of action, is required to actualize practice, and is embedded in practice, which should lead to reflection on the part of the educator (Giroux and Shannon, 1997).

To Know

Transformative teaching and learning have as their focus a curriculum organized around powerful ideas, meaningful and interactive teaching strategies, purposeful student involvement, and lessons that require students to participate in personal, social, and civic action to make their classrooms, schools, and communities more just and democratic (Banks, 2001). Additionally, according to Caldwell (2004) and Caldwell and Spinks (1998), transformation occurs as a result

of uses and implementation of technology in schools. Therefore, educators of today and tomorrow must demonstrate strong content knowledge and must be open to expanding their own understanding of knowledge through continual learning and professional development. Such development of understanding facilitates educators' abilities to be adaptive and continually transforming, thus leading them to provide opportunities for students to transform in ways that will enable them to apply their learning to life meaningfully, responsibly, and with character and integrity.

Research indicates that Transforming Practitioners must value and possess understanding of a variety of types of knowledge. Knowledge of the foundations of education, content, pedagogy, and characteristics of learners serves as a basis for becoming a Transforming Practitioner and provides the impetus for planning for and engaging students in transformational learning experiences. Indeed, a critical base of knowledge is necessary as a foundation for making the decisions that are required in today's classrooms (Reagan, 1993; Shulman, 1987). Courses in the foundations of education, such as history and philosophy of education, are viewed by Brubacher, Case, and Reagan (1994) as being significant to the development of higher-order thinking skills in educators. Teachers and educational leaders need to understand the psychological processes involved in teaching and learning (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002; Snow, Corno, & Jackson, 1996) as well as the relationships between human development and learning (Meece, 2002; Sprinthall, Neiman, & Theis-Sprinthall, 1996). They also need to acquire a content knowledge base appropriate to their areas of certification, with understanding of how this knowledge reflects contributions of diverse populations (Chen & Ennis, 1995; Lipson, Mosenthal, Mekkelson, & Russ, 2004; Shulman & Shulman, 2004). To facilitate learning effectively, teachers and educational leaders must also construct bases of pedagogical knowledge (Ambach, 1996; Cochran & Jones, 1998; Shulman, 2004). Our advancing, technology-rich society demands educators who are diversified in their knowledge of methodologies and are prepared to juggle a myriad of roles in educational settings (Igoa, 1995).

To Do

Transforming Practitioners are competent leaders of learning who consider a primary responsibility of the educator to be that of building upon prior knowledge and experiences of learners and who use approaches that capitalize on learners' knowledge and experiences for effective learning. Dewey (1944) discusses taking learners where they are and using that knowledge to construct learning environments that are student active and provide for cognitive and social activity enhanced with personal interaction. Transforming Practitioners assess the prior knowledge and experiences of students and based on such information know when, where, and how to provide the supportive "scaffolds" in what Vygotsky (1978) called "the zone of proximal development" and to remove them appropriately as students become more confident and independent in their own learning.

To take students where they are and provide for effective scaffolding, competent Transforming Practitioners progress through their own process of transformation. According to Shulman (2004), this transformative process involves five elements:

- 1) preparation – examining and critically interpreting materials of instruction in terms of the educator's own understanding of the subject matter;
- 2) representation – identifying alternate ways of representing ideas of text or lesson to students;
- 3) selection – the embodiment of representations in instructional forms or methods (selected from a variety of teaching methods and models);
- 4) adaptation – the process of fitting the represented material to the characteristics of the students – ability, gender, language, motivation, culture, prior knowledge, skills; and
- 5) tailoring – fitting the adaptations to specific students in the classroom.

The Transforming Practitioner and technology. Dewey's ideas of prior knowledge and experiential learning are grounded in the culture and social contexts in which students live. Today the culture and social contexts incorporate technology in various forms. The International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) (Brooks-Young, 2002) sets forth the beliefs that in order to facilitate transformational learning, all teachers and educational leaders should have certain competencies related to technology. These competencies include basic computer/technology operations and concepts, personal and professional use of technology, and application of technology in instruction. A firm foundation in technology provides a basis from which the Transforming Practitioner can make appropriate decisions when selecting, modifying, and implementing socially active learning environments that provide for meaningful learning.

Furthermore, Vygotsky's beliefs in situated learning support the need for and utilization of technology in instruction. Active learning experiences require students to work in groups to explore and analyze, think and reflect, and propose and act within a context of learning that links new learning with prior knowledge and experiences as well as life outside of school. Transforming Practitioners have an obligation to incorporate technology that can support the learning environment while engaging students in problem solving and critical thinking and providing tools of expression that are useful to students (Harley, 1993). Maddux, Johnson, and Willis (2001) explain how four principles of a Vygotskian classroom support meaningful integration of technology in learning opportunities.

- 1) *Learning is a social, collaborative activity.* This suggests that using technology to enhance communication, contact, and interaction would be beneficial.
- 2) *The Zone of Proximal Development can serve as a guide for curricular and lesson planning.* Students do not simply know something or not know it. They may arrive at a particular learning experience without knowing something but be ready to master the task if they have appropriate support. In addition to assistance offered by caring, nurturing adults, appropriate support may include electronic information resources such as encyclopedias on CD-ROM, software such as grammar checkers, and electronic brainstorming software that supports group problem analysis.
- 3) *School learning should occur in a meaningful context.* Technology can be used to place learning in context.
- 4) *Students' school experiences should be related to out-of-school experiences.* Technology can facilitate the application of academic subjects to life outside of the classroom.

In order for the learning environment to be culture-relevant and for students to link prior knowledge and experiences to new knowledge, Transforming Practitioners should ensure that a variety of learning opportunities incorporate technology.

To Be

Dixon-Krauss (1996) discusses the role of the educator in light of Vygotsky's beliefs. While interacting with the student, the teacher or educational leader determines strategies the student is applying to construct meaning and then decides on the type and amount of support to provide. If educators are Transforming Practitioners, they are able to make judgments along a continuum about the appropriate instructional mediation levels to use with students. Such judgments require that teachers and educational leaders reflect meaningfully and deliberately as they apply pedagogical knowledge (Ambach, 1996; Cochran & Jones, 1998; Shulman, 2004) and as they make efforts to plan, implement, and assess appropriate and stimulating curricula (Goodson, 2003; Posner & Rudnitsky, 2006; Shulman, 2004;). Additionally, because appropriate technology is required to accomplish learning objectives and to meet the diverse needs of students, educators must reflect on their own competencies in the use of technology, as well as areas in which they need to improve (Clark & Salomon, 1986; Cooley, 1997; Copley,

1992; Harrington, 1992). Reflection, in addition to effective communication, is also crucial if teachers and educational leaders are to be successful when working with students, colleagues, parents, and administrators (Griffin, 1989).

Dispositions. It is important that candidates in teacher education and educational leadership embody and display certain dispositions that are viewed as indicators of effective and successful teaching (Ginsberg & Whaley, 2003). Among such dispositions are attitudes that focus on the achievement of diverse learners (Suarez, 2003), grounded in an appreciation for diversity and an advocacy for students (Dee & Henkin, 2002). Transformative educators pursue their vocations with sincere passion (Mullin, 2003), operating from the belief that all students can learn and being willing and eager to provide the support that is necessary to facilitate learning (McCombs, 2003). Teachers and school leaders have the power to nurture decency in learners through patient communication, acknowledging contributions of students, and providing opportunities for students to show caring for and to serve others (Swick, 2001). Furthermore, transformative educators engage in and promote positive social interaction, recognize and encourage positive growth in others, and see value in the integration of service learning throughout the curriculum (Root, Callahan, & Sepanski, 2002). Transforming Practitioners are educators who are disposed toward reflection, integrity, and self-improvement (Ertmer, 2003).

Growing in the Profession (Advanced Programs). Studies have indicated that as transformative teachers and educational leaders become older and move further into their careers, they develop larger knowledge bases of subject matter and pedagogy, organize knowledge more efficiently in more complex interconnected schemas, and utilize their knowledge more effectively (Borko & Putman, 1996; Scardamalia & Bereiter, 1994; Sternberg & Horvath, 1995; Strauss, Ravid, Magen, & Berliner, 1998; Sweller, Van Merriënboer, & Paas, 1998). Transforming Practitioners must continue to grow and develop professionally to guard against automation (Sternberg & Horvath, 1995) and to deal effectively with changes that come with time and the expanding knowledge base of the world. The keenest and most effective teachers and educational leaders continually extend and enhance not only their bases of knowledge but also their effectiveness in educational settings and their reflection and decision-making skills. By bringing all of these together, experienced practitioners are in positions to contribute richly and meaningfully to the educational process. Advanced study that includes components of research provides teachers and educational leaders with additional abilities for contributing to the scholarship of the profession and for effecting transformation not only in students but also in schools and school systems. Fueyo and Koorland (1997) indicate that there exists a strong link between educational research and school reform. Research requirements of linking prior knowledge to new information, posing significant and sound questions, finding answers in a systematic manner, and basing answers and decisions on sound evidence place accountability on Transforming Practitioners and enable them to participate effectively in site-based decision making and to effect change.

Transforming Practitioners provide leadership in transforming curriculum and teaching in their own classrooms, at departmental or grade levels, in the school, and in the school system. Transforming Practitioners continue to grow through the promotion of diversified learning, lifelong learning, and inquiry, and this growth leads to informed learning behaviors that nurture democratic citizenship, equity, and civility (Banks, 2001; Brandt, 1994; Goleman, McKee, & Boyatzis, 2002; Henderson & Hawthorne, 2000; Palmer, 1998; Parker, W., 1997; Perkins, 1994; Scherer, 1997; Schneider, 1996; Spady, 1995). As Tift College of Education candidates progress through the advanced programs, they are moving toward mastery as Transforming Practitioners who also provide leadership in curriculum, teaching, and learning transformation (Burns, 1978).

Engagement

Transforming Practitioners demonstrate *engagement* of students in the learning process. To facilitate engagement, teachers and educational leaders make use of a variety of strategies and different modes of operation that provide guidance to students as they construct knowledge and understanding (Jackson, 2002). Discussion, demonstration, and argumentation are examples of classroom activities that positively engage students in learning experiences that nurture ownership of learning, inquisitiveness, and character and moral development. Transforming Practitioners implement curricula by designing learning environments in which students' beliefs are exchanged, defended, converted, and assessed. Such environments serve to provide dynamic contexts for learning in a multicultural society (Walkling, 1980). Furthermore, transformative learning experiences encourage exploration of controversial issues and alternative explanations for important events, as well as the development of appreciation of divergent opinions.

Collaboration

Transforming Practitioners demonstrate effective *collaboration* with students, educators, parents, and the community. Meaningful collaboration requires and strengthens a variety of intellectual, moral, and critical thinking abilities (Yost, Sentner, & Forlenza-Bailey, 2000) and advances practitioners' abilities to become responsive facilitators, effective decision makers, and role models.

Dewey (1933) states, "Reflection is an active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in light of the grounds supporting it and future conclusions to which it tends" (p. 6). Reflection requires deep and purposeful thinking, through which one can analyze and critically process differing levels of intuition, knowledge, and information. Building on that premise, if teachers and educational leaders are to respond, problem solve, make decisions, and collaborate effectively in a constantly changing world with varying challenges, they must continually strive to strengthen their abilities in reflection (Dewey, 1944; Goodman, 1989). Those who are skillful at reflection tend to be open-minded and to possess observational, empirical, analytical, and problem-solving skills (Dewey, 1933; James, 1899; Schon, 1987). Transformative educators must listen attentively and give serious consideration to alternative views and to views divergent from and opposed to their own. They also must be willing to question others' beliefs and be willing to have their own beliefs questioned (Dewey, 1933).

Diversity

Transforming Practitioners demonstrate the ability to address *diversity* in the classroom. The transformational approach to multicultural education, through which the structures of curriculum and teaching are changed to enable students to view concepts, issues, events, and themes from the perspective of diverse ethnic and cultural groups, is one of the more effective means for curriculum reform (Banks, 2002). Moreover, hooks (2003) believes that educational settings are where successful mediation between racial groups might be optimally achieved. Thus, teachers and educational leaders who are aware of and sensitive to the diversities and needs of students and who are able to choose appropriate materials, strategies, methods, and techniques will create environments for success and for understanding of others.

Transformation of Students

According to Jackson (2002), the most effective teachers and educational leaders seek *transformation*, an altered state of being or condition, not only for themselves, but also for the students with whom they work. In the society of today, basic skills, while necessary, are simply not sufficient. Teachers and leaders are charged with stimulating learners to demonstrate deep understanding by testing and applying ideas, questioning and critiquing, analyzing and

evaluating, solving problems, and thinking critically (Darling-Hammond, 1996, 1997, 2000). Transformation must occur in the classroom, and teachers and educational leaders who are prepared as Transforming Practitioners are in positions to facilitate such transformation.

Transformation of a student involves a personal and intense relationship between the educator and the student (Jackson, 2002). In order for transformation to occur, learners must examine and question, must challenge the known and the given, must think critically, and must reflect deeply. At the same time, teachers and educational leaders are required to establish appropriately stimulating and challenging sets of learning outcomes and contexts for learning and to mediate thought processes and learning. Human educators, rather than theories of learning or pedagogical methods, are living links in the educational process (Palmer, 2003). As such, educators—teachers and leaders alike—play critical roles in providing appropriate learning environments that allow for and promote transformation within students.

Living Links in the Educational Process

As the link between students and learning, The Transforming Practitioner provides rich, caring, and nurturing environments that allow students to engage in learning without risk. According to Noddings (2001), adequate academic achievement cannot be attained with success unless students learn to care about others and believe that others care about them. Moreover, Noddings asserts that caring and competence are closely and carefully connected. When educators design educational environments in which human beings are cared for and nurtured, they are able to link students with learning such that the students transform from egocentric beings to ones who care “for self, for intimate others, for strangers and global others, for the natural world and its nonhuman creatures, for the human-made world, and for ideas” (1995, p. 675).

Stones (1994) expressed the importance of the human educator, the *living link*, in effecting change in learners:

No teaching method can convey information ready-made. The human brain is neither a jug to be filled nor a letterbox to receive a delivery. Teaching depends on the interaction between human beings, not one-way traffic. Skilled teaching involves structuring learners’ environments so that change will occur, thus enabling learners to do what they could not do before the teaching (pp. 311-312).

Outcomes and Proficiencies

Tift College of Education faculty members carefully studied and thoughtfully applied the standards of relevant professional organizations and learned societies when designing courses and field experiences for candidates in teacher education and educational leadership. Furthermore, professional standards (INTASC and the Georgia Framework for Teaching for initial teacher education programs, NBPTS and the Georgia Framework for Teaching for advanced teacher education programs, and ELCC standards for the educational leadership program) are used in unit evaluation to measure candidate proficiencies in mastering desired outcomes. The following tables show the proficiencies for the initial teacher certification programs, the advanced teacher certification programs, and the educational leadership program aligned with the elements of the Conceptual Framework and with the relevant state standards. For the initial certification and advanced teacher education programs (M.Ed. and Ed.S. programs), the INTASC standards serve as the core proficiencies, with distinctions drawn as to the level of performance expected of candidates (“proficient” for initial certification candidates and “exemplary” for advanced program candidates). In addition to the core proficiencies represented by the INTASC standards, advanced program candidates are expected to meet standards related to research, advocacy, and leadership (at the “proficient” level for M.Ed.

candidates and at the “exemplary” level for Ed.S. candidates). Curricula and assessments for each individual program are aligned with the appropriate national organization standards, as well as the Georgia-specific program standards. Detailed rubrics (not included in this document in order to adhere to page limitations) elaborate on each proficiency, providing relevant indicators related to the conceptual framework principles: To Know (knowledge), To Do (skills), and To Be (dispositions).

In order to clarify the alignment of the numerous standards with the complex, holistic, integrated conceptual framework of The Transforming Practitioner, we have created lists that present four perspectives of that framework. The linear, discrete nature of the lists, however, should not suggest the elements in the list are discrete components of the framework, which represents them all simultaneously. Table 1 presents the elements of the framework that we use in the alignment matrix for Initial Certification and Advanced Teacher Education programs (Table 3). Table 2 presents the modified elements that we use in the alignment matrix for the educational leadership program (Table 4).

Table 1: Transforming Practitioner Framework Elements

1. 1.A. 1.B. 1.C.	1. Transforming Practitioner Principles To Know: The Transforming Practitioner knows the foundations of the education profession, content bases for curricula, and characteristics of diverse learners. To Do: The Transforming Practitioner does the work of a professional educator in planning and implementing well integrated curricula using developmentally appropriate and culturally responsive instructional strategies, materials, and technology. To Be: The Transforming Practitioner is a reflective, collaborative, and responsive decision-maker, facilitator, and role model within the classroom, school, community, and global environment.	3. 3.A. 3.B. 3.C.	3. Transforming Practitioner Characteristics Engagement: The Transforming Practitioner designs developmentally appropriate lessons; integrates curriculum; engages learners. Diversity: The Transforming Practitioner understands needs of diverse student populations; responds appropriately to diverse groups; provides culturally responsive lessons. Collaboration: The Transforming Practitioner models understanding of community; collaborates inside and outside the classroom; interacts effectively with groups.
2. 2.A. 2.B. 2.C.	2. Transforming Practitioner Processes Understanding: The Transforming Practitioner understands foundations, curriculum, and development. Practicing: The Transforming Practitioner plans, implements, and assesses; individualizes, differentiates, and adapts; varies instruction. Reflecting: The Transforming Practitioner reflects, revises, and refines; models professionalism; grows professionally.	4. 4.A. 4.B. 4.C. 4.D. 4.E. 4.F. 4.G. 4.H.	4. Transforming Practitioner Dispositions The Transforming Practitioner is respectful . The Transforming Practitioner takes responsibility . The Transforming Practitioner is flexible . The Transforming Practitioner values collaboration . The Transforming Practitioner values reflection . The Transforming Practitioner is committed to life-long learning . The Transforming Practitioner believes in teacher efficacy . The Transforming Practitioner engages in effective communication .

Table 2: Transformational Leader Framework Elements

<p>1. 1.A. 1.B. 1.C.</p>	<p>Transformational Leader Principles To Know: The Transformational Leader knows the foundations of the education profession, content bases for curricula, and characteristics of diverse learners. To Do: The Transformational Leader does the work of a professional educator in encouraging teachers to plan and implement well integrated curricula using developmentally appropriate and culturally responsive instructional strategies, materials, and technology. To Be: The Transformational Leader is a reflective, collaborative, and responsive decision-maker, facilitator, and role model within the classroom, school, community, and global environment.</p>	<p>3. 3.A. 3.B. 3.C.</p> <p>Transformational Leader Characteristics Engagement: The Transformational Leader encourages ownership of learning; inspires and empowers students and teachers; and provides dynamic contexts for engaged learning. Diversity: The Transformational Leader understands needs of diverse students, families, and teachers; integrates diverse perspectives into leadership strategies; and provides a culturally responsive learning environment. Collaboration: The Transformational Leader models positive and effective interpersonal skills by collaborating with families and other community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs and by mobilizing community resources.</p>
<p>2. 2.A. 2.B. 2.C.</p>	<p>Transformational Leader Processes Understanding: The Transformational Leader understands foundations, curriculum, and development. Practicing: The Transformational Leader develops, articulates, and implements a school vision; leads teachers to individualize, differentiate, and adapt; promotes active and effective learning. Reflecting: The Transformational Leader reflects on leadership experiences, assesses success of efforts, and proactively refines leadership efforts.</p>	<p>4. 4.A. 4.B. 4.C. 4.D. 4.E. 4.F. 4.G. 4.H.</p> <p>Transformational Leader Dispositions The Transformational Leader is respectful. The Transformational Leader takes responsibility. The Transformational Leader is flexible. The Transformational Leader values collaboration. The Transformational Leader values reflection. The Transformational Leader is committed to life-long learning. The Transformational Leader believes in educator efficacy. The Transformational Leader engages in effective communication.</p>

Table 3: Initial Certification and Advanced Teacher Education Program Standards Alignment Matrix

Proficiency	Transforming Practitioner Conceptual Framework	INTASC	NBPTS Core Propositions	NCATE/ Georgia 2000 Standards	Georgia Framework for Teaching
<p>Subject Matter Knowledge: The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) he or she teaches and creates learning experiences that make these aspects of subject matter meaningful for students.</p>	1A; 1B; 2A; 4F	1A; 1B; 1C; 1D; 1E; 1F; 1G; 1H; 1I; 1J; 1K; 1L; 1M	2	1A; 1B; 1D	1.1; 1.2; 1.3; 1.4; 1.5; 1.6
<p>Child Development: The teacher understands how children learn and develop, and can provide learning opportunities that support their intellectual, social and personal development.</p>	1A; 1B; 1C; 2A; 2B; 3B; 4A; 4G	2A; 2B; 2C; 2D; 2E; 2F; 2G; 2H	1	1C; 1D	2.2; 2.5; 4.2; 5.3
<p>Diversity of Learners: The teacher understands how students differ in their approaches to learning and creates instructional opportunities that are adapted to diverse learners.</p>	1A; 1B; 1C; 3B; 4A; 4G	3A; 3B; 3C; 3D; 3E; 3F; 3G; 3H; 3I; 3J; 3K; 3L; 3M; 3N; 3O; 3P; 3Q	1	1C; 1D	2.1; 2.4; 2.5; 3.2; 3.5; 3.6; 5.2
<p>Instructional Strategies: The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to</p>	1A; 1B; 1C; 3A; 4C; 4G	4A; 4B; 4C; 4D; 4E; 4F;	3	1C; 1D	5.3; 5.4; 5.5; 5.6; 6.4

Proficiency	Transforming Practitioner Conceptual Framework	INTASC	NBPTS Core Propositions	NCATE/ Georgia 2000 Standards	Georgia Framework for Teaching
encourage students' development of critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills.		4G; 4H; 4I; 4J			
Learning Environment: The teacher uses 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.	1A; 1B; 1C; 3A; 4A; 4B; 4D; 4G	5A; 5B; 5C; 5D; 5E; 5F; 5G; 5H; 5I; 5J; 5K; 5L; 5M; 5N; 5O; 5P; 5Q	3	1C; 1D	3.1; 3.2; 3.3; 3.4; 5.3
Communication: The teacher uses knowledge of effective verbal, nonverbal, and media communication techniques to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction in the classroom.	1A; 1C; 3A; 3B; 4A; 4C; 4E	6A; 6B; 6C; 6D; 6E; 6F; 6G; 6H; 6I; 6J; 6K; 6L; 6M	3	1C; 1D	3.7
Planning/Integrated Instruction: The teacher plans instruction based upon knowledge of subject matter, students, the community, and curriculum goals.	1A; 1B; 1C; 2B; 3A; 4B; 4C; 4D; 4E	7A; 7B; 7C; 7D; 7E; 7F; 7G; 7H; 7I; 7J; 7K	3	1C; 1D	5.1; 5.2; 5.3; 5.4; 5.7
Assessment: The teacher understands and uses formal and informal assessment strategies to evaluate and ensure the continuous intellectual, social and physical development of the learner.	1A; 1B; 1C; 2B; 4E; 4G	8A; 8B; 8C; 8D; 8E; 8F; 8G; 8H; 8I; 8J; 8K	4	1C; 1D; 1E	4.1; 4.2; 4.3; 4.4; 4.5; 4.6; 4.7; 4.8; 6.4
Reflection/Professional Development: The teacher is a reflective practitioner who continually evaluates the effects of his/her choices and actions on others (students, parents, and other professionals in the learning community) and who actively seeks out opportunities to grow professionally.	1A; 1B; 1C; 2C; 4F	9A; 9B; 9C; 9D; 9E; 9F; 9G; 9H; 9I; 9J	4	1C; 1D	6.4; 6.5
Community Involvement: The teacher fosters relationships with school colleagues, parents, and agencies in the larger community to support students' learning and well-being.	1A; 1B; 1C; 3C; 4A; 4D; 4G	10A; 10B; 10C; 10D; 10E; 10F; 10G; 10H; 10I; 10J; 10K	5	1C; 1D	2.3; 2.4; 2.6; 3.6; 6.1; 6.2; 6.3; 6.6; 6.7
Additional Proficiencies for Advanced Candidates					
Mastery of Theory and Research: Advanced program candidates demonstrate in-depth, critical knowledge of the theory and research relevant to the professional role(s) and focus area(s) emphasized in their program.	1A; 2C; 4F		4	1A; 1B; 1C; 1D	6.1; 6.4
Skills in Identifying and Using Professional Resources: Advanced program candidates demonstrate a high level of skill in identifying and using the human,	1A; 2C; 4F		4	1A; 1B; 1C; 1D	1.3; 1.5; 6.1

Proficiency	Transforming Practitioner Conceptual Framework	INTASC	NBPTS Core Propositions	NCATE/ Georgia 2000 Standards	Georgia Framework for Teaching
material, and technological resources needed to perform their professional roles and to keep abreast of the field's changing knowledge base.					
Inquiry Skills and Knowledge of Research Methods: Using systematic and professionally accepted approaches, Advanced program candidates demonstrate inquiry skills, showing their ability to investigate questions relevant to their practice and professional goals.	1A; 2C		4	1A; 1B; 1C	6.1
Advocacy: Advanced program candidates demonstrate competence in articulating and advocating for sound professional practices and public policies for the positive development and learning of all students.	1C; 3C		1; 4; 5	1D	6.6
Leadership: Advanced program candidates reflect on and use their abilities and opportunities to think strategically, build consensus, create change, and influence better outcomes for children, families, and the profession.	1C; 2C; 3C; 4B		4; 5	1D	6.7

Table 4: Educational Leadership Program Standards Alignment Matrix

EDL Proficiencies	Transformational Leader Conceptual Framework	ELCC SBL	ELCC SDL	NCATE/ Georgia 2000 Standards
Candidates who complete the program are educational leaders who have the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students by:				
Facilitating the development, articulation, implementation and stewardship of a school or district vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.	1A; 1B; 1C; 2A; 2B; 3A; 3B	1.1; 1.2; 1.3; 1.4; 1.5	1.1; 1.2; 1.3; 1.4; 1.5	1A(NT); 1C(NT); 1D(NT); 1E(NT)
Advocating, nurturing and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.	1A; 1B; 1C; 2A; 2B; 2C; 3A; 3B; 3C	2.1; 2.2; 2.3; 2.4	2.1; 2.2; 2.3; 2.4	1A(NT); 1C(NT); 1D(NT); 1E(NT)
Ensuring management of the organization, operations and resources for a safe, efficient and effective learning environment.	1A; 1B; 1C; 2.A; 2.B; 3C	3.1; 3.2; 3.3	3.1; 3.2; 3.3	1A(NT); 1C(NT); 1D(NT); 1E(NT)
Collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs and mobilizing community resources.	1C; 2C; 3B; 3C	4.1; 4.2; 4.3; 4.4	4.1; 4.2; 4.3; 4.4	1A(NT); 1C(NT); 1D(NT); 1E(NT)
Acting with integrity, fairness and in an ethical manner.	1C; 2C; 3C; 4A; 4B; 4C; 4D; 4E; 4F; 4G	5.1; 5.2; 5.3	5.1; 5.2; 5.3	1A(NT); 1C(NT); 1D(NT); 1E(NT)
Understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal and cultural context.	1A; 1C; 21; 3B; 3C	6.1; 6.2; 6.3	6.1; 6.2; 6.3	1A(NT); 1C(NT); 1E(NT)
Synthesizing and applying program knowledge and skills through substantial, sustained, standards-based work in real settings.	1A; 1B; 1C; 2A; 2B; 2C; 3A; 3B; 3C; 4A; 4B; 4C; 4D; 4E; 4F; 4G	7.1; 7.2; 7.3; 7.4; 7.5; 7.6	7.1; 7.2; 7.3; 7.4; 7.5; 7.6	1A(NT); 1C(NT); 1D(NT)

Assessment

Candidate assessment, rooted in the purposes and goals of the Professional Education Unit, is based on the three organizing principles of the Conceptual Framework:

- (1) **To Know** the foundations of the education profession, content bases for curricula, and characteristics of diverse learners;
- (2) **To Do** the work of a professional educator in planning and implementing well-integrated curricula using developmentally appropriate and culturally responsive instructional strategies, materials, and technology; and
- (3) **To Be** a reflective, collaborative, and responsive decision-maker, facilitator, and role model within the classroom, school, community, and global environment.

The processes of *understanding*, *practicing*, and *reflecting*, as well as the characteristics of *engagement*, *diversity*, and *collaboration*, serve to organize the portfolio used in assessment of candidates. The assessment rubrics for the portfolio include To Know, To Do, and To Be elements for each outcome/standard. All other assessment instruments (both the instruments used in previous years and the recently revised versions) are correlated to these principles, processes, and characteristics, as well. See [Conceptual Framework and Key Assessment Alignment](#).

Because excellence in preparation of teachers and educational leaders is the College's overall goal, assessment of students in initial and advanced programs is crucial to the success of the College. Thus, a detailed progressive process of assessment is required. The candidate assessment process is comprehensive and follows a student from the point of pre-admission through the first year following program completion. Assessment data is gathered at multiple transition points: full admission, program progression, pre-culminating experience, program completion, certification recommendation, post-program completion (graduate follow-up). Table 5 presents an overview of this process.

Tift College has adopted LiveText as a candidate assessment management tool. It was implemented in all programs during the Fall 2005 semester. (See [LiveText Overview Chart](#) and [Transforming Practitioner Framework and LiveText Assessment Chart](#).) Electronic portfolios are a requirement in all programs; candidates use customized portfolio templates that address the common outcomes of the Transforming Practitioner or the Transformational Leader, as well as the Georgia Professional Standards Commission's program-specific standards. Each program has identified required artifacts (including a common Analysis of Student Learning assignment), which are assessed at the course level; candidates include these artifacts and required reflections on how the artifacts demonstrate their ability to meet the designated outcomes/standards, including how the artifact contributed to their development as Transforming Practitioners. The unit also uses LiveText to manage the Dispositions assessment process: each student is assessed on the eight professional dispositions in each class and in each field experience. In addition to the dispositions assessment, all students in field experiences submit their journal reflections in LiveText and all complete a Demographic Data Report, which provides documentation on the required diversity of field placements. Candidates in Practicum and Student Teaching or Internship receive the summative evaluation of their performance through LiveText. The [rubric](#) that guides the formative and summative evaluations in these field experiences is [aligned with the conceptual framework, INTASC, and the Georgia Framework for Teaching](#). Candidates in the final clinical field experience are also assessed by their cooperating teacher on their content knowledge with a LiveText instrument aligned with program-specific content standards. Data from this assessment are combined with the scores on the state

content knowledge tests and the GPA from a standards-driven transcript analysis to enrich our data on candidates' subject matter knowledge. In addition to the candidate assessments in LiveText, the LiveText forms function is used to create and distribute various surveys to program completers, to graduates, to employers, and to cooperating teachers.

Our Student Information System (SIS) is the primary tool for collecting, monitoring, and aggregating quantitative data on candidates, such as entry and exit GPA and test scores. Prior to the implementation of the new GACE assessments, a separate database managed candidates' Praxis II subscores; with the data on GACE scores now provided by the state, a similar database on GACE performances will be easier to maintain.

Table 5: Overview of Candidate Assessments

Stage	Program Level	Evidence	Location
Full Admission	Initial	CGPA SAT/ACT Praxis I/GACE I FYS/ENG Math	SIS SIS SIS SIS SIS
	Advanced	CGPA MAT/GRE T-4 certificate	College transcript SIS PSC database
	Advanced (Ed Leadership)	CGPA MAT/GRE Recommendation from school district T-4 certificate 3 years teaching experience Instructional technology competency	College transcript SIS Student file PSC database Student file PSC database
Program Progression	Initial	CGPA GPA in Education courses GPA in Major # of C's Pre-requisite courses Fieldwork I Fieldwork II Demographic Data Forms Dispositions Assessments Portfolio artifacts	SIS SIS SIS SIS SIS LiveText; SIS LiveText; SIS LiveText LiveText LiveText
	Advanced	CGPA # of C's Dispositions Assessments Portfolio artifacts	SIS SIS LiveText LiveText
Pre-Culminating Experience	Initial	CGPA GPA in Education courses GPA in Major Practicum journals Practicum observations Practicum summative evaluation Demographics Data Form Analysis of Student Learning Content Knowledge Assessment (Classroom Teacher) Dispositions Assessments Portfolio artifacts	SIS SIS SIS LiveText Student file, FE Office LiveText LiveText LiveText LiveText LiveText LiveText
	Advanced	GPA Pre-requisite courses Dispositions assessments Portfolio artifacts	SIS SIS LiveText LiveText
Program Completion	Initial	GPA ST/Int journals ST/Int observations	SIS LiveText Student file, FE Office

Stage	Program Level	Evidence	Location
		ST/Int summative evaluations Demographics Data Form Analysis of Student Learning Content Knowledge Assessment (Classroom Teacher) Degree Audit Portfolio Dispositions assessments Candidate exit survey	LiveText LiveText LiveText LiveText SIS LiveText LiveText LiveText
	Advanced	Research Project (M.Ed. in ECE, MGE, SEC; Ed.S.) Clinical Practicum (Reading) Internship (Ed Leadership) Dispositions assessment Portfolio Exit GPA Candidate exit survey	SIS; LiveText SIS; LiveText SIS; LiveText LiveText LiveText SIS LiveText
Certification Recommendation	Initial	Praxis II/GACE II scores (including subscores)	SIS and test score database
	Advanced (Reading and Ed Leadership)	Praxis II/GACE II scores (including subscores)	SIS and test score database
Post-Program Completion*	Initial	Follow-up surveys Focus groups	LiveText SCOPE minutes
	Advanced	Follow-up surveys Focus groups	LiveText SCOPE minutes

*We consider the follow-up on program completers to be assessment of our *programs*, rather than of our candidates; however, if the state succeeds in implementing a new assessment of first-year teachers (based on the Georgia Framework for Teaching) and the PSC and Georgia Department of Education can coordinate their efforts to provide teacher preparation institutions with data on program completers after they are teaching, we will be able to do some analysis at the candidate level.

The portfolio and performance assessments in the Practicum and Student Teaching are the most cumulative assessments for the initial certification programs and the rubrics that guide those assessments show most clearly the connections between our conceptual framework and the candidate assessment system. Formative Evaluations (observations) and the Summative Evaluation in the two final clinical experiences are based on the [Field Experience Standards of Performance for Initial Certification Candidates](#). All initial certification portfolios are assessed with the relevant program-specific assessment rubric, all of which include the set of [Common Transforming Practitioner Standards](#). Candidates in Practicum are expected to be at the Developing or Proficient level on the summative evaluation; in Student Teaching, they are expected to be Proficient. Likewise, candidates are expected to be rated at the Proficient level on all sections of their portfolio by the end of their programs. In the field experiences, remediation plans are implemented with students who do not perform satisfactorily before they are allowed to progress further in the program. Students who do not receive satisfactory ratings on any section of their portfolio are expected to revise as necessary prior to a final review. A process to determine interrater reliability is in place, A full-scale implementation of that process occurred in Spring, 07. If significant variations emerge, we work with assessors to achieve clearer consensus on the ratings. In all cases, candidate performance is rated by multiple assessors.

This evolving candidate assessment process is only a part of the overall Tift College of Education assessment system, which includes assessments of programs and curriculum, faculty, resources, partnerships, and all unit operations, but it is at the heart of Mercer's continuing pursuit of its goal of preparing professional educators who will transform the lives of their students. (See [Assessments and Data Sources for Monitoring Unit Operations](#).)

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Glossary

Advanced Preparation. According to NCATE, advanced preparation refers to programs at the postbaccalaureate levels for (1) the continuing education of teachers who have previously completed initial preparation or (2) the preparation of other professional school personnel.

All Students. According to NCATE, all students include students in grades P-12 with differences based on ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, gender, exceptionalities, language, religion, sexual orientation, and geographical area.

Candidates. According to NCATE, candidates are individuals admitted to, or enrolled in, programs for the initial or advanced preparation of teachers, teachers continuing their professional development, or other professional school personnel. Candidates are distinguished from “students” in P–12 schools.

Collaboration. In the context of “The Transforming Practitioner,” collaboration refers to positive interaction with both the internal and external community. Collaboration is evidenced through engagement with fellow candidates, students, faculty, school-based educators, parents, and the community.

Dispositions. According to NCATE, dispositions are the values, commitments, and professional ethics that influence behaviors toward students, families, colleagues, and communities and affect student learning, motivation, and development as well as the educator’s own professional growth. Dispositions are guided by beliefs and attitudes related to values such as caring, fairness, honesty, responsibility, and social justice. For example, they might include a belief that all students can learn, a vision of high and challenging standards, or a commitment to a safe and supportive learning environment.

Diversity. According to NCATE, diversity refers to differences among groups of people and individuals based on ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, gender, exceptionalities, language, religion, sexual orientation, and geographical area.

Engagement. In the context of “The Transforming Practitioner,” engagement refers to active involvement that promotes in learners the processes of critical thinking, problem solving, inquisitiveness, development of character, and ownership of learning.

Initial Teacher Preparation. According to NCATE, initial teacher preparation refers to programs at baccalaureate or postbaccalaureate levels that prepare candidates for the first license to teach.

Practicing. In the context of “The Transforming Practitioner,” practicing refers to planning, teaching, and assessing in manners that ensure successful learning experiences for all students.

Reflecting. In the context of “The Transforming Practitioner,” reflecting refers to deep and meaningful thinking that causes teachers and educational leaders to enhance their levels of understanding and to make substantive as well as subtle changes in their practice.

Rubrics. According to NCATE, rubrics are written and shared criteria for judging performance that indicate the qualities by which levels of performance can be differentiated, and that anchor judgments about the degree of success on a candidate assessment.

The Transformational Leader. Consistent with Mercer University’s Conceptual Framework of “The Transforming Practitioner,” “The Transformational Leader” is an educational leader who contributes to the transformation in his/her faculty and students and thus is successful in bringing about enduring changes in a school’s disposition and character.

The Transforming Practitioner. “The Transforming Practitioner,” a living link in the educational process, is an educator who in changing internally through understanding, practicing, and reflecting such that, individually and collaboratively, he or she implements for all learners appropriate and significant life-changing experiences that effectively provide for the needs of the individual, actively engage students in the learning process, and promote life-long learning.

Understanding. In the context of “The Transforming Practitioner,” understanding refers to the possession of deep knowledge of the foundations of education, content, pedagogy, and characteristics of learners, as well as openness to expanding such knowledge through continual learning and professional development. Understanding serves as a basis for becoming a Transforming Practitioner and provides the impetus for planning for and engaging students in transformational learning experiences.