



## The SNU Educator Preparation Program Conceptual Framework

### Overview

In 2014-15, with the development of the new Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) Standards, Southern Nazarene University's Educator Preparation Program began the process of re-defining, articulating and re-designing its Conceptual Framework based on the InTASC (Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium) Standards, the new CAEP Standards, the Oklahoma General Competencies for Teacher Licensure and Certification, and the *SNU 14 Characteristics of Effective Teaching*. This reflective process involved a collaborative,

systematic and thoughtful planning and discussion process that involved the SNU School of Education Faculty, the Educator Preparation Council (governance committee), the Educator Preparation P-12 Advisory Committee, and various other stakeholders, community members and campus representatives. National, state and institutional standards were discussed and reviewed, soliciting input from the P-12 community (current educators and administrators) regarding what knowledge, skills and dispositions embedded in these standards were critical for future effective educators. General discussions and meetings of these groups led to a formal proposal, with the finalized structure approved by the Educator Preparation Council and presented to the administration of Southern Nazarene University in Fall 2015. This visual representation of the SNU Educator Preparation Program is designed to assist educator candidates to understand and articulate personal application of their preparation process, while also remaining representative of the complexity of national and state standards, and of the overall educator preparation process, all with the goal of developing effective educators that will impact P-12 student learning in their individual classrooms.

The Southern Nazarene University Educator Preparation Program Conceptual Framework is illustrated as a vintage “schoolhouse,” visually representing the heritage of the SNU School of Education in their history of continuously preparing quality, effectively equipped, and professional educators. Surrounding the Conceptual Framework is the visual of an “ivy ring,” representing the history of Southern Nazarene University itself and referencing and reflecting the school seal of the institution. The “schoolhouse” building visual further represents each educator candidate and what elements go into “constructing and building” an individual that will ultimately become an effective educator that positively impacts P-12 student learning. Flanking the entire conceptual framework is the focus diversity and on technology. Every aspect of the Educator Preparation Program, including coursework, field/clinical experiences and theoretical/practical applications, contains significant diversity and technology components that interact and impact the development of the effective educator. By equipping the educator candidate with an ongoing awareness of diversity issues and the knowledge of effective technology assisted instruction, candidates are prepared to utilize these aspects in preparing for quality, effective, optimum and impactful P-12 student learning experiences.

The four steps on the bottom of the conceptual framework represent the foundational nature of the institution. Each step represents a cornerstone to the educator candidate while at the same time integrating certain commonalities that permeate the entire process. Pictured on top of the foundational steps are the “pillars” that represent each of the 10 InTASC Standards. Each pillar represents a specific standard and is critical to the development of the effective P-12 educator.

However, it should be understood that all components overlap and integrate with one another. Capping the InTASC (pillars) Standards is the SNU Educator Preparation Program motto, *Committed to the belief that ALL students can learn.* At the apex of the SNU Educator Preparation Conceptual Framework is the ultimate goal for the program; that every Educator Preparation Program Completer (graduate) will emerge as a well-rounded, effective and professional educator with the ability to positively impact P-12 student learning.

## **The Conceptual Framework Foundational Steps**

**I.** The mission of **Southern Nazarene University** is *“To make Christlike disciples through higher education in Christ-Centered Community.”* This process begins even before an educator candidate’s first semester; every freshman and transfer student must attend New Student Institute (NSI) one week before classes officially start. Incorporated into NSI are seminars on campus life, study skills, career goals and a service project. As an educator candidate continues their experiences at Southern Nazarene University, they will grow in the university mission through various chapel services, individual and small group Bible studies, prayer groups, and through continued participation and ministry in various missions and service organizations. It is within this context that Southern Nazarene University endeavors to live up to its motto: *Character | Culture | Christ.* Educator candidates in the Educator Preparation Program at Southern Nazarene University develop characteristics of effective, professional educators through experiencing this campus culture and applying it to current society and culture, all within the context of growing in Christlikeness and extending grace to P-12 student learners/caregivers and those within the candidate’s professional learning communities and relationships.

**II.** The **General Education Step** provides the broad academic foundation for each educator candidate. Three overall goals guide the general education component of SNU. The first involves social/effective goals. “Students are challenged to develop a thirst for knowledge resulting in a self-sustained, lifelong commitment to the adventure of learning and a love for truth that includes open-mindedness, objectivity, courage, and persistence.” The second involves cognitive/professional goals. “Students are expected to acquire a reasonable understanding of the literary, philosophical, aesthetic, scientific and religious aspects of culture that structure thoughtful inquiry into the human condition.” Finally, the third goal involves spiritual/personal goals. “Students are helped to understand that the living out of this commitment requires adherence to high moral standards held with integrity, yet without being dogmatic or coercive. Students are challenged not only to become

equipped for leadership in the Church and society, but also to commit to serving others through the Church.” The General Education step communicates the emphasis on equipping educator candidates with the general *Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions* to positively impact P-12 student learning by providing them a well-rounded, global, and liberal arts approach to study, professional preparation and academic life.

**III. The Specialization Step** provides students with the specific content knowledge necessary to be effective educators in their chosen field of study. Every individual educator preparation program leading to certification offered by SNU meets the standards of their learned society, InTASC standards, and/or the professional standards articulated by the Oklahoma State Department of Education. Educator candidates are assigned a university advisor from the educator preparation who will monitor and guide them through their individual certification program in educator preparation. The Specialization step also includes the emphasis on equipping educator candidates with specific *Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions* in individual content areas. By focusing on specific content/subject areas, educator candidates are prepared to positively impact P-12 student learning in their individual specialty area.

**IV. The Professional Education Step** provides educator candidates with the pedagogy that will enable them to combine content with the *Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions* to impact P-12 student learning by creating positive learning environments. The components that guide and direct the professional education “step” toward the goal of preparing effective educators to positively impact P-12 student learning are found in the following goals for each educator candidate:

- To promote positive interpersonal relationships that builds the teaching/learning process.
- To promote understanding of basic social, legal and economic foundations of education.
- To become acquainted with mental, emotional, physical and psychological issues and aspects that affect learning.
- To assist in forming a base for understanding the nature of equal educational opportunity.
- To promote awareness and understanding of the diverse nature of learners including how multi-cultural and inclusion dimensions of education impact the demands for teachers and the implications for society.
- To assist in the development of a positive self-concepts among learners.
- To promote mastery of learning processes.

- To understand differences in learning styles and utilize instructional approaches to accommodate individual learner differences.
- To develop basic skills in diagnosing learners' (including learners with exceptionalities) needs and making decisions relative to meeting these needs with appropriate information, methods, and instructional technology.
- To develop knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of diversity within the cultural, social, and scientific achievement of individuals in the global environment.
- To promote an understanding of the function and application of technology for the classroom.
- To develop a positive disposition of life and of education within a framework of Christian principles.
- To encourage development of an attitude toward ongoing learning that will lead to continued professional growth.

### **The Conceptual Framework Pillars (*InTASC Standards*)**

Following the Steps of the SNU Conceptual Framework are the 10 pillars, based on the InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards. Each individual pillar represents one of the 10 InTASC Standards. It is the goal of the SNU Educator Preparation program that each educator candidate will develop as effective P-12 educators in each of the four theme areas of the InTASC Standards; *The Learner and Learning*, *Content Knowledge*, *Instructional Practice*, and *Professional Responsibility*.

#### **InTASC Theme I: *The Learner and Learning***

##### **Pillar #1: *Learner Development* (InTASC Standard #1)**

The teacher understands how learners grow and develop, recognizing that patterns of learning and development vary individually within and across the cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and physical areas, and designs and implements developmentally appropriate and challenging learning experiences.

##### **Pillar #2: *Learning Differences* (InTASC Standard #2)**

The teacher uses understanding of individual differences and diverse cultures and communities to ensure inclusive learning environments that enable each learner to meet high standards.

##### **Pillar #3: *Learning Environments* (InTASC Standard #3)**

The teacher works with others to create environments that support individual and collaborative learning, and that encourage positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.

## **InTASC Theme II: *Content Knowledge* Theme:**

### **Pillar #4: *Content Knowledge*** (InTASC Standard #4)

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 the discipline accessible and meaningful for learners to assure mastery of the content.

### **Pillar #5: *Application of Content*** (InTASC Standard #5)

The teacher understands how to connect concepts and use differing perspectives to engage learners in critical thinking, creativity, and collaborative problem solving related to authentic local and global issues.

## **InTASC Theme III: *Instructional Practice***

### **Pillar #6: *Assessment*** (InTASC Standard #6)

The teacher understands and uses multiple methods of assessment to engage learners in their own growth, to monitor learner progress, and to guide the teacher's and learner's decision-making.

### **Pillar #7: *Planning for Instruction*** (InTASC Standard #7)

The teacher plans instruction that supports every student in meeting rigorous learning goals by drawing upon knowledge of content areas, curriculum, cross-disciplinary skills, and pedagogy, as well as knowledge of learners and the community context.

### **Pillar #8: *Instructional Strategies*** (InTASC Standard #8)

The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage learners to develop deep understanding of content areas and their connections, and to build skills to apply knowledge in meaningful ways.

## **InTASC Theme IV: *Professional Responsibility***

### **Pillar #9: *Professional Learning and Ethical Practice*** (InTASC Standard #9)

The teacher engages in ongoing professional learning and uses evidence to continually evaluate his/her practice, particularly the effects of his/her choices and actions on others (learners, families, other professionals, and the community), and adapts practice to meet the needs of each learner.

### **Pillar #10: *Leadership and Collaboration*** (InTASC Standard #10)

The teacher seeks appropriate leadership roles and opportunities to take responsibility for student learning, to collaborate with learners, families, colleagues, other school professionals, and community members to ensure learner growth, and to advance the profession.

## **Southern Nazarene University Educator Preparation Program Motto**

Capping the 10 Pillars (InTASC Standards) of the SNU Educator Preparation Program Conceptual Framework is the SNU Educator Preparation Program Motto: *Commitment to the belief that ALL students can learn.* The SNU Educator Preparation Program is determined and dedicated to preparing educators in P-12 settings that can impact quality and effective P-12 student learning through this commitment. By following the 10 InTASC Standards, and assuring that this commitment is instilled and maintained in each of the standards by each educator candidate, the SNU Educator Preparation Program continues to promote the concept that quality and effective student learning occurs with ALL P-12 learners in the classroom.

### **Diversity and Technology**

Encompassing the entire SNU Educator Preparation Conceptual Framework are the critical themes of Diversity and Technology. SNU Educator Preparation Program Candidates understand that these two important overarching themes are interwoven and essential within each component of the Conceptual Framework and at each level of the SNU Educator Preparation Program.

Southern Nazarene University's School of Education is committed to preparing effective educators to meet learners' educational needs in all areas of diversity. Throughout coursework, field experiences and clinical practice in the SNU Educator Preparation Program, educator candidates are exposed to different ethnicities, cultures, socio-economic classes, religious and social preferences, language differences and urban/suburban/rural school settings. Embedded throughout the program, educator candidates are familiarized with issues regarding fairness in educational settings by meeting the needs of ALL students in a caring, non-discriminatory, and equitable manner. Through these experiences, educator candidates learn effective practices as they reflect and adjust teaching strategies for diverse learners. As society becomes more diverse, educator candidates in the SNU Educator Preparation Program are equipped to meet the educational challenges and needs in facilitating effective student learning in diverse educational settings and environments. Educator candidates are prepared throughout the program to be effective in planning for and adapting instruction to meet the needs of diverse learners in their classrooms, thereby positively impacting P-12 student learning for ALL learners in their classrooms and thus perpetuating the Educator Preparation Program motto; "*Commitment to the belief that ALL students can learn.*"

The emphasis on technology throughout the program reflects the commitment of the SNU Educator Preparation Program toward training educators to effectively utilize technology and technology-assisted instruction in their future classrooms. Effective technology-assisted instruction is not only addressed in a separate required course (Educational Technology) for every educator candidate, but is integrated throughout all professional and specialization courses. Educator candidates are trained to use a variety of software programs along with periphery hardware. Educator candidates also design their own personal web page and educational web page. All educator candidates are also expected to create instructional units that incorporate technology into the classroom curriculum. All faculty in the SNU School of Education Educator Preparation Program are expected to "model" effective uses of technology in their particular courses and as support for monitoring advisees. All coursework in the Educator Preparation Program contain an expectation for educator candidates to demonstrate technology knowledge and skills. Classroom presentations and supporting technology are embedded in each course throughout the program. Considerable resources and efforts have been utilized to provide up-to-date, state-of-the-art technology in all classrooms where educator candidates are prepared. Technology is also a critical

component of assuring that field and clinical experiences of educator candidates are monitored, evaluated and analyzed. At every foundational step, and in each of the InTASC Standards (the pillars), specific aspects are monitored to assure that all educator candidates are prepared to utilize technology to effectively and positively impact P-12 student learning.

### ***The Apex – “Impacting P-12 Student Learning”***

The ultimate goal (the Apex) for every educator candidate that completes the Educator Preparation Program at Southern Nazarene University is for individuals to emerge as quality, effective educators and to continue to pursue excellence and professionalism as they seek to positively and effectively impact P-12 student learning. All aspects and components of the Educator Preparation Program are designed so that a program completer will experience this ultimate goal as they enter into their future classrooms and interact with their future students.