

Lake Forest College Conceptual Framework
Theme: Supporting the Journey To Responsible Teaching

The mission of Lake Forest College's teacher education programs is to provide a developmental program of study that enables undergraduates to become effective teachers in today's highly demanding classrooms. Since the majority of our teacher education candidates are of traditional undergraduate age, we are committed to an appropriately-paced and structured sequence of courses and field experiences that provide multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate their instructional skills, intellectual strengths and personal commitments. Lake Forest College's teacher education programs thus provide opportunities for each teacher education candidate to grow into the role of teacher. Faculty and cooperating teachers provide on-going and personalized assessment, mentorship and advising. Our ultimate goal is to ensure that the young adults who come to us with a dream to teach become responsible professionals who are confident in their classrooms, deeply knowledgeable about subject matter, responsive to their students, and committed to their own growth as lifelong learners.

Introduction: Articulating the Shared Vision and Mission of Lake Forest College for Teacher Preparation

Lake Forest College has been preparing teachers for the public schools since its founding in 1857. The history and mission of the college support quality teacher preparation. As is the case in the small liberal arts college tradition (Daly, 1986), teacher preparation is valued intrinsically as teaching is the primary mission of faculty at this type of institution. And as Daley also points out, the small size of the faculty at liberal arts colleges allows for more interaction through faculty governance that involves the participation of education faculty and colleagues in other departments and divisions across campus. This leads to more collaboration and respect and understanding of various types of scholarship, including the scholarship of teacher education.

Collaboration and close contact among members of the faculty across departments and divisions at Lake Forest College has provided a fully integrated program of study for our teacher candidates. One program feature is that all of our program development, policy initiatives, and final candidate approval and assessment occur through a committee with representation from departments across campus (Education Advisory Council). Faculty throughout the college are intimately involved in the development of our teacher candidates through this committee. Second, we have a double major program, meaning that all teacher candidates in our elementary and secondary programs complete a major in a department outside of education in addition to their education major. Each candidate is assigned an academic advisor and mentor in addition to his/her advisor in education. This structure leads to a sharing of responsibility for the mentorship and assessment of each candidate from first semester freshman year to graduation and recommendation for certification. Third, we have developed a number of courses that are either co-taught or cross-listed in the Education Department and other departments on campus so that even our faculty structure and course structure are interwoven with other departments on campus. In this manner, our students experience a program of study with shared values

and commitments by the entire campus community. As we say in our Lake Forest College mission statement, “We know our students by name,” meaning we mentor individual potential. This same value statement can be extended to include our vision for teacher preparation. It takes the commitment of an entire campus to teach teachers—one individual at a time.

Developing and articulating our vision of a Lake Forest College educated teacher has been a long, communal, and rewarding process that has deepened and clarified our understanding of what we do well as we prepare teachers and has drawn us—the faculty throughout Lake Forest College and our alumni base—closer together. This process continues and defines our vision of how we develop our programs of study in the future. Our conceptual framework developed in three key stages. First, in 1998, we started a series of meetings with Lake Forest College faculty, alumni, current students, and representatives from local schools during which we carefully considered how the College’s mission statement (developed in 1992) could guide us in developing a disposition statement and an assessment system that reflected our particular institutional values. In our 1999 state review, we articulated a tripartite statement of commitments shared by the faculty at Lake Forest College and shared by our school partners. These three commitments are: *a commitment to personal growth, commitment to analytic reflection, and a commitment to a vision of responsible and ethical professionalism.* Second, we have continued to meet with faculty, alumni, and students to develop these statements of commitment into a list of Identifying Characteristics of a Lake Forest College teacher that have formed the basis of our new assessment system. These identifying characteristics are what our alumni pointed to as what made them unique among their colleagues, the ways in which they believed they were prepared well by Lake Forest College to meet the challenges of teaching. These characteristics include resourcefulness, responsiveness, a strong sense of teacher efficacy, and a belief in the value of careful, analytic self-assessment. Third, we redesigned our policies and procedures for program entrance, student teaching application, and program exit (recommendation for certification), as well as our fieldwork and coursework assessments to reflect the Identifying Characteristics. Students are now made aware of these expectations for performance from the initial course in Education and are held accountable to developing them throughout their coursework, both within the Education Department and throughout the College. Most recently, in response to the ISBE review team's comments that we needed a clear mission and vision for the Department, not just for the College as a whole, we met with our advisory committee, the Education Advisory Council, and with local teaching alumni to shape a mission statement and a theme that communicates our values and goals as a teacher education community while building upon the mission of the College, our conceptual framework of key commitments (of our faculty and school partners) and identifying characteristics (of our students and teaching alumni).

In the document that follows, the connection and interrelationships among the College’s mission statement, the key commitments developed in 1998, and the list of Identifying Characteristics developed in 2000, and the mission statement developed in this last year will be articulated. To do this, first of all, we illustrate the connection between the

particular commitments of our faculty and the development of the identifying characteristics our alumni found to be important in their teaching lives. Secondly, we articulate the research base on teacher development and student learning and achievement that guides our program development and undergirds our conceptual framework. This research base is well-established reaching back to the early 1980s when fundamental research on teacher development in relation to self-development, teacher identities, and personal practical knowledge was taking place (see Elbaz, 1981; Polkinghorne, 1988) and into the 1990s with research on teacher autobiography and narrative thinking (Elbaz, 1990; McEwan & Egan, 1995) and into the present with research on preservice teachers' moral and sociocultural perspectives and reflective practice (Sanders and Carignan, 2003; Hoffman-Kipp, 2003; Kincheloe, 2004). The body of work on preservice teacher development points to the clear connection between teacher beliefs and life experiences and types of teaching styles and practices they adopt. Unlike earlier work in teacher education that relied on analysis and "correction" of teacher behaviors as the role of the teacher educator, this work suggests that the teacher educator's roles as mentor and guide to "living the values" of a fulfilled and effective teacher professional were perhaps as important if not more so than documenting teacher behaviors and suggesting alternative practices, the more traditional role of teacher educators and supervisors. This research calls on teacher educators to know and understand the values, dispositions, goals, and perspectives of teacher candidates in order to have meaningful and long-lasting influence on their practices. This work also suggests that teacher educators need to be cognizant of what they model as values and practices in terms of influencing preservice teachers' work with their students. Third, and finally, we describe the design of our program of study and assessment system in relation to the mission, commitments, and identifying characteristics of the teachers we teach.

We now have a systematic way of analyzing and making decisions about program design for the future guided by a clear vision of our values as the foundation of our purposes and goals. All of this gives us a sense of conviction in making important decisions and offers our students a sense of direction and meaning for their program of study.

Stage One: Development of the Unit's Philosophy, Purposes, and Goals: A Tripartite Commitment

Lake Forest College's teacher education program design is based on the principles and structure of the liberal arts college tradition and the specific commitments of Lake Forest College. These values and commitments are best summarized in the Lake Forest College mission statement. In the section that follows, the connections and interrelationships of the College's mission and the commitments and values of its teacher education program are explored.

In 1992, Lake Forest College adopted the following mission statement:

Lake Forest College affirms that education ennobles the individual. Our curriculum engages students in the breadth of the liberal arts and the depth of traditional disciplines. We encourage students to read critically, reason analytically,

communicate persuasively, and, above all, to think for themselves. We foster creative talent and independent research. We embrace cultural diversity. We honor achievement. Our faculty of distinguished scholars takes pride in its commitment to teaching. We know our students by name and prepare them to become responsible citizens of the global community. We enable students, faculty, trustees, and administrators to solve problems in a civil manner, collectively. We maintain a secure residential campus of great beauty. We enrich our curriculum with the vibrant resources of Chicago. Lake Forest College celebrates the personal growth that accompanies the quest for excellence.

In developing our conceptual framework, students, faculty and alumni of teacher education programs at Lake Forest College met in multiple meetings in 1998-99 to determine the ways in which the education programs were fulfilling the mission of the college. The results of those meetings revealed *three key commitments* of Lake Forest College that provide the foundation for teacher preparation to be successful. Since our last review in 1999, we have been building on these three principles and articulating them into program and candidate assessments.

Commitment to Personal Growth: Mentoring Individual Potential

As stated in the mission statement of the College, "education ennobles the individual...we know our students by name." Just as a good teacher knows and responds to the whole child, caring for his/her intellectual, emotional and social well-being, we believe a good teacher educator cares for the whole teacher candidate. We view our work with teacher candidates through a developmentalist lens, asserting the healthy personal development of the teacher as the essential groundwork for the development of professional commitments and skills of teaching.

The commitment to personal growth and mentorship by our institution is evident in our approach to supervision, the reflective self-assessment designed in our coursework and our focus on autobiographical experiences. In his discussion about developing a "critical complex epistemology" in teacher education, Kinchloe (2004) describes critical complex teaching as teaching that "involves teachers as knowledge producers, knowledge workers who pursue their own intellectual development." An epistemology of teaching includes, according to Kinchloe, multiple forms of pedagogical knowledge: empirical, normative, critical, ontological, experiential, and reflective-synthetic. He suggests that teachers are not encouraged enough to "confront why they think as they do about themselves as teachers—especially in relationship to the social, cultural, political, economic, and historical world around them" (p. 58) The notion that teacher education must provide opportunities and structure for teacher candidates to shape their personal identities as teachers within a variety of contexts is embedded in our program. It is closely associated with what Kinchloe proposes should be part of teacher preparation:

There is nothing new in asserting that the ways one teaches, the pedagogical purposes one pursues is directly connected to the way teachers see themselves. At the same time, the ways teachers come to see themselves as learners, in particular the ways they conceptualize what they need to learn, where they need to learn it,

and how the process should take place shape their teacher persona [CPRE,1995]. Such a persona cannot be separated from the various forms of knowledge delineated here and the larger notion of 'professional awareness.' ...Becoming educated, becoming a critical complex practitioner necessitates personal transformation. (p. 58)

Our students are asked in their introductory courses to identify how *who they are* influences *how and what they will teach*. Specifically, students are asked to write autobiographical reflections (Knowles, 1992; Connelley and Clandinin, 1988), dialogic reflection journals (Sherman, 2001) and narrative cases of their practices/observations with collaborative critique (Ritchie and Wilson, 2000; White, 1991; Gomez and Abt-Perkins, 1995; Gomez and Tabachnick, 1992) beginning in their introductory courses and progressing throughout their coursework. The value of autobiography in teacher education to provide opportunity for expression of personal voice as well as to enable candidates from diverse backgrounds to become more committed to the study of teacher education is suggested by Fendler (2003):

In an autobiography, the teacher writes as the expert on the topic of 'self,' practice that recalls Cartesian reflectivity. This device was presumably instituted as a way to situate knowledge and to dispel the elitist notion that scholarly writing must come from an objective or generic 'god's eye' point of view. In the case of authors from underrepresented demographic groups, autobiography can provide visibility and recognition for people who might otherwise be overlooked. (p.22)

These writings and dialogues form the basis of goal-setting in fieldwork experiences. Our small seminars support intensive, meaningful dialogue with teacher candidates regarding their personal and professional development. Not only do we know our students by name, but they also know each other by name, meaning our small seminars support exploration of autobiographical connections to practice. Our use of on-line discourse groups gives candidates freedom to share and reflect in a different context that some find more comfortable when dealing with personal orientations toward practice. Our fieldwork supervisors are also students' methods instructors and academic advisors. Supervisors have relationships with teacher candidates that extend beyond the moments of observation in the classroom. This relationship creates the basis for more collaborative and dialogic (See Abt-Perkins, Dale, and Hauschildt, 2000; Waite, 1995; Nolan and Francis, 1992) supervisory practices. In other words, the supervisor is mindful of the dilemmas, experiences and personal struggles of each individual teacher as he/she addresses particular issues within the lesson itself. In this way, established Illinois Content Area Standards are being met while the individual goals, desires, and purposes for teaching of our candidates, those reasons that bring passion to the teaching and learning process, are being carefully nurtured as well. Responsibility for supervision is also shared with faculty across campus. In the secondary programs, the student's advisor from his/her content area major visits and assesses the candidate's work in the classroom. These advisors are also responsible for presenting teacher candidates for assessment prior to student teaching. This is yet another way that faculty across campus share responsibility for mentoring and assessing our students on an individual basis.

The importance of self-development in teacher development has been explored extensively in recent research (cf. Bullough and Gitlin, 1995; Danielewicz, 2001;

Featherstone, Munby and Russell, 1997; Lipka and Brinthaupt, 1999). Munby and Russell, leading researchers in teacher development, state that this connection is central:

As people learning to teach gain experience, they also gain confidence, yet this confidence at the practical level does not always translate directly into what might be called professional confidence. We have developed a view that giving authority to one's personal experience while learning to teach is central to understanding how and what one is learning from experience. (pp. 2-3)

The role of self and teacher identity also has been connected to teacher effectiveness (Borich, 1999; See Hamachek, 1999, for a summary of research linking teaching excellence, student achievement, and teacher self-understanding). This work points to the importance of developing a "teacher self" that is in healthy symbiosis with one's personal history, moral commitments, and goals for living. In other words, perhaps unlike other professions, teaching requires a commitment that melds the personal aspects of one's life with the professional aspects and highlights self-understanding as a key component in professional growth and effectiveness.

Research on self-development working from the social interactionist and social psychological theory advanced by G.H. Mead (1934) shows how important the role of the mentor or "significant other," to use Mead's term, is to the integration of experience with a developing sense of self. The beginning teacher can be viewed as a "developing self," gradually forming a concept of his/her professional self through interaction with meaningful others, mentors. In other words, as teacher candidate and teacher educator interact, there is a psychological event that occurs that shapes not only the candidate's cognitive understanding but his/her self-concept as well, which has an impact on the quality of teacher he/she becomes.

Our faculty are valued by our teacher candidates not only for their expertise on curriculum and instructional design, but for their roles as mentors and models of how to lead fulfilling and productive teaching lives. The close communication structure, mentorship relationships, and long-term relationships we build with our teacher candidates and alumni form the structural basis for the theoretical understanding we have of teacher identity development. Our students want to become teachers, in large part, because we are the kind of teachers we are. We, at Lake Forest College, are always mindful of the role we are playing as models of the teaching life. Again, using Mead's theories, we realize that our students are developing an image of themselves as teachers and that image is, in large part, influenced by us if we are considered "significant others" by our students. Put another way, we take seriously the notion that mentorship and modeling work hand-in-hand to form our influence as teacher educators on the values and practices of our teacher candidates. The extent to which teachers form positive, healthy images of their roles as teachers determines the extent to which they can function positively in their relationships with their students. Moreover, the character of these relationships will affect the teacher candidate's ability to promote their future students' learning. Through self-awareness, recognizing their own biases and values, they can work to overcome disconscious racism prevalent in teacher candidates (Abt-Perkins, Hauschildt and Dale, 2000; Abt-Perkins and Gomez, 1993; Cochran-Smith, 2000), be

more open and accepting to individual differences in their students, and have a more powerful impact on the behaviors and values of their students toward the schooling process and learning in general. They become "significant others" to their students. Because we value our teacher candidates for their values, personal commitments, and characteristics, our teacher candidates are able to accept and value others.

Commitment to Practical Reflection: Analytic Inquiry of Performance

As articulated in our College mission statement, we are committed to the outcome of our students' ability to "read critically, reason analytically, communicate persuasively, and above all, to think for themselves" in order to "solve problems." This analytic ability to solve problems is at the heart of what we believe is necessary to learn and grow as a teacher. The literature base about reflective practice is broad and deep; it is grounded in the seminal work of Dewey (1933) and, more recently, in Schon's (1983) work on professional knowledge; it has enjoyed a prominent place in the literature base during the past three decades (e.g., Fendler, 2003; Hoffman-Kipp, 2003; Kaminski, 2003; Risko, Vukelich & Roskos, 2002; Rodgers, 2002; Sanders & Carignan, 2003; VanManen, 1977; Zeichner, 1996; Zeichner & Liston, 1987). Dewey (1933) provides us with insight regarding the qualities of reflective thinking: open-mindedness, whole-heartedness, and responsibility. These three qualities are reflected in the dispositions that our program values and nurtures in teacher candidates (See Lake Forest College Identifying Characteristics). The context for reflection is important to us, too. Risko, Vukelich, and Roskos (2002) express our commitment to reflection and the manner in which we foster it in our program:

Then we must step back and analyze carefully the social contexts in which reflection is taking place—the settings in our college classes or in the schools, who is participating in the discussions and what are they saying, and how frequently these opportunities occur across the program and each course...Engaging future teachers in multiple opportunities to critique their own reasoning makes explicit to them the power of their own thinking and its value for directing their instructional decisions and problem solving. (p.142)

Our candidates view teaching problems as resolvable through analytic reflection on their practices and careful observation and assessment of their students' responses to their instruction. Inquiry is central to all aspects of our program. Throughout their course of study within the Education Department and through their other major programs of study at the college, students are taught to frame problems and to use various tools of analysis. Analytic thinking and reflective inquiry is emphasized in field experiences and internships, as is suggested by Cochran-Smith, who says that the "knowledge teachers need is generated locally when teachers regard their schools and classrooms as sites for systematic inquiry" (Cochran-Smith, 2004 quoted in Perry & Power, p. 126). In addition to multiple research project assignments throughout their courses of study, in each of the content-area majors at the College, students are required to take at least one course that focuses on research design and implementation in that discipline. In the education major, students conduct research projects within each course. Case studies, simulations, and

problem-solving activities are all staples of the instructional approach of faculty across campus.

This commitment is also evident in the design of our fieldwork experiences within the education major. In each course within the education major, there is a fieldwork or field study component. We believe that the journey from novice to competent teacher can only occur through the constant review of theory in terms of practice. Beginning with our introductory course and throughout our courses, students observe and interact with teachers, children, and public school communities. Certain forms of knowledge necessary for productive inquiry into classrooms and teaching—the ability to interpret complex environments such as classrooms, the ability to formulate and apply theoretical frameworks for understanding pedagogical events, and the ability to reflect meaningfully on the consequences of certain practices—can only be learned through the careful construction and integration of field experiences with theoretical and methodological study in coursework (Berliner, 1988). In our junior and senior level courses, we are committed to long-term internships and student teaching placements. We believe these long-term experiences are necessary for our students to be able to study their practices over time. To do careful study of how one's practices are affecting children's learning, teacher candidates need to have ample opportunity to observe, interact with, and study the responses of particular students. They also need time in the same classroom with the same children to analyze the effects of how they revise their approaches, modify their practices, and conduct and consult teacher research. Donald Schon's work (1991) revealed the connection between higher order reflective processes and meaningful learning from practical experience in the professions. Zeichner and Liston (1987) suggest a specific type of teacher reflection they call "developmentalist" which focuses on the child's needs, interests, and abilities. They suggest placing teacher candidates in environments where they can observe students over time, pose questions about the effects of their practices, and investigate those questions. Throughout this process, teacher candidates are asked to reflect on the changes that are occurring in their own knowledge base. Electronic developmentalist portfolio presentations give students an opportunity to share with each other and the broader educational community how their practices emerge from their personal understandings, experiences, and commitments.

Another way that this commitment to analysis is evident is in our supervision practices. We are committed to providing teacher candidates with fieldwork supervisors who are also responsible for their preparation in methods of instruction. Supervisors who are also methods course instructors bring much needed coherence to how theories and approaches to instruction can be effectively practiced. We also practice frequent supervision, visiting our candidates on a bi-weekly basis in internships and student teaching. This frequency of contact allows for both the candidate and the supervisor to assess progress on implementation and do more thorough analysis of the results of candidates' modifications and progress. Candidates and supervisors work together to analyze performance. All of our fieldwork supervisors are long-term faculty of the College; faculty from other departments participate in supervision of secondary candidates according to field of study. In this way, the entire College takes responsibility for mentoring and assessing candidates' work in the classroom. Progress of teacher candidates is assessed both

formally and informally. Formally, supervisors complete summative written assessments and statements of progress on meeting standards. Informally, supervisors consult with one another as they “pass on” a teacher candidate from one phase of the program to another. These consultations include how to best support a particular teacher candidate, necessary challenges the candidate and supervisor will need to meet at each phase, and other personal dimensions of building an effective working relationship with each candidate. At weekly department meetings, the first item on the agenda is always concerns about current students who are in the field. Department faculty members collaboratively address issues.

At Lake Forest College, we are following developmentalist principles and capitalizing on the powerful connection between personal and professional growth. Day (1993) believes that teachers constantly switch between public (theories espoused in education courses) and personal theories (based on their own values and histories as students) as they analyze their practices. Day suggests that teacher education experiences should help teacher candidates express this link and find ways to capitalize on this reflective process. Some theorists suggests that preservice teachers should be thinking carefully about how their own personal histories color their understanding of their teaching contexts, calling this relationship "personal practical knowledge" (Connelly and Clandinin, 1988; Elbaz, 1991). At Lake Forest College, we take seriously the personal connection and interpretations our students make to theories of learning and instructional design. We consider the ways in which they teach to be their personal expression of theory and hold them to high expectations in terms of their reflections about their practice.

Commitment to Professionalism: Melding Competencies with Responsibility

In keeping with the mission of Lake Forest College, we believe that good teachers are also “responsible citizens.” Our candidates understand that there are moral consequences to pedagogical decisions. The choices they make about what to teach and how to teach are value-laden and have important consequences. As our candidates teach, they are aware that they are communicating a perspective on the world that has consequences for how their students’ values, perspectives, and, eventually, their activities as citizens. They understand that they are teaching more than subject matter; indeed, they are responsible for the developing ethical and social consciousness of their students.

Oser, Dick, and Patry (quoted in Sherman, 2004) underscore the notion that responsibility and effectiveness are interdependent:

We can say that a method is both effective and responsible if the criteria of performance are combined with the criteria of morality and commitment: reinforcement of good student behavior is effective and responsible if the reinforcement technique is combined with truthfulness; an individual learning sequence can be considered effective and responsible if the strategy used is appropriate (or fair) with respect to the learning capacity of the child. (p.122)

Fundamentally, we believe that teacher candidates need to keep the larger aims of developing their students’ democratic capacities and a sense of citizenship in a good society as they make decisions about what and how to teach in order to live fulfilled lives

as teachers and for their students to be inspired to learn. Gutmann (1999) argued that a basic professional responsibility of teachers is to “cultivate the capacity for deliberative democracy” (quoted in Wood, 2001, p. 76). Good teaching practices for us then are more than what is typically referred to in more technical models of effective teaching; rather, following the ethical model established by Dewey (1954), we understand that technical expertise is meaningless and eventually ineffectual without a sensibility and commitment to larger social aims of teaching and learning. Hansen (2001) captures this eloquently: “Moral knowledge in teaching becomes ineffectual without technical skill. But technical skill and expertise may be damaging or even dangerous without a moral vision informing their use” (p. 849).

The moral implications of educational practices and structures and the ability of our teacher candidates to address inequities in the school process are taught, talked about, and supported by us as faculty and are evident in three specific features of our program. First, our students in their coursework throughout the College have established a sense of social consciousness. Our students experience the melding of factual or declarative knowledge about their subjects with social, political, and ethical frameworks of knowledge and inquiry in all of their classes at Lake Forest College. The focus on the “breadth and depth of traditional disciplines” through a full major of study in an academic field encourages a view of knowledge that is not simply factual, fragmented, or merely instrumental. Second, our focus on self-development and self-understanding gives teacher candidates the ethical fortitude necessary to teach in ways that result in positive, productive changes in students’ lives in schools. Third, our intensive, long-term field experiences give teacher candidates an opportunity to articulate and act upon their moral commitments through their pedagogical choices. In this way, they engage in the highest order of teacher reflection—critical reflection—by considering carefully and fully the consequences of their teaching acts over time (Beyer, 1991; Sherman, 2001; Van Manen, 1977).

In their fieldwork experiences, we emphasize two key principles that support the establishment of democratic classrooms and encourage dedication to responsible citizenship within the classroom—the role of the teacher as model/mentor/ student advocate and the role of communication and active learning processes. Early in their teacher education program of study, we ensure that each teacher candidate at Lake Forest College has a long-term field experience working with socioeconomically, racially, and ethnically diverse students. It is in these field experiences that we are able to address the moral and political aspects of schooling, teaching and learning. Our students gain resilience, resourcefulness, as well as culturally relevant teaching skills. In the process of working in challenging school environments, our students are called upon to deepen their commitments to teaching, articulate their teaching passions, and broaden their vision as to the roles and responsibilities of teachers (Sherman, 2001). Teaching children who are poor, who are new immigrants, who feel angry or disconnected from school requires clarity of mission and self-understanding (Brendtro, Broenleg, and Van Bockern, 1990; Gay, 2000; Haberman, 1995). In these challenging school environments, our teacher candidates are required to use technology to expand the learning resources of the students in their care. The use of technology in these environments becomes a form of social

action, a tangible way our students can improve the educational experience of their students.

Throughout this early and extensive field placement, the emphasis is on establishing a teacher identity that supports student dedication to learning and to schooling. Teacher candidates are consistently asked to assess the ways in which they are influencing the values and life goals of their students. They are not allowed to “blame students or families” for their students’ lack of progress; rather, they are encouraged to become even more resourceful and more creative to meet the needs of their most challenging students. In our evaluation framework and in our syllabi for this internship, there is a heavy emphasis on communication skills and the ability to plan for interactive learning. Our students, from this first internship forward, are taught to value their students’ voices, opinions, and perspectives through the types of methods, assessments, and curricula we encourage our students to use in their field experiences. In these ways—through careful assessment of their roles as mentors and their roles as facilitators of students’ voices—our students are asked to create classrooms that are democratic and that inspire their students to work toward the best possibilities for their lives. In later field experiences, our students have the opportunity to work in schools with an abundance of financial resources and where the student and family populations are more racially and ethnically homogeneous and socially privileged. We are fortunately situated in a community that allows for this diversity of experiences for our students. This juxtaposition of field experiences is done so that our students can engage in critique of a social, political, and economic system that supports such “savage inequalities” (Kozol, 1992) of educational opportunity. In this way, we promote a view of teaching as working toward a better democracy and the role of teachers as engaged citizens (See Wood, 2001, for an argument for this view of teaching as opposed to more technical views of teaching).

Stage Two: Alignment of Candidate Proficiencies with Professional, State and Institutional Standards: Establishing a Statement of Identifying Characteristics

In order to develop a set of performance assessments consistent with our values and commitments and the research on teacher development which guides us, we turned to our alumni for help in articulating operational definitions of our beliefs. In addition to articulating our key commitments as an institution and as a faculty to our teacher education candidates, we also developed a set of identifying characteristics of a Lake Forest College educated teacher working with alumni groups in the summer of 2000 and have continued to revise and review this statement in faculty and student groups. We thought it was important to understand what our teaching alumni saw as important in their preparation after they had been actively teaching. The statement of Identifying Characteristics of a Lake Forest College Educated Teacher is a summary of our meetings with them. These characteristics are: professional qualities or dispositions, resourcefulness, responsiveness, a belief in teacher efficacy, and a dedication to reflective self-assessment. These identifying characteristics show the ways in which the mission statement of the College and the key commitments of the faculty are sustained by our graduates in their teaching lives. The characteristics identified by our alumni as being important and as distinguishing them from other teachers have their roots in the three

teaching commitments described above. For example, the development of personal dispositions for teaching is reflected in our faculty's commitment to personal growth and mentorship of individual potential. The development of resourcefulness and reflective self-assessment—two of the Identifying Characteristics—can be traced to the faculty commitment to practical reflection or the focus on analytic inquiry into performance. And the Identifying Characteristics of responsiveness and teacher efficacy are tied to the faculty commitment to responsible and ethical frameworks for performance and knowledge construction. Not surprisingly, what our alumni articulated as “key characteristics” or “values” of a Lake Forest College educated teacher are directly attributable to how they were educated and the commitments of the Lake Forest College faculty to their development as teachers. Following our social interactionist theoretical view of learning to teach, candidate proficiencies expressed in the Identifying Characteristics statement are an outgrowth of the mission, philosophy, and teaching commitments of their mentors, our faculty, outlined above.

These Identifying Characteristics helped us to operationalize or “make visible” our mission, philosophy and commitments by creating a portrait of teaching practices that were more readily transferable into a system of performance assessments. These characteristics are articulated and reflected in our individual course and program assessment structure, fieldwork assessments used by supervisors and cooperating teachers, and in our policies and procedures handbook, illustrated particularly in our entrance and exit requirements. Policies are enacted that are consistent with the vision and the mission of the institution and the unit as these are reflected in the agreed upon values of our conceptual framework.

Stage Three: A Coherent System for Candidate Assessment

The aforementioned characteristics represent our desired outcomes for our teacher candidates. These characteristics represent the dispositions, the conduct (Hansen, 2001), and the attitudes the unit expects candidates to demonstrate. Illinois State Content Area Standards for Teachers are congruent with what our alumni, students, and faculty have identified as important characteristics of a Lake Forest College educated teacher. For example, resourcefulness—one of the identifying characteristics—can be viewed as a reflection of Illinois Professional Teaching Standards on Human Development, Diversity, Learning Environment, Content Knowledge and Planning. When our alumni spoke of responsiveness, the ability to design instruction at the “point of instructional need” (Sherman, 2004) of students, they were referring to the abilities to plan and deliver instruction as outlined by the Illinois Professional Teaching Standards. When our alumni referred to teacher efficacy, the ability of a teacher to be creative, diligent, and consistent over time in meeting the needs of students, they were reflecting the Illinois Professional Teaching Standards in Instructional Delivery, Communication, and Assessment. When our alumni spoke of using analytic self-assessment to address teaching problems, they were of the same mind as those who wrote the Illinois Professional Teaching Standard on Reflection and Professional Growth. (See attached graphic representation of how the Identifying Characteristics are aligned with State standards throughout the assessment

checkpoints in the Lake Forest College teacher education programs, titled Program Checkpoints).

Similar to our campus-wide commitments described above, in the past two years, a system has been developed to share the responsibility for teacher candidate assessment campus-wide. This has been a process that began with sharing the standards with department chairs and colleagues on the Education Advisory Council who represent the humanities, science, math, and social science divisions of the college and concluded with a system for assessing candidate performance that includes the content-area advisor and college administration. A system of assessment embedded in our advising structure is consistent with our institutional commitment to individual mentorship and close advising. All of our students are assigned two faculty members to advise and mentor them throughout their preparation program. One advisor is a member of the Education Department and serves to guide course selection, assess progress and help individual candidates design programs of study that meet their individual needs and goals as a teacher. The second advisor is a member of the Department in the candidate's second major program of study. This advisor is aware of the content area knowledge and skill development of the candidate. These two advisors work closely together to assess each candidate so that the program of study for each of our students meets his/her individual developmental needs and capitalizes on the particular talents and interests of each student of teaching while ensuring progress on development of the Illinois Content-Area Standards.

Advisors are responsible for formative and summative assessment of candidate performance. Advisors in the content area major are responsible for determining student strengths and deficiencies in meeting the content area standards as candidates progress through their major course of study. Advisors in the Education Department are responsible for overseeing student development in the Professional Teaching Standards, Technology and Core Language Arts standards. Both advisors recommend candidates for entrance, continuation, and completion of programs. Both advisors oversee the developmental portfolio process that assesses students' development toward LFC identifying characteristics and ISBE standards (See attached chart: Standards, LFC Characteristics and Program Checkpoints). Our advising system, therefore, besides providing close and coherent mentorship throughout a candidate's program of study, also supports the regular assessment of candidates' performance (See attached chart: Education Department Advising Calendar and ISBE Standards Assessment Summary). College administrators are also involved in the assessment process. College administrators in library and information technology are involved in developing policies and programming for the technological skills of our candidates. The Dean of the College helps to assess the professional personal dispositions necessary to teach. While we have a standard curriculum of study, this is modified to address any needs the candidate may have as he/she progresses through the program. Furthermore, the Dean of the Faculty and the President are responsible for reviewing student appeals and overseeing departmental policy decisions. Working in close communication as advisors, with administrators and with individual students, problems are addressed as the student is progressing through his/her course of study. This commitment to collaboration, dialogue

and close communication allows faculty and administrators to exercise flexibility and resourcefulness in meeting the needs of our diverse teacher candidate pool. Since the faculty and administration work together, students view our assessment system to be clear, coherent and, while maintaining its flexibility and responsiveness to individual needs, consistent and fair.

The conceptual framework and accompanying assessment system is evaluated and revised regularly by our faculty, our current students, local cooperating teachers and local teaching alumni. This is done in several different contexts throughout the academic year. Our current students are introduced to the conceptual framework in their first course in the Education Department (ED 210, Observing the Schooling Process). They are asked to discuss their interpretation of these principles as part of this course. In subsequent coursework and progress evaluations, they are involved in self-evaluation experiences using the conceptual framework, in particular, the identifying characteristics statement. Their teaching portfolios are organized around these core principles of practice. Our alumni review the conceptual framework annually in response to an alumni questionnaire sent with the departmental newsletter at the end of the spring semester. We also discuss the conceptual framework at an annual alumni meeting. Our cooperating teachers, department chairs and principals in our fieldwork experiences and partnerships are asked to evaluate the assessment tools at the conclusion of each fieldwork experience. The Education Advisory Council, made up of faculty, students, and local teachers, also reviews the conceptual framework annually. In Department meetings throughout the year as course assessments and program assessments are designed, the conceptual framework is reviewed, revised, and applied in this process. We are developing a database that tracks the progress of candidates in each cohort. This will enable us to revise the program as we monitor the performances of candidates across programs.

By beginning with institutional values and working with alumni to establish program goals, we were able to integrate the Content-Area Standards into our program assessment system without sacrificing the unique identity of our institution, programs, and alumni community. This has resulted in a deeper commitment to working with and meeting the standards than would have been possible without this process of identification and alignment. (See attached chart: Relationship of Commitments, Identifying Characteristics and IPTS standards). Our faculty, candidates, school partners, and alumni now all share a common ground from which to guide the journey into teaching.

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