Educators as Architects of Change

John H. Lounsbury College of Education
Georgia College & State University

http://info.gcsu.edu/intranet/school_ed/

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A Message to Host Teachers from Our Dean. . . 

Dear Colleagues,

All educators owe a significant debt to those from whom we received encouragement, advice, time, and the benefit of years of life experience when we began our careers in education. I am sure as you reflect upon those educators who shaped your professional development that you value those who held high expectations for you as a novice teacher and gave you wise counsel for how to improve and strengthen your performance. We all know the profession is beleaguered by challenges and problems today; the demands upon the profession strain our abilities to endure. Indeed, the profession is not for the faint of heart. Given this context, we are so deeply appreciative of you for partnering with us and sharing our mission to prepare teacher candidates who are colleagues you will want and need to join your efforts to engage students, parents, and school partners to build learning communities and to bring renewal to the profession and to the institution of education. Each child is a gift we have all agreed to accept and value. Help us induct our students into the calling of this profession by accepting the gift that each of our student teachers represent. We know that you and our students will be presented with treasured opportunities for collegiality and professional enrichment. One day, these new teachers will share the legacy of your gift to them with the next generation of teachers. Thank you all for giving back to and sustaining the profession in this way.

Respectfully,

Jane

Dr. Jane Hinson, Interim Dean
John H. Lounsbury College of Education
2010-2011
OVERVIEW OF THE FIELD-BASED TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM

The field-based teacher education program of the John H. Lounsbury School of Education of Georgia College & State University has enjoyed a long history as one of Georgia’s most celebrated teacher preparation programs. Teacher candidates inherit a tradition of excellence that is envied and imitated by other institutions.

Our teacher education program is solidly grounded in the guidelines of nationally recognized professional organizations and is fully accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education. NCATE certifies that the John H. Lounsbury College of Education teacher education program meets or exceeds its rigorous standards of excellence. Our program is also fully approved by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission.

The rationale for our program and the guiding principles that drive it are derived from our Conceptual Framework, a comprehensive statement of the vision of the JHL College of Education to assume a leadership role in America’s colleges and universities. More particularly, the Conceptual Framework details the plans of Georgia College & State University to enhance our role as “Architects of Change,” preparing teachers to improve the current state of education by collaborating with all stakeholders to solve problems creatively and to set the course for future trends in education. In essence, the Conceptual Framework identifies and explores the following core concepts: a foundation in liberal arts; a foundation in professional preparation; a foundation for addressing human relations and diversity issues; the development of dynamic leadership abilities; the differences in undergraduate and graduate programs; and the solid foundation provided by the various components of the teacher education programs.

The Conceptual Framework of John H. Lounsbury College of Education appears in its entirety near the back of this handbook. Host teachers can gain a clear picture of the philosophy, guiding principles, and organizational structure that have been interwoven in our teacher candidates’ preparation as teachers for the future and as architects of change. We invite you to read the Conceptual Framework at your leisure.

What Is A Field-Based Program And What Are Its Benefits?

All of our programs for initial certification are field-based, which means that our teacher candidates do more than just read and hear about schools prior to their student teaching internship: They actually spend more than 1,000 hours observing and working in a variety of schools before graduation. Our Master of Arts in Teaching Program (MAT), which offers initial certification as the secondary level, also places cohort students in schools for a significant amount of time.

The benefits of experiencing a variety of school settings and host teachers and extensive exposure to hundreds of children from diverse populations are numerous. Teacher candidates draw from each aspect of their experiences to create their own understandings of the demands, challenges, and rewards of teaching. They see many different teachers work with children of various ages and abilities in schools that vary in climate, location, and administrative philosophy.

The wealth of experiences with the inquiry and reflection that occur through interaction with their Mentor Leaders, the rich liberal arts foundation from their two years in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and practice in pedagogy and technology create a cadre of new teachers ready to become “Architects of Change” to meet the needs
of students in 21st century America. Our teacher candidates are uniquely prepared to meet that challenge.

How Are Field Placements Made?

Undergraduate teacher candidates in the John H. Lounsbury College of Education spend more than 1,000 hours in field placements. They are placed either with host teachers in our partner schools or with host teachers in other schools with which we have good working relationships. Teacher candidates are assigned to schools by the Mentor Leader, working with the school principal and the university liaison. The Mentor Leader uses his or her knowledge of the host teachers and teacher candidates to match them in a mutually satisfactory and productive relationship. The exact nature of field placement depends upon whether the teacher candidate is a junior, senior, or graduate student.

Juniors have four field placements through the academic year, two each semester; seniors have a single placement in the fall semester and a student teaching internship during their final semester. Some seniors arrange to stay in the same placement all year long. Graduate (MAT) teacher candidates have both a middle school and high school placement in the fall semester and teaching internships (student teaching) in their final semester.

Who Are Mentor Leaders and What Do They Do?

Mentor Leaders are members of the faculty of Georgia College & State University who teach, coach, supervise, and professionally “parent” the members of their cohort of teacher candidates. The Mentor Leader and his/her cohort work together for two years (only one year for MAT teacher candidates), during which teacher candidates experience 3 semesters of field placements and their final placement for student teaching. The Mentor Leader decides how teacher candidates are paired with host teachers; makes the arrangements for each candidate’s placement with the host teacher and the school administrator; supervises each candidate’s performance during the placement; confers with the host teachers often; and awards a grade to the teacher candidate for his or her field experience.

The names, phone numbers, and email addresses for all the Mentor Leaders appear in this handbook. Please know that they are eager to be of service to you as you work with your teacher candidate. Do not hesitate to request a visit, a conference, or information from the Mentor Leader at any time during our teacher candidate’s placement with you. All Mentor Leaders have intense pride and in their stewardship of these teacher candidates. They want to see them succeed in your classroom and to thrive under your tutelage and good example. Call on them as often as you need them.

Who Are Host Teacher?

Many host teachers wonder what the designation means and what it will entail for them as they take on the role. This extract of characteristics is written to assist in clarifying and responding to the many queries from university as well as school faculty as to what it means to be a host teacher.

Host teachers are inquirers of teaching. They wonder, question, create ideas, test, and confirm and try again. They systematically look at the perturbations inherent in
acts of teaching in order to make meaning of those perturbations. It is important that host teachers model their skills of reflection and try to make explicit for the teacher candidate the many variables that affect decision-making. This does not mean that host teachers have everything “right.” In fact, effective host teachers are well aware that they will continually refine their practice in response to new data; “right” is to be weighed within the context of the teaching act. Effective host teachers would understand the teacher candidate is not necessarily to mimic the host teacher’s practices, even when they are successful, but the candidates are encouraged to engage in inquiry themselves as students of teaching.

A host teacher is a coach who can both encourage the teacher candidate as she works to achieve goals, and hold her accountable for reaching those goals. The host teacher would probably be involved in helping the candidate set those goals and they would engage in frequent and regular dialogue about the goals. Observed behaviors would be recorded and become the basis for evaluations he makes of the teacher candidate. The host teacher needs to be able to discern what approach is necessary and communicate the appropriate feedback to the teacher candidate be that praise or constructive criticism.

A host teacher is a collaborator with the teacher candidate. In this relationship the knowledge and skills of each is valued and brought to bear on the common situation they face—teaching the students. The process of collaboration is synergistic and throughout it leadership roles continually shift. In collaborative products one is unable to pick out each precise contribution of individual collaborators and so ownership, responsibility, control, and success are mutual. Because they are collaborators, the host teacher would not correct the teacher candidate in front of the students unless the students were suffering great harm.

A host teacher is a leader who is committed to the improvement of the profession of education. He gives of his time and talents to assist in inducting new professional educators into the field.

What is Expected of Our Teacher Candidates?

Teacher candidates in our teacher preparation cohorts are emerging professionals. As such, we expect them to conduct themselves with dignity, decorum, and consummate professionalism. While they are still students and entitled to make the kinds of mistakes we all made as novices, our teacher candidates have been carefully selected and have been exceptionally well prepared to enter teaching. Details of the exact requirements for each placement are given in the following pages. However, all teacher candidates in the John H. Lounsbury College of Education, whatever their area of certification, share the following expectations:

In Procedural Matters
1) Teacher candidates are expected to conduct themselves as welcome guests and professional colleagues in the public school, and as such to be observant of the same rules, regulations, and expectations which all professional educators in the public school observe.
2) Teacher candidates are expected to sign in and out every time they enter or leave the school. They are also expected to be on time and to stay until the specified time every day unless a variation is pre-approved by the Mentor Leader.
3) If a teacher candidate must be absent, he or she is expected to notify both the host teacher and Mentor Leader as early as possible before the school day begins. Make-up hours will be assigned by the Mentor Leader and approved by the host teacher, as well as the School Administrator.
4) Teacher candidates are expected to dress professionally, following the dress code specified by the administrator for the faculty in the school of placement. When in doubt, teacher candidates should comply with a dressier, rather than more casual, standard.
5) Teacher candidates are expected to inquire about (and follow) the school’s policies for use of copy machines, laminators, computers and other types of instructional equipment. They are also expected to inquire about any of the machines’ peculiarities before using the equipment.
6) Teacher candidates are not to use the school’s telephone, computers, or fax machines for personal business.
7) Teacher candidates are not allowed to take their cell phones or pagers into the school.
8) Teacher candidates may not smoke on school premises.
9) All teacher candidates are expected to direct their host teachers to the John H. Lounsbury College of Education web page and to the link for the Host Teacher Handbook on the first day of each placement. http://info.gcsu.edu/intranet/school_ed/
10) Satisfactory field-based experience evaluations must be achieved each placement in order to continue in the program.
11) Teacher Candidates may **never** serve as a substitute teacher. The state of Georgia **requires** that a certified teacher or substitute teacher be available to supervise a teacher candidate’s classroom performance.

**In Personal Interactions**
1) Teacher candidates are expected to establish and maintain proper and cordial relationships with all school personnel, learning names and responsibilities to the degree allowed by circumstances.
2) Teacher candidates are to establish and maintain proper professional relationships with students and their parents or caretakers.
3) Teacher candidates are expected to avoid inappropriate language or conduct in the school setting and at any school-sponsored function.

**In Teaching Duties and Responsibilities**
1) Teacher candidates are expected to honor the confidentiality of information about students’ grades, test scores, disciplinary records, or any other personal information.
2) Teacher candidates are expected to seek prior approval for any learning activities they implement.
3) Teacher candidates are expected to learn and follow guidelines and practices used by the host teacher for classroom management. Any modifications need to be discussed with the host teacher.
4) Teacher candidates are expected to seek the level of involvement expected by the university instructor, but with the full cooperation of the host teacher.
5) Teacher candidates are expected to provide the host teacher with timely and complete information about talks assigned by university instructors to be carried out in the field placements.
6) Teacher candidates are expected to take the initiative in making their placements successful and getting the most out of each new learning experience.
7) Teacher candidates are expected to be observant of opportunities to be useful in the host teacher’s classroom and to volunteer his or her services as needed.

Cardinal Principles of Host Teaching

**Principle I: A warm welcome and unbridled enthusiasm set the stage for a mutually successful experience.**

- Call the teacher candidate in advance to extend a personal welcome.
- Provide a separate desk or space, a chair, a name card, student handbook, class roll, etc.
- Post a banner, sign, or welcome cards.
- Add her/his name under yours outside the classroom.
- Prepare your students for his arrival, making sure they know he is an authority figure and must be treated with the same respect and deference you are. Be mindful of the teacher candidate's blossoming sense of authority; please take care not to undermine him in front of the students.
- Introduce her to each class, allowing a few minutes for her to tell about herself.
- Take him on a tour of the school, pointing out key locations and introducing him to others.
- Invite the teacher candidate to join you at lunch until she is comfortable on her own.
- Provide copies of textbooks, faculty handbooks, etc.
- Discuss expectations for arrival and departure times, dress, do’s and don’ts, copy machine policies, parking, etc.
- Give the teacher candidate one or more duties within the classroom from the first day.

**Principle II: Embracing the teacher candidate as a professional, a peer-in-the making, and a partner in a high calling plants expectations of success and instills confidence.**

- Explain the decision-making process as you go, so he can begin to gain insights.
- Ask her open-ended questions about what she is observing in the teaching to prompt her analysis and to stimulate her creativity.
- Include the teacher candidate in planning sessions, parent conferences, student support team meetings, etc. Tell him whether or not his participation would be appropriate in each situation.
- Share materials and ideas. Let her make a copy of your best lesson plans, handouts, bulletin board files, parent letters, classroom rules, etc. Try to remember what it was like to be a beginner!
- Ask the teacher candidate to help you think through a chronic problem situation in the classroom or school. Ask him for some ideas for resolving it. Find something positive in his answer and build on it as needed.
- Ask the teacher candidate to observe a student whom you identify for a few days and make some observations about the student’s behavior, interactions with others, or difficulty mastering content or skills. Help her build skills of observation.

**Principle III: Preparing the teacher candidate effectively includes a mini-course in professional discretion and confidentiality.**

- Whenever the opportunity arises, make references to school policies, district rules, or laws that affect decisions. Help her see that choices of action need to be filtered through these considerations.
• Caution the teacher candidate about the demands of confidentiality and the legal liabilities she might encounter as a result of breaching confidential information.
• Monitor comments for indiscretions. Avoid unprofessional characterizations of students, their parents, colleagues or superiors.
• Have the teacher candidate spend a few hours reviewing the district’s policies and any communications about legal issues (first amendment rights, sexual harassment, etc.) He needs to understand the reality of a litigious public.
• Caution the teacher candidate about establishing and maintaining appropriate relations with students and avoiding even the appearance of impropriety.
• Remember that the P-12 students are ultimately the host teacher’s responsibility. Supervise the teacher candidate’s content, pace, grading techniques, assignments, and communications with parents. Monitor the progress and grades of P-12 students closely.

**Principle IV: The host teacher may be the most powerful shaping influence in the teacher candidate’s professional preparation.**
• Model the behavior that is expected.
• Set clear expectations for planning, materials, and evaluation. Point out what you are doing as you go.
• Plan with the teacher candidate and the Mentor Leader the gradual assumption of responsibilities.
• Remember that it’s OK to pull back or speed up the schedule as warranted.
• Create the kind of climate in the classroom in which experimentation and mistakes are acceptable.
• Share advice and constructive feedback.
• Fill out the teacher candidate’s evaluation in a way that honestly reflects his/her performance. We don’t expect that every teacher candidate will perform “excellent” or even “good” at all times in every placement, especially in the beginning. This will allow the Mentor Leader and the teacher candidate and opportunity to track growth and improvement.
• Review the evaluation with the teacher candidate. If for any reason you feel uncomfortable doing this, mail it to the Mentor Leader and she will be glad to review it with the teacher candidate.
• Encourage the teacher candidate to be reflective about his professional growth.
• Facilitate warm relationships with building administrators, staff, and other faculty.
• Increase feedback as the teacher candidate assumes more responsibility.
• Accentuate the positive! -- but do not withhold important information that could be useful to the teacher candidate because you are afraid to discourage her/him.
• Congratulate yourself for influencing the future in a powerful way.

**Common Questions of Host Teachers**

**What if there are concerns about the teacher candidate’s performance?**
Georgia College & State University’s College of Education prides itself on preparing teacher candidates who are ready to teach before their actual student teaching in their final semester. During their first three semesters of field experience, teacher candidates have many opportunities to practice their skills, try out the techniques and strategies they’ve seen modeled for them, and create a few of their own. (MAT teachers have only
1 semester’s field placement before student teaching.) Occasionally, once the formal student teaching opportunity arrives, teacher candidates will encounter difficulties in various aspects of their performance. It is at this point that you, the host teacher, become most valuable and that you and the Mentor Leader can work together to intervene and ease the teacher candidate through the difficulty and onward toward a promising career. When you first notice that the teacher candidate is not progressing as quickly as you would like, try the following strategies:

• Meet regularly with the teacher candidate to review her plans for each day’s instruction.
• Do not let the teacher candidate teach unless you have reviewed the plans and found them appropriate for your students on that day.
• If there are several areas of concern, concentrate on just one or two of them (example: “Today I’ll be watching to see if you state the objective of your lesson before you begin” or “Today I’ll be watching to see if you have the students’ attention before you begin.”).
• For problem areas of performance, clarify your expectations with specific directions (example: “I expect you to be standing at the door as students enter, direct them to their seats, make eye contact, and have them begin the sponge activity you have written on the board. As you give those directions, move and speak with authority as you circulate among the students. Mentally take the roll as you walk and begin your introductory remarks.”)
• Document any resolved OR unresolved matters on the teacher candidate’s evaluation form.
• After the lesson, ask your teacher candidate to reflect on her teaching and explain how she can modify it next time.
• Share your own experience in the area of concern.
• Provide resources you might have that could improve her performance.
• Ask your teacher candidate to observe you and some of your colleagues who have mastered the area of concern and to take notes of specific strategies used to avoid the problem being addressed. Review these observations with her soon after the lesson and give her an opportunity to practice the new behavior soon.
• Have the teacher candidate videotape himself regularly (to remove the threat) and review it with him, letting him take the lead in critiquing it.
• If necessary, reduce the overall teaching responsibilities so that your teacher candidate can concentrate on the problem areas.

In addition to the suggestions outlined above, it is critically important for you to notify the Mentor Leader of the problem as soon as it begins to concern you. Ask the Mentor Leader to increase the frequency of his observations and to offer additional resources to resolve the concern. Frequently, this intense effort to address and correct the concern is all that is needed to resolve it.

What if the candidate is stronger, better prepared than usual, and essentially ready to teach when he/she arrives?

We often find that the extensive field experience (over 1000 hours) our teacher candidates have had equips them so well for the classroom that they are “ready to teach.” In that
case, you may want to consult with the Mentor Leader and move the teacher candidate into more responsibility quickly and into a variety of enriching activities. Some suggestions follow:

- Accelerate the schedule described in the timeline you received for the student teaching semester.
- Help your teacher candidate find new ways to meet students’ individual needs.
- Ask the teacher candidate to create an interdisciplinary unit and implement it.
- Encourage the teacher candidate to assume additional extracurricular activities (parent conferences, book fairs, etc.)
- Ask the teacher candidate to observe other teachers who have areas of expertise that would be helpful.
- Help the teacher candidate conduct an action research project and share the results.
- Encourage the teacher candidate to attend professional meetings or conferences.
- Share a thought-provoking professional book or journal article.
- Help the teacher candidate compile files of ideas, articles, lesson plans, bulletin boards ideas, etc.

Some of the ideas and suggestions in this handbook were borrowed from a similar publication produced by James Madison University (1998-99). We are grateful for their use.

**Conceptual Framework**

Access to Academic Excellence for the New Millennium is the University System of Georgia’s vision in its quest to be a leader among the nation’s universities and colleges. This vision is particularly applicable to the Georgia College & State University Faculty of Educator Preparation. The Faculty of Educator Preparation consists of faculty from the College of Education, the College of Arts and Sciences, and the College of Health Sciences, as well as faculty from local P-12 educational institutions. For academic excellence to be accomplished in the new millennium it must begin with the education of the youngest child. If the school systems are going to meet this challenge, many changes must take place. Our nation’s economy and the American workplace have changed dramatically in the past fifty years. The skills needed for successful living have altered radically, primarily because technology is changing the way we live. American schools, however, are geared to produce students for a nation that, in many ways, no longer exists (Wise, 1996). In order to meet the needs of the 21st century, American educators must be architects of change. They must be taught by schools of education how to improve the current state of education by working with community leaders and local and state governments. Educators must know how to collaborate with others to creatively solve problems and make decisions about the current educational climate and future trends in education.

As America enters the new millennium, it is assessing the various elements of society with an eye for change. The National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future recently concluded an intensive two year study of America’s education system (1996). This 26-member bipartisan panel concluded that the reform of elementary and secondary education depends first and foremost on restructuring its foundation, the teaching profession. The commission made clear that the restructuring must go in two directions: toward increasing teachers’ knowledge to meet the demands they face and
toward redesigning schools to support high-quality teaching and learning. The conceptual framework of the GC&SU Faculty of Educator Preparation supports this challenge.

Educational professionalism is at a threshold. The educator of the future must be equally at home in the classroom and in working with others to bring about continuous improvements. This is why teacher education is fundamental to the future of society. Initial educator preparation and continuous educator development must be based on the concept of evolving teachers who will be change agents in their communities. Systems cannot change by themselves. Rather, the actions of individuals and small groups working together will lead our schools into the future and forge students who will be prepared to meet the challenges of the 21st century (Fullan, 1993).

In forming a conceptual framework designed to meet the needs of students in the 21st century, GC&SU's Faculty of Educator Preparation endeavored to reach agreement on what teachers should know and be able to do in order to help students succeed. This task has recently been completed by three professional bodies: the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC), and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS). Their combined efforts to set standards for teacher education, beginning teacher licensing, and advanced certification outline a continuum of teacher development and offer the most powerful tools we have for “reaching and rejuvenating the soul of the profession” (Darling-Hammond, 1996, p.196). These standards and the assessments that grow out of them identify what it takes to be an effective teacher: subject-matter expertise coupled with an understanding of how children learn and develop; skill in using a range of teaching strategies and technologies in order to engage students in meaningful learning experiences; sensitivity and effectiveness in working with students from diverse backgrounds; and the ability to assess and analyze students’ learning and make appropriate changes to encourage the positive effect on learning for all students. The standards reflect a teaching role in which the educator demonstrates the ability to work well with parents and other educators as an instructional leader who orchestrates learning experience in response to curriculum goals and student needs and who challenges students to high levels of independent performance. By incorporating these standards into a conceptual framework, the Faculty of Educator Preparation believes that graduates of its programs will be fully prepared to meet the educational challenges of the new millennium. The GC&SU Faculty of Educator Preparation has chosen the phrase Educators as Architects of Change to be the conceptual framework for the professional experience offered by this institution. This framework is constructed upon a professional knowledge base which focuses on the following core concepts: Foundation in Liberal Arts, Foundation in Professional Preparation, Foundation for Addressing Human Relations and Diversity Issues, and Development of Dynamic Leadership Abilities.
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