

Guiding Principles

The purpose of an alliance is to bring together school and university faculty in the joint work of teacher education. We seek teachers who are interested in serving as models and mentors and schools which are productive settings for learning for both teachers and students. Working together, we hope to continue developing a five-year teacher certification program that reflects our collective visions about the kinds of teachers needed to meet the educational needs of an increasingly diverse student population, an increasingly complex society, and new understandings about subject matter and learning. A major challenge in teacher preparation is helping novices learn approaches to teaching and learning that they may not have experienced themselves as students. Unless novices can see new approaches to teaching and learning, and work with teachers who are themselves interested in exploring such possibilities, they are likely to simply reproduce the practices they experienced as students.

We bring to this alliance a set of guiding principles which shape our approach to teacher education. We believe that a successful alliance depends upon mutual endorsement of these basic beliefs.

Beliefs About Teaching and Learning

- All persons are learners and bring particular experiences, perspectives, and insights to educational settings which are essential contributions to be built upon in any teaching - learning relationship. The responsible and effective teacher must assume the capacity of all learners and seek ways to extend their knowledge and interests.
- Teachers are learners as well, and need to pursue and extend their own interests in and understanding of subject matter and how to teach it in ways that respect the integrity of students and the disciplines. And, they need to examine those understandings in light of ongoing developments in disciplinary fields.
- Teaching practice is complex and evolving in relationship to new learners, changing school circumstances, new perceptions and understandings, interactions with colleagues, etc. Reflection and inquiry are essential tools for life-long learning by teachers.
- Teachers have essential experience and insight about the education of youngsters which are necessary resources for successful schools. School settings which do best in educating youngsters also foster teacher initiative and collaborative decision making.

Beliefs About Learning to Teach

- Novices learn best in the company of exemplary teachers who are committed to ongoing study and improvement of their own practice.
- Novices need carefully structured and sequenced opportunities to practice thinking and acting like a teacher.
- Both universities and schools have important and complementary contributions to make to novices learning.