

Newberry College Institutional Report

Standard 4

E. Standard 4. The unit designs, implements, and evaluates curriculum and provides experiences for candidates to acquire and demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions necessary to help all students learn. Assessments indicate that candidates can demonstrate and apply proficiencies related to diversity. Experiences provided for candidates include working with diverse populations, including higher education and P–12 school faculty, candidates, and students in P–12 schools.

E.1. How does the unit prepare candidates to work effectively with all students?

Proficiencies related to diversity are deeply connected to the Newberry College Teacher Education conceptual framework and teacher dispositions. Diversity is one of the guiding principles of the conceptual framework. Teacher candidates are expected to recognize the differences among individuals and cultures and adapt broad-based content and instructional techniques that provide for the needs of all learners. In addition, candidates are assessed on the teacher disposition of fairness during coursework and again during internship. Candidates must demonstrate the qualities of caring, respect, empathy, and fairness, in relationships with students, parents, and peers; promote a classroom culture that acknowledges and embraces differences; maintain high standards and expectations for all students; show sensitivity to all students; respect and promote understanding of ethnic, racial, gender, sexuality, religious, socioeconomic, ability, and language differences; and be committed to providing opportunities for all students to be successful.

Through required courses, key assignments, field experiences, and an internship, candidates examine the core concepts of diversity, interact with diverse learners and peers, and differentiate instruction to support all learners. The Teacher Education Program (TEP) models equitable teaching and appropriate methods of differentiation.

Newberry County is a rural area that provides candidates with unique opportunities to interact with school partners and learn with a diverse student population in their field placements. The TEP utilizes a diversity formula and database to place students with a variety of diverse experiences including diverse student populations, geographic areas, mentor teachers, and economic levels.

Newberry College is a diverse environment with students from 14 different countries, and 30 different regions of the United States, and a variety of ethnic, racial, and religious groups. Candidates regularly interact in diversified groups inside and outside of the classroom. In an effort to provide greater diversity in the TEP, the unit has partnered with Clemson University to be a Call Me MISTER (Mentors Instructing Students Toward Effective Role-models) institution which recruits African American males to

the field of elementary education. To increase the diversity in the age of education students, the REMAST (Recruit and Engage Math and Science Teachers) grant recruits career changers into math and science education programs and the Fast Forward program prepares non-traditional students to be Early Childhood educators. In Spring 2011 a student group called SAFE (Student Alliance for Equality) was formed to provide a forum for gay and straight students to support each other on campus.

All candidates are required to successfully complete EDU 232 - Working with Exceptional and Diverse Learners. This course is designed to provide teacher candidates with strategies to understand how our diverse society influences teaching and learning in the classroom. This course emphasizes understanding how students' learning is influenced by individual experiences, talents, disabilities, gender, language, culture, social status, and family values. Special attention is given to exceptional learners including categorical labels, educational law, and instructional accommodations. This course encourages teacher candidates to reevaluate personal beliefs and possible prejudices that may adversely affect the learning process and gain an appreciation for facets of diversity that may be encountered in their classrooms. Specifically, candidates are expected to recognize culturally-competent teaching while working towards becoming culturally-competent teachers, and differentiate between individual differences recognizing their impact on teaching and learning. Candidates also are expected to understand legislation and institutional responsibilities related to exceptional learners; determine appropriate accommodations for various learning styles, intelligences, and exceptionalities; and differentiate learning by modifying lesson plans to accommodate diverse learners.

Candidates must meet ADEPT (Assisting, Developing and Evaluating Professional Teaching) performance standards which includes meeting the needs of students with "special needs" and students from various cultural backgrounds. ADEPT includes many references to being responsive to students' "cultural perspectives"/ "cultural backgrounds", working with "diverse groups of students," and being "fair and consistent." ADEPT Performance Standards 1 (long range planning), 2 (short range planning), 5 (instructional strategies), 6 (providing content for learners), 7 (monitoring, assessing, and enhancing learning), and 8 (maintaining an environment that promotes learning), and 9 (managing the classroom) all set the expectation that teachers will address diversity in their classrooms. All candidates must pass ADEPT to be recommended for certification in the state of South Carolina.

Elements of diversity are also integrated in all methods courses and the internship with the use of the Newberry College Lesson Plan Template. Candidates are expected to differentiate instruction for a variety of learners by providing specific tasks, strategies, and modifications made for each lesson plan they create and implement. Specific populations included are non-native English speakers, gifted, special needs, multicultural, and others. Attention is also given to differences in gender, learning styles, and socioeconomics.

The TEP also provides an array of opportunities for candidates to learn and interact with professionals who focus on issues of diversity in the community. These include school psychologists, special education teachers, a district level special education coordinator, a principal from single-gendered education environment, an expert on poverty, and parents of children with special needs. Candidates also participate in tutoring low-income students as part of the Value's Based Learning program through the

First Year Experience (COL 101, 102) classes. Key assignments and/or evidence used to measure diversity proficiencies:

- Course Grades EDU 232 – Working With Exceptional and Diverse Learners
- Written disposition statement on *Fairness*
- Reflection paper on *Tolerance and Diversity*
- Accommodations portion from lesson plan rubric
- Diversity formula and placement database

Newberry College candidates interact with a diverse faculty. The TEP faculty display racial diversity in that 14% of full-time faculty are African American and 20% of adjunct faculty are African American. Programs increase the exposure of candidates to diversity by inviting professionals from diverse backgrounds as guest lecturers/panelists (Richard Pringle, Stephen Hampton, Lisa Richardson, Sabrina Moore). Several faculty in the Teacher Education Program have expertise in diversity in education. For example, one faculty member has attended poverty workshops and has taught diversity courses at USC before coming to Newberry College. Another is currently writing his dissertation on the recruitment and retention of African American males in elementary classrooms in South Carolina.

The TEP is committed to increasing faculty diversity. The office of Human Resources follows guidelines including affirmative action representatives on search committees, position advertisements in venues that reach a diverse readership, and recruitment at national conferences. In addition, the Chair of the Department of Education (DOE) requires a justification from a search committee if a minority candidate is not in the pool of identified candidates. Despite efforts, however, qualified faculty candidates from diverse backgrounds have not applied for faculty positions.

The Newberry College campus not only has a diverse environment, but the teacher education program has diverse candidates. African American candidates comprise 19.2% of the teacher education population and 2.9% are of Hispanic or Latino decent. Approximately 52.3% of candidates are female. The TEP has made significant efforts to recruit and retain a more diverse candidate population and these efforts are proving to be effective.

Newberry College works with districts that reflect the diversity of South Carolina with percentages of minority students in districts ranging from 8.1% to 76.1%. Four of the districts have a higher percentage of minority students than the state average of 36.4%. Subsidized meal percentages range from 29.4% to 71.6% and students with disabilities range from 6.3% to 8.8% in the partner districts. Demographic information for partner schools shows the diversity of the P-12 students with which our candidates work.

E.2b. Continuous Improvement

- **Briefly summarize the most significant changes related to Standard 4 that have led to continuous improvement. (If no significant changes related to this standard have occurred since the previous visit, indicate “None” in this section.)**

Based on graduate follow up data and on a conceptual belief that teachers must be competent in diversity proficiencies, a new course was established in 2007 that focuses on cultural diversity (EDU 232 – Working with Exceptional and Diverse Learners). Existing courses were also revised to include significant diversity components as evidenced by syllabi.

Based on assessment data from EDU 232 course grades and other assessments, it was determined that the course content needed to be expanded beyond the original format, which was mainly an exceptional learner class to focus on a more complete/comprehensive definition of a diverse learner. Candidates must score a C or higher in the course in order to be admitted to the Teacher Education Program. It serves as a gate because those individuals without a C or higher have not mastered the skills and dispositions (fairness) needed for being a teacher. In the fall/spring 09-10, grades went down overall. As a result, when a vacancy came open due to a retirement, the TEP hired a new faculty with prior experience teaching the topic, redesigned the course, adopted a new textbook, created new key assignments, and early results show that students are mastering the course content at a higher rate.

During the program review for National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), early childhood faculty determined that candidates needed more experience working with students and their families. Modifications were made to an existing course. ECE 251 was renamed *Children, Schools, Families and Communities* to assist candidates in building family, school, and community partnerships that support children's well-being and educational success. Candidates explore theories and processes used to establish positive home-school-community relations to include: diversity of families, professionalism and ethics, the NAEYC Code of Conduct, and advocating for young children.

The lesson plan template was revised in 2008 to place more emphasis on differentiated instruction.

A new course specifically focusing on accommodations and interventions for special needs students is currently being considered by faculty. Once approved, this course will become a required course for early childhood, elementary, and middle level majors. Using case studies, characteristics of impairments, disorders, and individual differences will be highlighted with much time spent on specific modifications and accommodations used for diverse learners. The course will address categories of exceptionality including: cognitive impairments, physical impairments, health impairments, visual and hearing impairments, emotional/behavioral impairments, communication disorders, and giftedness. Candidates will focus on interpreting and implementing the federal rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Other topics include English Language Learners and Response to Intervention (RTI).

Efforts to increase recruitment and retention of a more diverse candidate population have included:

- Continuing the Teacher Cadet partnership with high schools and expanding it to include eleven high schools, some with highly diverse populations

- Providing resources for education candidates who need extra support to pass required standardized tests (i.e., Praxis I) for admission to the professional program. Dr. Charles Hatch, a national PRAXIS preparation consultant, volunteers approximately 8 hours a week to help candidates prepare for PRAXIS.

- Revising the department mission statement to increase the focus on diversity, approved 2007.

- Establishing the Call Me MISTER Program. Call Me MISTER (Mentors Instructing Students Toward Effective Role Models) is a highly acclaimed national recruitment and support program designed to increase the number of elementary school teachers with diverse backgrounds. Program participants are typically selected from under-served, socio-economically disadvantaged and educationally at risk communities. Due to the low number of males who choose elementary grades teaching as a profession, especially minority males, the program is critical for providing role models for young students of all ethnic and cultural backgrounds. It is the vision of the Newberry College Call Me MISTER Program to encourage, equip and support minority males to become elementary education teachers and leaders. The program will contribute to the available pool of exemplary teachers who are committed to making a positive difference in children's lives.

- The TEP is committed to increasing faculty diversity. The office of Human Resources follows guidelines including affirmative action representatives on search committees, position advertisements in venues that reach a diverse readership, and recruitment at national conferences. In addition, the Chair of the Department of Education (DOE) requires a justification from a search committee if a minority candidate is not in the pool of identified candidates. Despite efforts, however, qualified faculty candidates from diverse backgrounds have not applied for faculty positions. For this reason and because of a belief in the importance of diversity in the teaching force, the college engaged in a "Grow Your Own" program. By cultivating a relationship with a Newberry College graduate who was a practicing public school administrator, the college was successful in creating a new faculty position to begin full-time in August 2011. The targeted person started out as an adjunct faculty member, and then became the campus director of the Call Me MISTER program. Due to his outstanding growth and potential, the college created a new faculty line for him as an Assistant Professor of Education. Unfortunately, despite tremendous efforts on the behalf of the college, the targeted candidate declined the offer of a position. The TEP will look for another candidate who brings diversity to the program and will seek to hire that person as soon as possible.

