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Reconceptualizing a Reflective Framework: Lessons Learned

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ABSTRACT

Faculty at The Catholic University of America (CUA) created a conceptual framework (with the theme of the *reflective practitioner*) several years ago. Recently, the original framework was revised to provide explicit scaffolds for candidates to expand their opportunities for reflection with the ultimate goal of increasing their teaching effectiveness. This paper describes the process of how faculty in CUA's teacher education program revised this reflective framework. This paper 1) delineates the challenges with the original framework, 2) outlines the steps taken to revise the document, and 3) provides a list of recommendations for other universities.

Introduction

The purpose of this article is to describe how the Department of Education at The Catholic University of America revised its conceptual framework to better scaffold its teacher education candidates' reflection. While there has been some important work done on the creation of a conceptual framework (Dottin, 2001; Peca & Isham, 2001) there has been little to no work published on the reconceptualization of an existing framework. This paper is designed to share lessons learned and techniques recommended for faculty hoping to revitalize the use of a meaningful framework in all aspects of their teacher education unit. The recommended steps should be helpful for units that are tasked with either revising their existing conceptual framework or creating a new framework based on an established mission and philosophy.

CUA's teacher education unit had the luxury of a well-structured and thoughtful framework that had been designed and implemented several years ago (Valli & Taylor, 1987; Taylor, 1988). The original conceptual framework was an innovative effort to cull key concepts from well-respected critical theorists (e.g., Berlak & Berlak, 1981; Schon, 1983; Schwab, 1973; Van Manen, 1977) into a unique framework for the teacher education programs. The framework had been acknowledged by NCATE for its quality, had received professional acclaim by the research community of the day (Zeichner, 1987), and had been used to structure the undergraduate and graduate teacher education programs at the University (Ciriello, Valli, Taylor, 1992). When starting to prepare for the Catholic's latest accreditation visit, the Accreditation Committee at the department originally assumed that the existing conceptual framework would require superficial treatment to meet the stated accreditation expectations (NCATE, 2000).

The revision process could have consisted of a patchwork inclusion of the additional requirements (knowledge base, outcomes, etc.). By choosing to go beyond this mosaic approach, the University's teacher education unit was revitalized. The faculty experienced three important realizations: the conceptual framework in its entirety should represent a seamless flow from vision to outcomes, should represent the living philosophy of all members of the teaching community, and should be accessible to educators at all levels of experience.

This third realization resulted in a shift in emphasis from a faculty/theory orientation to a candidate/practitioner orientation. The new document is still based on strong theoretical foundations that are to be considered by all reflective practitioners, but those theories are no longer abstract. Each idea is embedded in meaningful questions that allow the candidates to discover the complexities of their experiences in a natural, rather than scripted or proscribed, manner.

Original Framework

In the mid-1980s the professional educational community began to study the role of reflection in teacher education. Research studies explored how reflective processes could be taught (e.g., Valli & Blum, 1988; Zeichner & Liston, 1987), and how social justice could be emphasized (e.g., Gore & Zeichner, 1991; Tom, 1992; Valli, 1990). The original authors of the conceptual framework, drew upon features of various theories (especially, Berlak & Berlak, 1981; Schwab, 1973; and Van Manen, 1977) to create a unique solution for the teacher education program. The original conceptual framework was essentially an expanded philosophy statement. It was aimed primarily at faculty who were tasked with adapting the abstract language to facilitate candidates' reflective thought. It emphasized the importance of social justice and ethical considerations in education, and specific aspects of the framework were selected for candidate use to deepen reflection. The framework was also used to justify changes to the teacher education programs. Candidates were given specific assignments designed to broaden the range of issues on which they were expected to reflect in order to deepen the quality of their reflection.

The design and use of the original conceptual framework was recognized at the time as an innovative first step in the application of abstract theories to the teaching of undergraduate pre-service teachers. Key pieces from each of these theoretical approaches were presented to candidates essentially unchanged from the original works. The documentation on the application of and research done on the original conceptual framework was extensive (e.g., Taylor & Valli, 1992; Valli, 1989; Valli, 1997). The original authors were active and passionate about the role of social justice as a driving force in the development of reflective practitioners, and their determination and deep commitment allowed the general theoretical document to be translated into action. Other faculty members embraced the vision and plan created by Drs. Valli and Taylor but looked to them as individuals rather than to the document for guidance. After the authors' departure, the implementation process was left in the hands of individual professors teaching courses in apparent isolation. While each faculty member was committed to the overall goal of producing reflective practitioners, the implementation efforts and specific details of the framework were interpreted differently.

Candidate Challenges with Framework

Faculty expressed concerns that only the brightest candidates were able to understand and apply the original conceptual framework. The following anecdotes were cited as examples of ongoing difficulties:

- Candidates did not spontaneously use the language of the conceptual framework to describe the challenges of their own learning or that of the P-12 students with whom they interacted.
- Even when prompted, candidates used the conceptual framework in a mechanical way, as a requirement to be fulfilled rather than a tool to aid their reflection.
- Candidates' reflection in casual conversation seemed deeper and more insightful than that expressed in formal assignments using appropriate terminology of the framework.
- Candidates demonstrated misconceptions about key elements of the original framework prior to the capstone student teaching experience.
- Candidates who were able to use the language of the conceptual framework to describe initial, superficial reflection rarely used the conceptual framework as a tool to explore a situation or to deepen and broaden their initial analysis.

It is the goal of the University's teacher education unit to provide meaningful experiences and opportunities for candidates to reflect in order to mature as moral and ethical thinkers. While there were some wonderful examples of candidates growing in their understanding of the role of education and educators as moral and ethical agents, the original framework did not appear to play a key role in facilitating that development. In fact, many candidates appeared to graduate with their understanding of their role as educators still relatively superficial rather than enriched through challenging exploration of the complexities of education. While the authors of the original document wrote about

the framework and its original implementation, no systematic analysis of the use of the framework and its impact on candidates was completed.

Programmatic Challenges with Framework

In addition to the struggles candidates had with the framework, there were programmatic and faculty concerns also. The original authors fought for a clear focus on critical theory and social justice. However, by the time faculty began revising the document, it had lost much of its vitality as those original advocates either left the department or went on to new projects. This reduced presence could be seen in a number of ways.

New faculty entering the department were given conflicting explanations of the role of the conceptual framework and were essentially left to their own devices to make it meaningful for themselves and to determine the role the conceptual framework would play in their classes, if at all. While faculty agreed with the larger themes of reflection and social justice in general, some professors felt it was not important to understand the details since they had no reason to include the framework in their own non- teacher education courses. The framework was not discussed in general faculty meetings even when changes in the teacher education programs were presented for review. When the conceptual framework was discussed at all, it was always in the light of teaching the candidates rather than as a tool for most faculty to examine their own practice - even among those professors specializing in the teacher education programs.

Individual course assignments included reflective components, but there was not an active plan for addressing the developmental nature of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions associated with meaningful reflection. This approach resulted in some ideas covered extensively while others languished with little opportunity to be assimilated before the senior capstone experience. While some scoring guides mentioned reflection, they failed to describe what kind of reflection would meet or exceed expectations. Other assignments did not include any reference to reflective practice. While the program was designed to include reflection, there was not a clear way to document development.

While not immediately obvious at the beginning, during the revision process it became clear that some faculty had philosophical concerns with the nature of the framework. The original document had a strong emphasis on critical reflection as described in critical theory, which was considered to be superior to all other aspects of reflection. While it was acknowledged in the original document that candidates needed to acquire the technical skills of teaching, the “teacher as practitioner” had a strong negative connotation; there was an implication that reflection about technical issues was unsophisticated. Interviews and casual conversations with faculty indicated that while social justice issues were of vital importance, many felt that the daily technical dilemmas were also of central concern, especially to novice educators and should not be discounted.

Reconceptualization and Revision of Old Framework
Choosing Lead Writer

A doctoral candidate together with The Director of Teacher Education (authors) set out to draft what was expected to be a minor revision of the conceptual framework. At the time it was assumed that the revision process would consist primarily of adding a short knowledge base section and extracting a set of observable outcomes from the original document to meet accreditation requirements for a formal conceptual framework. The doctoral candidate had taught in the teacher education program (but was not working on a course of study leading to certification), so she had only worked with the original document in the role of adjunct faculty rather than as a candidate. As the scope of the revision process expanded, the doctoral candidate accepted a full-time position within the department working directly with teacher education candidates at all levels. By the time the accreditation visit occurred, she had become the recognized expert on the use of the conceptual framework and the role it played in tying the unit together.

If the scope of the job had been well understood, it is unlikely that it would have been given to a graduate student. Having said that, she brought a useful perspective that shaped the resulting document as she bridged the gap between teacher education candidates and faculty. While other programs probably would not use a graduate student for this important task, her role in the revision process could be instructive for other programs considering this type of project and highlights the need for a systematic approach to assigning the revision task. The advantages of having a lead author (new to the teacher education unit) to revise the document were the following:

- As a new addition to the department, her understanding of the framework was defined by its current use rather than by the purpose initially intended by the original authors.
- She was not perceived as professionally threatening by any other members of the department. Since she had not published in this area, other members of the faculty were not attacking her professional expertise when they disagreed with her suggestions. By the nature of her role, her questions seemed to ask for clarification rather than posing a threat or challenge.
- Since her coursework and original research agenda was outside the teacher education unit, she brought a departmental, rather than programmatic perspective to the task. If the framework represented a meaningful tool to aid reflection, it should have useful application for all those involved in education and educational research.
- Since she had worked with candidates at all levels, she had a good grasp of the challenges presented by the existing framework. This prompted her to consider how different elements could contribute to meaningful use by all members of the teaching-learning community.
- Since she had not participated in an accreditation review before, she asked questions about the purpose of the conceptual framework that might have been delayed or even overlooked if a more experienced faculty member had been tasked with the revision.

An essential aspect of her role can be captured by the image of a *ghost-writer*, where the primary goal is to capture the understanding of another person without imposing the writer's unique understanding. The revision process involved all members of the faculty since the revision was approached as a task of clarification and synthesis of the beliefs held by faculty rather than sharing the established beliefs of a single author. It should be noted that the role of a ghost-writer was understood as distinct from that of an outside consultant. While new as a formal full-time member of the faculty, the doctoral candidate had been a member of the teaching/learning community for a number of years and had been responsible for teaching and assessing the reflective skills of the candidates in a number of courses.

Patchwork Approach

Once the accreditation requirements became available (NCATE, 2000), faculty made plans for revising the original conceptual framework document to include the missing required elements (vision, knowledge based, etc.). At that time, the department staff assumed that adding these pieces would suffice with investing limited time and effort. The original conceptual framework narrative was expected to satisfy accreditation requirement for the University's philosophy, purposes, and goals. The remaining elements were planned to be discrete additions. Of these, the unit assessment system was assumed to be the most challenging and time-consuming and was given to the Director of Teacher Education to outline.

This plan started well when the vision and mission segments were added from existing documents. The next task was the identification of outcomes to allow for clearly defined desired results that would also shape data collection and analysis. As described above, the original conceptual framework was designed to explain and justify the need for reflective practice, specifically to foster reflection on questions of social justice and ethical practice. It did not include any mention of the other knowledge, skills, and dispositions required for a professional educator. Since it was clear that the department expected candidates to master more than just isolated reflective skills (pedagogy, content knowledge, classroom management, etc.), the broad categories for expected outcomes were generated by looking at the course goals in each program and current literature on best practices (e.g., Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005). Similarly, the knowledge base rapidly became disconnected from the original narrative when it became clear that vast areas of expected candidate learning (child development, educational psychology, pedagogical content knowledge, etc.) were not specifically addressed.

The conceptual framework was excellent as a theoretical justification based on critical theories of its day but did not provide a structure for exploring other aspects of a teacher education program. The original conceptual framework, therefore, lent itself to either a knowledge base that was far too narrow in scope (critical theories only) or to a knowledge base that was far too broad in scope (everything else) with no useful distinction between interesting and essential knowledge. At that time the decision was made to abandon the narrative component of the existing conceptual framework as the

foundation for the knowledge base and move to use the broad areas of observable outcomes as the focus for the knowledge base discussion. It should be noted that this apparently straightforward decision was anything but. Extended efforts to link the outcomes and knowledge base to the existing framework were unsuccessful. At that time it was still hoped that continuing the patchwork approach would be sufficient, but it became obvious that more substantial revisions were necessary.

Choosing Visual Metaphor

The authors of this article examined the original document and concluded that the major components culled from earlier critical theorists (in particular, Berlak and Berlak, 1981; Schwab, 1973; and Van Manen, 1977) were still influential and useful in terms of guiding candidate reflection. However, the weaknesses identified at both candidate and programmatic levels pointed to a need for additional attention. One complaint of the old form was that the existing visual images were disjoint and static. It was suggested that a new image could make the material more accessible to the candidates without changing the essence of each component. The following discussion includes specific references to the unit's framework to provide a meaningful example of how different visual metaphors clarified the unit philosophy and refined the intended purpose of the framework as a whole. Clearly, different images would be appropriate for other themes, but the presentation of multiple images is still highly recommended.

Over the next six months various images were presented to the faculty. Each version was rejected for various reasons, but rather than weaken the revision process, each discarded representation significantly improved the departmental commitment to the project. As a new version was presented, faculty were better able to articulate what they did not like about it, which highlighted underlying assumptions faculty had about the role of the conceptual framework in their own courses. Figure 1 represents the original matrix used to prompt candidates to consider multiple aspects of the learning environment (student, teacher, content and context) using different types of reflection (descriptive, interpretive, and critical). Faculty unanimously panned it as being too static and mechanical. Faculty also reported that the matrix form discouraged candidates from considering the interaction of multiple aspects of the learning environment.

	Technical	Interpretative	Critical
Student			
Teacher			
Content			
Context			

Figure 1. Organizing matrix for original conceptual framework.

The second image (Figure 2) shows a pyramid where each face represents an aspect of the learning environment (teacher, student, content and context) that was to be interpreted in multiple ways to support an individual learner. Interestingly, however, the reasons why faculty did not like the new image varied widely and crystallized the differences in how individuals understood the existing conceptual framework. Some

faculty felt the implied role of philosophical reflection was too small since it was visually smaller than the other types of reflection. Others argued that the technical level was short changed since it was on the bottom, with an implication of inferiority. The image provoked important conversation about the implied hierarchical nature of the original documents. Probably the most important qualitative shift in the conceptual framework occurred due to these conversations as it was determined that this hierarchical nature was no longer the dominant understanding of departmental philosophy. In addition, faculty universally agreed that the pyramid image was far too static when the ideal conceptual framework metaphor should emphasize a dynamic process (Cave, A., & Vaccaro, 2010).

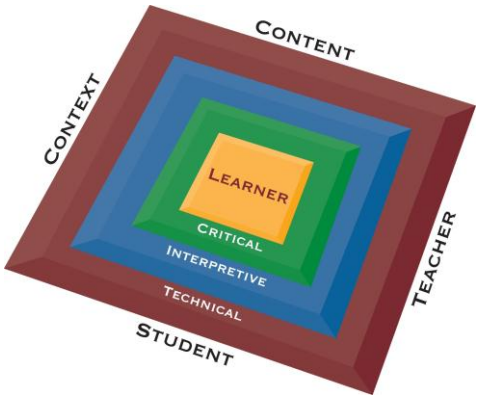

Figure 2. Rejected visual organizer.

That was the first time that faculty became involved in sharing what they wanted the new conceptual framework to include rather than disparaging the earlier framework. The things that faculty wanted to discard were revealing about their own philosophy and preferences and showed that the original conceptual framework structure (regardless of the image used) was not going to be sufficient.

The final image agreed upon (see Figure 3) was a pinwheel. This new image seemed to capture the dynamic and interdependent nature of the components of the new conceptual framework. Its recursive nature allowed and encouraged the user to start the reflective process in any place that felt comfortable or familiar leading to a more complex conceptualization of all components until the cycle could be started again. By breaking the four commonplaces suggested by Schwab (1973) into eight elements, it became easier for faculty to understand how their particular courses and research interests fit into the larger scheme. To select the elements surrounding the P-12 student, the authors looked to the observable outcomes generated far earlier in the revision process.

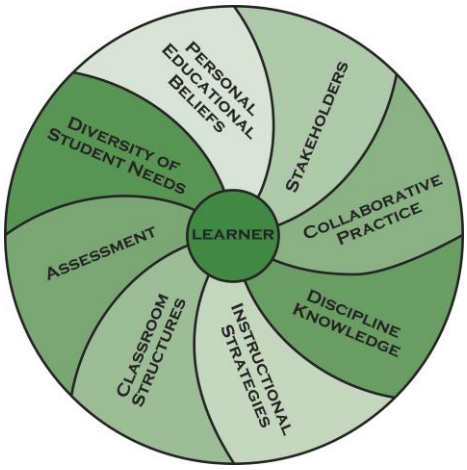

Figure 3. Final visual organizer.

This use of observable outcomes as a tool to revise the conceptual framework is of particular note. There was some discussion if clearly defined outcomes should be the result of a well-constructed conceptual framework rather than using outcomes to shape the framework. It was concluded that it is often easier to ask faculty to describe their ideal graduate and then work backwards to identify common factors. The conceptual framework represents the link between the abstract vision and those desired outcomes. By acknowledging both the starting point (producing reflective practitioners) and the end point (recognizing individual student needs, working well with all stakeholders, having a rich understanding of the role of assessment, etc.), the framework becomes much easier to create.

At that point the conceptual framework became the embodiment of the philosophy of the department as a whole. While all faculty were involved in the narrative component of the conceptual framework to ensure commitment and ownership, the other required accreditation elements (standards, outcomes, unit assessment system, etc.) specific to teacher education programs were completed later. These products were submitted to the general faculty for approval, but the ensuing discussions were relatively superficial compared to those concerning the philosophical component. The process then changed from one of creation to one of implementation.

Transition and Implementation

Once the conceptual framework document had been finalized, the formal version was presented to the departmental and supporting faculty and the professional community, which included a representative from the University's higher administration, the State Board of Education, and the professional development schools. Other sessions were held for cooperating teachers and principals, as well as faculty from other schools and departments who regularly interacted with secondary education candidates. These

stakeholders were briefed, and discussions focused on how new assignments (e.g., electronic portfolios) could demonstrate meaningful reflection on content area material.

Faculty were given individual assistance on how to modify existing assignments to include relevant aspects of the conceptual framework to make the reflective goals more explicit. After the conceptual framework was presented officially and repeatedly to faculty, special work sessions were scheduled in order to address key phases of implementation. For example, faculty mapped out the coverage of conceptual framework and specialized professional association standards in each course of each program. These conversations forced faculty teaching the same courses to collaborate and reach consensus about the primary goals of each course and major assignments. Eventually, faculty teaching the same courses agreed to the content of relevant syllabi and the standards listed in them. All assignment templates and matching scoring guides were updated to reflect the changes to the conceptual framework with expected levels of candidate performance identified. The courses and major assignments were revised to provide a logical sequence of experiences so that each contributed to the development of the specific knowledge, skills, and dispositions important in each course and larger goal of each program.

Special attention was paid to the adjunct professors who worked with candidates in their junior methods classes. Previously, adjuncts tended to focus on the framework only if it had direct bearing on a specific course assignment. Under the new approach, adjuncts, like all other faculty, were expected to have a much more meaningful understanding since the role of the framework had been greatly increased. All professors needed to be able to teach about the framework, to describe how the framework informed and was informed by their own practice, to articulate how the experiences of their class moved the candidates forward in both reflective skills and pedagogy, and to explain how the framework created a larger scheme of which their course was an integral component. The resulting discussions fostered program coherence and collaboration between regular faculty and adjuncts.

Candidates were exposed to the new version of the conceptual framework through formal training sessions at developmentally appropriate levels of intensity. The doctoral candidate met with each undergraduate and graduate cohort to ensure that a consistent message was sent and a common language was used in and out of the teacher education programs. These sessions were popular and well attended. Faculty sitting in on these sessions reported that candidate questions clarified their own understanding and requested additional briefings in other classes. These briefings were especially helpful for faculty who had been teaching the old conceptual framework since it was originally introduced and appreciated the additional exposure when making the transition to the new design.

The intensive mentoring program lasted for a semester and was followed by less frequent follow-up sessions upon request. This level of intensity was possible due to the small size of the department, but even so, the time demands on the presenter became unwieldy. The resources of the University's Centre for Planning and Information Technology were tapped to meet the on-going demands. In addition to the complete text, shorter summary documents were created, a general PowerPoint presentation was shared and two video presentations were made on DVD and on-line. The longer (46-minute)

version was intended to be used as the introductory material for candidates, faculty, and the professional community, and the short (16-minute) version was designed to be a 'review session' (see http://education.cua.edu/tedocs.cfm). It is important to note that these video presentations were not intended to replace the professor's presentations in the classroom. Each professor was expected to discuss how the conceptual framework applied to the course content and specific field experiences. Faculty members were expected to build the conceptual framework into on-going class discussions, not just as a token review at the beginning of the semester. The multimedia and written support materials were considered to be supplemental in nature and to act as a common denominator to ensure consistent use of the language and varying aspects of the framework.

The developmental nature of reflection was acknowledged and built into assignments. While candidates had previously been expected to reflect, they had not been evaluated on their ability to articulate the role of reflection as an important aspect of the teaching process. Reflection moved from an implied goal to an overarching common theme. Data were collected on how well candidates explained the meaning of each component using appropriate terminology.

Special attention was paid to those candidates who were transitioning from the old to new version of the conceptual framework. Faculty planned the transition period to cover a full academic year. During this time, candidates were introduced to the new framework and were encouraged to use it but were allowed to use the old structure as long as their reflection was meaningful. The greatest challenge faced the student teachers who had been exposed to the old version for three years. Their capstone project required the greatest levels of complexity and the most sophisticated reflection. Because the shift in language and approach were fairly significant, the new version was presented, but candidates were given the option of using the old framework. Interestingly enough, the majority of student teachers opted to use the new framework and successfully met or exceeded expectations for its use. During interviews, the student teachers reported that the new structure had rapidly become a key tool in problem solving in their classroom, implying a level of integration that was not expected after so short an exposure.

The accreditation requirements became a natural extension of the ongoing work described above. The programmatic review lent itself well to the creation of the unit assessment system. All revised assignment templates, scoring guides, surveys, and field experience evaluations were entered into an electronic database for efficient data collection and analysis. Active discussion about what should be expected at each stage occurred, and areas of overlap and weakness were identified. Two new key assessments (a thematic unit and electronic portfolio) were created to cover areas identified as underdeveloped and were well received by faculty and candidates.

Observable Outcomes

Feedback from the pre-service teachers in both conversation and written work shows a significant improvement in their abstract understanding of why reflection and critical theory matter and in their concrete application of those ideas to make meaningful

changes in their P-12 classrooms. Faculty began to draw from the extensive performance based data to expand this primarily anecdotal evidence to more systematic empirical examination of candidates' ability to reflect using the framework. Faculty analysis on key assessments provides further evidence for candidates' ability to understand and apply the conceptual framework better and sooner in their program than before. Whereas the original document elegantly combined key theories into a meaningful theoretical framework, the new version shifts the focus of the framework from faculty to candidates and the P-12 experience. One of the most profound outcomes of the reformulation of the conceptual framework was candidates' and graduates' response to the new document. Candidates now seem more enthusiastic about using the new conceptual framework in their assignments as well as out-of-school discussions. The most satisfying experience for faculty was to hear graduates (during induction year) talk about their heavy reliance on the conceptual framework to guide their reflection. Graduates report that they continue using the conceptual framework in their teaching when things go well but especially when they are confronted with difficulties. During the accreditation visit the Board of Examiners (BOE) met some of these candidates and graduates. The BOE members reported their amazement and satisfaction with the candidates' and graduates' ability to articulate the conceptual framework and to use it in a meaningful way in their assignments and practice.

The importance of reflection has been highlighted throughout the program and department. The reflective framework is now a bridge that links assignments, courses, and field experiences. Each course now explicitly delineates the aspects of the framework to be addressed. The framework 'has a voice' now and is utilized more effectively by both faculty and candidates. Given attention on par with other professional standards, the University's conceptual framework standards are now included in syllabi, assignments, and scoring guides. Candidates can explain both the general purpose and the specific details of the framework and thus better understand the structure of their entire course of study.

The following recommendations should help anyone working on a candidate- and faculty-friendly conceptual framework while preparing to meet the accreditation standards.

Recommendations

1. Make the framework **candidate-friendly**. This should result in a document that focuses on theory to application. Candidates should be able to see how general philosophical and theoretical positions have direct observable implications in the P-12 classroom. Candidates should see the framework as a practical tool that can be called on in any educational setting, not just as an arbitrary requirement to be used for a specific assignment.
2. Use desired **outcomes** to shape the framework. These outcomes are the observable consequences of the experiences provided in a teacher education program and are the clearest examples of the living nature of its philosophy. This is the heart of the

conceptual framework and all else will flow naturally from a clear understanding of these desires.

3. Include **all members of the professional community** not just those directly associated with the teacher education program. While the specific elements required by NCATE might be focused on candidate preparation, all those involved in educational research and practice should embrace the overarching philosophical goals. It is essential to note that strict compartmentalization of this process will result in false economy. Candidates should be able to see how the conceptual framework catches the philosophical beliefs that make the institution unique.

4. Think of the conceptual framework as a **tool in your own practice** not just as a scaffolding tool applicable to novice or naïve pre-service educators. If the conceptual framework truly represents philosophy-in-action, it should make all educators more effective. If faculty see the relevance and applicability of the conceptual framework in their own work, the integration of the framework into the courses they teach will be much easier.

5. Include faculty in **group discussions**. Isolated conversations or written feedback often overlook vital points or possible conflicts that come out naturally in the course of spirited conversations. The consequences of these conversations are more than the sum of their parts. Faculty ownership increases significantly as consensus is reached. Again, avoiding intellectual confrontations is a false economy. These talks will also facilitate the transition from the old to new versions because the changes happen gradually and are clearly driven by faculty feedback.

6. Appoint a single faculty member to act as a **ghost-writer** on the framework. This writer should articulate the shared philosophical orientation of the faculty. Consider tasking someone either new to the department or someone who normally works on the fringes of the teacher education programs. This will allow basic assumptions to be questioned in a way impossible by someone who has been using an existing framework for any length of time.

7. Make the creation of a meaningful **visual metaphor** a priority. Visuals allow for an almost tangible conduit for conversation during the revision and subsequent application of the conceptual framework. Initially, use images from other conceptual frameworks to spur conversation.

8. Blend the last two points by presenting **two different visual metaphors** to faculty early in the writing/revising process. This accomplishes two things: first, faculty are sent the message that decisions have not been finalized and their input is essential in making the best possible outcome. Second, the process of comparing the strengths and weaknesses of the two images encourages deep cognitive processing of the implied philosophical conclusions that can be drawn from the conceptual framework.

9. Write the conceptual framework with an eye to **future audiences**. A single passionate author can make up for a number of shortcomings in the written materials, but it is essential to remember the faculty members who will follow. The document and supporting training materials should be explicit enough to stand alone without additional coaching or explanation from the original authors. Later generations might choose to change the conceptual framework, but there should be no doubts about the role and goals of the current document.

10. Plan on an **extensive transition** period. A full academic year is not unreasonable to create supporting materials, such as PowerPoint presentations, handouts, and videos and update all syllabi, assignments, scoring guides, field evaluations, and other pertinent documents. More importantly, all stakeholders need time and scaffold opportunities to fully integrate a new way of thinking into all aspects of their practice. Candidates need to hear how the new framework is integrated with each class and assignment. Faculty will appreciate individual as well as group sessions to explore how courses and assignments can be enriched.

Conclusion

This paper described CUA's efforts to revise its conceptual framework in preparation for its continuing accreditation visit. The initial assumption was that the revision would consist of the patchwork addition of missing components spelled out in NCATE requirements. Instead, CUA faculty chose to completely overhaul the existing conceptual framework changing both structure and content in a meaningful way. This revision was far more time consuming then originally estimated but ultimately worth the effort since the process and resulting document revitalized the entire teacher education program and strengthened the departmental and unit ties.

In sum, the key lessons learned from this experience include the following: 1) use the candidates as the targeted audience, 2) look to desired candidate outcomes to shape structure and content of the framework, 3) choose a writer who can act as a ghost-writer to build consensus, 4) use multiple visual metaphors to deepen faculty understanding and commitment, and 5) plan for an extended transition and implementation phase that targets the specific needs of all stakeholders. The positive results of these lessons can be seen in all aspects of the University's teacher education program and should lead to similar success in other programs.

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