

Conceptual Framework for the Education Department

COLLEGE MISSION

Loyola College in Maryland is a Catholic comprehensive university, in the educational and spiritual traditions of the Society of Jesus and the Religious Sisters of Mercy, dedicated to the ideals of liberal education and the practice of *cura personalis*. The educational mission of Loyola College in Maryland is to challenge students to learn, lead and serve in a diverse and changing world.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT MISSION

Within the Jesuit traditions of intellectual excellence, social justice, ethical responsibility, and *cura personalis*, the Education Department of Loyola College promotes leadership and scholarship in the development of teachers, counselors, administrators, and other educators.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

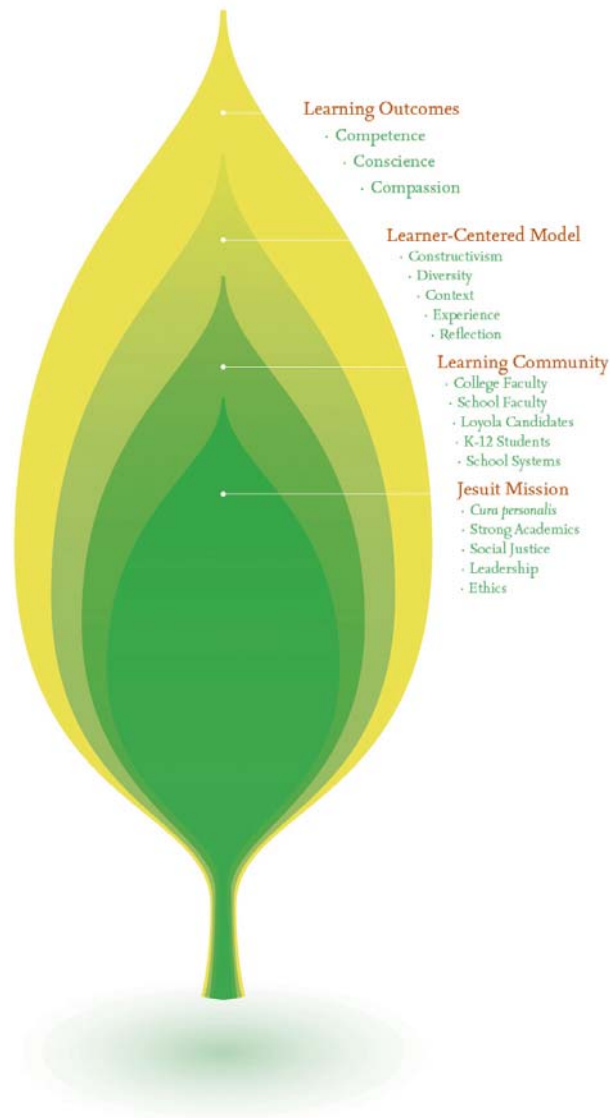
The core mission of the Jesuits has always been a strong conceptual basis for programs offered at Loyola College. Since its inception in the 1949-50 academic year, the Education Department has shared in this basic institutional mission. Prior statements of the department's mission and goals have consistently emphasized the Jesuit mission. Indeed, State of Maryland team members who participated in the 1995 state review of the department have commented that the Jesuit notion of *cura personalis* was evident in the programs, faculty, staff, and students during that visit. As the department has worked to develop this formal conceptual framework in preparation for the first accreditation visit by the NCATE team, it has been clear throughout the discussions that linkage to the college mission and vision remains strong and deep. The very first attempt to articulate the framework focused almost exclusively on Jesuit values and characteristics. As the department has come to understand the expectations for structure and content as outlined by NCATE, the department has worked to articulate and build on this strong foundation, rather than starting anew. As a result, the conceptual framework provides a clear structure for explaining the department's current status and future direction and for conducting ongoing evaluation of its progress toward meeting long-held goals.

The goal that the department has set for its candidates and the organizing phrase for the learning outcomes, *Competence, Conscience, Compassion*, is derived from a statement on Jesuit education by Reverend Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., the leader of the Jesuits (International Commission, 1993). The contemporary Learner-Centered Model that informs the department's foundational perspective and pedagogy is compatible with the concept of Ignatian Pedagogy, the modern blueprint for instruction that is based on the teachings and practices of St. Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Jesuits. The statement of the conceptual framework below represents the formal articulation of a set of beliefs, processes, and goals that have been in place for many years, although they had not been articulated, codified, and shared in such a coherent manner until now. This conceptual

framework is designed to remain a work-in-progress that will continue to serve as both a guide and a litmus test for programs in the department.

Briefly, the conceptual framework states that the Education Department of Loyola College in Maryland envisions an extensive learning community grounded in the values of the Jesuit mission, informed by a learner-centered model of instruction, and seeking to cultivate education leaders of competence, conscience, and compassion.

The key elements of this conceptual framework are embodied in the graphic below and an explanation of the four major elements follows:



Jesuit Mission

As the basis for all work in the college, the Jesuit mission includes a set of five characteristics that are especially important to the programs in the Education Department.

Cura personalis: *Cura personalis* sets a high standard for the department's entire way of being. It implies that Loyola is not in the business of simply preparing excellent teachers and other school personnel; it is equally committed to candidates' personal growth. Faculty encourage candidates to interact with practicing professionals in mentoring relationships, offer opportunities for them to serve the community through course-based service learning projects, and encourage them to develop and give time to personal interests. This not only helps them become better citizens, but better professionals as well — professionals who live out *cura personalis* by caring for their students, staff, and clients, not just delivering a curriculum or providing a service. Furthermore, *cura personalis* is not limited to the relationship between faculty and candidates; it affects the curriculum and the entire life of the department. All members of the learning community, as described below, are concerned with one another and are committed to learn from one another.

Strong academics: Strong academic preparation has been the hallmark of Jesuit education for centuries. At Loyola College in Maryland it is evidenced by the focus on preparing critical thinkers who have a grounding in a rich curriculum. A variety of specific initiatives in the undergraduate division such as the Alpha Program and the Honors Program are evidence of this focus. In the undergraduate programs of the Education Department, the focus on broad and deep academic preparation in the Elementary Education Program and a full academic major at the secondary level demonstrate the department's commitment to this component of the conceptual framework and address the first component of the Maryland *Redesign of Teacher Education*. At the graduate level students are accepted into the program who have demonstrated academic success, and departmental core courses (e.g., Introduction to Educational Research, Philosophy of Education, Learning Theory, and/or Introduction to Special Education) are included in all graduate programs.

Social Justice: In his recent address to representatives of Jesuit colleges and universities, Father Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J. (Kolvenbach, 2000) has reaffirmed the fundamental commitment that Jesuit educational institutions have toward service to those in need. This commitment to social justice can be seen in the department's increased focus on service learning activities and on efforts to increase the opportunities for candidates to work and learn in schools with significant numbers of students who are materially disadvantaged. This component also relates to national and state directives to prepare professionals who can address the needs of all learners.

Leadership: With educational reform as a major focus of state and national government as well as a prime concern of researchers and policy-makers in professional educational organizations, the department accepts the challenge to prepare leaders who can work within established systems to help effect change that is based on sound research and

theory. The faculty recognize that educational institutions resist change and that effective change agents must understand the principles of group dynamics and learn to work with individuals and groups in order to facilitate the change process (Fullan, 1991; Hall and Hord, 1987; Havelock and Zlotolow, 1995). The department readily accepts the college charge to prepare candidates "to lead and serve in a diverse and changing world."

Ethics: Teachers, principals, and other K-12 education professionals can have a powerful influence on the development of a sense of right and wrong in the students they serve. The department recognizes this fact and takes responsibility for preparing candidates to accept the important responsibility of helping students reflect on this aspect of their role in schools. Programs stress professionalism and adherence to professional ethical principles in all areas. But for a Jesuit institution, ethics must go beyond a simple professional code of conduct. In the Jesuit tradition, ethics implies a sense of social justice, a need for service learning, a deep understanding that *cura personalis* truly means that every student is special and has a right to learn.

Learning Community

The 1996 strategic plan for Loyola College describes the institution as a community of learners established in the Jesuit tradition. The Education Department embraces this notion and extends its meaning to include not only the faculty and candidates at Loyola, but also the administrators, teachers, and K - 12 students who are affiliated with the schools and school systems that have become Loyola's educational partners and that host field experiences and internships for candidates. The state and national movement toward the preparation of teachers in Professional Development Schools (PDS), loosely modeled on the classic teaching hospital, calls for close relationships among all professionals involved in the preparation of teachers and other school personnel (Teitle & Del Prete, 1995) . Loyola's commitment to Professional Development Schools, which began with the establishment of a PDS at Rockburn Elementary in June, 1995, and to integrated programs stressing the translation of theory into practice serve as the clearest examples of what it means to be a learning community.

College faculty: The Education Department has sought to balance its need for strong academics, close connections to traditional teaching disciplines, and extensive school-based experience by establishing a professional education faculty with multiple roles and appropriate backgrounds. Recent changes in the definition of clinical faculty status have been implemented in an effort to broaden the more traditional scope of faculty as established in the Loyola College Faculty Handbook. These new roles are defined in the Policy Handbook of the Education Department. College-based professional education faculty have the primary responsibility for establishing and delivering the curriculum in both initial and advanced programs and for ensuring that school-based faculty and faculty from other departments in the College of Arts and Sciences are involved in all aspects of this effort.

School faculty: Each Professional Development School that is a partner with Loyola College forms a Steering Committee that meets to develop an overall plan for the

implementation of the partnership. Intern placement, professional development opportunities, and assessment activities are all part of the purpose of these committees. Each PDS has a site coordinator who works closely with the college coordinator towards full implementation of the PDS standards. Action research and an increase in professional development opportunities are goals for the future as the department moves to broaden collaboration between college and school faculty.

Loyola candidates: The education of degree/certification candidates at the undergraduate and graduate levels is the primary reason for the existence of the department. Faculty focus on the attainment of the learning outcomes (Competence, Conscience, Compassion) presented here for all candidates in Initial Teacher Education as well as the Advanced preparation programs of the department. Loyola graduates and program completers represent the work of the department and serve as the primary examples of its success.

K-12 students: The Learner-Centered Model discussed below puts the ultimate focus of all programs on the students that Loyola graduates will serve in their roles as teachers, counselors, administrators, and specialists in the schools. Preparation that ensures that all graduates are ready to meet the needs of all types of students is central to program efforts.

School systems: School systems, both public and private, have the primary responsibility for determining curriculum and the delivery systems in which graduates will work. Through extended efforts to incorporate state and system-specific needs and goals into all programs faculty both influence and assist these systems in achieving their ultimate goals.

Learner-centered Model

The individual student, no matter what he or she brings to the classroom or clinic in terms of ability, experience, background, or status, is the focus of the philosophy, theory, and pedagogy that is offered to candidates who enroll in departmental programs (APA Board of Educational Affairs, 1997). This learner-centered model blends contemporary understandings of how people learn with modern interpretations of what a Jesuit educational approach entails. It forms a coherent set of principles about how people learn, both as students and throughout their lives, that bridges educational philosophy, psychological theory, and pedagogy. Five key elements are identified as components of this model.

Constructivism: A significant body of research from a variety of disciplines documents that human knowledge widens and deepens as we build links between new information and experience and what we already know (Bransford et al, 2000; Lambert and McCombs, 1997; Sandholz et al., 1997). We add to, adjust, or reorganize existing knowledge as we gather new information from a variety of experiences and interactions. These processes vary in different subject areas and among individuals with varying aptitudes, motivations, and skills; however, it is only when the new information becomes connected to the learner's prior knowledge and understanding that true learning takes

place. If new knowledge remains inert, i.e., isolated from that which is already known, it cannot be used effectively and it does not transfer readily to new situations. Because of the critical importance of each unique individual making connections to his/her existing knowledge, this model stresses issues of student diversity.

Diversity: The core constructivist principles of learning apply to all individuals at all stages in life, but many other personal and societal variables also influence learning as we consider individual students. While each student is born with and develops his/her own abilities, new preferences for learning conditions also arise through cultural transmission and school experiences. Careful attention to these individual characteristics of each student in the classroom increases the likelihood of planning and creating effective learning environments. When students perceive that their individual differences are valued, respected, and accommodated by the teacher, as they are when faculty implement the concept of *cura personalis*, levels of motivation and achievement are likely to be optimized. The constructivist approach and its accompanying focus on diversity leads to the recognition of the importance of the context in which learning takes place.

Context: In colloquial terms, the focus on context refers to the notion of "meeting students where they are" — recognizing that, within a constructivist perspective, that is essentially where students will begin whether we acknowledge it or not. This focus stands in stark contrast to what Rogers (1969) rejects as "jug-and-mug" instruction, what Friere (1970) deplors as the "banking" model of education, and what purely receptive, curriculum-centered approaches to education espouse. It is, at the same time, entirely consistent with contemporary Jesuit pedagogy as described in *Ignatian Pedagogy: A Practical Approach* (1995), which "consistently maintains the importance and integrity of the interrelationship of teacher, learner and subject matter within the real context in which they live and stresses the importance of the effort to integrate theory, method, and practice in preparing effective practitioners."

Experience: Working within the context in which we find each student, it is experience that provides the starting point for constructing new knowledge. The central role of experience in education was described by Dewey (1938). It establishes the basis for the pedagogies of active learning, discovery learning, problem-based learning and generative learning — all viable formats for building sound knowledge structures for diverse learners. Experiential learning through simulation, case studies, field work, internships, and service learning provides candidates with the opportunity to grasp new ideas in terms of what they already know and engages them in the process. Experience also provides the material for reflection.

Reflection: Reflection goes hand in hand with experience in a successful learning situation. Careful reflection on all aspects of the learning experience is an essential component of the learner-centered model. It involves both the teacher and the learner. Reflection allows for assessment of progress toward goals and serves a self-monitoring, metacognitive function. Candidates are led to reflect on their own learning, on what they see in practice during observations, practica, and internships, and on the effects of their work on the students with whom they interact. Instructors, supervisors, and mentors all

provide constructive, critical feedback on candidate performance and encourage analysis of strengths and weaknesses in performance throughout all programs offered by the Education Department.

The last three components of this learner-centered model echo the components of the contemporary description of Ignatian Pedagogy, which “stresses the importance of the local context for planning effective instruction and encourages a continuous learning system that includes guided reflection on carefully planned experiences, critical thinking, and ongoing formative assessment.”

Competence, Conscience, Compassion

This component of the framework establishes the goal of the department's efforts and identifies the eight general learning outcomes that faculty look for in graduates of all programs. These outcomes outline the knowledge, skills, and dispositions expected of candidates and they are consistent with the mission and the philosophical and pedagogical model. They also align well with state and national standards for the preparation of teachers and other school personnel (G.103). These outcomes form the basis for the department's developing unit assessment system. They are listed here in a general format that takes on unique meaning in each of the department's programs.

I. Competence

- I.A. Possesses Broad Knowledge
 - I.A.1. Foundations
 - I.A.2. Content
 - I.A.3. Pedagogy/Service Delivery
- I.B. Creates Productive Learning Environments
 - I.B.1. Adapts Instruction/Service to Student Needs
 - I.B.2. Considers Student Background and Special Needs
 - I.B.3. Incorporates Technology
 - I.B.4. Communicates Effectively
 - I.B.5. Assesses Outcomes
- I.C. Reflects on Practice
- I.D. Displays Leadership
- I.E. Forms Community Relationships

II. Conscience

- II.A. Behaves Ethically
- II.B. Is Committed to Social Justice
 - II.B.1. Advocates for Students

III. Compassion

- III.A. Exemplifies *Cura personalis*
 - III.A.1. Respects the Whole Person: Mind, Body, and Spirit
 - III.A.2. Provides Service to Others
 - III.A.3. Shows concern for all learners

HIGHLIGHTS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

- September, 1995 MSDE Program Approval visit; *Cura personalis* theme came through clearly and strongly as the unifying theme of the department.
- July 21, 2000. Draft document focusing on articulating the Jesuit Mission as conceptual framework was presented to departmental meeting for review and discussion.
- July 24, 2000 (Ed. Dept. Mtg.), Mission statement drafted, discussed, debated, and approved
- August 21-24, 2000. Dr. Delclos and Sr. Sharon Wall attend NCATE Institutional Orientation in Washington DC. Attend working sessions on conceptual framework with Erskin Dottin
- March 12, 2000, April 10, 2000, June 12, 2000, July 24, 2000, February 12, 2001, September 10, 2001, September 24, 2001, October 8, 2001, November 12, 2001, December 10, 2001, Presentations and discussions of CF at Education Department meetings
- September 10, 2001 (Ed. Dept. Mtg.), Triangular Draft of CF circulated on Education listserv and discussed
- September 24, 2001 (Ed. Dept. Mtg.), Circular draft of CF circulated on Education listserv and discussed
- October 10, 2001 (listserv), Linear graph of CF circulated and discussed
- September 24, 2001 (Ed. Dept. Mtg.), September 25, 2001 (listserv), October 8, 2001 (Ed. Dept. Mtg.), Debate over Ignatian Pedagogy and discussions with students and PDS mentors leads to combined focus on learner centered model and pedagogy.
- October 8, 2001 (Ed. Dept. Mtg. page 3), Draft approved
- November 12, 2001 (Ed. Dept. Mtg.), Outcomes from CCC goal listed and tied to standards for inclusion in assessment plan
- January 15, 2002 (listserv notification), Graphic redesigned and distributed.
- Ongoing, Sharing of CF with constituents and stakeholders
- Ongoing, Referencing to CF added to syllabi