

UVI School of Education

Philosophy

The philosophy of the School of Education which dates back to 1982 retains its original intent which is rooted in the unit's vision and mission and is consistent with the mission of the institution which states that the institution is learner-centered and demands excellent teaching. In fact, the unit believes that quality education depends in large upon teaching competence, and since the effectiveness of teachers depends in large measure upon the quality of the education to which they are exposed by institutions responsible for producing them, it is logical that efforts to prepare professional school personnel to cope with the pressing issues of present living in this society, as well as with anticipated change, should originate in the Professional Education Unit which has been charged with the responsibility for educating professional school personnel.

Further, the institution and unit believe that school professional preparation should be basically liberal arts, supplemented by a specialized curriculum that addresses the needs of the school professional, and that the primary need of today's professional is a well-rounded knowledge base which provides one with the ability to deal with the complexities of the modern world. Specialization, therefore, is to supply that theoretical and practical knowledge which provides tools necessary for competent practice of the profession.

We believe that the curriculum is patterned on the educational system of the United States and based on theoretical practices and socioeconomic milieu of the local system of education and societal characteristics peculiar to the Virgin Islands as a microstate. This position is based upon the principles that a) with regard to the specifics of the program, the general education requirements will provide largely for the liberal arts component, with the addition of special courses in the social sciences, science, and mathematics. This component is to provide that part of a student's total education which looks first of all to the student's life as a responsible human being and as a citizen; b) the professional component, that part which looks to a student's occupational competence, should emphasize knowledge of human development and learning, and the development of teaching competencies through consistent and cumulative field-based experiences, supported by knowledge of curriculum and of designs for teaching/learning; c) a logically formulated and clearly articulated philosophy must be the basis for deliberate approaches to both the reorientation of present teachers and the orientation of future teachers in an attempt to ensure responsiveness in the delivery of educational services.

To this end, the purpose of the unit is to prepare professionals who are leaders that are reflective and active learners and that are committed to the enabling of students academic development and success. Specifically, the unit, through its identified goals, commits itself to prepare candidates:

1. that are reflective and are capable of evaluating their choices, actions and decisions in the learning process and that engage in opportunities for professional growth.
2. that are equipped to assume the role of enabler of student learning, by they themselves having an in depth understanding of specific content matter as well as professional and pedagogical content knowledge and skills that can be applied to student learning.
3. that are active learners and that engage in critical thinking and that demonstrate an awareness of research and that use research-based best practices to inform teaching and learning.
4. that are leaders that are capable of initiating relationships with school colleagues, parents, and the community to support student learning.

Candidates Proficiencies

The four themes that follow are consistent with the institutional standards, NCATE standards, and Specialized Professional Standards, guide the statements that describe the institution and unit's expectation of candidates and graduates. These themes and learner outcomes below were developed by the unit and other stakeholders responsible for the preparation of candidates in the professional unit. Each outcome reflects the alignment of candidates' proficiencies with the institutional and professional standards for initial and advanced programs.

Theme 1: The Professional as Reflective

1. The candidate engages in opportunities for professional growth.
2. The candidate uses his strength and weaknesses as learning tools to modify and make appropriate adjustments to instruction.
3. The candidate is willing to give and accept constructive criticism.
4. The candidate evaluates the effects of choices and decisions on students and others.

Theme 2: The Professional as an Enabler of Student Learning

1. The candidate respects and values all learners.
2. The candidate plans and organizes student activities and experiences for full participation of all learners.
3. The candidate selects and uses teaching strategies that respond to student individual needs and learning styles.
4. The candidate has an in depth understanding of subject matter content, pedagogical content knowledge as well as professional knowledge and skills.
5. The candidate constructs learning environments that are learner centered, and that encourage positive social interaction, collaborative engagement and self-motivation.
6. The candidate demonstrates sensitivity to diversity.
7. The candidate understands how children learn and develop.
8. The candidate uses knowledge of how children learn to plan for instruction and assessment.
9. The candidate selects, develops, and uses formal and informal assessment strategies to evaluate student learning, strengthen instruction and decision making.

Theme 3: The Professional as an Active Learner

1. The candidate engages students in critical thinking and problem solving opportunities.
2. The candidate demonstrates an awareness of research and research-based best practices and uses this to inform instruction and adjust teaching to fit.
3. The candidate appreciates context and relevance of teaching and learning experiences. The needs of all children.
4. The candidate uses knowledge of effective verbal, non-verbal and media communication strategies to promote learning.

Theme 4: The Professional as a Leader

1. The candidate shows initiative and self-motivation in leadership.
2. The candidate establishes cooperative partnerships with school colleagues, parents, and the community to support student learning.
3. The candidate demonstrates caring dispositions toward all students.