

**MOREHEAD STATE UNIVERSITY
PROGRAM REVIEW**

EDUCATION SPECIALIST DEGREE (Ed.S.)

IN

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

(for teachers certified P-5 or 5-9)

Leads to Rank I Certification

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2002

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INTRODUCTION

The graduate programs in education at Morehead State University are based on the conception that the mastery of the discipline of teaching is an on-going, life-long process. The university's role in this process is to provide graduate education programs designed to: 1) extend experienced teachers' knowledge in their chosen area of specialization; 2) increase their understanding of the developmental and learning needs of their students in a pluralistic society; 3) empower teachers through recent trends and research to make good decisions about the experiences of the learners with whom they work. The Education Specialist Degree in Elementary Education encompasses this process as it focuses on extending the learning of teachers certified to work with students enrolled in grades P-9.

Empowering teachers, in compliance with current trends, in educational experiences to lead all learners to have the opportunities to succeed in classrooms is the premise for this program. Within this premise is the operative concept of "all" students; thus, the empowerment is centered on those educational experiences that will lead students to be life-long learners in academic and social arenas.

I. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The central metaphor of the conceptual framework for MSU's teacher education unit is Educator as Architect: Designing Environments Where Students Construct Knowledge and Develop Skills. This metaphor is intended to convey a consistent theme of constructivism that recurs throughout our programs and provides a degree of unity and consistency. That theme may be more pervasive in our Education Specialist Degree in Curriculum and Instruction than any other, as may be evident from the titles of core courses. EDEL 685 Collaboration for Teachers certainly ties into the idea of a community of learners rather than stand-alone dispensers of information, an idea which is recurrent in constructivist literature. EDEL 681 Advanced Seminar in Contemporary Educational Thought is designed to allow candidates to explore independently and in a community of learners themes introduced in the earlier History and Philosophy of Education course. The emphasis is on candidates exploring topics they find meaningful, and the amount of independent work is consistent with constructivist epistemologies. Similarly, the two-semester sequence of action research courses (EDUC 677 Applied Research for Classroom Teachers I and EDUC 678 Applied Research for Classroom Teachers II) is designed as a learning by doing experience built around one's own classroom needs. It is intended to help teachers become reflective problem solvers of their own instructional problems. The final course, a capstone, EDEL 686 Seminar for Experienced Teachers in Grades P - 9 was created as a culminating experience where teachers reflect upon, consolidate, and apply the things they have learned in their programs. In addition to the opportunities to take ownership over individual topics and projects

in these core courses, candidates have 12 hours of electives in their programs from which they can further pursue their own professional interests and needs. Again, the recurring emphases upon choices, ownership, application, and reflection are all reflective of the constructivist theme.

II. PROGRAM EXPERIENCES

Graduates of the Education Specialist in Curriculum and Instruction program are encouraged to continually reflect and grow in the areas specified by the Kentucky Experienced Teacher Standards (Kentucky Department of Education, 1999). The teachers enrolled in this program have completed a Master's Degree and bring a broad knowledge base which is expanded and deepened through continued nurturance of a commitment to professional development. Through the combination of courses such as EDEL 681 Advanced Seminar in Contemporary Educational Thought and EDUC 677/EDUC 678 Applied Research for Teachers I and II, graduates of this program are required to attain a deeper understanding of philosophical issues central to professional development and then implement new strategies for instruction. The requirement of critical reflection and strategy development leads to growth in the designing and planning instruction, creating and maintaining productive learning climates, the integration of technology, and planning for further educational change. The matrix on the following page outlines those courses that place particular emphasis on specific Experienced Teacher Standards. Although single graduate courses may emphasize particular standards over others, taken as a whole, these courses consistently require candidates of this program to return to the Experienced Teacher Standards. Flexibility in elective options provides further opportunity for candidates in this program to choose from a range of options to pursue particular interests, needs, and opportunities for further professional growth.

Additionally, as the program was designed, the curriculum was centered around the five core propositions established by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. These propositions express that effectiveness, knowledge, skills, dispositions, and commitments to their students are central to affectively enhance learning in the classroom:

- Teachers are committed to students and their learning.
- Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.
- Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.
- Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.
- Teachers are members of learning communities.