

Subp. 1. Standards for Program Design and Improvement

Standard 1.

The unit must ensure each program has a clear and consistent conceptual framework threaded throughout the program that is research-based, results-oriented, and focused on the skills teachers need to be effective.

Evidence

The FDLTCC Conceptual Framework (CF)

Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College's Elementary Education program is grounded in a clear, consistent, and research-based Conceptual Framework CF: [FDLTCC Unit and Conceptual Framework 2026](#)) that is woven throughout coursework, field experiences, assessments, and program decisions. The framework centers Anishinaabe ways of knowing, culturally responsive teaching, and evidence-based instructional practices aligned to Minnesota's Standards of Effective Practice (SEPs). The CF ensures candidates build the skills necessary to be effective in diverse K-6 classrooms.

FDLTCC's CF emphasizes:

Teacher effectiveness grounded in the MN SEPs for the Unit design and Conceptual Framework were collaboratively developed through discussions with the Dadibaakonigewin (local Indigenous advisory committee, [WINHEC Final Self Study- Sent.pdfpg. 57](#)) and the FDLTCC AASC (college curriculum committee ([Advisory Meeting](#))) from initial conception through approval by MN PELSB accreditation and continue to be reviewed when necessary.

The continuation of the design of the FDLTCC Elementary Education Conceptual Framework (CF) and the seven cultural standards and professional outcomes shape and map out the unit's elementary education curriculum. Faculty take that curriculum and use a culturally responsive approach to pedagogy to reinforce the values of Anishinaabe culture, traditions, and ways of knowing throughout the content and includes professional dispositions required of the unit's teacher candidates ([Dispositions.pdf](#)). The cultural standards also reflect the ways that the units' faculty incorporate local ways of knowing and teaching into their practice. This can be seen with the use of the local environment and community resources to link what they are teaching to the everyday lives of the candidates, as well as using indigenous knowledge as part of the foundation for the curriculum.

Culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) "recognizes students' differences, validates students' cultures, and asserts that cultural congruence of classroom practices increase student success in schools" (Ragoonaden, 2017, p. 24). It is an approach that that focuses classroom curricula and practice on students' cultural frames of reference (Gay 2010; 2013). While Indigenous teachings is focused specifically on Indigenous knowledge, it also compliments and reinforces CRP.

Indigenous knowledge provides that every student whether Aboriginal or not, is unique in his or her learning capacities, learning styles, and knowledge bases. Knowledge is not what some possess and others do not; it is a resourceful capacity of being that creates the context and texture of life. Thus, knowledge is not a commodity that can be possessed or controlled by educational institutions, but is a living process to be absorbed and understood (Battiste 2002, p. 15).

According to Barnhardt and Kawagley (2008) Indigenous knowledge comprises the “information that people in a given community, based on experience and adaptation to a local culture and environment, have developed over time, and continue to develop. This knowledge is used to sustain the community and its culture and to maintain the genetic resources necessary for the continued survival of the community” (pp. 235-236).

In addition, Arsenault et al., 2018; Diver et al., 2019; Kovach, 2009; McGregor, 2014; Tobias, 2009; Wilson, 2008 emphasize the two-eyed seeing approach to employ more holistic research approaches used in Indigenous methodologies. And encourages reciprocal learning through knowledge exchange-between Indigenous community members and academic researchers as well as within Indigenous communities.

As stated in the Conceptual framework:

The FDLTCC Education Unit is unique in that it focuses on Indigenous knowledge from the Anishinaabe perspective and incorporates CRP and supported by the Dadibaakonigewin committee (Seasonal Dadibaakonigewin Meeting 2.9.22), while at the same time effectively weaving state standards into the curriculum in order to strike a balance between formal and non-formal, and between traditional and modern teaching methods. It is also important to note that while the unit is focused on Indigenous knowledge and CRP, it is also grounded in professional theory and current research applied to the educational settings (e.g. Dewey, Vygotsky, Piaget, Gardner, Darling-Hammond, and Freire). The unit faculty provides teacher candidates with the academic and pedagogical context to integrate research and standards-based curricula into practice and provides knowledge on how Anishinaabe cultural, linguistic, ethnic and experiential backgrounds contribute to solving problems. Key assessments linked to state standards ensure that teacher candidates demonstrate the ability to work with students, families and community in ways that reflect the various proficiencies ethical behaviors, and dispositions expected of them as professional educators, as well as the understanding and values that are consistent with the belief that all students can learn.

The CF is continually monitored and updated through syllabus revisions (AASC 03_09_23) and integration of new materials. Websites and literature that emphasize Anishinaabe ways of knowing and culturally responsive standards prepare future educators with MN teaching licenses for professionals.

Importance of Indigenous Knowledge in Teacher Education Programs

Few pre-service teacher education programs have “developed any insight into the diversity of the legal, political, and cultural foundations” of Indigenous peoples. In addition, most teacher education programs incorporate Indigenous knowledge as a component of multicultural education, if it is addressed at all. Therefore, when teachers encounter cultural difference, they have very little theory, scholarship, research, or practice to draw upon when working with Indigenous students, their parents, and the community (Battiste, 2005, p. 5).

It has long been assumed that Native teachers can provide the necessary Indigenous resources and knowledge. However, it is important to note that most Native educators have been trained in the same

teacher training program as all other teachers and come with their own diverse histories and experiences related to Indigenous knowledge. Battiste and McLean (2005) noted that:

They [Native educators] receive the same Eurocentric mainstreamed education as other teachers, but are expected to be the solution to the systemic issues affecting students' disaffection with education. Some teachers may speak the students' native language, but they receive little or no language methodologies and cultural pedagogies in conventional teacher preparation. Few universities offer the theories or methodologies, or protocols on learning diverse skills capable of withstanding multiple forces of racism with caring, love, and respect (p. 8).

The unit recognizes that Native teacher candidates may differ significantly in terms of understanding their history, language, and cultural practices. The unit's conceptual framework takes into consideration these differences and scaffolds Indigenous teachings and knowledge into the curriculum and uses CRP to support their teacher candidates as they attain knowledge and skills needed to be effective educators.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Multicultural education that is focused on recognition and inclusion has shifted to a more intentional paradigm of culturally responsive pedagogy. CRP "relies on educators connecting to their students' backgrounds, building on students' home dialects and languages, planning for dialogic instruction, attending to classroom discourse, and maintaining a rigorous curriculum" (Richardson & Dinkins, 2014, p. 59). CRP requires that educators understand the cultural practices and backgrounds of diverse students CRP "recognizes students' differences, validates students' cultures, and asserts that cultural congruence of classroom practices increase students' success in schools" (Ragoonaden, 2017, p. 47).

With the review of the latest research to assist in growing teachers for the future of all communities, much collaboration with the advisory committees, cultural committees, and the faculty committees, the FDLTCC Elementary Education program has designed a program for all students to be prepared for the future.

The CF was collaboratively developed through a multi-year process that included: Monthly meetings with the Education staff (El Ed meeting) faculty meetings allowed for the beginning of the new unit for the Elementary Education program to begin and grow the program from the two-year AS degree to the four years. Adjustments to resources, recommendations from the community and partner schools as well as the Local Indigenous advisory council have added the experience and resources to make changes to the program in small increments. Continuous attendance with Professional Development as well as presentations at local, state and national conferences with worldly knowledge to incorporate into the classrooms from faculty within the program that have knowledge and the local cultural experts to be a component of the program as it grows.

The CF is explicitly integrated across the entire program—not only in introductory courses—and is reinforced through key assessments (Key Assessments) that are interweaved with cultural standards throughout the curriculum in this Elementary program. In each area from orientation and advising

through coursework, field and clinical experience and assessments, there are many opportunities for students to demonstrate the CF of the program.

FDLTCC's CF is intentionally results-oriented in the following ways: aligning to the K-6 outcomes, implementing structured literacy and evidence-based reading practices, use of assessments to drive instruction, and to prepare future teachers for safe, inclusive, and culturally sustaining classrooms. Throughout the four years of the Elementary Education program, students were engaged with culturally responsive classrooms for field work and student teaching processes. The student surveys and supervisor surveys will demonstrate the engagement for this process. The dispositions demonstrate the progressions throughout the program (Dispositions.).

The data driven practices that include yearly assessments (FDLTCC Program Review), change of syllabus, when necessary, feedback from the advisory groups(FDLTCC EI Ed Advisory Agenda Nov 13 2025) and new research as the program grows help to guide and review what is working, what needs to be reassessed and what progress has been made. As stated by

Grant and Gibson (2011) they found that that the best predictors of success in education are life experiences, attitudes, disposition toward difference, and a commitment at individual and institutional levels to embody an inclusive pedagogical practice such as CRP. CRP is not a type of pedagogy that could be turned on and off but rather requires a continued exchange of ideas and requires careful classroom planning. In pre-service teacher education programs, mentorship within teacher education program as well as teacher candidate collaboration is key to successfully implementing CRP.

To support the updated data driven practices this last response to summarize the importance of an Indigenous perspective intertwined within the CRP and key assessments (Key Assessments) allows for the intertwining of these efforts.

With continued efforts Smith, Diver, and Reed (SAGE 2023) emphasize to use personal experiences to normalize the two-eyed seeing from a variety of perspectives, we are working from our own experiences, we are also coming to our analysis through the lens of basketweaving and ceremonial trails. We also draw on years of experience working through an allied approach to ecocultural revitalization in these domains, which include using science and engaging in dominant systems (p. 1-2).

In summary the FDLTCC's Elementary Education program maintains a research-based, results-oriented conceptual framework that: is deeply grounded in Indigenous knowledge systems, aligned with MN Statutes 122A.092 and MN Rule 8710.2000, prepares teachers with the essential knowledge and skills necessary for effective practice, is explicitly integrated across coursework, clinical practice, assessments, professional development, and program governance, ensures continuous improvement the responsiveness to community and K-6 needs. This framework guides every program element and ensures that graduates become effective, culturally responsive educators prepared to teach and advocate for all learners.
