

Undergraduate Belief Statements with Professionally Congruent Practices
Initial Candidates 1.13.05

We believe professional educators:

1. possess the underlying disposition that learning and personal growth is achievable and expected for all.
Pedagogically congruent practice: Educators holding this belief have high expectations for all students' learning, resist "giving up" on students, and avoid making excuses if students fail to learn. This belief is apparent in their knowledge of the psychology of learning and motivation. It is also apparent in the skills used in choosing a variety of teaching and assessment strategies appropriate for the learning needs of all students. This knowledge and these skills include but are not limited to: strategies for grouping for learning, models of teaching, the use of a variety of learning materials, and an awareness of diverse learning modalities.
2. possess the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to facilitate learning in the content areas they teach.
Pedagogically congruent practice: Educators holding this belief seek competence and understanding of concepts, skills, and processes of the disciplines included in their endorsement areas. They are ready and able to think on their feet. Their command of relevant technology and content yields a level of confidence that permits experimentation with teaching approaches while it encourages the construction of understanding on the part of students through the organization, orchestration, and presentation of interconnected ideas. In addition, they assess their own teaching and its effect on the learning of all students.
3. value different ways of knowing.
Pedagogically congruent practice: Educators holding this belief use the objective scientific tradition, rational evidence-based argument, as well as intuitive, human connections that involve knowing from accumulated cultural wisdom. They are able to diagnose, assess, and facilitate student learning as dependent on a range of contextual variables, i.e. past experiences, cultural predispositions, new information, local context, etc., and are able to select and implement appropriate instructional approaches to fit their students' various ways of knowing. These educators appreciate and value culturally-bound knowing and use this understanding in their interactions with learners.
4. utilize appropriate interpersonal communications.
Pedagogically congruent practice: Educators holding this belief have highly effective interactive communication skills. They easily engage in and foster positive interactions aimed to strengthen relationships between and among people enabling them to contribute to the creation of strong families, communities, and governing entities. They get to know all their students well. Communicate in a positive way; provide instructive feedback that helps students improve as learners; and demonstrate respect for, and a commitment to, the cultures and communities from which students come.
5. engage in and promote life-long learning.
Pedagogically congruent practice: Educators holding this belief are intrinsically motivated to think critically, to make decisions, to learn independently, to use the reliable resources at their disposal, including technology, and to continue to develop mentally, physically, and emotionally. Educators who hold this belief possess the disposition to habituate the acquisition of knowledge and instructional skills through critical and reflective thinking, professional reading, and action research using both traditional and technological methods. In short, educators who hold this belief exhibit a love of learning in every pedagogical decision they make. By extension, professional educators promote and foster this love of learning in all students.
6. demonstrate a caring attitude.
Pedagogically congruent practice: Educators holding this belief exhibit an ethic of caring in everything they do. They look for the good in students. They recognize students for their efforts at thinking critically as well as for their desire to participate. They are careful in their recognition; they rarely praise individual students publicly, use private, specific praise sparingly, encourage students frequently, and dignify student's answers when they are incorrect. Their classrooms are positive, learner-centered environments where students are active, curious, successful risk-takers and decision-makers. Educators who hold this belief recognize the importance of shifting the responsibility for much of what goes on in the classroom from the teacher to the student. They recognize that conflict is how students learn to solve problems, build positive-self esteem and create a sense of self-efficacy. Therefore, they avoid punishment, coercion, sarcasm, ridicule and manipulation with rewards. They encourage students to reflect on the choices they make and the consequences of their actions for themselves and for others. Their goal is to help students develop the same caring attitude for themselves, their fellow community members, and more distant global populations.
7. value diversity.
Pedagogically congruent practice: Educators holding this belief encourage and seek different ways of perceiving, knowing, and valuing. The content and instructional strategies chosen represent a sophisticated selection process that legitimates the experiences, needs, histories, and learning preferences of diverse populations across the full range of traditional school subjects. As well, the instructional approaches of professional educators are marked by sensitivity to potential learning roadblocks such as differing language backgrounds, and cultural ways of perceiving, knowing and valuing skills and information.

8. promote and assess student growth through experience.

Pedagogically congruent practice: Educators holding this belief continually plan and implement assessment strategies that serve to evaluate student development. In addition, they assess their own teaching and its effect on the learning of all students. They systematically inquire and reflect, using assessment feedback, to improve their teaching. Educators who hold this belief are disposed to vary their teaching episodes and assessments according to the developmental level, learning preferences, and modalities of their students. Educators know and are skilled in the use of teaching strategies and assessments that continually challenge and provide feedback before, during, and after learning activities. These include, but are not limited to, knowledge and skill in using integrated learning units, technology, learning cycle approach, cooperative learning approaches, direct instructional approaches, and multi-sensory approaches.

9. value a "real world" approach to educational practice informed by past and future perspectives.

Pedagogically Congruent Practice: Educators holding this belief recognize that knowledge is not static-that it has been shaped and re-shaped according to changing conditions. This recognition yields an understanding of the fact that the "real world" is encountered in ways not particularly discernible by a single-subject perspective. Consequently, educators who hold this belief integrate school subjects to produce curricular relevance and thereby increase student leverage over problems common to the human condition.

10. use technology to promote learning.

Pedagogically Congruent Practice: Educators holding this belief continually explore and evaluate innovative technologies and use them appropriately to help all students learn.