

SALISH KOOTENAI COLLEGE

DIVISION OF EDUCATION



Conceptual Framework

2023

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Education Division Conceptual Framework

Introduction

Description of the College

Salish Kootenai College (SKC) is located in scenic Pablo, Montana, at the center of the Flathead Indian Reservation. The Flathead Reservation is surrounded on the east, west and south by mountains. To the north is the majestic Flathead Lake, the largest natural freshwater lake west of the Mississippi. Winding its way through the reservation from north to south is the lovely Flathead River. The Flathead Indian Reservation is home to the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. The tribes include the Séliš (Salish), Q̓lispé (Pend d'Oreille) and Ksanka (Kootenai) tribes and this region is their aboriginal territory with land tenure from time immemorial (SQCC, 2003). The 1.3 million acre reservation is home to approximately 5,000 enrolled members of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. Another almost 3,000 members live outside of the reservation (tribalnations.mt.gov).

Established in 1977, Salish Kootenai College enrolled 648 students in Fall 2023. Enrollment over the past 7 years averaged 693 students with a range from 835 to 618, driven by economic forces. The Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges granted initial accreditation to Salish Kootenai College in December, 1984; the most recent reaffirmed regional accreditation by NWCCU was in 2021. The first accredited bachelor's degree program at Salish Kootenai College was added in 1998. In 2023, SKC boasts 57 degree or certificate programs, with fully 18 of them full four-year bachelor degrees. Salish Kootenai College is a member of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC), the Association Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, the American Council on Education, the American Association of Community Colleges, the American Association of Higher Education (AAHE), the Collaboration for the Advancement of College Teaching and Learning, the Council for Opportunity in Education, the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, the National Association of College and University Business Officers and the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges.

Establishment of the College

The Tribal Council of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes established Salish Kootenai College (SKC) in 1977 to address the need for culturally responsive postsecondary education programs for Indigenous peoples residing on the Flathead Indian Reservation (SKC Catalog, Exhibit A). The Séliš (Salish), Q̓lispé (Pend d'Oreille) and Ksanka (Kootenai) tribes have had a long history of formal western education that was neither culturally sustaining nor respectful of Indigenous ways of knowing and practices.

A recent SKC Elementary Education graduate, Sarah Anderson (now a teacher in a local school), summarized the first efforts for formal education on the Flathead Reservation in a research paper in fulfillment of her degree.

The Boarding School Era began in the latter half of the nineteenth century as a result of the American Indian assimilation movement headed by the United States government. Many people viewed Indians as uncivilized and as savages. They believed that the only way to fix them was to completely take away their language, their traditions, and as much of their culture as possible. Boarding schools quickly became the ideal way for the government to accomplish this task because they could begin to shape Indian children into who they wanted at a very young age. The purpose of boarding schools is explained in the following quote: “[boarding schools were] the institutional manifestation of the government’s determination to completely restructure the Indians’ minds and personalities” (Adams, 1995, pg 97).

Almost overnight, boarding schools and day schools started to pop up all over the country.

The ideology of assimilation was also shared by the Flathead Reservation Indian agent, Peter Ronan, who held great influence over the matters of the Salish (formally known as the Flathead Indians), Kootenai, and Pend d'Oreille tribes. His viewpoint is clear in this statement from one of his reports:

“The children, if taken into school at the age of two or three or four years and kept there, only occasionally visited by their parent, will when grown up know nothing of Indian ways and habits. They will, with ease, be thoroughly, though imperceptibly, formed to the ways of the whites in their habits, their thoughts, and their aspirations” (Ronan, 2014, pg. 5, found in Anderson, 2017).

In the heart of the Flathead Reservation, the St. Ignatius Mission was the focus of these early assimilation efforts.

In 1910, the United States government opened the Flathead Indian Reservation to homesteading resulting in the Tribes losing 60% of reservation land as well as becoming minority landowners on their reservation. As the number of homesteaders increased, public schools were started and some Salish, Pend d'Oreille, and Kootenai children were eventually transitioned to formal education in public day schools. The parochial boarding schools in St. Ignatius discussed above eventually gave way to day programs run by the church. These educational programs operated until the 1970's. In addition, many Indigenous children were sent off the reservation during the boarding school era to education programs managed by the United States government (SKC Catalog, 2006-2007).

The formal education received by Indigenous children at that time was based on European American culture and language and did not take into account Tribal culture and ways of knowing (Cajete, 1994). When children's home and community culture are neither respected nor represented in the school setting, children from diverse cultures are marginalized and their development negatively impacted (Christian & Bloome, 2004; Moll, 1992). Consequently, the history of parochial boarding schools on the Flathead Indian Reservation resulted in a low number of Indigenous Peoples graduating from high school and even fewer obtaining postsecondary education (SKC Catalog, 2006-2007). In an attempt to address the need for culturally revitalizing and sustaining (Paris, 2012) postsecondary education for Indigenous peoples on the Flathead Indian Reservation, Salish Kootenai College was established in 1977.

Salish Kootenai College Vision Statement

Salish Kootenai College aspires to be the pre-eminent educational center of excellence for American Indian Students, grounded in the cultures of the Séliš, Ksanka and Q̓ispé people of the Flathead Nation. The college will empower students to improve the lives of their families and communities through research, leadership and service.

Salish Kootenai College Mission Statement

The mission of Salish Kootenai College is to provide quality postsecondary educational opportunities for American Indians, locally and from throughout the United States. The College will promote community and individual development and perpetuate the cultures of the Confederated Tribes of the Flathead Nation.

Salish Kootenai College Mission Objectives

Salish Kootenai College identifies four Mission Objectives that encompass the mission and vision of the College. The M.O.s provide a focus for all activities and programs at SKC.

1. Provide access to higher education for American Indians locally and throughout the U.S.
2. Maintain quality education for workforce or further education;
3. Perpetuate the cultures of Confederated Salish and Kootenai Peoples; and

4. Increase individual and community capacity for self-reliance and sustainability through research and service that promotes community health and wellbeing, preservation of cultural and natural resources, and civic participation for the Flathead Reservation and other communities.

To fulfill its mission and vision, Salish Kootenai College has endeavored to create meaningful and substantive programs to improve the lives of Indigenous peoples on the Flathead Indian Reservation and across the United States. The Education Division is a key to these efforts and currently offers the following degrees preparing future teachers from Early Childhood through High School.

- Early Childhood Education (A.A. and B.S. Degrees)
- Early Childhood Education: P-3 (A.A. and B.S. Degrees)
- Elementary Education (A.S. and B.S. Degrees)
- Secondary Science Education (B.S. Degree)
- Secondary Math Education (B.S. Degree)
- Native Language Teacher Education (A.S. and B.S. Degrees)

In the 2022 - 2023 academic year, SKC's Education Division began implementation of its first approved graduate studies Education degree. The first cohort of this new graduate program was comprised of 18 students, 9 in its "Integrative Indigenous Education" strand, and 9 in its "Literacy, Equity, and Excellence" strand. It is interesting to note that 15 of the 18 teachers that enrolled in this inaugural graduate cohort at SKC were alumni who returned after getting their bachelor degrees at SKC years earlier.

- Master of Education in Curriculum & Instruction (M.Ed Degree)

Salish Kootenai College established teacher education programs to address the major concern in Indigenous education of the absence of qualified American Indian teachers particularly in schools that serve significant numbers of Indigenous students. The most recent Montana Office of Public Instruction Report on American Indian Student Achievement reported the following demographics:

- "Over 9% of Montana's total population is American Indian, made up mostly of the twelve tribal nations of Montana: Assiniboine, Blackfeet, Chippewa, Cree, Crow, Gros Ventre, Kootenai, Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa, Northern Cheyenne, Pend d'Oreille, Salish, Sioux
- For the 201-2018 school year there were 20,535 American Indian/Alaska Native students in Montana that report American Indian/Alaska Native as at least one of their races. The number of American Indian students in Montana is increasing every year. 14.0% of Montana's students are American Indian.
 - 44.6% or 9,162 of American Indian students attend a school physically located within a reservation with 55.4% or 11,373 located outside a reservation boundary." (Montana Office of Public Instruction)
- "The percentage of American Indian teachers in Montana has barely increased since the mid-1990s—rising from 1.9 percent in 1995 to 2.3 percent today." (Cummings, 2015) The Montana Office of Public Instruction notes that in the 2015-2016 academic year currently there were 10,334 licensed teachers working in Montana. By extrapolation, American Indian identified teachers are estimated at only 238. (Montana Office of Public Instruction, 2016)

However, the stagnation of Native teacher employment in Montana is undergoing some notable change. On the Flathead Reservation alone, in the late 1980s, there were only three Native American teachers serving in its seven public school districts (Ruhman, 2016). Due in large part to the efforts of the SKC's Division of Education and its graduates, this number has now risen to approximately 39 (DOE enrollment & graduate records, 2023). This number does not include the number of Native teachers SKC has prepared who are teaching elsewhere in Montana or in other states. Because of the fluidity of teacher employment, an exact number of SKC-trained Indigenous educators still teaching is difficult to ascertain; however, the Division is confident this number would be well in excess of 100 teachers beyond Flathead Reservation boundaries.

Salish Kootenai College has attempted to address the issue of too few qualified Indigenous teachers and its academic and social ramifications for Indian youth through the provision of degree granting teacher preparation programs that provide a culturally revitalizing and sustaining teacher education curriculum to predominantly Indigenous teacher candidates. The effectiveness of the Education Division in meeting this critical need can be measured in many ways, but one of note is the record of 100% placement of our graduates seeking full time teaching positions in public schools or early childhood centers. In addition, there is a high frequency of SKC teaching candidates being recruited and contracted, *before* completing the final student teaching term prior to licensure. The Division is proud of the record of our graduates as teachers of excellence and also as change agents within their schools.



Key Foundations of Teacher Education at SKC

Several of the following elements serve as guideposts to the implementation of educator preparation at Salish Kootenai College:

Salish Kootenai College Education Division Vision Statement

The Education Division envisions a culturally responsive teacher education program and curriculum supporting candidates' development by fostering learning communities that build on past experiences and connect to students' life dreams. A culturally responsive education will support the personal as well as professional development and success of SKC candidates, affording them greater life options.

Furthermore, the Education Division envisions SKC teacher candidates will be culturally competent and skilled educators empowered to transform curriculum and instruction to address the developmental, linguistic and ethnic diversity of every child they teach; SKC teacher candidates as future professional educators, advocates and leaders will empower the students they teach, expanding their life options through nurturing culturally responsive learning communities.

Salish Kootenai College Education Division Mission Statement

The professional education programs at Salish Kootenai College seek to support teacher candidates in making connections between their personal development and their professional growth, in meaningful integration of cultural learning and in collaborative efforts toward the larger good for local and global communities. The critical areas of professional preparation that distinguish Salish Kootenai teacher education graduates include:

- Knowledge of Indigenous Students contexts and best educational practices leading to developmentally and culturally appropriate pedagogy.
- Identification with Indigenous cultures and community values imbedded in content and pedagogy.

- Commitment to meeting the needs of developmentally, ethnically and linguistically diverse learners.
- Commitment to reflective practices leading to personal and professional development.
- Development of collaborative relationships with mentoring teachers and peers organized into learning communities that promote performance, knowledge, and dispositions in real settings.
- Strong evidence of effective communication, critical thinking, cultural understanding and citizenship.

Program Purposes

The professional education programs function to meet three overarching purposes. These include:

- Developing education degrees that are culturally responsive to the teacher candidates within the community served by SKC.
- Preparing candidates to be culturally competent and skilled educators.
- Preparing candidates to provide culturally revitalizing and sustaining curriculum to Indigenous children as well as other diverse learners.

Central Principles and Beliefs of the Teacher Education Division

Instruction and curriculum in the professional education programs are guided by central principles and beliefs that respect and reflect the rich, holistic perspectives of the Séliš (Salish), Qlispé (Pend d'Oreille) and Ksanka (Kootenai) people.

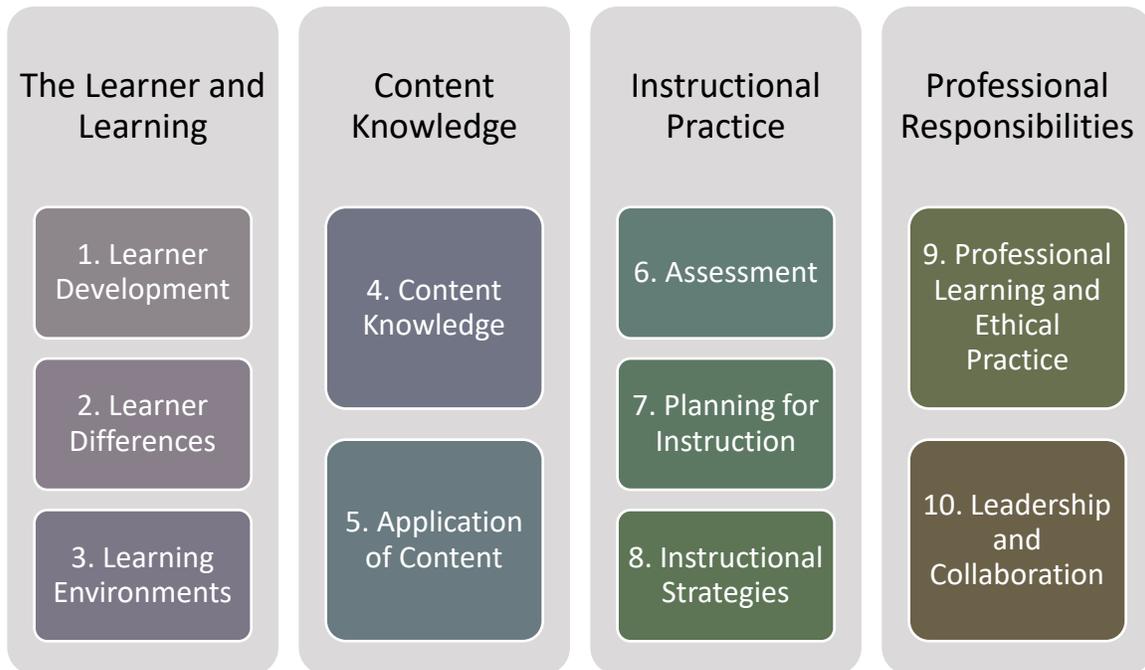
5 Central Beliefs

- ◉ **Culturally sustaining and revitalizing instruction and curriculum will lead education to its promise of opportunity and equity.**
- ◉ **Learning communities foster the construction of knowledge.**
- ◉ **Reflective practice leads to the continuous flourishing of both teacher and student.**
- ◉ **Each learner's uniqueness, when valued and invited in all its diverse forms, enriches the learning community.**
- ◉ **Communication, critical thinking, cultural understanding and citizenship are essential to effective teaching.**

Program Outcomes and Candidate Performance

Expected Candidate performance and program outcomes reflect the guiding principles and beliefs of the professional education program as well as best practices as defined by Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) Model Core Teaching Standards (April, 2011) and the Montana Professional Educator Preparation Program Standards (PEPPS). The tight alignment between PEPPS 501

Standards and InTASC are clear with the exception of Indian Education for All language. SKC is devoted across all courses and discipline areas to provision of depth of study about Montana Tribes and benefitting all Indigenous peoples. The level of integration of Indigenous content, concepts, and contexts is at an extremely high level. Within this integrated context, SKC candidates demonstrate professional entry-level competencies in the performances, knowledge, and dispositions represented following and in Appendix A.



InTASC Standards (CCSSO language)
Standard #1: Learner Development
1 –The teacher understands how learners grow and develop, recognizing that patterns of learning and development vary individually within and across the cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and physical areas, and designs and implements developmentally appropriate and challenging learning experiences.
Standard #2: Learning Differences
2 –The teacher uses understanding of individual differences and diverse cultures and communities to ensure inclusive learning environments that enable each learner to meet high standards.
Standard #3: Learning Environments
3 –The teacher works with others to create environments that support individual and collaborative learning, and that encourage positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.
Standard #4: Content Knowledge
4 –The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) he or she teaches and creates learning experiences that make these aspects of the discipline accessible and meaningful for learners to assure mastery of the content.
Standard #5: Application of Content
5 –The teacher understands how to connect concepts and use differing perspectives to engage learners in critical thinking, creativity, and collaborative problem solving related to authentic local and global issues.
Standard #6: Assessment
6 –The teacher understands and uses multiple methods of assessment to engage learners in their own growth, to monitor learner progress, and to guide the teacher’s and learner’s decision making.

Standard #7: Planning for Instruction
7 –The teacher plans instruction that supports every student in meeting rigorous learning goals by drawing upon knowledge of content areas, curriculum, cross- disciplinary skills, and pedagogy, as well as knowledge of learners and the community context.
Standard #8: Instructional Strategies
8 –The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage learners to develop deep understanding of content areas and their connections, and to build skills to apply knowledge in meaningful ways.
Standard #9: Professional Learning and Ethical Practice
9 –The teacher engages in ongoing professional learning and uses evidence to continually evaluate his/her practice, particularly the effects of his/her choices and actions on others (learners, families, other professionals, and the community), and adapts practice to meet the needs of each learner.
Standard #10: Leadership and Collaboration
10 –The teacher seeks appropriate leadership roles and opportunities to take responsibility for student learning, to collaborate with learners, families, colleagues, other school professionals, and community members to ensure learner growth, and to advance the profession.

PEPPS - 10.58.311 Initial Content and Pedagogical Knowledge

The Salish Kootenai College Education Division ensures that candidates:

- (a) demonstrate a deep understanding of the critical concepts and principles of their discipline and are able to use discipline-specific practices flexibly to advance the learning of all P-12 students toward attainment of college- and career-readiness standards;
- (b) demonstrate an understanding of the 11 Montana teaching standards (ARM 10.58.501) within the categories "the learner and learning," "content," "instructional practice," and "professional responsibility;"
- (c) use research and evidence to develop an understanding of the teaching profession and use both to measure their P-12 students' progress and their own professional practice;
- (d) apply content and pedagogical knowledge as reflected in outcome assessments in response to standards of professional associations and national or other accrediting bodies;
- (e) demonstrate skills and commitment that afford all P-12 students access to rigorous college- and career-ready standards; and
- (f) integrate technology in the design, implementation, and assessment of learning experiences to engage P-12 students, improve learning, and enrich professional practice.

PEPPS - 10.58.501 Teaching Standards

(1) All programs require that successful candidates:

- (a) demonstrate understanding of how learners grow and develop, recognizing that patterns of learning and development vary individually within and across the cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, behavioral health continuum, and physical areas, and individualize developmentally appropriate and challenging learning experiences for learners of all cognitive abilities;
- (b) use understanding of individual differences and diverse cultures and communities, including American Indians and tribes in Montana and English Language Learners (ELL), to ensure inclusive environments that enable each learner to meet high standards;
- (c) work with others to create environments that support individual and collaborative learning and that encourage positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation;
- (d) demonstrate understanding of the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) the candidate teaches and create individualized learning experiences that make the discipline accessible and meaningful for learners to assure mastery of the content, and include the instruction of reading and writing literacy into all program areas;

- (e) demonstrate understanding of how to connect concepts and use differing perspectives to engage learners in critical thinking, creativity, and collaborative problem solving related to authentic local and global issues;
- (f) use multiple methods of assessment, including formative and summative assessments, to engage learners in their own growth, to monitor learner progress, and to guide the teachers' and learners' decision making;
- (g) plan and implement individualized instruction that supports students of all cognitive abilities in meeting rigorous learning goals by drawing upon knowledge of content areas, curriculum, cross-disciplinary skills, and pedagogy, as well as knowledge of learners and the community context;
- (h) use a variety of instructional strategies to encourage learners to develop deep understanding of content areas and their connections and build skills to apply knowledge in meaningful ways;
- (i) engage in ongoing professional learning and use evidence to continually evaluate candidate's practice, particularly the effects of candidates' choices and actions on others (learners, families, other professionals, and the community), and adapt practice to meet the needs of each learner;
- (j) interact knowledgeably and professionally with students, families, and colleagues based on social needs and institutional roles;
- (k) engage in leadership or collaborative roles, or both, in content-based professional learning communities and organizations and continue to develop as professional educators; and
- (l) demonstrate understanding of and ability to integrate history, cultural heritage, and contemporary status of American Indians and tribes in Montana.

In addition, 10.58.312, 313, 314, 315 cut across all degrees offered in the Education Division. 10.58.518 (Math), 522 (Science), 531 (Early Childhood) and 532 (Elementary) are addressed in the unique program requirements for certification in those areas.

The InTASC and PEPPS are addressed across courses in each degree program with specific standards selected for collection of key artifacts in each course. Assessment of artifacts is conducted annually in the Division's Critical Assignments Matrix, a tool used by faculty to document student performance data relevant to the national InTASC standards.

Statement of Philosophy and Professional Commitments

The teacher education programs at Salish Kootenai College are built upon central principles and beliefs that together form a framework reflective of SKC's unique context, community and culture. The framework informs the teacher education curricula, instruction, evaluation and assessment, as well as faculty and administrative decisions. Education faculty members are committed to these central principles and base decisions upon these beliefs. Faculty members are also aware that this is a *living* document, in a continual state of revision in response to our individual and collective reflection.

The SKC faculty worked closely with the **Education Division Advisory Board** consisting of SKC teacher candidates plus administrators, community members, public school administrators along with teachers, community Head Start representatives, and members of the Séliš - Q'Íispê and Ksanka Culture Committees to identify the principles that are the foundation of the Education Division's conceptual framework. Education faculty members are committed to representing the culture, ways of knowing and best practices held by the community served by SKC as well as the professional education community. Furthermore, the Education Division is committed to seeking continuous input from the tribal community and the professional education community regarding best practices. Thus, the framework will be assessed regularly based on this input and revised as needed.

Philosophically, the education faculty members believe all learning occurs within an individual's social, cultural and life contexts. Therefore, culturally oriented instruction, instruction that links students' home and community culture to school culture, is at the heart of the Education Division's mission. The faculty recognizes and addresses the history of forced cultural assimilation through formal education that oppressed many Indigenous peoples through a commitment to provide equal educational opportunities for SKC teacher candidates empowering these candidates to provide equitable educational opportunities for their future students. Hence, the faculty members promote socially just and democratic learning

communities through culturally revitalizing and sustaining instruction; the faculty believes that such learning communities will lead education to its promise of opportunity and equity for all.

Theoretical Framework

A. Culturally revitalizing and sustaining instruction and curriculum will lead education to its promise of opportunity and equity.

Why is Culturally Sustaining Instruction Important?

It is well documented that bringing Indigenous Knowledge, including the beliefs and practices of students' home and community culture into classroom instructional and curricular processes can shape students' sense of belongingness, esteem, identity development and enhance academic success (Cajete, 2015; Battiste, 2008; Christian & Bloome, 2005; Nieto, 2002; Osterman, 2000; Banks, 2013, Sleeter, 2011). However, American Indian children as well as children from other ethnically and linguistically diverse backgrounds are typically expected to adapt to a school culture created by a largely European American teaching force; 90% of the American teaching force is European American (Nieto, 2000).

In 2001, 62% of the children in the 36 schools on Montana's American Indian reservations are Indian, but fewer than 3% of the educators in these tribal schools are American Indian (Montana Office of Public Instruction Survey, 2001). This statistic endures today, with small overall change in the numbers of Indigenous teachers serving American Indian students in Montana. Teachers who do not share the same home and community cultures as the students they teach find it more difficult to see the cultural identities that shape their students' development and academic performance (Moore, 2004; Nieto, 2002).

Theory, Research and Wisdom

Cajete

Cajete (1994) suggested a number of elements that characterize Indigenous education processes. He proposed that these elements characterize Indigenous education wherever and however it has been expressed. "They (the common elements) are like the living stones, the "Inyan" as the Lakota term it, that animate and support the expressions of Indigenous education" (Cajete, 1994, p. 29). The following elements characterize Indigenous education:

- *Integration and interconnectedness are universal traits of its contexts and processes.*
- *Its processes adhere to the principle of mutual reciprocity between humans and all other things.*
- *It recognizes that learning is seeing the whole through the parts.*
- *Indigenous thinking emphasizes seeing things comprehensively: seeing things through and through.*
- *Indigenous thinking unfolds with an authentic context of community and nature.*

(Cajete, 1994, pp. 29-32)

In a similar way the Salish - Qlispe Culture Committee articulated their cultural values for purposes of framing two tribally developed science curricula as follows:

An Integrated Whole

For thousands of years, the Salish, Pend d'Oreille, and Kootenai ways of life were a complete and unified whole. The cultural values held by tribal people, and the way they lived upon the land and with each other, were parts of an integrated whole.

At the center of those ways of life stood two great pillars -- a deeply spiritual relationship of respect with the land, water, plants, and animals; and tribalism - a way of living closely and in community with one another. In both areas, tribal ways of life held

at their center a sense of reciprocity – of giving as much as one takes or receives, whether from the earth or from each other.

Tribal Cultural Values for a Tribal Way of Life

The natural world and spiritual world are inseparable. Animals and plants are respected. They were here before us and help us. Natural and cultural resources are valued and maintained by never taking more than one needs, never failing to leave something for others, and never wasting anything. In this way there will always be help for future generations.

We value the privilege to hunt, fish, and gather foods and medicines. We also value traditional song, dance, games and ceremony. We value the art and material cultures that are all part of the traditional cycle of life.

We value, honor and respect our elders and ancestors and love our children ensuring continuation of languages, histories and cultures.
(White and SQCC, 2009)

These values are the foundations of culturally responsive instruction leading to both opportunity and equity. They frame specific content, contexts, and concepts that are integrated throughout instruction.

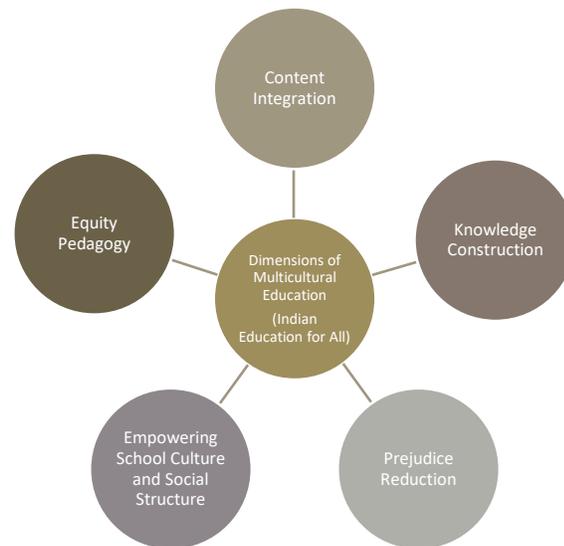
Banks

The works of Dr. James Banks (2007,2013) were used to support integration of Indian Education for All into instruction at all levels and in all content areas in Montana. Dr. Banks defines five dimensions, or areas, for multicultural education: 1) content integration, 2) the knowledge construction process, 3) prejudice reduction, 4) equity pedagogy, and, 5) an empowering school culture and social structure. Each will be discussed in some detail associated with SKC Education Division Central Beliefs and they are all tightly interrelated. In relation to culturally responsive instruction and curriculum, content integration is emphasized.

SKC Education Division recognizes that implementation of *Indian Education for All* is aligned with and part of our mission. One task that would seem straight forward in relation to culturally sustaining practice is adding content about Montana tribes to our teacher preparation curriculum. As stated in the *Framework for Indian Education for All Implementation*, the task seems straightforward until contemplating the following questions. What content? Whose history, culture and language? Defined by whom? What is actually meant by the term integration? As pre-service teacher educators, we grapple with these big questions and continue to immerse ourselves in study of the 12 Montana tribes (Elser, 2010). The process of integration, however, demands new approaches to instruction and curriculum design, and the associated preparation of future classroom teachers. Toward that end, syllabi are being continually renewed in fulfillment of MCA 10.58.501 (our Montana Teaching Standards) and MCA 20.1.501 (*Indian Education for All*.)

Bronfenbrenner

Bronfenbrenner (1977) suggested that no person can be understood in isolation; understanding the developing person comes from studying their unique social and cultural contexts and the dynamic systems within and between these contexts. Bronfenbrenner proposed an ecological-systems approach to the study of development. For example, he suggested that just as a scientist might study an organism through



studying the ecology of the organism, the interrelationship between the organism and its environment, human development should also be examined through studying all of the systems that surround the development of each child (Berger, 2006; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998).

Berger (2006, p. 27) further described Bronfenbrenner's Ecological-Systems Approach to studying human development:

Among the systems that Bronfenbrenner described were Microsystems (elements of the person's immediate surroundings, such as family and peer group), exosystems (such local institutions as school and church), macrosystems (the larger social setting, including cultural values, economic policies, and political processes), and chronosystems (the historical context). A fifth system, the mesosystem, involves the connections between Microsystems; for example, the home-school mesosystem includes all the communication processes (letters home, parent-teacher conferences, phone calls back, back-to-school nights) between a child's parents and teachers.

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological-Systems Approach for studying human development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998) is reflected, expanded and transformed by Dr. Gregory Cajete, who poses the question, "What are the 'ecologies' of Indigenous education?" Answering in part, "Throughout Indigenous education is an implicit understanding that a balance, rhythm, and universal meaning pervade all things, and all play a part in them." (Cajete, 2015, p.11) This profound understanding reflects Salish, Kootenai and Pend d'Oreille holistic ways of knowing and thinking.

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological-Systems Approach (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998) which suggests that understanding the developing person comes from studying their unique social and cultural contexts and the dynamic systems within and between these contexts, provides an incomplete, but compelling vision of connectedness. Cajete (2015), and Elders of Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (SQCC, 2009) complete this circle providing the Indigenous holistic approach to learning; these ways of knowing suggest that human development and learning cannot be separated from the many systems along with the interactions between systems that make up a person's whole life context. This includes kinship and relatedness with the earth and natural world.

Vygotsky

Similar to Bronfenbrenner's idea that development occurs within the interactions of a person's life systems, Vygotsky (1978) believed that learning occurs within larger social and cultural contexts. He suggested that individuals construct knowledge in communities of practice through social interactions. Vygotsky suggested:

Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level and, later on, on the individual level; first, between people (interpsychological) and then inside the child (intrapsychological). This applies equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory, and to the formation of concepts. All the higher functions originate as actual relationships between individuals (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 57).

Moreover, key to social constructivist theory is how language and culture shape cognitive development. That is, culture and language provide the framework through which people experience and interpret their worlds. Vygotsky (1978) stated:

A special feature of human perception...is the perception of real objects...I do not see the world simply in color and shape but also as a world with sense and meaning. I do not merely see something round and black with two hands; I see a clock.... (p. 39)

Vygotsky (1978; 1986) and Heath's study of language communities (Heath, 1983) further elaborated on the role of language and cognitive development. They agreed that language learned through social interactions with the young child's family is a tool for thought. That is, before a child has language, his or her actions drive thought; after acquiring language, thoughts drive action. Thus, cognitive development is closely tied to language learned within the unique cultural paradigm of a child's family (Garcia, 2005). For young children, language development occurring within the context of family and transmission of culture are closely linked (Garcia & McLaughlin with Spodek & Saracho, 1995).

“If a child’s cognitive schemata for operating in the world are culturally bound, what are the effects of trying to learn in an environment where the culture (and language) of the classroom differs from the culture (and language) of the home?” (Garcia, 2005 p. 32). American Indian children who speak Tribal languages in the home along with other children who speak diverse languages have clearly documented cognitive benefits when provided with instruction and contexts that promote their bilingualism and acknowledge home culture and language as important and of value. By contrast, these students may face the challenge of accommodating existing schemas or creating new ones thus impeding learning and development when the learning environment fails to support and expand on home language or culture (Garcia, 2005). Culturally responsive curriculum and instruction that respects a child’s home language provides more equitable opportunities for children to learn and advance academically.

Similarly, Cajete (1994, pp. 29-32) suggested that elements of Indigenous education honor the role of language in shaping thought and in preserving culture. He provided the following examples as characteristics of Indigenous education that view language as important to human development:

- *Indigenous education incorporates language as a sacred expression of breath and incorporates this orientation in all its foundations.*
- *Indigenous education recognizes the power of thought and language to create the worlds we live in.*

Practice

To achieve socially just democratic learning communities in our classrooms, we must address the inequities of education through culturally revitalizing and sustaining instruction. The literature clearly suggests that development occurs within social and cultural contexts (Vygotsky, 1978; Bronfenbrenner, 1977) and that learning, esteem and personal identity are enhanced when instruction is linked to students’ home and community cultures as well as languages (Battiste, 2008, Banks, 2013, Christian & Bloome, 2005; Garcia & McLaughlin with Spodek & Saracho, 1995; Nieto, 2002; Osterman, 2000, Cajete, 2015). The professional education programs at Salish Kootenai College address this need through providing culturally congruent instruction for teacher candidates and through providing teacher education curricula that affords candidates the opportunity to become proficient in providing culturally enriching instruction to their future students.

The faculty of the professional education programs understand and model that teaching begins by learning “who your students are” (Pransky & Bailey, 2003, p. 371) and by teachers examining their own backgrounds and culture to understand how cultural identities affect teaching (Sleeter, 2011; Cajete, 2015; McIntosh, 1989; Nieto, 2000) and learning. Teacher candidates are expected to explore their culture and to examine how their culture and beliefs impact their instruction. For example, in professional education courses teacher candidates explore their folk pedagogy, “taken-for-granted practices that emerge from deeply embedded cultural beliefs about how children learn and how teachers should teach” (Lee and Walsh, 2005, p. 60). Moreover, the SKC faculty members attempt to integrate home and traditional values, cultural understandings, languages, and behaviors of teacher candidates in the context of class curriculum thereby creating space for teacher candidates’ voice and decision making within their classrooms (Dudley-Marling & Paugh, 2005, Banks, 2013). Each and every methods class in the Division (as well as non-education classes across our campus) incorporates culturally congruent frameworks in its activities, projects, and throughout its coursework.

Last, teacher candidates learn about and practice the tenets of culturally revitalizing and sustaining teaching in methods courses and in EDUC 311, Cultures, Diversity and Educational Ethics; these include (Gay, 2000): the nature of curriculum and how curriculum influences us indirectly and directly; caring must be embedded into the very core of teaching and learning; cross cultural communication is essential for provision of clarity of thought and nuance of expression; learning environments must be welcoming at all times; and building on the cultural experiences and dreams of our students is vital to equitable educational opportunities.

Candidate Performance, Knowledge and Dispositions Central to Culturally Responsive Instruction and Curriculum (Aligned with PEPPS 501)

The candidate will:

(b) use understanding of individual differences and diverse cultures and communities, including American Indians and tribes in Montana and English Language Learners (ELL), to ensure inclusive environments that enable each learner to meet high standards;

(e) demonstrate understanding of how to connect concepts and use differing perspectives to engage learners in critical thinking, creativity, and collaborative problem solving related to authentic local and global issues;

(l) demonstrate understanding of and ability to integrate history, cultural heritage, and contemporary status of American Indians and tribes in Montana.

B. Creating connections with the larger community promotes the construction of knowledge.

“The evident weakness in American schools has much to do with the weakening of their community context.....Education can never merely be for the sake of individual self-enhancement. It pulls us into the common world or it fails altogether”

– Robert Bellah et al., The Good Society (in Kohn, 1996, p. 101).

Why are learning communities important?

At SKC we believe learning occurs in a richly social context and that the social construction of knowledge is central to the development of the learner and also reciprocal, where learners together create a collective and supportive community. This community nests in the context of the larger cultural community. Our learning community is nurtured by, and in turn seeks to nurture, this rich cultural context.

Tribal Traditional Values

Essential to Indigenous life-ways is a sense of community and relatedness to each other and all of creation. Salish - Qlispe elders expressed it as follows and also the reciprocity that underpins sense of community in very tangible and concrete ways.

At the center of those ways of life stood two great pillars -- a deeply spiritual relationship of respect with the land, water, plants, and animals; and tribalism - a way of living closely and in community with one another. In both areas, tribal ways of life held at their center a sense of reciprocity – of giving as much as one takes or receives, whether from the earth or from each other. (White and SQCC, 2009)

The significance of community to learning for Indigenous people has been reaffirmed in a ground breaking work by Dr. Gregory Cajete.

Learning goes on within a community. Learning by sharing experiences and reflecting on them in community helps us understand what we are learning as well as see the learning process in wider contexts. A group offers as many ways of seeing, hearing, feeling, and understanding as there are group members. We realize that we can learn from others’ experiences and perspectives. Experiences in groups also show us our own and others’ biases and how our understanding may have been limited. We see that sometimes people do not know how to receive or use real innovation; many times people do not know how to recognize real teachers or real lessons. We learn that a community can either reinforce an important teaching or pose obstacles to bringing its true message home. As the Tohono O’odaham phrase it, only “when all the people see the light shining at the same time and in the same way” can a group truly progress on a path of knowledge.(Cajete, 2015, p.45)

Kohn

Kohn (1996) defines school communities as, “a place in which students feel cared about and encouraged to care about each other” (p. 101). He goes on to say that,

They (students) experience a sense of being valued and respected; the children matter to one another and to the teacher. They have come to think in the plural: they feel connected to each other; they are part of an “us.” And, as a result of all this, they feel safe in their classes, not only physically but emotionally (p. 101).

Kohn (1996) suggested that learning communities are essential to supporting the development of people of any age as, “students need to feel safe in order to take intellectual risks; they must be comfortable before they can venture into the realm of discomfort. Few things stifle creativity like the fear of being judged or humiliated”(p. 102). He further suggested, “If you want academic excellence, you have to attend to how people feel about school and about each other” (Kohn, 1996, p. 103).

Theory, Research and Wisdom

Cajete calls upon us to:

“re-form our collective consciousness around core Indigenous values – especially sustainability, survival, and life-supporting respect for all that is. We must rally our personal and collective creativity to re-create our communities in ways that are healthy by Indigenous standards, which are inclusive and holistic. A pedagogy of Indigenous community is key, because its ways of educating inspire creativity and will to develop the collective consciousness required to meet the global need.” (Cajete, 2015, p. 77)

Banks

Learning communities are essential to achieve the dimensions of multicultural education and critical to the success of ethnic minority students and others who may be marginalized within the setting of institutions developed around Eurocentric hierarchies or technical mechanistic models. In essence, the knowledge construction process, equity pedagogy, development of empowering school cultures and prejudice reduction are all made manifest by developing and nurturing a learning community in the school and the classroom (Banks, 2013). The more marginalized the population, the more essential the learning community becomes to student success.

Vygotsky

In social constructivist learning theory, the learner is at the center of curriculum and instruction and all members of the school community--students, teachers, administrators--are learners and teachers who interact as social communities of learners. Individual development comes from social interactions where cultural meanings are shared by the group and eventually internalized by the individual (Vygotsky, 1978). Specifically, knowledge is constructed through conversations and social interactions where people construct layers of meaning and understanding.

The social nature of learning is demonstrated in classrooms as educators guide students toward two levels of learning: (1) their potential level of learning or the “zone of proximal development,” followed by (2) their independent level of learning. Vygotsky (1978) defined the zone of proximal development as follows:

It is the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers (p. 86).

When a learner is in the zone of proximal development, certain cognitive structures are still maturing. Vygotsky suggested that interaction with others best supports the maturing learner toward the independent level of learning. More knowledgeable others within the learning community scaffold instruction, building on the learners current funds of knowledge, gradually releasing the responsibility for learning to the learner (Pearson and Gallagher, 1983).

Dewey

In 1897, John Dewey published his educational philosophy in a document called *My Pedagogic Creed* (Mooney, 2000). In this document he stated about education:

True education comes through the stimulation of the child's powers by the demands of the social institutions in which he finds himself (p. 4).

“Dewey believed that children learn best when they interact with other people, working both alone and cooperatively with peers and adults” (Mooney, 2000, p. 5).

In addition, Dewey articulated the role of the educator as facilitator in a child's learning experiences. The child was at the center of his or her learning experience and the teacher was in the role of supporter. The teacher is to “co-partner and guide in a common enterprise – the child's education as an independent learner or thinker” (Dewey, 1934, p. 10). Dewey saw the educator as a planner and facilitator in a child's education; the educator has more experience than the child and he or she should use this experience to take the lead in a child's education as a more mature thinker rather than as the expert (Dewey, 1933).

Dewey's beliefs that learning is stimulated through social interaction with peers and through the teacher's role as co-partner influenced constructivist thinkers (e.g., Kamii, 1991). Constructivists suggest that learners must make their own meaning of experiences and integrate their perceptions into existing funds of knowledge through the processes of assimilation and accommodation (Piaget, 1952, in Berger, 2006). As such, educators as co-partners in student education create learning communities where students engage in curriculum, investigating new ideas, constructing knowledge and adding to their knowledge bases.

In fulfillment of professional dispositions, Richard DuFour writes about professional learning communities as part of ongoing professional development for teachers.

The powerful collaboration that characterizes professional learning communities is a systematic process in which teachers work together to analyze and improve their classroom practice. Teachers work in teams, engaging in an ongoing cycle of questions that promote deep team learning. This process, in turn, leads to higher levels of student achievement. (DuFour, 2004)

Hence, learning communities are critical for children to support social construction of knowledge, and are also essential to teachers ongoing development and improvement.

Practice

Theory and research suggests that learning communities foster the construction of knowledge (Kamii, 1991; Mooney, 2000; Pearson and Gallagher, 1983; Vygotsky, 1978). The professional education faculty addresses the need for learning communities through small class size and respectful interactions between faculty and students. Faculty members make an attempt to know students personally and provide class activities that support the development of relationships between students. Class activities routinely consist of collaborative learning activities typical of social constructivist teaching practices that require learners to develop interpersonal skills and to see the individual learning as linked to the group learning process (Dewey, 1938/1997; Vygotsky, 1978). Moreover, the faculty models and teaches a variety of social constructivist instructional strategies including: making instruction personally or socially meaningful to students, negotiating meanings with students through exploratory talk (Ormrod, J. E., 2006), class discussion, small-group collaboration, and valuing meaningful activity over correct answers (Wood et al, 1995).

Candidate Performance, Knowledge and Dispositions Central to Fostering Learning Communities (Aligned to PEPPS 501)

The candidate will:

(c) work with others to create environments that support individual and collaborative learning and that encourage positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation;

(g) plan and implement individualized instruction that supports students of all cognitive abilities in meeting rigorous learning goals by drawing upon knowledge of content areas, curriculum, cross-disciplinary skills, and pedagogy, as well as knowledge of learners and the community context;

(i) engage in ongoing professional learning and use evidence to continually evaluate candidate's practice, particularly the effects of candidates' choices and actions on others (learners, families, other professionals, and the community), and adapt practice to meet the needs of each learner;

(j) interact knowledgeably and professionally with students, families, and colleagues based on social needs and institutional roles;

(k) engage in leadership or collaborative roles, or both, in content-based professional learning communities and organizations and continue to develop as professional educators

C. Reflective practice leads to the continuous flourishing of both teacher and student.

“Indigenous education recognizes that we learn by watching and doing, reflecting on what we are doing, then doing again” (Cajete, 1994, p. 31).

Why is reflective practice important?

Reflection is an essential part of learning and through the lens of cognitive science it provides a profound form of recall practice essential for creation of cognitive constructs, supporting long-term memory of critical knowledge and skills. Reflection also promotes elaboration, another essential cognitive practice that supports successful learning (Brown, Roediger & McDaniel, 2014).

Reflection plays a critical role in supporting teachers to develop a Culturally Responsive Pedagogy of Relations (Sleeter, 2011; Bishop, Berryman, Cavanagh, & Teddy, 2009) which has as two central understandings, “the rejection of deficit theorizing as a means to explaining disparity and the assumption of responsibility for what you can achieve professionally” (Sleeter, 2011.)

Teachers not predisposed to self-reflection and evaluation tend to attribute all classroom difficulties to someone else: it's the children who are too immature, disrespectful, or out of control; the director or parents present unfair demands; the room is too small; there's nothing to do on the playground and on and on..... We want teachers to continually examine their own behaviors with children, to consider learning objectives for themselves (Carter & Curtis, 1994, pp 79-80).

Carter and Curtis (1994) suggested that although people learn from experience that is “only half of the story” (p. 79). People must reflect on their experiences, “analyzing events, dynamics, conclusions; and from comparing the “official word” or theory with their own intuition and experience” (p. 79). Such reflection deepens one's personal awareness and insights empowering him or her with a sense of efficacy and the ability to make action plans.

In addition, educators bring a great deal of personal experience to their roles as teachers (Carter and Curtis, 1994). For example, teachers may repeat how situations were handled in their childhood with respect to issues such as conflict, illness or orderliness. Or, an educator may consciously try to respond differently to situations they found to be unfair or disagreeable as a child. Carter and Curtis (1994) suggested that educators can use reflection to gain awareness on how perceptions regarding issues such as: their childhood experiences, gender, home culture, religion, and other personal filters influence instruction which can provide enlightenment and the ability to treat all children more equitably.

Theory, Research and Wisdom

Séliš (Salish), Qíispé (Pend d'Oreille) and Ksanka (Kootenai) cultures suggest that people learn best from doing as well as from listening and reflecting (O'Dell, 1990). From an early age the Séliš, Qíispé, and Ksanka people are taught to listen to the whole story in conversation and to be reflective before commenting. These Indigenous language and communication patterns suggest that children are taught to reflect and derive

meaning from whole stories, whole events and whole experiences (O'Dell, 1990). Thought and reflection are central to Tribal ways of learning and knowing and as such are a part of the culturally sustaining curriculum of the Salish Kootenai College Professional Education Programs.

Moreover, reflective practice is an integral part of most teacher education program curricula (Ferraro, 2000). Schon (1983) defined reflective practice as deliberately and thoughtfully considering one's experiences when applying knowledge or theory to practice; he further suggested that beginning teachers be coached in reflective practice by professionals in the field. Beginning teachers, Schon (1987) recommended, could use reflective practice as a tool to recognize agreement between their instruction and that of seasoned successful educators.

In addition, reflective practice in education has been defined in terms of action research and has become a standard concept in teacher education programs (Ferraro, 2000). Moore (2004, b) described action research methodology in a how-to-conduct action research book as follows:

Action research presents a simple, reliable research process that may be used to focus teaching questions and gather, organize, and interpret the many classroom data sources which reflect student responses to teaching. It provides basic tools and strategies, leading to a more comprehensive way of thinking about classroom research. Once familiar with the components of the action research process, you can broaden and modify it to fit individual classroom research needs and goals. As a teacher, you will begin to conceptualize classroom research as an ongoing assessment process in which you continually implement the tools and strategies of action research to view daily teaching and learning. In fact, you are probably already following some of the steps as a part of your daily teaching routine, but the process completed as a whole is very powerful and empowering.

The professional educator as researcher model encourages teacher candidates and professional educators to implement new instructional strategies and to enhance curriculum in their classrooms. As well, teacher candidates and professional teachers are encouraged to discuss their research findings and interpretations with mentors and colleagues. This collaborative model of reflective practice provides suggestions for future practice and enriches the candidates and educators' personal reflections (Ferraro, 2000; Moore, 2004, b).

Practice

Among the central features of our assessment process through the Teacher Education Program portfolio are the required reflective essays demonstrating knowledge of the Division's Five Central Beliefs. Students begin this reflective process early in the program (Stage 1) and revise their reflections as they progress through the professional teacher preparation program. They experience direct evidence of their personal and professional growth as future educators; connect the standards to their emerging practice or performance, knowledge and dispositions, and develop and practice the essential habit of reflection in regular classroom practice and classroom based action research.

The Teacher Education Program faculty models and utilizes reflective practice. Faculty members conduct regular formal and informal assessments of their students' learning and use this information to inform their teaching. Additionally, students are asked to evaluate courses on a regular basis and faculty use this information to modify course activities and instruction as appropriate. The faculty members maintain collegial relationships and often visit with each other informally to brainstorm teaching ideas and reflect on best practices. Moreover, the Division has regular meetings to discuss and reflect on program practices and curriculum.

The process of reflection is well integrated into the teacher education curricula. Students are frequently asked to reflect on content through class discussions, small group discussions, written reflection exercises, and journaling. Students keep reflective journals during course field assignments and write reflective papers about their learning experiences. Students also engage in a Junior Showcase in their third year, in which they must self-select artifacts from their teacher preparation experience that they feel represents their ongoing growth as an educator. Moreover, students are required to complete EDUC 495, Reflective Practice and Research in Education, during their student teaching experience. Students learn action research methodology in the course and complete an action research project during their student teaching experience. Students are required to write research questions that will inform their practice and to collect, analyze and interpret data. At the culmination of the

student teaching experience, students are given the opportunity to discuss and reflect on their action research projects with peers and SKC faculty.

Last, students are required to develop a reflective portfolio which is a compilation of evidence and experience, achievement, and professional development (Bruce, 1997) organized around the Teacher Education Program expected student learning outcomes; student outcomes are based on the Education Program beliefs, InTASC Standards and PEPP Standards. Students engage with their portfolios in three stages: at program entry, before student teaching and after student teaching. Students reflect in writing on their professional development based on Teacher Education Program student learning outcomes at each of the three portfolio assessment phases.

Candidate Performance, Knowledge and Dispositions Central to Reflective Practice

(Aligned to PEPPS 501)

The candidate will:

- (a) demonstrate understanding of how learners grow and develop, recognizing that patterns of learning and development vary individually within and across the cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, behavioral health continuum, and physical areas, and individualize developmentally appropriate and challenging learning experiences for learners of all cognitive abilities;
- (d) demonstrate understanding of the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) the candidate teaches and create individualized learning experiences that make the discipline accessible and meaningful for learners to assure mastery of the content, and include the instruction of reading and writing literacy into all program areas;
- (f) use multiple methods of assessment, including formative and summative assessments, to engage learners in their own growth, to monitor learner progress, and to guide the teacher's and learner's decision making;
- (h) use a variety of instructional strategies to encourage learners to develop deep understanding of content areas and their connections and build skills to apply knowledge in meaningful ways;
- (i) engage in ongoing professional learning and use evidence to continually evaluate candidate's practice, particularly the effects of candidates' choices and actions on others (learners, families, other professionals, and the community), and adapt practice to meet the needs of each learner;
- (k) engage in leadership or collaborative roles, or both, in content-based professional learning communities and organizations and continue to develop as professional educators.

D. Each learner's uniqueness, when valued and invited in all its diverse forms, enriches the learning community.

Traditional Tribal Values from Seliš, Ql'ispé and Ksanka Elders

The following personal characteristics are valued highly in Seliš, Ql'ispé and Ksanka cultures:

Respect	Courage	Level-headedness	Kindness and compassion
Honesty	Thoughtfulness	Self-restraint	Endurance, strength, fortitude
Humility	Patience	Selflessness	Cooperation and helpfulness
Generosity	Relatedness	Quiet and calm	Observation and listening
Responsibility	Self-respect	Self-discipline	Humor, good cheer, warmth

Uniquely, most of these qualities are manifest in the context of community.

“Indigenous education honors each person’s way of being, doing and understanding” (Cajete, 1994, p. 31). The Education Division at SKC

Why is it important to value and invite diversity to enrich the learning community?

Indigenous communities invite diversity demanding that the community realize, appreciate and empower the wisdom created by difference (Cajete, 2015; Sleeter, 2009; Banks, 2002; Nieto, 2000; 2002). Why must educators value and invite diversity? The moral responsibilities of education in America include supporting the social development of learners; and, since education is a basic right of all human beings: “it superimposes the need to develop the full potential of every student and school administrators and teachers need to pay special attention to making the attainment of this goal possible” (Blacker, 1998, p. 1).

Theories, Research and Wisdom

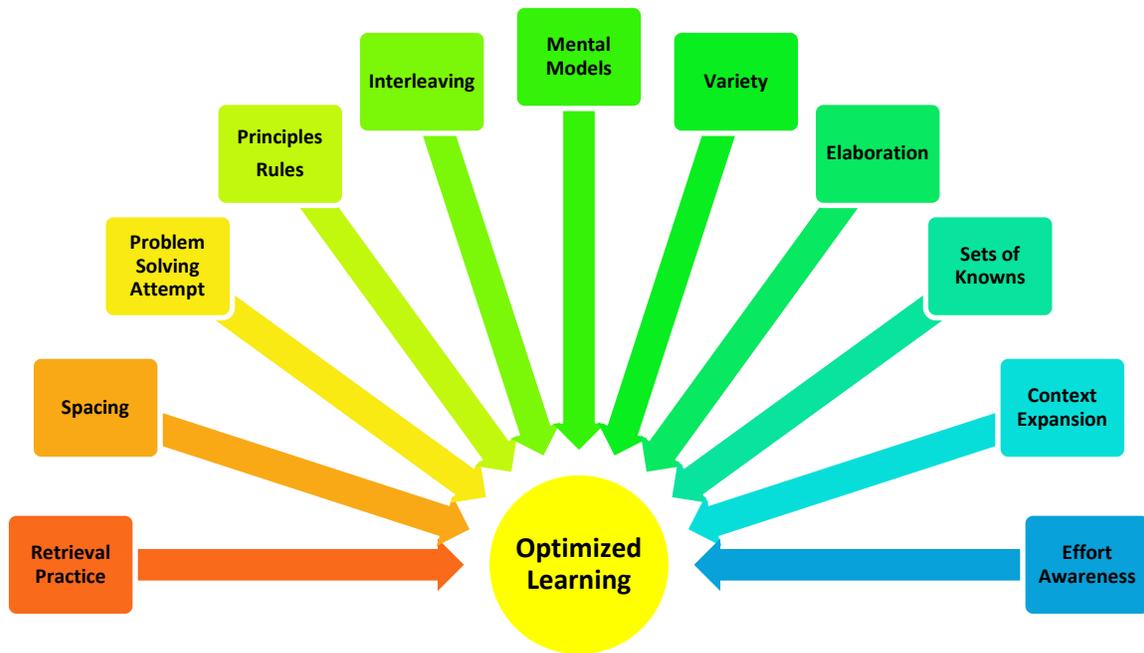
Seliš, Ql’ispé and Ksanka cultures suggest that every person’s way of thinking and doing should be honored. The Tribal cultures value each member of the Tribe as they contribute something unique to the community. Cajete (1994) reflected that Indigenous thinking respects the individual and suggests that all individuals contain inherent value. He further suggested of Indigenous education (pp. 30-31):

- *It recognizes that each person and each culture contains the seeds that are essential to their well-being and positive development.*
- *It recognizes that the true sources of knowledge are found within the individual and within nature.*
- *It integrates human individuality with communal needs.*

In his contemporary work, *Indigenous Community: Rekindling the Teachings of the Seventh Fire* (2015), Cajete elaborates on the responsibility and reciprocity implicit in Indigenous communities and also, the value of diversity that permeates them.

“Indigenous communities understand that the essential continuity of the community is carried within each individual, thereby making each individual important, valuable, and needed in the perpetuation of the life of the community. There is a place for everyone –the child, the adult, the elderly, the physically impaired, the ‘two-spirit’ people. Each person has something to offer, a special gift, and thereby is allowed to participate to one extent or another in the life of the community.” (Cajete, 2015, p.33)

The Education Division draws on traditional Seliš, Ql’ispé and Ksanka values and on rich understandings of the role of diversity in Indigenous communities to inform our practice, ways of being present with our students, each other and communities we serve. At the same time, the Division is also devoted to bring to bear the best of cognitive science, brain-based learning and theories that support powerful and effective teaching and learning strategies. These strategies when mastered and varied within instructional practice are proven to support learners of diverse ability levels and personal preferences, each with unique intelligences and ways of knowing. For example, the following strategies are currently being integrated in a series of methods courses, seeking to model and support implicit and explicit use of findings from cognitive science to optimize learning.



Adapted from *Make It Stick: The Science of Successful Learning*
by Brown, Roediger, and McDaniel, 2014

Howard Gardner

Howard Gardner pushed against the notion of a single type of intelligence. Gardner (2013) responded to questions regarding his theory of multiple intelligences as follows:

The theory is a critique of the standard psychological view of intellect: that there is a single intelligence, adequately measured by IQ or other short answer tests. Instead, on the basis of evidence from disparate sources, I claim that human beings have a number of relatively discrete intellectual capacities. IQ tests assess linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligence, and sometimes spatial intelligence; and they are a reasonably good predictor of who will do well in a 20th (note: NOT 21st) century secular school.

But humans have several other significant intellectual capacities. In my original book, I described musical intelligence, bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, interpersonal (social) intelligence, and intrapersonal intelligence (understanding of self). A few years later, I added the naturalist intelligence: the capacity to make consequential distinctions in the world of nature. I also have speculated about two other possible intelligences: existential intelligence, the intelligence of 'big questions'; and pedagogical intelligence, the intelligence that allows human beings to convey knowledge or skills to other persons. (Gardner, 2013)

Gardner (1999) theorized that intelligences are neural potentials which may or may not be activated depending on the values of a particular culture and the decisions and actions of the developing person as well as the maturing person's family, teachers and other significant adults. He also suggested of acquiring intelligences, "each of us is equipped with these intellectual potentials, which we can mobilize and connect according to our own inclinations and our culture's preferences" (p. 44).

In his book, Gardner (1999) suggests that although various cultures value individual multiple intelligences differentially, no intelligence is bad or good. His discussion of culture shaping an individual's intelligences suggests that educators may need to be aware of their preferences and potential biases for how teaching and learning should occur and attempt to support the development of all eight intelligences through instruction. Gardner (1999) stated that it is best to develop as many intelligences as possible as it opens up new venues for learning.

Multiple Intelligences and Brain-Based Learning

Jensen (2000) discussed brain development, learning, and teaching as they relate to learning preferences. He suggested that:

As learners, we don't have a genetically determined or single definitive learning style. Most of the brain is involved in most every act of learning (p. 146).

Jensen (2000) suggested that rather than use learning styles to categorize students:

The two most important things to remember for building a successful brain-based learning approach are: 1) provide a variety of (instructional) approaches; and 2) offer choices (p. 146).

It seems logical to conclude that use of differentiated instruction would support the development of multiple intelligences and promote the overall success of all learners.

Differentiating instruction means creating multiple paths so that students of different abilities, interests or learning needs experience equally appropriate ways to absorb, use, develop and present concepts as a part of the daily learning process. It allows students to take greater responsibility and ownership for their learning, and provides opportunities for peer teaching and cooperative learning (Diamond, 2004).

Moreover, instruction that utilizes one type of methodology could put some students at a disadvantage if the selected method fails to support the wide variety of learning preferences represented in the classroom. Cognitive scientists at the forefront of research to help optimize learning agree—*variety truly is the spice of life*, and a critical tool future and current teachers need to employ to address the needs of all learners equitably.

Practice

The education faculty members are well informed in the area of cognitive science, differential instruction, brain-based learning theory and Multiple Intelligence Theory. Faculty members reinforce development differentiated practice by modeling a wide variety of research-based practices, and by creating meaningful learning opportunities relevant to diverse learners. In addition, teacher candidates are given opportunities to apply multiple intelligences theory through developing and implementing curriculum as assigned in professional education classes, methods and curriculum classes and student teaching.

Faculty members spend a great deal of time creating safe environments that allow for successful collaborative work projects. Students benefit from working with peers who have diverse learning preferences and abilities as it broadens their perspectives and allows them opportunities to be a mentor or be mentored in a particular area of curriculum (Vermette, 1994).

As faculty at a small college, the education faculty members have small advising loads and classes and, as such, can spend time working with individual students addressing academic needs and learning more about how to individualize instruction for each teacher candidate. When necessary, students can take courses from the developmental studies department such as basic math, advanced reading and applied English to help them prepare for more advanced courses in the general education curriculum or the teacher education curriculum.

Candidate Performance, Knowledge and Dispositions Central to Valuing and Inviting Diversity (Aligned to PEPPS 501)

The candidate will:

(a) demonstrate understanding of how learners grow and develop, recognizing that patterns of learning and development vary individually within and across the cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, behavioral

health continuum, and physical areas, and individualize developmentally appropriate and challenging learning experiences for learners of all cognitive abilities;

(b) use understanding of individual differences and diverse cultures and communities, including American Indians and tribes in Montana and English Language Learners (ELL), to ensure inclusive environments that enable each learner to meet high standards;

(c) demonstrate understanding of how to connect concepts and use differing perspectives to engage learners in critical thinking, creativity, and collaborative problem solving related to authentic local and global issues;

(d) demonstrate understanding of and ability to integrate history, cultural heritage, and contemporary status of American Indians and tribes in Montana.

E. Effective communication, critical thinking, cultural understanding and citizenship are essential to effective teaching

Why are communication, critical thinking, cultural understanding and citizenship essential to effective teaching?

The Salish Kootenai College Board of Directors established the following as a guiding principle for the college:

Provide a learning environment in which students develop skills in effective communication, critical thinking, cultural understanding and citizenship.

The Board of Directors recognizes the importance of supporting the development of communication skills, critical thinking, cultural understanding and citizenship in all SKC students as a foundation for personal and professional development. The Education Division embraces this guiding principle and is committed to nurturing these skills and dispositions in teacher candidates. These overarching themes are incorporated into all SKC syllabi across campus.

Theories, Research and Wisdom

Communication

Salish Kootenai College defines communication as clear, respectful sharing of information guided by critical thinking and mindful consideration. Skilled communicators connect with people through spoken and written words that effectively convey content knowledge and individual values.

Communication and language are at the heart of education, and of one's culture. Fishman (1996), in an attempt to convey the importance of perpetuating one's home language referred to language as "the soul of the people," "the mind of the people," and "the spirit of the people" (p. 3). Vygotsky (1978; 1986) and Heath's study of language communities (Heath, 1983) stated that language is learned through social interaction and is thus cultural. They further elaborated that once language is acquired, thought drives action; therefore, language is tied closely to cognitive development and thus cognitive development is shaped by culture.

Professional educators must be aware of the different modalities, contexts, and highly nuanced modes of communication. In his most recent text, Ron Ritchhart explores eight forces we must master to transform schools. Among them, is language. In this area he defines these seven essential language moves employed by master teachers.

- The language of thinking (identification and activation of thinking processes, support for metacognition and creation of strategic narratives of learning)
- The language of community (creating a 'we' that includes teacher as participant and not merely director, artful use of inclusive pronouns)

- The language of identity (framing so students see themselves *as* historians, scientists, teachers, researchers, explorers etc... vs learning *about*, a part of vs apart from what is to be learned)
- The language of initiative (planfulness, agency, use of hypothetical language, ‘If we... then this might...? Or What would happen if we...?’)
- The language of mindfulness (conditional language, open ended, promotion of broad flexible thought inviting new possibilities vs right and wrong; or black and white thinking)
- The language of praise and feedback (promotion of growth vs fixed mindsets, praise of effort, specificity of praise and feedback)
- The language of listening (demonstration of interest, understanding before seeking to be understood, authentic engaged questions)

(Ritchhart, 2015)

Salish, Kootenai and Pend d’ Oreille cultures value observation, listening, and learning through life experience: observing, listening, doing and reflecting. Elders used praise and punishment sparingly and rewarded effort with feedback associated with the emerging skill. In a recent unpublished dissertation, a respondent describing the traditional education practices of his father Patlik, son Allen Pierre said, “you never say, ‘I can’t do that’ – because if it’s in your spu’us and you have the willingness to do it, you can conquer anything that is sent in front of you” (Munson, 2017) and another respondent, Mona Ebensteiner, regarding her mother Dolly’s instruction:

So when I started partaking in the language camp, She’d say: Well, if you’re having a hard time, just spell it out how you hear it, and then try later to spell it in the Salish way. So I’d try and I’d get close and she’d say “nope that’s not it.” And I’d say “ah. I have to try harder... and I said, I just can’t get it mom, its’ really hard.” And she’d say, “you’ll get it, you just gotta take time.” (Munson, 2017)

In each of these examples you can hear the language of initiative, language of feedback and overarching value of persistence.

Communication occurs across many languages, and at SKC, faculty work hard to integrate Salish and Kootenai languages into instruction whenever possible. Many engage in extended study of Salish or Kootenai. All respect the ways in which these treasured and endangered languages carry the seeds of culture. Our commitment extends to the development of a Native Language Teacher Education Program for the purpose of preparing expert teachers who are also fluent speakers to support language restoration and maintenance on all levels from cradle to grave.

Cultural Awareness

Cultural Understandings at SKC emphasize sustaining and perpetuating the living cultural traditions of the Séliš, Q̓lispé, and Ksanka peoples. This includes the tangible forms [places & artifacts] and intangible forms [language and ceremony]. Understanding these traditions helps students recognize the importance and necessity of cultural traditions to all people and their roles in intercultural relations.

There are two essential understandings about Montana Tribes associated with culture. The first is that all aspects of traditional culture continue to this day, and individuals and families vary widely from highly traditional to highly assimilated. Some exhibit pluralism with aspects of their lives engaged in both traditional and contemporary life-ways. The second understanding is associated with the role of the oral tradition and the importance of story (Montana Office of Public Instruction, 2010). The role of story in learning, memory and for the perpetuation of culture can’t be over emphasized. This is well established by cognitive scientists and linguists alike, but was known to Indigenous Peoples from time immemorial.

Taken from a model teaching unit titled *Exploring Traditional and Contemporary Relationships of the Salish and Pend d’ Oreille People to the Bitterroot Through The Gift of the Bitterroot as told by Johnny Arlee*, here is a tangible example.

The traditional story of The Gift of the Bitterroot explains, within the cosmology of the Salish and Pend d'Oreille, how the bitterroot, an important food source, came to the people. The story tells of a time of hunger and the desperation of a mother for her children, who were starving. In her grief, she weeps and her prayers are heard by the sun who calls on her guardian spirit to intervene. Her guardian spirit, in the form of a bird, comforts her by creating a new plant from her tears - providing both beauty and food for the people. Thus, the tears and grief of a woman were a part of the creation itself. From her despair, new life was created. The continual cycle of life coming out of death, joy from despair, are themes present in the story, and in this case, account for the special responsibilities of women for maintaining the relationship with the bitterroot, including monitoring for the critical time of harvest, supervision of gathering and cleaning, preservation and preparation for eating.

Do not be deceived by the simplicity of this story. While it recounts a part of the oral tradition of the Salish and Pend d'Oreille, it also exposes and transmits their traditional knowledge of flora. Included in this knowledge are what plants require for life and growth, how to support them by controlling harvesting and preventing over harvest or wasteful harvest, reciprocity that allows the continual renewal of the plant and a culture of respect for this vital and treasured food source.

Throughout the story elements of culture are imparted. For example, from the old woman's grief the bitterroot were created as a source of "comfort." That comfort comes from two important qualities of the bitterroot plant:

1. Its beauty, and
2. Its nutritional value.

Thus, in the oral tradition, both beauty and the food coming from the bitterroot were treasured by the Salish and Pend d'Oreille.

Tribal knowledge of natural processes is also transmitted through the story. First, the presence of three things required for the growth of most plants: sun, water or moisture and soil. Second, the knowledge that soil is developed from decomposed organic matter (dead plants) and that from this dead organic material, life is renewed and new plants are nourished. How did the Salish and Pend d'Oreille know these things? How did they come to know the bitterroot was both good to eat and also highly nutritious? The oral tradition carries the information (in the tradition of Western empiricism, it could be called "data") from multi-generational observations of the natural world. Again, in the language of empiricism, these observations might be considered "longitudinal data" on an unprecedented level. For the Salish and Pend d'Oreille, they always understood it to be so (Montana Office of Public Instruction, 2013). Story is critical pedagogy supporting efforts to understand culture.

As stated earlier in this framework, bringing the beliefs and practices of students' home and community culture into classroom instructional and curricular processes can shape students' sense of belongingness, esteem, identity development and enhance academic success (Christian & Bloome, 2005; Nieto, 2002; Osterman, 2000). However, American Indian children and other children from ethnically and linguistically diverse backgrounds are typically expected to adapt to a school culture created by a largely European American teaching force (Nieto, 2000). The professional education programs at Salish Kootenai College address this inequity through providing culturally responsive instruction for teacher candidates and through providing teacher education curricula that affords candidates the opportunity to become proficient in providing culturally responsive instruction to their future students.

How can professional education programs prepare teacher candidates to provide culturally responsive instruction and curriculum to American Indian and other ethnically and linguistically diverse children? The literature suggests that teacher education curriculum should provide candidates opportunities to learn to: a) understand their own culture and how their culture shapes their expectations and interactions with others (Grossman, 1999; McIntosh, 1989; Van Horn & Segal, 2000); b) examine and be responsive to the individual contexts of the children and families they serve through direct communication with each (Van Horn & Segal; Yang & McMullen, 2003); and c) study the culture of the children and families in the communities served by our schools (Jones & Derman-Sparks, 1992).

Critical Thinking

Critical Thinking is a self-directed process for refining thought. Critical thinkers validate and reflect on their thinking, consider the validity of information sources, context, and multiple perspectives, and apply both logic and traditional understandings to make decisions.

Additionally, Eggen and Kauchak term it “The ability and inclination to make and assess conclusions based on evidence” (Eggen & Kauchak, 2001). Furthermore, at the core of cognitive learning theory is the development of learners who think critically (Eggen & Kauchak, 2001). Eggen & Kauchak (2001) continued:

If learners are to take responsibility for their own learning, they must be given opportunities to practice analyzing and evaluating ideas, weighing opinions, assessing evidence, and constructing solutions to problems. A classroom climate that values different perspectives and high levels of discussion is essential. Reasons for answers are as important as the answers themselves (p. 342).

Democratic learning communities invite multiple ways of considering or framing a problem as well as a variety of ways of acquiring knowledge or wisdom (Nieto, 2000; 2002). This type of adaptive decision making which honors varied perspectives and sources of knowledge allows for richer, collaborative decision making. Decision making that is inclusive of all learners expands individual students’ thinking and affords equitable learning opportunities for all.

Moreover, teaching students how to solve problems requires teaching basic processes of critical thinking. These include: observing, finding patterns and generalizing, forming conclusions based on patterns, and assessing conclusions based on observation (Eggen & Kauchak (2002). Teaching students critical thinking processes empowers them to be active learners rather than passive recipients of knowledge (Santrock, 2007).

Citizenship

Citizenship includes informed and committed participation in the life of one's community at the local, national, and global levels. Citizens recognize and address community issues, apply ethical and legal knowledge and reasoning, and respect the rights of others.

Educators are charged with the mission of shaping students into productive citizens (Anderson & Major, 2001). However, how do professional educators define productive citizenship? John Dewey contended that schools align citizenship too closely with obedience to authority; he suggested that true citizenship required questioning authority (Anderson & Major, 2001). Similarly, Koulish (1998) suggested that classroom experiences should support an active view of citizenship rather than a rights-oriented passive view: learning experiences should afford opportunities to help students move beyond the traditional legal-status view of citizenship that “provides an individual with full membership in the political community, access to equal voting, holding office, unencumbered travel abroad, and entitlement to scarce public resources” (p. 562) to a more involved community centered perspective.

How can curriculum and instruction help students and teacher candidates move from passive to active citizenry? Service-learning and experiential learning opportunities promote engaged citizenship (Beckman, 1997). Dewey, (1916) in Koulish (1998) stated:

Community service should be integrated within the academic curriculum. Experiential education connects community service to the classroom. It connects knowledge to experience, is problem centered, and is grounded in depth of meaning..... (p. 563).

Koulish (1998) elaborated that experiential education builds full-embodied involvement and citizenship through a personal, active and reflective process of learning by doing.

Furthermore, Beckman (1997) suggested service-learning fosters active citizenship to the extent “that the work volunteers do is thought about and critically assessed” (p. 73). She suggested that students should reflect on, analyze and discuss service learning experiences during class in order to attribute deeper meaning to their volunteerism. Other literature suggests that students increase tolerance, feelings of accomplishment and desire to continue doing service, all characteristics that contribute to citizenry, when they participate in service-learning projects (Moely, McFarland, Miron, Mercer, & Ilustre, 2002; Root, Callahan, & Sepanski, 2002).

Practice

The SKC faculty members are committed to nurturing strong communication skills, cultural understanding, critical thinking and citizenship in teacher candidates. The teacher education programs recognize these skills and dispositions as the four cornerstones to professional development. As such, SKC teacher educators are proficient in and model these skills and dispositions. Opportunities to develop the four cornerstones are well integrated into the teacher education curriculum.

For example, teacher candidates are required to complete the *Transition to Professional Teaching Summer Seminar* as a requirement of entry into the Professional Education Program in Elementary Education. The emphasis of the summer institute is to further develop communication, cultural understanding, critical thinking and citizenship in teacher candidates. Candidates build on strategies that will enable them to successfully interact with peers, professional educators and community members. Other courses in the professional education curriculum that build on the four cornerstones are as follows: ENGL 101, English Composition; ENGL 202, English Composition II; SPCH 100, Basic Communication; ENGL 306, Writing Research Papers; EDUC 175, Community Service-Learning in Education; MATH 100, College Algebra; MATH 115, Math for Elementary Teachers; ECED 109, Meeting the Needs of the Family; NASD 101, History of Indians in the US; EDUC 230, Teaching the American Indian Child; EDUC 311, Cultures, Diversity and Educational Ethics; plus three elective credits in the area of American Indian Studies – Fine Arts.

Last, the faculty members employ social constructivist and constructivist teaching strategies that build on the four cornerstones of professional development. For example, class activities routinely consist of collaborative learning activities typical of social constructivist teaching practices that require learners to develop interpersonal skills and to link individual learning to the group learning process (Dewey, 1938/1997; Vygotsky, 1978). Other social constructivist instructional strategies used by the education faculty include: making instruction personally or socially meaningful to students, negotiating meanings with students through exploratory talk (Ormrod, J. E., 2006), class discussion, small-group collaboration, and valuing meaningful activity over correct answers (Wood et al, 1995).

Candidate Performance, Knowledge and Dispositions Central to Communication, Critical Thinking, Cultural Understanding and Citizenship (Aligned to PEPPS 501)

The candidate will:

- (e) demonstrate understanding of how to connect concepts and use differing perspectives to engage learners in critical thinking, creativity, and collaborative problem solving related to authentic local and global issues;
- (j) interact knowledgeably and professionally with students, families, and colleagues based on social needs and institutional roles;
- (l) demonstrate understanding of and ability to integrate history, cultural heritage, and contemporary status of American Indians and tribes in Montana.

Commitment to Diversity

Equity and inclusion through culturally responsive curriculum is the vision of the SKC Professional Education Programs. The teacher education curricula prepare teacher candidates to be culturally competent and skilled educators through helping them to: a) understand their own culture and how their culture shapes their expectations and interactions with others (Grossman, 1999; McIntosh, 1989; Van Horn & Segal, 2000); b) examine and be responsive to the individual contexts of the children and families they serve through direct communication with each (Van Horn & Segal; Yang & McMullen, 2003); and c) study the culture of the children and families in the communities served by our schools (Jones & Derman-Sparks, 1992). Through rigorous

coursework, teacher candidates are especially prepared to instruct American Indian children and partner with American Indian families, particularly members or descendants of the Salish, Kootenai and Pend d' Oreille tribes.

The faculty of Salish Kootenai College is ethnically a mix of American Indians and European Americans. The student body is ethnically diverse: in 2015, 73% of SKC students were Tribal members (58%) or Tribal descendants (15%); 1% were African American; 1% were Canadian First Nations; 2% were Hispanic; and 23% were Caucasian. As a minority majority institution, SKC is focused on diversity. Furthermore, teacher candidates are also exposed to diversity during field work and clinical experiences on the Flathead Indian Reservation and beyond, including the Montana School for the Deaf and Blind. Ethnically and linguistically diverse students as well as students with exceptionalities and students from varied economic backgrounds are enrolled in the public schools and early learning programs on the reservation.

It is self-evident that the Teacher Education Program embraces *Indian Education for All*, 20-1-501, MCA, Office of Public Instruction, Montana. The seven Essential Understandings Regarding Montana Indians are explicitly covered in required American Indian Studies and cultural courses such as: NASD 101, History of Indians in the US, EDUC 235, Introduction to American Indian Education, EDUC 311, Cultures, Diversity and Educational Ethics, EDUC 321 Research Writing in Education and EDUC 307 Curriculum, Planning and Assessment. In addition, three elective credits in the area of American Indian Studies - Fine Arts are required. This content is also integrated throughout methods courses and is embedded in the literacy strand (EDUC 352, 354, 356) with core texts including selected IEFA Model Teaching Units and the following:

- Cajune, J. (2011). [*Montana Tribal Histories: Educators Resource Guide and Companion DVD*](#). Helena: Montana Office of Public Instruction Indian Education for All Division. Retrieved 2/19/2024
- Division of Indian Education. (2015). [*Montana Tribes: Their Histories and Locations*](#). Helena, Montana: Montana Office of Public Instruction. Retrieved 2/19/2024.
- Elser, T. (2010, rev. 2020). [*The framework: A practical guide for Montana teachers and administrators implementing Indian education for all*](#). Helena, MT: Montana Office of Public Instruction. Retrieved 2/19/2024
- Juneau, S., Fleming, W., & Foster, L. (2013). [*History and Foundation of American Indian Education*](#). Helena: Montana Office of Public Instruction Indian Education for All Division. Retrieved 2/19/2024
- Montana Office of Public Instruction. (2010, rev. 2024). [*Essential Understandings Regarding Montana Indians*](#). Retrieved 2/19/2024

Commitment to Integration of Technology

Competency, Constructivism and Instruction

Technology is integrated into the teacher education curricula with the expectation that teacher candidates become proficient in use of technology as an instructional tool within a constructivist framework. McKenzie (2000) suggested that there is “no greater tool of empowerment and efficacy than technology used constructively with students” (p. 2). Technology can and should support advanced knowledge acquisition which is done by providing environments and thinking tools that engage constructivist conceptions of learning (Eggen & Kauchak, 2001). Some applications of technology that are consistent with a constructivist approach include tutorials that help students build knowledge (Eggen & Kauchak, 2001); virtual fieldtrips and simulations; WebQuests that assist with inquiry oriented activities (Learning Theories: Constructivism, 2000); and communication applications such as e-mail, chat rooms and list serves that allow students to work collaboratively in and outside of the classroom (Learning Theories: Constructivism, 2000).

Moreover, education faculty members are informed regarding constructivist applications of technology and engage teacher candidates in learning through use of technology. For example, SKC Education faculty members make extensive use of computers and other technologies in their instructional work. All courses involve considerable use of online resources and digital media to enhance the learning process. In addition, faculty members use all of the following technologies: digital imaging, digital video,

digital audio, graphic presentations, Smartboards, multimedia authoring tools (i.e. Hyperstudio), and productivity tools (i.e. Office). Furthermore, faculty members make extensive use of educational video, web resources, and presentation tools to enhance instruction. Online databases are available for candidate research from the SKC library; and other documents are accessible through electronic reserve. SKC participates in an inter-Library loan system with other institutions in Montana, including the University of Montana and its satellite campuses.

All coursework in SKC Education programs involve candidates in aspects of technology; for example, instructional experiences, student class presentations and research are enhanced by use of technology. In terms of technical instruction, there are two elementary education program courses that specifically cover educational technology and its applications. EDUC 115, Computers in Education, is a course that focuses on the basic computer competencies that candidates will need as educators. EDUC 115 fosters proficiency in the use of productivity tools such as Microsoft Word, Excel, Powerpoint, Access, as well as basic use and familiarity with digital imaging. In addition, EDUC 305, Technology in the Elementary Classroom, expands upon topics covered in EDUC 115. For example, EDUC 305 engages candidates in WebQuests, multimedia projects, and other constructivist learning experiences. Candidates also work with more advanced digital still imaging tools and digital video production. Plus, candidates create several templates and projects that can be utilized in their student teaching experiences or when they are employed as professional educators.

Technology Infrastructure at SKC

Salish Kootenai College is among the most technically advanced institutions in the tribal college system. SKC was the very first tribal college to begin offering online courses in the mid-1990s, and has expanded its web-based learning network since then. The College has recently established an “e-campus”, which hosts a combination of online coursework, web documents, and other telecommunications tools. SKC’s Industrial Technology (IT) Department has developed its own online course management system to deliver its web-based courses; as well the IT department has expanded its capacity to host and deliver classes, seminars and conferences using Polycom-based teleconferencing tools.

Additionally, students have access to over 120 workstations in both Windows and Mac platforms, distributed in multiple lab, center, and classroom settings. A state-of-the-art digital media lab is available for image editing, digital arts and design, and video production. SKC faculty members have received training in the use of Smartboard technology, and several instructors are now using these tools on a regular basis. Other labs and technology services include an Academic Skills Lab, an Analytical and Environmental Chemistry Lab, a Career Center student computer center, a Math and Sciences Lab, a new Molecular Biology and Biophysics Research Lab, a Media Center / Public Television production and broadcast studio, and a host of computer services and workstations affiliated with the Library. There are 10 staff members that work with the technology environment at SKC; about the same number of instructors teach courses directly focused on computer science, digital media, and networking.

Capacity to Meet Standards and Fulfill Mission, Vision and Core Beliefs

Capacity will be discussed in three categories; people, place, and resources. The SKC Education Division is rich in all three areas and has the capacity to meet or exceed standards within the context of our mission, vision and the core beliefs discussed above.

People

Without question the greatest asset the Division has in fulfillment of our mission, vision, core beliefs and standards are the fine people to surround and support our teacher education candidates at all levels, and the candidates who support each other as active and thoughtful learning community members. These two groups come together in the field, informed and inspired by the faculty of the Division.

Partnerships

A diverse group of stakeholders in the Flathead Reservation education community gather at Salish Kootenai College regularly to guide and inform the ongoing efforts of the Education Division. Established in 2002, the Division’s “Education Advisory Board” meets 2-3 times each year. The group’s membership

changes from time to time but always includes teachers and administrators from area schools, graduates, tribal education personnel, and other local and county education officials. Our faculty also participates in all Advisory Board meetings in order to more deeply understand the needs in our community specific to our goal of providing highly prepared teachers for P-12 classrooms.

Currently the Education Division Advisory Board (EDAB) consists of the following members:

Sandra Beal	Curriculum Director, Ronan-Pablo Schools
Dr. Sandra Boham	SKC President
Linda Bone	Early Childhood Faculty
Dr. Amy Burland	Director of Early Childhood Partnerships
Michelle Mitchell	Director, Tribal Education Department (SKC alum)
Jeanne Christopher	Director, CSKT Early Childhood Services
Eric Hogenson	Elementary Faculty, Dept. Chair
Leigh Ann Courville	Early Childhood Faculty, Co-Chair of ECED
Manda Davis	Early Childhood Faculty, Co-Chair of ECED
Dr. Michael Munson	Vice President of Academic Affairs, SKC
Dr. Tammy Elser	Elementary Education Faculty, Director M.Ed. C&I Graduate Program
Kathie Maiers	Director, SKC TRIO program
Doug Ruhman	Dean, Division of Education
Frank Sucha	Retired Ronan Public Schools Teacher
Dr. Wren Walker Robbins	Chair, Secondary Education Dept
Mark Johnston	Superintendent, Ronan-Pablo School District
Frank Jobe	Principal, Ronan Middle School
Christa Anderson	Principal and Supt., Dixon School
Shawn Hendrickson	Principal, St. Ignatius Middle/High Schools
Polly Dupuis	SKC Math faculty and Polson SD#23 Teacher
Jedd Tougas	Ronan SD High School Science teacher (SKC alum)

This group serves in a mentoring capacity, assisting, guiding, and informing the Education Division faculty and leadership as it continues to build and refine its initiatives and its academic programs. Through its diversity and high level of expertise, the Board offers unique perspectives that greatly enhance the department's potential for the successful implementation of its goals.

To further emphasize open communication and effectiveness with the partner schools, one faculty member of the Education Division has been assigned the responsibility of working with P-12 school officials to schedule, plan, and implement field experiences and student teaching for candidates in Education programs. The "Student Teaching Supervisor" (STS) directs and manages candidate placements in concert with P-12 school officials and classroom teachers to ensure appropriate selections for mentoring supervising teachers and student engagement. The expectations and objectives for our field placement and clinical partnerships are articulated for both candidates and school personal in the *Methods Course Field Experience Guidelines*. Our P-12 partnerships are essential to fulfilling our mission, vision and meeting standards through clinical practice.

As mentioned, the Education Division's Early Childhood Education program works extensively with the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes' Early Childhood Services Department (CSKT Head Start) and has for many years. Both institutions meet regularly to coordinate training and professional development for EC teachers from throughout the Flathead Reservation.

Apart from its clinical associations, the Division also partners with local schools in its FRESH teacher support group, which meets monthly during the school year to help new teachers. This group is part of the Division's comprehensive system of support for its graduates entering the field of professional teaching. Pre-service teachers still in training are also invited to attend these gatherings, and often do. In addition, local school administrators have met to advise and strategize with Division leaders in the revitalization of the College's Secondary Education programs.

The Education Division also partners with the Montana School for the Deaf and Blind in Great Falls as a part of its Diversity Practicum course (EDUC 312). Students in the P-3, Elementary, and Secondary programs take this course to learn firsthand about the unique learning needs of students with different ways of processing information. They observe and assist in MSDB classrooms, then plan and present lessons having to do with the Flathead Reservation to students.

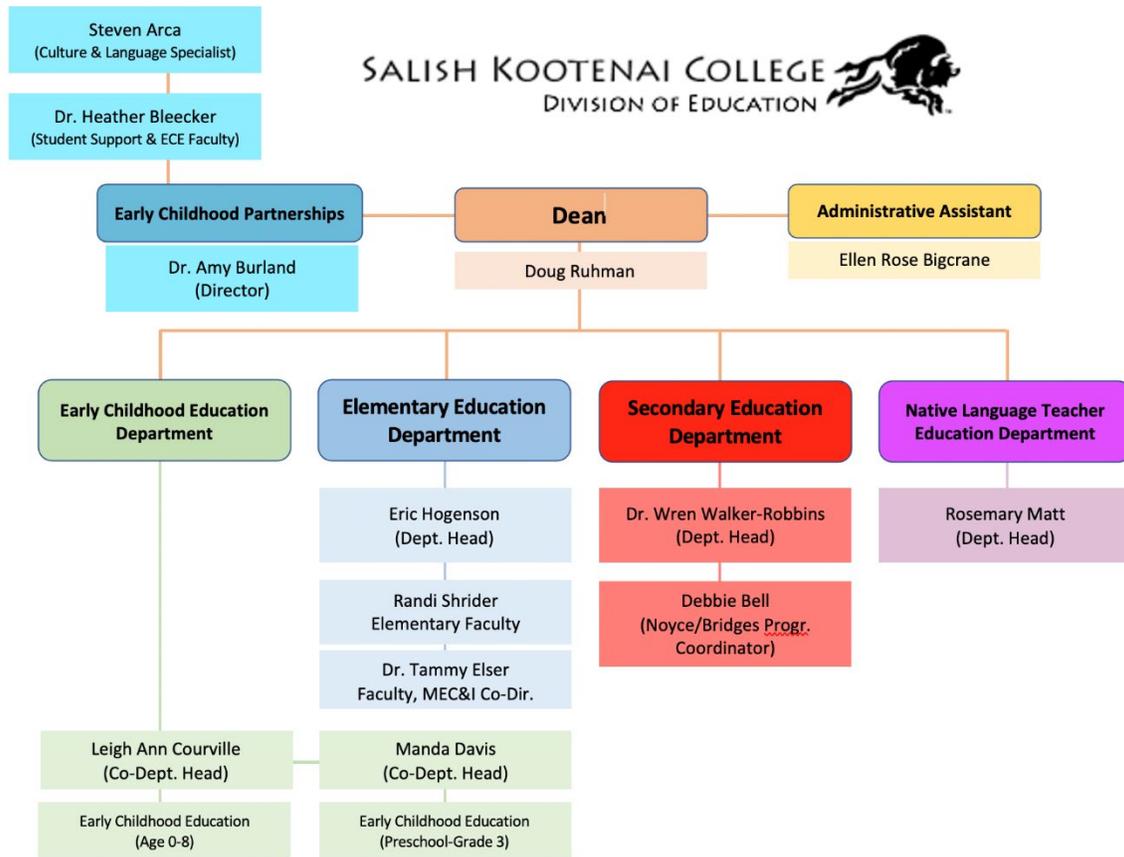
In the last several academic years, SKC has built a number of new 2+2 articulation agreements with other colleges, including several other TCUs in Montana, and some from other states. These partnerships have created degree pathways for students in those communities to secure their associate's degrees in their local college, and then complete their bachelor's degree at SKC remotely, while remaining within their local systems of support (and in many cases, while maintaining their employment as teachers).

Lastly, the Division of Education continues to partner with the Flathead Reservation Boys & Girls Clubs in both Ronan and Polson. The BGCs offer mentoring, academic support, and after school experiences for local schoolchildren from grades K-8 in two large, newly constructed facilities on our Reservation. Numerous Education students work at one or both of these centers, some as part-time helpers and some as regular employees. Besides serving as another option for clinical experiences, the BGC networks with the Division on many levels.

Faculty Qualifications, Performance and Development

The education faculty at Salish Kootenai College brings unique contributions and strengths to the Education Division and to Salish Kootenai College as a whole. The faculty is diverse in their skills, expertise, education, gender and experiences. Furthermore, faculty actively serve and nurture relationships in the P-12 schools in which our candidates conduct their field experiences and where many will one day be employed. Education faculty members have taught and worked in Polson, Charlo, Ronan, Dixon, and Arlee elementary schools and with Reservation schools such as Head Start and the BIA funded Two Eagle River School. Faculty frequently provide professional development for in-service teachers across the reservation and throughout Montana in their areas of expertise. As a result, SKC Education Division faculty members are familiar with community needs, and can create meaningful educational experiences for our teacher candidates through their associations and relationships.

All education faculty members hold a master's degree and four of them have earned doctorates. Three others are currently pursuing their doctoral degrees. All faculty members participate in scholarship activities through faculty development groups devoted to research and integration of the 4C's. The following faculty narratives describe the particular expertise that each faculty member brings to the education programs at SKC. In addition to the qualifications of the education faculty, information about each faculty member's scholarship and service activities and participation in professional development is included below. Here is an organizational chart showing the current configuration of the faculty and staff in the Division of Education at SKC:



Faculty Qualifications, Experience, and Scholarly Work

Dr. Amy Burland acquired a Bachelor’s in Elementary Education from Moorhead State University, MN, and a Master’s of Education in School Administration from Grand Forks, ND. She attained a Doctorate of Education in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Montana, emphasizing early mathematics. Amy has worked at Salish Kootenai College for over 20 years, serving in various capacities, beginning as an adjunct instructor, then as Elementary Department Chair, and eventually as Dean of the Division of Education. She is now the Early Childhood Partnerships Coordinator, overseeing Early Childhood projects under the Kellogg Foundation, Early Educators Investment Collaborative, and the Federal Office of Head Start. These projects are aligned with increasing the quality of care and learning for children and families on the Flathead Reservation and throughout Montana. Amy has been involved with revitalizing Native Games since she first became certified through the International Traditional Games Society in 2010. Since then she has secured funding to host numerous trainings at SKC that make the certification accessible to education students, SKC faculty, and Flathead Reservation teachers.

Leigh Ann Courville is currently Co-Chair of the Early Childhood Education department in the Division of Education. She earned her Bachelor of Elementary Education with an emphasis in Early Childhood from Western Montana College and an Associate in Early Childhood in Dillon, Montana (now University of Montana Western) and a Masters of Education in Curriculum and Instruction from University of Montana, Missoula. Leigh Ann has worked at SKC since September 2013. Starting as an Assistant Director/Lead Teacher at the campus Early Learning Center where she provided support in the administration of a high

quality program and moving into the Director position at the Early Learning Center in 2014. In this position managing day-to-day operations of the center and the Transitions grant coordinator. This included oversight of implementation of High Scope Curriculum, grant funding and childcare budget. During this time the center moved from a STARS to Quality level 2 program to a level 4 program. She joined the SKC Education department Fall of 2018 and teaches classes in early childhood and child development and serves as a supervisor to the Early Learning Center on campus and link to the Education department.

Leigh Ann has been in the field of early childhood education for about 28 years and that work has been in Montana and Alaska and included tribal Head Start and Early Head Start program teacher and site coordinator, Early Childhood Specialist and trainer for Alaska's CCR&R (child care resource and referral), administrator/teacher in bi-lingual Montessori program, family child care, and substitute in public schools.

She brings a passion for the field of early childhood and the value of culture and place and its role in early education.

Manda Davis is also currently a Co-Chair of the Early Childhood Education department, along with Leigh Ann Courville. She received a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Psychology and English Literature from Willamette University in 1999. While attending Willamette, Manda worked at Fairview Mental Hospital as a research assistant and as an Applied Behavior Analysis treatment specialist for young children with Autism. Upon graduation, she returned home to the Flathead Valley where she received her Early Childhood Montessori Teaching Certificate. In 2001, Manda completed the certification for Montessori Elementary Teacher Training in Woodinville, Washington and returned to Kalispell to help establish a public Montessori program for grades K-3 at Helena Flats School. She has over 15 years' experience teaching in Montessori classrooms, both public and private, with children ages 2 through 12 and is currently a teacher trainer for the Montana Montessori Teacher Training Institute.

In 2006, Ms. Davis received a Master's Degree in Curriculum and Instruction with an emphasis in Early Childhood Special Education from the University of Montana. She then went on to Columbia University's Teacher's College as a Doctoral candidate in Early Childhood Education where she taught Master's Degree level classes in "inclusive practices and curriculum differentiation in early childhood education." Manda has an insatiable love of learning and is thrilled to be working with pre-service and experienced teachers on the Flathead Reservation.

Manda began teaching at Salish Kootenai College in January of 2017. She teaches classes in leadership and professionalism, coaching and mentoring, meeting the needs of families, and supporting cognitive development in math, science, and literacy. She and her two sons participated in the Native Games certification clinic organized by the International Traditional Games Society at SKC and has a passion for working with pre-service and established teachers to host Native Game tournaments on the Flathead Reservation. Manda has collaborated with Dr. Amy Burland and Kathie Maiers on a Restorative Teachings Grant established by the American Indian College Fund that fuses the Special Olympics Montana Young Athletes Program curriculum with the Traditional Games curriculum so that all children can participate in Native Games events.

Manda serves on several committees at SKC, and has been active in the Food Sovereignty Program, including the distribution of food boxes to students and others at the College.

Ms. Davis is a member of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, the Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children, the American Montessori Society, and the Montana Early Childhood Higher Education Consortium. Manda is delighted to be an integral part of the faculty at SKC and particularly enjoys working with the dedicated teachers at the Head Start programs on the Flathead Reservation where excellence and innovation in early childhood education happens every day.

Randi Shrider was born and raised in Saint Ignatius, MT. After graduating from Charlo High School, she received a Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education from the University of Montana while also earning her Associate's degree in Early Childhood from Salish Kootenai College. In 2009, Randi moved to Alaska where she expanded her educational journey through serving the Yukon-Koyukuk School District (YKSD)

as an early elementary teacher in the village of Minto. During her time in Minto, she was recommended to participate in the Rural Alaska Principal Preparation and Support Project (RAPPS) that focused on helping prepare principals for high-poverty and remote Alaska schools where she earned her first Master's degree in Educational Leadership. After receiving her degree, she worked as a principal/teacher in the village of Allakaket. In her position as administrator, she developed a diverse knowledge and skill set displaying the competence and creativity that have helped to shape her professional goals. Her flexibility in working with students, teachers, staff and the public has earned her an enviable reputation as an individual who truly cares about individuals who live in small communities. Randi further advanced her career in education while carrying out her professional responsibilities within the district as high school counselor, during which time she earned her second Master's in Counseling from the University of Alaska. Randi eventually opened a new office in Eagle River, Alaska, and served as both a counselor and teacher to military families through a statewide correspondence program. During the 2020-2021 school year, Randi served as an assistant principal of a charter school in South Houston, TX, serving youth and families from various ethnic, racial, cultural, and religious backgrounds. She teaches classes in both the ECED and Elementary programs, and also teaches the SKC Seminar class that onboards new students to the College. Randi serves on the Professional Development and Inservice Committees and helps out in many extra capacities across campus.

Dr. Heather Bleecker serves as Student Support Specialist in the Division, and also assists the ECED department with early childhood partnerships, including coordinating the numerous 2+2 articulation agreements and transfer pathways between SKC and other TCUs. Dr. Bleecker has 17 years of experience in mathematics education. Heather joined the SKC faculty in September of 2018 and serves as an instructor in the ECE:P-3 and Elementary departments.

Heather taught high school mathematics in Long Beach, California and Polson, Montana. She holds a National Board Certification in Adolescent and Young Adulthood Mathematics and is an HP Prime Ambassador. Heather has served as an adjunct professor for the University of South Dakota. Heather was a research associate and project manager at the University of Michigan for an NSF grant studying geometry instruction at the undergraduate level for instructors preparing future secondary mathematics teachers. She has accompanied students and graduates on several conferences and training opportunities throughout the U.S. and internationally. She traveled with elementary students to Guatemala in the summer of 2023 to engage in math teaching as part of the Mathkind program, and has attended and presented at numerous professional teaching convenings, such as NCTM national conference. Her research interests include studying mathematics teachers' perceptions of teaching competencies.

Eric Hogenson currently serves as the Department Chair for Elementary Education in the Division of Education. He earned his B.A. in Environmental Studies from Dartmouth College in 2001, and his M.Ed. in Educational Leadership from California Lutheran University in 2013. Eric was born in Missoula, MT and raised on the Flathead Indian Reservation in Polson, MT. He is the son of two life-long educators and attributes his love of learning to his parents. After graduating from Polson schools, Eric followed his love of the outdoors and attended Dartmouth College in the woods of New Hampshire. There, he earned his degree in Environmental Studies. After college, Eric helped pioneer Dartmouth's inaugural volunteer teaching program in the Republic of the Marshall Islands. He lived and taught on Ejit Island, the home of the people of Bikini Atoll, who were displaced by the US Nuclear Testing program in the 1950s. After two extraordinary years, he moved to Los Angeles and worked at Brentwood School (K-12) from 2003-2016. During his time there, he honed his teaching and leadership skills as he assumed a multitude of roles, including teaching science to every grade K-12, serving as the high school science department chair, directing the summer programs, and serving on the senior administrative team. In 2016, Eric became the Director of the Upper Division at Laurence School (K-6) in Van Nuys, CA, where he mentored and supervised teachers, directed the curricular program, and developed many co-curricular programs. He is most proud about his work enhancing the STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, math) program at Laurence. Among his accomplishments, he presented at regional and national conferences about the value

of connected and experiential learning. As an enrolled member of the Little Shell Band of Chippewa, Eric has been reconnecting with his roots in Montana. He is just beginning his pathway to a doctoral degree in Education.

Dr. Tammy Elser joined the SKC faculty in the Education Division in December 2016 as a full-time instructor focusing on literacy and Indian Education. Previous teaching assignments include integrated literacy, curriculum foundations, and multicultural education courses for the University of Montana; and content area reading and classroom management for SKC.

Dr. Elser earned her Ed.D. in Curriculum and Instruction, preceded by an M.Ed. in Guidance and Counseling, a B.A., English, a B.A. in Drama and A. A. emphasizing social work, all from the University of Montana. The emphasis of her doctorate and 35 years work in K-12 and higher education are on literacy, language acquisition and bilingual education, multicultural education and Indian Education for All. She taught and designed and directed Federal Programs on the Flathead Reservation for 25 years, with three at Two Eagle River School and twenty-two years in the Arlee Public Schools. In Arlee, she developed the only comprehensive approach to literacy instruction to close the achievement gap between American Indian children and their non-Indian peers and sustained it for many years.

Through her educational consulting firm, *Insight Educational Services, Inc.*, Tammy has worked nationally as an educational consultant. Recent work for Montana Office of Public Instruction includes writing *The Framework: A Practical Guide for Montana Teachers and Administrators Implementing Indian Education for All*, and development of seven curricula integrating *Indian Education for All* content into the communication arts while promoting 21st century skills. Under contract with Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, Dr. Elser developed two comprehensive and innovative curriculums integrating across content areas, emphasizing environmental science. *Fire on the Land* and *Explore the River*, distributed to classrooms across Montana, fulfill the Common Core Literacy Standards for Science and History as well as the Next Generation Science Standards.

She has developed curriculum for the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian associated with their Treaties Exhibit and protocols for NASA supporting climate science education. In addition, a textbook review was provided for Pearson publishing supporting Montana specific content in a 4th grade Geography text.

Professional development in higher education in the recent past include contracts with Creighton University providing professional development for five American Indian Catholic Mission Schools and a plenary session for STEM professors in minority serving institutions for the American Association of Colleges and Universities.

Over the last decade, Dr. Elser conducted classroom observations in over 520 P-12 classrooms examining technology integration and best practices. Her K-12 work focuses on practical, classroom-level supports, transforming teaching and learning. Literacy, curriculum integration and best practices in support of rigorous educational expectations are her enduring passions and the focus of about 40 days of teacher professional development each year.

In 2019 Tammy and colleagues in the Education Division began focused work to develop a Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction, and in 2022 the first cohort of this program began its studies. In August 2023, 100% of the initial cohort of graduate students completed their program and graduated with honors. Dr. Elser is Co-Director of this program along with Dr. Wren Walker Robbins. Dr. Elser directs the Literacy, Equity, and Excellence strand of this advanced degree program for teachers.

Rosemary Matt (Séliš/Q̓ispé) is from the Flathead Reservation in Montana. Rosemary's parents are Fred Matt and Kathy Ross, both members of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. Rosemary was raised by her mother, an educated Séliš women who instilled strong community and leadership values. Rosie serves as the Dept. Chair and Faculty for the SKC Native Language Teacher Education program. She holds a Master of Arts in Educational Leadership from the University of Northern Colorado and a Bachelor of Science in Education from Montana State University-Billings. She has served in many professional capacities over the past twenty years including: teacher, grant director, youth prevention program director,

curriculum director, HISET Chief Examiner, school director, and program coordinator. Rosemary's commitment to Salish Language and Culture started when she was hired at Nk^wusm Salish Language School as the Curriculum Director in 2009. This position started her adult journey into learning Salish and understanding the importance of Salish revitalization efforts within our community and the northwest. Her commitment to her community includes serving as the Advisor for the Nk^wucin (One Voice) UNITY Youth Council and being a co-founder of The Salish Institute, a community-based non-profit whose mission is to improve the health, culture, education and environment of the Salish and Pend d'Oreille people. Currently, she is an American Indian College Fund Indigenous Visionary Native Women Leadership Fellowship Mentor and is embarking on the initial stages of her doctoral work at Montana State University.

Douglas Ruhman currently serves as Dean of the Division of Education. He oversees all aspects of the Division, and is responsible for grant management, personnel supervision, and the academic and operational workings of the Division. Prior to this position he served as faculty and Dept. Chair for Elementary Education. He earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Elementary Education from the University of Montana and a Master of Education Degree with an Educational Technology endorsement from Lesley University in Cambridge, MA. Doug taught in several environmental science education programs prior to receiving his Bachelor's Degree in 1988. He was a Watkins Scholar, designing a supplemental elementary science program that traveled to various Missoula elementary schools teaching hands-on environmental science lessons to 2nd and 4th graders.

Doug began teaching in a 4th grade classroom on the Flathead Indian Reservation, and worked as a teacher, whole language specialist, technology coordinator, and staff development designer on the Reservation for 15 years prior to coming to SKC. Doug has been involved in curriculum design and selection committees in the areas of science, technology, and language arts. While still a classroom teacher, Doug helped to design and implement a comprehensive classroom civics/economics program for his school, which later was adopted by other schools on the Reservation. In 1999 Doug received the Outstanding Educator Award from the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes for his work in teaching about the Flathead River Ecosystem.

Mr. Ruhman began working at Salish Kootenai College as faculty in the Elementary Education program in the summer of 2002, and has been involved in several outreach projects with Reservation youth since that time, including being the site evaluator for the Kellogg Leadership for Community Change project, a joint program of SKC and the Ronan School District. This project's goals sought to empower American Indian youth, encourage academic excellence, and reduce the dropout rate among Indigenous learners.

In addition, Doug has served on faculty development focus groups dealing with student engagement in online learning, cultural competency, and the implementation of active learning techniques. He has attended national and regional conferences on technology education, distance education, generational poverty, community leadership, and teaching and learning at minority-serving institutions, among other topics. Mr. Ruhman has served SKC in several work groups and committees, including chairing the annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration Week committee, chairing the Community Service Day committee, serving on the SKC Marketing Committee, and representing faculty on the President's Advisory Council. Doug was the recipient of a Fulbright-Hays Scholarship which resulted in a cultural study abroad in China during the summer of 2009. He was selected as the recipient of the American Indian College Fund Faculty Member of the Year Award in 2014, and still teaches in the Division.



Contribution to SKC through Committee Work and Service, Past and Present

Dr. Amy Burland

- Institutional Review Board (IRB) (2018-present)
- Secured funding and coordination for Montana Early Childhood Native Language Summit (2017 to present)
- Native Games Professional Development to local pre-service and in-service teachers (2010-present)
- National Presentations on American Indian College Fund projects, including:
- Restorative Teachings (incorporating Native Games into MT Special Olympics curriculum), Denver, CO (2017 & 2018).
- For the Wisdom of the Children Early Childhood STEM Initiative – Our People’s Timeline (building STEM into early childhood education teacher training). National American Indian Education Conference (NAIE), Hartford, CT (2018); and Early Childhood Education Funders Workshop, Minneapolis, MN (2019);

Doug Ruhman

- M. L. King, Jr. Celebration Week Committee (past Chair)
- Community Service Day Committee (past Chair)
- 4Cs / Citizenship Committee (2018-19, past Chair)
- Academic Advising Work Group (2013-2015)
- Faculty Handbook Committee (2014-2016)
- New Faculty Orientation task force
- Academic Program Reviews (several)
- Presentations at Faculty Inservice (several)
- Presentations at Flathead Res. PIR Day (multiple years)
- Volunteer, SKC Harvest Dinner Event (multiple years)
- Montana OPI Praxis Working Committee (9 years)
- Montana Higher Education Consortium
- Building Emergency Coordinator (2016-present)
- SKC Marketing Committee (4 years)
- Graduate Curriculum Committee
- Co-Chair, Montana Council of Deans of Education (current)

Leigh Ann Courville

- Food Access Committee (current)
- Teachers Teaching Teachers- Reggio Presentation Spring 23
- Building Strong Foundations (BSSF)
- Zero to Five Collaboration Early Childhood Tribal Policy Coordinator
- BPC Webinar Tribal Childcare featuring SKC/ECED Feb 2023
- Native Roots MPR Radio March 23

Randi Shrider

- Student Referral Team (DOE) collaborator
- Advisory Board (DOE) collaborator
- Junior Cohort (DOE) advisor
- ATD: Holistic Student Support (SKC) collaborator, facilitator, note-taker
- Professional Development Committee (SKC) collaborator
- General Education Committee (SKC) collaborator
- Scholarship Committee (SKC) Collaborator
- Distant Education Committee (SKC) Collaborator
- Strategic Plan Community Help (SKC) (Community Focus Groups)
- NSO (SKC) collaborator
- High School Engagement (SKC) collaborator
- Animal Shelter
- Bread Basket
- Food Box Distribution

Manda Davis

- SKC Scholarship Committee
- MT Committee for 2019 revision of MELS
- NAYC Professional Standards Committee
- Tribal Language Summit
- Food Box distribution (2022) and Food Access Committee (2023)
- SKC Scholarship review team
- ATD (Achieve the Dream) Faculty support initiative
- Women for Wellness
- MLK Day
- Reggio Emilia training in Italy
- Families First Learning Lab provider
- Early Childhood Services training and support
- SKC ELC training and support
- Local ICWA volunteer and supporter
- Montana Early Childhood Higher Education Consortium
- EsF Educateurs Sans Frontières - (coalition of educators across the world focused on social justice)
- All Nations Health Center Volunteer in Missoula

Eric Hogenson (new employee 22-23)

- Distance Education Committee
- Benefits Committee
- Community Service Day Committee

Tammy Elser

- Institutional Review Board (IRB) (2018-present)
- Graduate programs working group (2019-present)
- Graduate Curriculum Committee
- Early Literacy Advisory Council for Montana Board of Public Education (2023-present)
- Professional Development Committee (2017)
- Presentation at Faculty In-service (Spring 2017)
- Presentations at Flathead Res. PIR Day (multiple years)
- Presentations at Best Practices Conference OPI (multiple years)
- Collaborative professional development events (TED, OPI, Others 4 to 8 times annually)
- In-service professional development provider - all Flathead Reservation Schools (4 to 8 sessions annually)

The Evelyn M. Stevenson Education Building

Physical Space

In 2012 the Education Division moved into its new home. SKC constructed a 10,300 square foot building that houses all but our Secondary Science degree programs. The building includes five spacious and flexible classroom spaces, nine faculty offices, a faculty work and meeting space, a student lounge and commons area, a shared resource library, and a computer lab. A student work room has been retrofitted to support adjunct faculty and to house BRAIDS, a Native Youth Community Partnership project. All classrooms have e-white boards, white boards and bulletin boards and the entire space is well appointed with high speed wireless internet connected to SKC's extensive network system. On a daily basis, faculty and students can eat lunch together in the commons area, confer in faculty office space, or hold informal work sessions in the lab, work room or accessible classroom space. The building is so comfortable that students sometimes come early, camp in the commons area or a classroom where they will be instructed later and stay all day working through lunch on projects and collaborating in support of each others' educational goals. In our last Conceptual Framework, the Division (then a department) likened itself to a village. This has become an increasingly accurate description with the addition of this lovely and beautiful home.



Resources Including Technology

Salish Kootenai College is a leader among other units in the tribal college system in the utilization, application, and infrastructure of its information technology network. SKC makes use of well over 1,100 computer workstations and dozens of file servers, with 187 workstations available to students in various settings across campus. Unique among other tribal colleges is SKC's legacy of online course delivery.

Offering e-learning classes since 1997, SKC has the capacity to meet students' needs both on campus- for students with scheduling or transportation issues- and at distance for off campus students. SKC's IT department has recently selected Schoology as its most recent learning management system (LMS), which enables delivery of online courses to around 270 students each quarter. College faculty have developed 668 online courses, nearly all of which are currently available for online delivery through Schoology.

SKC's IT infrastructure includes 16 different computer labs accessible to all students, staff, and faculty, including a state-of-the-art computer graphics lab used for web design, digital imaging, and video production. Hardware resources include interactive whiteboards, scanners, tablets, mobile and desktop computers, large-scale printing devices, digital interfaces for science instruction, numerous advanced technological tools specific to individual programs, and projection systems available in all classrooms. SKC also has the capacity to host and deliver classes, seminars, and conferences using various teleconferencing tools. The Education Division has purchased an advanced robotic system that allows students at distance to attend classes and participate along with classmates in real-time. Several students have successfully attended classes from remote locations using this robot system.

Software resources include MS Office productivity tools, GIS and other mapping software, locally-produced native language apps and other tools, digital media and web authoring tools, imaging, audio and video editing software, and a wide array of Web 2.0 tools used by education faculty and students. SKC's IT department also employs several full-time IT interns who are available for faculty, staff, and students to troubleshoot and address technical issues that may arise in the course of daily operations at the College.

Candidates in education courses use many of these resources. Faculty and students' use of SKC's technology tools and infrastructure is important in two ways: first, in terms of providing the richest possible learning settings for faculty to teach and candidates to learn; second, in terms of building technological competency, in preparation for their work as current and future educators. In both of these goals, SKC is committed to ensuring a dependable and efficient technological environment that adapts to change and supports its programs.

SKC's IT infrastructure includes multiple file servers, with data volumes that can be allocated to departments for the archiving, storage, and processing of assessment data. Though the TEP portfolio system has historically been paper-based, Education Division personnel have recently developed an electronic portfolio model that will simultaneously archive and report on data for program assessment purposes. As long-time teachers, SKC's Education Division personnel have considerable experience in working with multiple document processing techniques, and thus have sufficient technical resources and skills to develop and maintain its assessment model as outlined in the Assessment Plan.

Another critical resource for SKC Education Division students in the D'Arcy McNickle Library, named in honor of the accomplished writer and anthropologist D'Arcy McNickle, who was a member of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) and a tireless Native American rights advocate. The library began serving students in 1980 and in 2010, the SKC Library was renovated to include more study rooms, a large computer learning lab, and an enlarged children's area. The 23,600 square foot facility houses over 50,000 books, periodicals, and videos, as well as an extensive Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) collection. Electronic resources and data bases expand the collection and access to information exponentially. Computers, printer/scanner, and video viewing rooms are available to SKC affiliates and community members.

Student Services

Service	Description
Bookstore	Provides required textbooks and other support resources that are stocked and available for students prior to the onset of classes. Responds to faculty requests regarding inventory.
Counseling	Offers career, life skills, employment and short-term personal counseling as well as placement services to all students throughout the school year and summer. Referral to community resources and agencies.

Academic Skills Lab	Assists students at all levels of learning (pre-literacy, college algebra, writing and reading) through a developmental remediation process.
Tutoring and Success Coaching Early Alert System	Provides services to students in all coursework from general studies to into their selected degree program, in 2015 SKC initiated an early alert system where any faculty member can request follow-up academic or other forms of support from a team of campus success coaches. These services support and monitor students who may be in danger of failing a course or potentially dropping out of college.
Financial Aid	Counsels and advises students regarding all aspects of financial aid opportunities and responsibilities.
SKC Early Learning Center	Provides affordable childcare to students and staff for infants and children ages 2-12, 3-5 year olds receive benefit of pre-school following the High Scope model.
ACCESS	Offers special support services to students with disabilities.
Housing	Coordinates on and off-campus available housing with students through an application/availability process.
Library	Invites the use of extensive resources for pursuit of an academic career. Provides books, microfilm, daily/weekly newspapers, periodicals, electronic indexes and databases. Resource librarians assist students with the automated library system and the free interlibrary loan service.
Writing Center	The SKC Writing Center provides individualized and group tutoring and individual support in academic writing. The Writing Center is housed in a new space designed for this purpose in the newly rebuilt Michelle Building which opened in 2016.
Computer Center	Helps students utilize telecommunications equipment and technologies in their educational pursuit.
Fitness Center	Serves students and staff campus-wide through organized classes and specialized cardiovascular, strength and flexibility equipment.
Student Orientation	General orientation for new students is scheduled quarterly in order to introduce students to college life at SKC.

Academic Advising

One of the most important services provided to students is academic advising. In congruence with John Dewey's philosophy, advisors are considered to be a "co-partner and guide" who assist and support students by being actively involved in the learning process in a leadership role (Dewey, 1934). Advising at SKC is viewed as a critical element for students as relationships are built and students feel connected. The Education Advisor is the first contact person for most prospective elementary students. Students meet with the advisor quarterly and as needed to assess and problem solve student needs and progress in the curriculum. Students are referred to the SKC Counseling Department or community resources for specific or personal needs. The advisor tracks student progress through grades, course completion and one-on-one student conferences. Advisors and instructors refer students who are at risk of failing courses to the SKC Retention Officer, and in turn the Retention Officer often contacts advisors regarding students who are at risk of failing in order to collaborate and develop plans to assist the student to become successful.

New Changes in the Division of Education, 2023

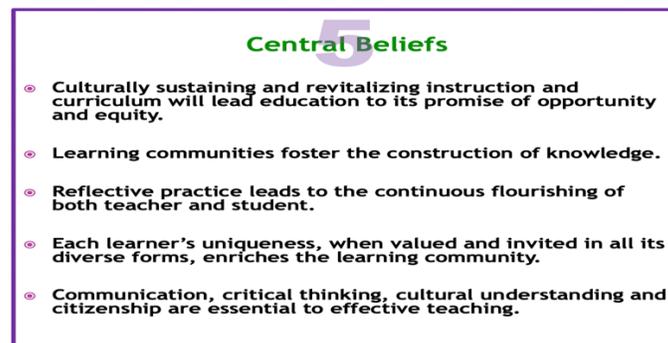
Program and Student Assessment Systems

As part of the normal process of program completion in the DOE, graduating seniors fill out evaluations of their experience at SKC, reflecting on the aspects of their teacher preparation that they feel were most helpful in preparing them as educators, as well as any aspects which they feel were least helpful. In reviewing these surveys, we came to see a pattern wherein one of the program components that students perennially questioned had to do with the portfolio system, in which students maintained a checklist of required assignments at three stages of their Teacher Education Program (TEP). This system was cumbersome for both students and for faculty, who often had to locate past assignments and the accompanying portfolio rubrics that had to be evaluated separately from the course's assessment.

In the ECE-P3 and Elementary programs, student portfolios were organized by 10 national teacher preparation standards (InTASC standards). Although comprehensive, these standards were not directly connected to SKC or to students on a personal level. Students in ECED maintained portfolios based on National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) standards.

In the interest of being responsive to student feedback and program improvement, work was initiated in 2018 and 2019 to revise and restructure the Division's assessment schema to better reflect the SKC experience, to align more closely with Indigenous worldviews, and connect with each student's personal and professional growth as an educator... while at the same time maintaining measures of success that were tied to national InTASC standards for teacher preparation.

It was decided that student portfolios would be based instead on the Division's "Five Central Beliefs", which had been established back when the Education Department was first developed in 2007-2008, but which were updated and revised in 2019:



Working subcommittees were formed in the Division and this work was well underway when the COVID-19 pandemic forced SKC into lockdown in spring of 2020. These efforts to revise and improve student and program assessments were understandably stalled as the Division prioritized the delivery of its programs and classes using virtual and at-distance methods off and on for the majority of two academic years. Gradually this

work resumed, was refined in 2021-2022, and put into preliminary implementation in 2022-2023.

Our revised assessment system exists in two domains: the Student Portfolio and the Critical Assessments.

Revised Student Portfolio System

On the “front” side, students engage in an Initial Conference (Stage 1) associated with their program’s launch course into their third and fourth years of study (Teacher Education Program, or TEP). For ECED students, this would be ECED 298/299, Early Childhood Practicum. For P-3 and Elementary students, this would be done in conjunction with EDUC 203, Foundations of Education. There is a scored rubric associated with this conference, and a baseline is established that sets the stage for documenting the growth of knowledge, skills, and dispositions that are associated with the student’s degree program.

Then, near the end of Year 3, students participate in a “Junior Showcase” event (Stage 2) which provides an opportunity for them to highlight the coursework, projects, and other artifacts and experiences that they feel have most helped them to evolve as an educator. This event is held on campus as an evening showcase where students assemble a display of these formative artifacts and meet with visiting guests to explain and present evidence of their growth as teachers. Invited guests to the Showcase include PreK-12 classroom teachers, SKC and public school administrators, other students, faculty, family members, and community members.

Finally, when students are in their senior year and have completed student teaching- just prior to graduation- they engage in their Final Conference (Stage 3) in which they revisit the Central Beliefs and share about how their immersive clinical experience in the classroom impacted their growth as educators. The same rubric (as in the Initial Conference) is used and the growth in knowledge, skills, and dispositions can then be measured and evaluated to determine candidates’ readiness for teaching. All three Stages of this process are collectively referred to as the Student Portfolio, as all documentation is kept in online folders that can only be accessed by the individual students, and their faculty and advisors.



Critical Assessments System

On the “back” side, numerous course assignments that represent student progress in relation to the ten InTASC standards are scored uniformly and these data are maintained by faculty in a common instrument that is organized by cohort. In this way, measures of student and program progress can still be documented and analyzed in relation to national standards (InTASC or NAEYC), but this occurs as a separate process in the background, maintained by faculty and apart from the student’s portfolio. This critical assessments component was developed in 2021 and 2022 and is still in the process of being implemented.

Additional Early Childhood 2+2 Articulation Agreements that are in place include Fort Peck, Little Bighorn College, and Stone Child College through the **Montana Tribal College Transfer Pathways for Student Success Project**. This project is funded through the American Indian College Fund and is a collaborative effort among the seven Montana Tribal College Presidents. This project aims to strengthen transfer pathways between the Montana TCUs to support Native student completion and employment in two high-demand fields: healthcare and teacher education. The proposed initiative is building progressive education pathways from certificate to associate to baccalaureate degree attainment across the Montana TCUs through 1+1 and 2+2 articulation agreements. More broadly, it increases the capacity of the Montana TCUs to collectively support Native student success, on-time transfer, and degree completion and will also harmonize the Montana TCUs' transfer policies, procedures, and student support. The SKC Early Childhood program has closely partnered with CS&KT Early Childhood Services (ECS) for over 30 years. SKC and ECS have a longstanding MOA that provides tuition and fee waivers for their teachers pursuing Early Childhood degrees. These projects have increased the number of ECS teachers who have attained associate and bachelor's degrees, assisting ECS in meeting the Federal requirements for Head Start. The current projects allow us to provide stipends for completing courses and degree levels.

Stackable One-Year Early Childhood Certificate/CDA Equivalent

At SKC, a stackable one-year certificate was developed to lead to the Associate degree. This certificate is equivalent to the Child Development Associate Certificate (CDA), a Nationally recognized Early Childhood Certification, but more importantly, provides the first year of an Associate degree. The CDA does not provide college credit and takes as much time to complete as the certificate. For this reason, the one-year certificate is an important piece that does away with the overlap of training that slows the attainment of EC degrees.

The SKC one-year certificate is the first step in establishing a stackable credential for those beginning their Early Childhood career pathway. For the fully employed Head Start teachers, this can be done with two summers of coursework and by taking two courses each quarter during the school year. If that is too rigorous, they will complete it in two summers and two school years by taking one course each quarter. The SKC one-year certificate is in the 2023-2024 SKC Catalog.

Early Childhood P-3 (ECE:P-3) Significant Changes

During the Covid pandemic, the P-3 program was able to provide synchronous, online learning for all students in the department and provided additional supports as needed for individual students. Courses in the P-3 degree plan added important content to reflect the ongoing strain and unique burden on local school districts, communities, and families due to school closures, illness, and increased poverty. Practicum experiences were completed by students in new ways, including using video recordings to complete observations and having students work with children in their neighborhoods. Various directed studies were also provided for students who became “out of synch” with the degree plan due to the disruptions caused by Covid.

Enrollment in the P-3 program has declined in recent years, reflecting the general trend in low enrollment in education programs across the state. However, we continue to have new and returning students interested in this unique program, which is the only P-3 program offered in Tribal Colleges in Montana. Additionally, this program provides candidates interested in teaching young children an opportunity for licensure with an emphasis in the early grades, a field that is rapidly developing as our understanding of the importance of early education is refined and expanded.

Elementary Education (ELEM, K-8) and Other Curriculum Changes

Other than the changes already noted, curriculum in all three degree tracks (Early Childhood, P-3, and Elementary) remained relatively consistent during this review period, mainly due to the disruptions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic and the priority assigned to maintaining program delivery. However, the following will serve to summarize some other notable curricular modifications that occurred from 2019-2023:

Elementary Education (ELEM) added specific requirements for a minimum of two NASL courses in the 3rd and 4th years, with an emphasis on local (Seliš or Ksanka) language beginning in AY 2019-2020. This was based on the need for teachers employed in local schools to have a foundational understanding of local Native language to better ensure meeting the needs of Native students and their families.

In AY 2020-2021, ELEM added a parallel track called “Elementary Education - Native Language Emphasis” which reconfigured the standard ELEM degree plan to include 5 courses in Native languages (especially emphasizing those of local tribes).

As mentioned, ELEM substantially changed its Student Portfolio system and assessment matrix towards a more student-centric model that emphasizes the Division’s Five Central Beliefs and links understanding of these Beliefs to students’ own personal scholastic experience, rather than solely on a set of external teacher education standards. However, these same national standards are retained and candidate aptitude for teaching will continue to be measured by way of Critical Assessments throughout the 3rd and 4th year of their programs.

In AY 2020, 2021, and 2022, Early Childhood Education (ECED) and ECE P-3 made minor changes to their degree plans to accommodate students associated with 2+2 articulation agreements; most of these changes involved moving classes to different terms, and some delivery modes shifted from daytime to evening class times to allow those at distance and teachers in early learning settings to attend classes after the school day.

Course delivery partnerships were formed with other departments on campus; for example- Division faculty networked with Psychology faculty and replaced an ECED developmental Psych class with a class delivered by the PSYC department, PSYC 340. In 2022 the DOE worked with the Business Education Division to begin creation of a resource room for aspiring professionals on campus with professional clothing, accessories, and supplies. Education and Native American Studies continue to network frequently on program development and cultural trainings, among other collaborations.

The ECE:P-3 program created several specific endorsement programs to bridge from Elementary to P-3, vice-versa, and ECED to P-3 both directions as well. Originally named “Minors”, these names were changed in 2019-2020 to be more correctly identified as “Endorsement Programs”. Since their establishment, several students have completed these program bridges and now have credentials in both programs, making them more adaptable to changing employment scenarios.

Secondary Education (Broadfield Science and Mathematics) Changes

SKC’s Secondary Education programs began in 2009 with the development and implementation of its Bachelor of Secondary Science Education (BSSE) program. In 2013, a second degree program was implemented, Bachelor of Secondary Mathematics Education (BSME). Both of these programs prepare teachers to teach in grades 5-12. In these early years, the interest in these degrees was relatively low by comparison to the Elementary and Early Childhood programs, yet fairly steady with approximately 4-6 candidates in BSSE and usually 2-4 candidates in BSME. Since their inception, the BSSE program has graduated 14 Broadfield secondary science teachers and 100% of these graduates are actively employed in education, most as secondary science teachers. The BSSEM program has graduated 5 secondary mathematics teachers and 80% of these graduates are currently employed as math teachers.

However, since 2015 the numbers of students in these programs have decreased substantially:

Total Full Time Students	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	Fall 2022	Fall 2023
BSSE	4	3	5	5	5	1	3
BSSEM	4	4	3	0	2	0	0
BSSE + BSSEM	8	7	8	5	7	1	3

Beginning in 2021, SKC’s Administration approached the Division of Education’s leadership with a request to conduct an exploration of the sustainability of these programs moving into the future, given their low enrollment. During the 2022 and 2023 academic years, numerous meetings were held on and off campus, involving stakeholders such as local public-school administration and staff, tribal education leaders, SKC STEM faculty, and others. A consensus was reached that indicated there was substantial support to keep the secondary education programs, however a significant revision would be needed since they were not sustainable in their current form.

In December 2023 Dean Ruhman and Dr. Walker-Robbins (Dept. Chair for Secondary Education) met with administrative teams from both Ronan/Pablo SD #30 and Polson SD#23 to explore PreK-12 ideas for how best to revise SKC’s secondary education models. In this convening, district leaders emphasized a need for preservice teachers to experience substantially more in-classroom field work in order to build familiarity with the real daily life of teachers, focus on relational skills with today’s learners, and cultivate a level of comfort and familiarity with being in the classroom with

students on a regular basis. Other topics brought forward by these partnering school administrators included an interest in integrated STEM as a model, more candidate choice in coursework according to their teaching interest, and ways to restructure secondary education so that individuals already working in schools as paraeducators or other staff can pursue teaching degrees and licensure. The Division then set about the task of developing an integrated Secondary STEM Education Program (SSEP) that incorporates aspects of the concepts and program revisions that were brought forward by our school partners. Spring and Summer 2024 will see the further development of this program restructure, and the hope is that a revised program can be piloted in 2024-2025.

Research in the Division of Education

Students in all departments in the DOE engage in research learning in an educational context. This occurs on multiple levels. Several courses incorporate small-scale research embedded in their classes, such as the case study involving children's reading development that is associated with EDUC 354, a reading methods course. In EDUC 311, Cultures, Diversity, and Ethics in Education, students are required to research and present a project that explores education-related issues affecting tribes in Montana.

Beyond the integration of research into courses, students also take courses specially addressing research writing, such as EDUC 321, Research Writing in Education, in which they learn the forms and structure of research writing for their methods courses.

The next level of research application is Action Research, which takes place in the senior year and involves identifying an authentic educational issue and designing an intervention to address it. Students take EDUC 471, Action Research in Education the term preceding student teaching, to identify an area they are passionate about in teaching, and learn the forms and structures of action research. In this course students construct a template they will follow to implement this action research project (ARP) the following quarter when they student teach and can gather actual student data in their classroom. Once the data is completed, students work to write a comprehensive ARP paper and present their findings to their faculty and peers. This teaches candidates how to think about and address educational problems in a structured, methodical manner instead of with "trial and error". The ARP provides students with a scholarly experience that celebrates their evolution as an educator and gives them real-life problem solving skills they can use in the classroom.

Summary

1. Summary of Program Strengths

Division of Education teacher education programs have worked hard to be responsive to the learning communities they serve and partner with. Faculty have reached out to these partners to find ways of making their programs accessible to their unique student needs, and have consistently fostered positive relations with educational providers. These programs have prioritized curricular changes (detailed above) that emphasize culturally revitalizing and sustaining content and pedagogy, and have worked hard to network with

other colleges to improve transfer pathways and program alignment across complex and differing curricular landscapes at different institutions. The program staff are extremely student-centered and make themselves available to students at times that work for them, both in terms of advising and instruction. This may involve classes delivered in online or hybrid settings, or in the evening when students are not working.

The Elementary Education program in the DOE has an extraordinary placement record and has retained its students successfully for years. A hallmark of the ELEM program at SKC is its adherence to children's development and research-based practices that place the child's holistic wellness and their cultural identity at the highest priority. Its purpose is to train teachers to advocate for best practices that foster healthy relationships and engaged learners first, and content acquisition second. This is modeled in the program's unwavering dedication to candidate success through holistic advising and a balanced approach that values flexibility with accountability for its teacher graduates.

2. Summary of Program Areas for Improvement

The ECED program has grown and expanded in its reaching out to include other institutions and communities and in its multiple grant programs. Although this is certainly a positive development, it can present staffing concerns as the breadth of workload on faculty and staff have increased. It will be important to move forward with an eye to this dynamic. The department is currently down at least one full time FTE, as Eric Hogenson transitioned over to the Elementary Dept. Chair position. That position was advertised but had no applicants, and so it has been restructured and will be re-advertised. We are hopeful that the department will acquire a new faculty member before the start of winter quarter; this will help alleviate some of the workload currently being carried by the existing team.

The ECE:P-3 program is suffering from low enrollment. Student numbers need to be monitored by the Dept. Chairs and the long-term viability of the program should be assessed. Networking with local schools, the Education Advisory Board, and other stakeholders will be need to determine if the program is meeting the needs of the larger educational community. An exploration of the state of P-3 education in the state would be helpful, and perhaps SKC's program staff can facilitate, or at least participate in this process so that the future of the program can be better understood.

The ELEM program has experienced inconsistent enrollment that has been characterized by up-and-down student numbers for several years in a row. Both the ELEM program and the P-3 program should consider expending more efforts in recruitment, including more visits to schools as well as opportunities for increased dual enrollment courses that can bring in more high school students (especially more Native students) into teacher preparation at SKC.

In addition, ELEM program faculty have recognized the need to strengthen its communication and partnerships with local K-8 school leadership, also. This is an important and necessary facet of the program's success and could (and should) be prioritized.

3. Program Priorities for the Future

As SKC's teacher education programs move into the future and emerge from the COVID era, especially in the next three to four years, it will be important to for these programs to strive for balance in workloads as they seek to grow their enrollment. We hope to engage in more professional development in the areas of socio-emotional learning and the implementation of Indigenous research methodologies in all programs. We will seek to engage with language learning in a more intentional way, and build more integration of these languages into our courses in all programs. We also wish to continue building strong bonds among the people we work alongside every day, in our departments and throughout the Education Division. When we create strong, mutually respectful, and supportive relations with our colleagues, we foster a happy and productive team. This promotes a better educational experience for our students.

Lastly, several members of the Division's staff and faculty will likely be retiring in the next three to five years. The Division will need to build its leadership capacity in order to sustain the positive accomplishments it has experienced thus far. This is no small task, and it will be important in the next few years to plan for these changes systematically to ensure the ongoing success of the programs and of the Division as a whole. If we are careful and do this well, these programs can thrive and grow well into the future.

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