Accord on Initial TEACHER EDUCATION

Association of Canadian Deans of Education
www.acde-acde.ca

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ACDE

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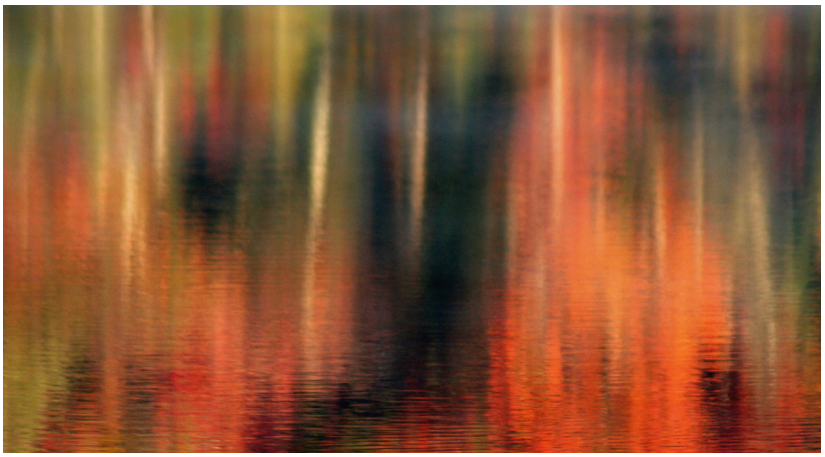
The Context for Teacher Education in Canada

Today's changing world requires the full participation of citizens who cultivate knowledge, think critically, and act responsibly in accordance with democratic values and principles. We envision a democratic society that is inclusive, equitable, and sustainable and an education that nurtures informed citizens who contribute creatively to human development and social change.

Canadian society is increasingly diverse. Schools contain students with a broad range of abilities, from different backgrounds and ethnicities, with emotional and social differences, and with widely varied approaches to learning, home lives, and out-of-school experiences Canada's teachers must be equipped to prepare all students for their roles in this diverse world.



ACDE and Teacher Education

The ACDE General Accord emphasizes a strong framework of normative principles for initial teacher education. All institutions signing the Accord on Initial Teacher Education are expected to aspire to these principles in their initial teacher education programs.

ACDE's principles for initial teacher education are, by design, broad. The way in which these principles are articulated within initial teacher education programs depends on the nature and context of the member institution. Within this framework of diversity, however, some broad characteristics may be discerned.

It is ACDE's view that programs of initial teacher education should involve the development of situated practical knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and academic content knowledge, as well as an introduction to research and scholarship in education. Essential to that development is a form of induction into the profession as well as ongoing communication with professional peers. Becoming a teacher is a developmental process that includes initial preparation and continues throughout life, in order to enhance both the profession and teachers' own professional ability. An effective initial teacher education program commits to preparing teachers for their continuing professional development.

Teacher education is a form of higher education, one that introduces students to conversations about the nature and key concepts of learning. There is both an intellectual and a practical component to teacher education. It must be situated within a university or university-college in order to allow the meaningful interaction of student-teachers with research-oriented faculty and to promote awareness of the interconnected nature of theory, research, and practice in the profession.

By developing shared goals and principles and by undertaking cooperative research and data sharing, ACDE can enhance the profile of initial teacher education within all its member institutions and more broadly, promote greater understanding of the complexities and merits of teacher preparation programs to the public at large. It is ACDE's wish to highlight more clearly the significant strengths of initial teacher education within the post-secondary context; to clarify the contributions of initial teacher education programs to post-secondary institutions; and to promote greater understanding about the value of high-cost components of initial teacher education programs such as internships, community collaborations, and field experiences. We believe that ACDE's role in advocating for initial teacher education will benefit all faculties, schools, colleges, and departments of education in their interactions with partners within and beyond our university environments.

Principles of Initial Teacher Education

ACDE supports the following principles for initial teacher education in Canada:

- An effective teacher education program demonstrates the transformative power of learning for individuals and communities.
- An effective initial teacher education program envisions the teacher as a professional who observes, discerns, critiques, assesses, and acts accordingly.
- An effective initial teacher education program encourages teachers to assume a social and political leadership role.
- An effective initial teacher education program cultivates a sense of the teacher as responsive and responsible to learners, schools, colleagues, and communities.
- An effective initial teacher education program involves partnerships between the university and schools, interweaving theory, research, and practice and providing opportunities for teacher candidates to collaborate with teachers to develop effective teaching practices.
- An effective initial teacher education program promotes diversity, inclusion, understanding, acceptance, and social responsibility in continuing dialogue with local, national, and global communities.
- An effective initial teacher education program engages teachers with the politics of identity and difference and prepares them to develop and enact inclusive curricula and pedagogies.
- An effective initial teacher education program supports a research disposition and climate that recognizes a range of knowledge and perspectives.
- An effective initial teacher education program ensures that beginning teachers understand the development of children and youth (intellectual, physical, emotional, social, creative, spiritual, moral) and the nature of learning.
- An effective teacher education program ensures that beginning teachers have sound knowledge of subject matter, literacies, ways of knowing, and pedagogical expertise.
- An effective initial teacher education program provides opportunities for candidates to investigate their practices.
- An effective initial teacher education program supports thoughtful, considered, and deliberate innovation to improve and strengthen the preparation of educators.