

Conceptual Framework

Up until the introduction of our concurrent program in 2003, prospective teachers had to leave the region for English-language teacher education, which limited accessibility for some students interested in becoming teachers. With our special focus on Aboriginal-infused curriculum, and concern for equity and sustainability, we are further adding to the value of Northern teacher education. Evidence of that can be seen not only in our coursework, but in the design of the Education building that includes both a state-of-the-art Aboriginal smudge classroom, and a physical plant constructed on sustainable design principles, with an energy and health conscious footprint.

In providing teacher education in both official languages, Laurentian University expects B.Ed candidates to demonstrate excellence and professionalism. The English-language program, like its French-language counterpart, has a strong emphasis on ethical behaviour and professionalism in conformity with the *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession* and the *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession*. It is part of our teaching philosophy within Laurentian's professional education that students learn professional behaviour and how to treat people fairly and equitably by observing role models -- faculty members and hosts/associates in practice settings, and by being committed to a process of self-reflection that is informed by the integration of theory and practice.

Faculty members, host and associate teachers, teacher union representatives, Ontario College of Teachers and Ministry of Education personnel, local teacher administrators, our B.Ed candidates, and others concerned with teacher education are actively involved in this teacher education enterprise. All are expected to adhere to professional standards of practice and to all Ontario regulations. Our overall goal is to educate caring, critical Canadian citizens who will bring leadership to the communities in which they live. The specific means for achieving these goals can be found in the multiple "integration courses" available in the initial degree, in our practicum handbooks, in our various Education courses of study, and in the myriad presentations and workshops that comprise our program.

Our Concurrent Education Program is thus conceptualized on the following components: an embedded Aboriginal focus with a concern for equity and sustainability; partnership with other key players in the teacher education continuum (EDU, OCT, OTF, superintendents); a rich, diverse practical engagement with teaching in multiple settings; conceptual underpinnings from both constructivism, and social reconstructionism with its emphasis on social and curricular equity, and engagement with the real world.