

4.1 Overview of conceptual framework

“Preparing Competent, Caring Teachers”

The conceptual framework of the UTTC Teacher Education program is based on the philosophy that a competent, caring teacher is prepared to teach *all* children. We believe that teaching from what was traditionally a Native perspective is the best way for all children to learn. A Native perspective begins with recognizing the child in the context of family, community, and culture. Learning is a natural part of human growth, development, and socialization in all cultures. In many cultures, particularly Native American, the learning experiences that constitute education are based in cultural values of relevance, relatedness, respect, and responsibility - referred to in this framework as the “4 Rs”.

Relevance is demonstrated through meaningful and authentic learning experiences tied directly to state and national standards. Candidates learn and experience reflective practice through field placements in the classroom under mentor and instructor guidance. They are provided the opportunity to study things that are meaningful and relevant to one's life and interests.

Relatedness is believing and behaving as if you are a relative to another person or thing. It is demonstrated and reinforced through collaborations with children and families.

Respect is a very important traditional Native value. Respect is demonstrated through student contributions and their respect of others' contributions. The disposition of respect is demonstrated through courtesy, kindness, and acceptance of individuals and their contributions.

Responsibility is a core value of Native cultures as well as the teaching culture. Candidates are expected to demonstrate accountability for their actions and decisions as they engage in their general education and teacher education curriculum.

The 4Rs are integrated throughout the UTTC Teacher Education unit and program(s) and are placed in the context of a holistic worldview and global interconnectedness. These and other values will prepare teacher candidates, and in turn the children they will teach, to be productive members of society and have a good quality of life.



CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK SYMBOL

The Dragonfly Spirit of Zuni legend is a protector of children. Japanese warriors often used it as a symbol of strength, courage & invincibility. In ancient cultures, damselflies (related to dragonflies by the Order Odonata) represented transformation, adaptation, insight, immortality, regeneration, swiftness, summer, illusion and a connection to the spirits (plants) and elements (water) of nature. Many tales tell of people, troubled with inner conflicts and doubts, being guided and helped by dragonflies.

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The philosophy of the United Tribes Technical College Teacher Education unit is based in cultural values of relevance, relatedness, respect and responsibility. Relevance is demonstrated through meaningful and authentic learning experiences tied directly to state and national standards. Relatedness is demonstrated through collaboration with children, families, colleagues and community. Respect is meant to be reciprocal and is modeled by accepting the contributions of others. Responsibility is grounded in achieving the skills and knowledge required to becoming competent, caring teachers.

The green diamond that surrounds the dragonfly is from the United Tribes Technical College institutional logo. Within the institutional logo, there are five diamonds, each representing unity among the five tribes that make up United Tribes: Three Affiliated Tribes of Fort Berthold; Standing Rock Sioux Tribe; Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa; Spirit Lake Tribe; and Sisseton Wahpeton Sioux Tribe. The diamond symbolizes man and life.