



Themes

At D-TALE, our goal is to become a global leader in the professional development of educators by creating diverse learning environments that underscore the symbiosis of research, teaching, life-long learning, community service, and leadership. D-TALE's vision is rooted in three major themes that are deeply embedded within our practices and provide the principles that outline our structure. They provide the bases for our pedagogical research; they guide our reflective practices; and they support our partnerships, both within the university and within the broader community. Our three themes are:

Professional Excellence and Growth: Candidates develop the knowledge, skills and dispositions essential for a successful career in the field of education. These skills include, but are not limited to, mastery of subject matter and pedagogical theory, instructional design and assessment, approaches for motivating learners, inquiry, reflective practice, leadership, classroom management strategies, and, for our leadership candidates, the ability to design and implement a strategic vision that involves all stakeholders in creating a positive learning environment in which all students can achieve their potential.

Community and Diversity: Candidates learn that students construct knowledge in a myriad of individual ways that are influenced by such factors as ability, ethnicity, social environment of home and school, primary language, and gender. It is important for candidates to learn to recognize such individual student differences and adapt their instruction and strategic vision to individual student needs and to do so in a variety of diverse communities and classroom settings.

Leadership and Service: Candidates develop qualities that prepare them for further professional development and leadership roles in the school, profession, and community, where they will serve and act as advocates for all students.

Pathways

Research: Stony Brook University's well-established reputation of excellence in research within and across disciplines provides teacher candidates with environments rich in myriad opportunities for professional growth and life-long learning within and across academic departments and centers at the University. Teacher candidates engage in a broad range of experiences that include research-based discourse, scholarly investigations, and professional development activities with colleagues and with peers.

Reflection: D-TALE faculty are reflective practitioners and principled role models who are committed to teaching excellence, professional development, service, and scholarship. Reflective practice is integrated into all aspects of the teacher education program and is designed to enhance teacher candidates' professional growth and life-long learning. Reflection, in the form of discussion, observation and journals, allows teacher candidates to improve and develop performance-based skills as well as more general awareness of self, students, and classroom decision-making. Videotapes and portfolios provide additional channels for reflection and evaluation.

Partnership: Teachers construct knowledge by sharing experiences, ideas and concerns about teaching and learning with peers through collaborative conversations. Partnerships provide peer support and raise awareness of multiple perspectives. Cooperative learning enhances construction of knowledge within communities of learners who engage in activities that include posing questions, formulating hypotheses, and discussing issues. These contribute to both learning and teaching. The student body at Stony Brook is widely diverse, with close to one-third of its undergraduates, including many teacher candidates, coming from homes in which a language other than English is spoken. Comfort with linguistic, social, ethnic, racial, and individual differences, and flexibility to teach and learn within diverse contexts, is intrinsic to our educational context. Our teacher candidates do their fieldwork and clinical practice in the nearby diverse community, including schools with students from language backgrounds in a single building. In such settings, our teacher candidates learn to build partnerships with students from diverse backgrounds, and learn to lead them on their own pathways to growth and learning.