

University of Delaware Conceptual Framework for Professional Education Programs Effective Fall 2012

The University of Delaware Conceptual Framework provides the goals and outcomes for the candidates, faculty, and administrators in professional education programs. The University prepares educators with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that are required to fulfill the responsibilities of an uncompromised commitment to serving the needs and interests of students, families, and communities. As professionals in education, the preservice teachers, inservice teachers, and other educators¹ in our programs will implement recognized best practices and continue throughout their careers as leaders in the advancement of their profession. They will recognize students and professionals as whole persons who are developing across the cognitive, social, emotional, and physical domains within families, communities, cultural, and economic contexts.

To these ends, candidates in University of Delaware professional education programs will:

- continuously engage in inquiry, reflection, learning and improvement of their practice, informed by evidence and their experience, as well as by research and professional literature, and they will help contribute to the knowledge base of education through their own professional learning and experience;
- respond in creative, empathetic and flexible ways to the needs and interests of the students, families and communities whom they will serve and advocate for their needs and interests both in their own institutions and in broader policy arenas;
- be committed to their students' academic, social and emotional learning and inspire their students' desire for learning and for the content being learned;
- be passionate about their profession and seek opportunities for professional growth and leadership;
- situate their knowledge in local, state, national and global contexts and recognize others' perspectives; and
- believe that all students can learn and structure their practices to promote equity and equality in education.

Candidates will embody three qualities as they move on their trajectory to become the professionals described above: knowledge and skills, leadership and commitment to equity. They will develop these interdependent qualities through rich experiences in their programs and achieve the following outcomes associated with them.

Knowledge and Skills

Candidates will have a deep understanding of the content of their discipline and apply this knowledge appropriately and flexibly, using deliberate and informed decision-making based on evidence. Preservice and inservice teachers will know how to make this significant content, as represented in standards, accessible to students through creative, developmentally appropriate and challenging learning experiences. The learning experiences they plan will be grounded in knowledge of how students learn, engage students in their own learning through inquiry about

¹ Examples of other educators are school psychologists, school leaders, and school librarians.

ideas or problems and motivate students to make connections to their lived worlds. They will create classroom and school environments that encourage and facilitate learning and use teaching strategies and technologies for the range of abilities and backgrounds in the diverse populations served. They will be able to apply multiple, research-based assessment methods to improve instruction and student learning. Other educators will have the knowledge and skills to support and promote continual improvement in communities of learning.

Leadership

Well-prepared leaders are essential in the school improvement and reform process. Candidates will be leaders who have the skills and drive to be a part of the decision-making process that impacts students and schools and have the capacity to influence instructional and policy decisions about teaching and learning. Candidates will be advocates for students, families, and communities and collaborate with families, colleagues and community service providers to develop and implement effective programs to support the development and learning of all students. They will engage in critical examination of current policies and practices to advance individual and collective efficacy; they want to move the profession forward.

Commitment to Equity

Increasingly, the participants in the U.S. education system represent a range of diversities that include ethnicity, gender, race, religion, socio-economic status, family composition, age, geographic area, language, sexual orientation and identification, abilities and disabilities. Candidates will have an understanding of the diverse students' learning needs and backgrounds, a recognition and understanding that equity and equality are not the same and the compassion to modify teaching and leadership practices to respond to the needs of diverse learners and their families, teachers, and administrators.

Outcomes

The outcomes for candidates are consistent with Delaware state standards, national accreditation standards, national specialty organization standards, and the InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards. Candidates will demonstrate in their professional education programs:

1. a commitment to education as a scholarly profession that requires ethical standards, a continuing process of learning, evidence-based decision making, and the reflective re-examination of content knowledge and pedagogy.
2. a commitment to the belief that learners of all ages and abilities can be educated by interacting with others appropriately and respectfully, addressing preconceptions, being receptive to feedback and employing strategies that emphasize interacting in a positive manner.
3. the capacity to create and implement productive, safe, and engaging learning experiences and evidence-based assessments that reflect an understanding of:
 - a. human development and learning so that their actions are developmentally appropriate for students of all ages and abilities;
 - b. the content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge that promotes students' knowledge, skill development, critical reflection and problem-solving according to the methods of inquiry and standards of evidence used in their area of expertise;

- c. appropriate and effective use of technologies; and
 - d. the range of diversity in students including their ethnicity, gender, race, religion, socio-economic status, family composition, age, geographic area, language, sexual orientation and identification, abilities and disabilities.
4. the capacity to work as partners with students, families, other professionals and the wider community to provide a supportive, safe, and caring learning environment to optimize every learner's educational attainment.

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