




# The Conceptual Framework

## Developing Using Assessing



# context

- I have been involved with NCATE accreditation since the late 1970's.
- As a dean at one institution I managed 4 accreditation cycles
- As University Dean at CUNY I managed 8 accreditation visits in 5 years.
- I have served on or chaired BOEs for 20 years.
- I have worked with institutions in the US and internationally seeking accreditation.
- So, my suggestions and advice are based on my experience and knowledge, but there are other views and the BOE/UAB decisions carry the day!



# How important is the conceptual framework?

- My Claim:
- A clear conceptual framework is essential for a quality program.
- If developed and used appropriately, it gives coherence to a program, provides for stakeholder inputs, and is worth the time it takes to develop.
- It may be the most valuable piece of an accreditation process and leads to everything else.



# The Importance of a Shared Vision

A shared vision is not an idea. It is not even an important idea such as freedom. It is, rather, a force in people's hearts, a force of impressive power. It might be inspired by an idea, but once it goes further--if it is compelling enough to acquire the support of more than one person--then it is no longer an abstraction. People begin to see it as if it exists. Few, if any, forces in human affairs are as powerful as a shared vision.



# The Importance of a Shared Vision

At its simplest level, a shared vision is the answer to the question, “What do we want to create?” Just as personal visions are pictures or images people carry in their heads and hearts, so too are shared visions pictures that people throughout an organization carry. They create a sense of commonality that permeates the organization and gives coherence to diverse activities.

Peter Senge *The Fifth Discipline*



# How is it developed?

## By answering three questions.

- Why do we educate in a democracy?
- What qualities—skills and dispositions—should excellent educators have in the context of why we educate? What evidence supports the selection?
- How do we know excellent educators when we see them?
- It is essential to provide a forum to consider and answer these questions. It can be a very valuable experience, and all stakeholders must be part of the process. It is not easy, it is time consuming, and should be ongoing.
- It is like the difference between reform and renewal.



# Are conceptual frameworks shared visions?

- ◆ They can be, IF:
- ◆ ...all the important stakeholders participate in their formation--faculty in education, faculty in arts and science, faculty in schools, members of the community.
- ◆ ...the vision/framework drives your work: admission, curriculum, content, pedagogy, field experiences, and assessment.
- ◆ ...you take the time to be sure you mean the same thing by the “essentially contested concepts” that permeate conceptual frameworks.

# W.B. Gallie's Contribution

- ◆ Essentially Contested Concepts:
  - ◆ Inherently subject to multiple interpretations, depending on your values, concerns, experiences, goals, and beliefs
- ◆ Democracy, freedom, social justice, critical thinking, “all children can learn,” professional development schools, partnerships and, yes, education itself.



# Dealing with essentially contested concepts: my advice

- One can try to avoid them.
- I think that makes conceptual frameworks less interesting, less distinctive, and less important.
- A better solution is to have the discussions needed to define the meaning for your institutions and partners.
- Make the meaning clear when you describe the conceptual framework.

# A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK ...

- provides direction for admissions, programs, courses, teaching, candidate performance, scholarship, service, and unit accountability.
- is knowledge-based, articulated, shared, coherent, consistent with the unit and/or institutional mission, and continuously evaluated and, if need be, revised.
- provides the bases that describe the unit's intellectual philosophy and institutional standards, which distinguish graduates of one institution from another.



# And, a conceptual framework...

- must be research based
- must be developed with input from all stakeholders
- must be reflected in every standard.
- must mesh with and reflect the institutional mission and vision and the mission vision of the unit and its programs to prepare educators.
- must be evident in your assessment.
- should be revisited regularly and revised when needed.



# How many conceptual frameworks do you need?

- First, how many can you have?
- There is no limit in the accreditation process.
- If all programs answer the same questions, why would you need more than one?
- If you decide to have separate conceptual frameworks, make sure there are clear and compelling reasons that are explained.
- Be certain that one group of faculty does not minimize the conceptual framework of others.



- **A GOOD EXAMPLE?:**
- **INITIAL: Caring Professional Educators for a Diverse and Democratic Society**
- **ADVANCED: Inquiry, Advocacy, and Leadership in Education for a Diverse and Democratic Society**



# Portrait of a Teacher

*The embodiment of the vision and mission of the work is the Portrait of a Teacher, a statement of dispositions and standards that drive admissions, curriculum, and the assessment of the program. The Portrait evolved through the collaborative efforts of the faculty from education, the arts and sciences, and the public schools and is constantly open for review and revision. In its most recent iteration,*



# The Conceptual Framework as a “portrait.”

# Portrait of a Teacher

- *The Montclair State University community is committed to the continuing development of educators who exemplify the dispositions, knowledge, and skills reflected in this portrait.*
- *They:*
- *Have expert knowledge of the disciplines they will teach and can use various strategies, including media and technology, for creating learning experiences that make the subject matter accessible and meaningful to all students.*
- *Understand how children and adolescents learn and develop in a variety of school, family and community contexts, and can provide learning opportunities that support their students' intellectual, social, and personal development.*
- *Understand the practice of culturally responsive teaching.*



# Portrait of a Teacher

- *They understand that children bring varied talents, strengths, and perspectives to learning; have skills for learning about the diverse students they teach; and use knowledge of students and their lives to design and carry out instruction that builds on students' individual and cultural strengths*
- 
- *Plan instruction based upon knowledge of subject matter, students, families, communities, and curriculum goals and standards; and taking into account issues of class, gender, race, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, age, and special needs in designing instruction*
-

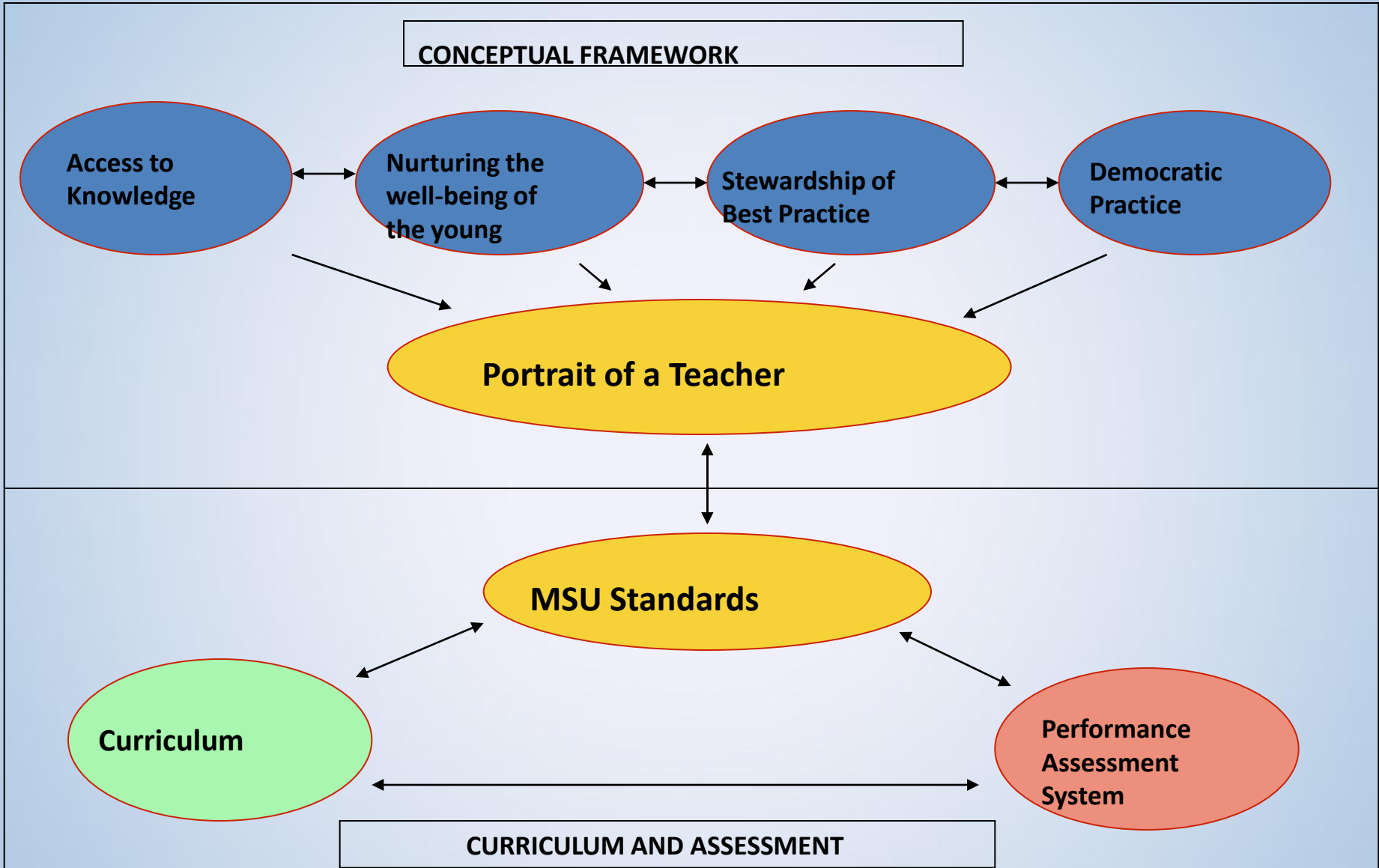
# Portrait of a Teacher

- *Understand critical thinking and problem solving, and create learning experiences that promote the development of students' critical thinking and problem solving skills and dispositions*
- 
- *Understand principles of democracy and plan and carry out instruction that promotes democratic values and communication in the classroom*
- 
- *Understand and use multiple forms of assessment to promote the intellectual, social, and physical development of learners and to inform instruction*
- *Create a community in the classroom that is nurturing, caring, safe, and conducive to learning.*



# Creating an image for the cf has become a tradition

# Coherence Within MSU Programs for Educators



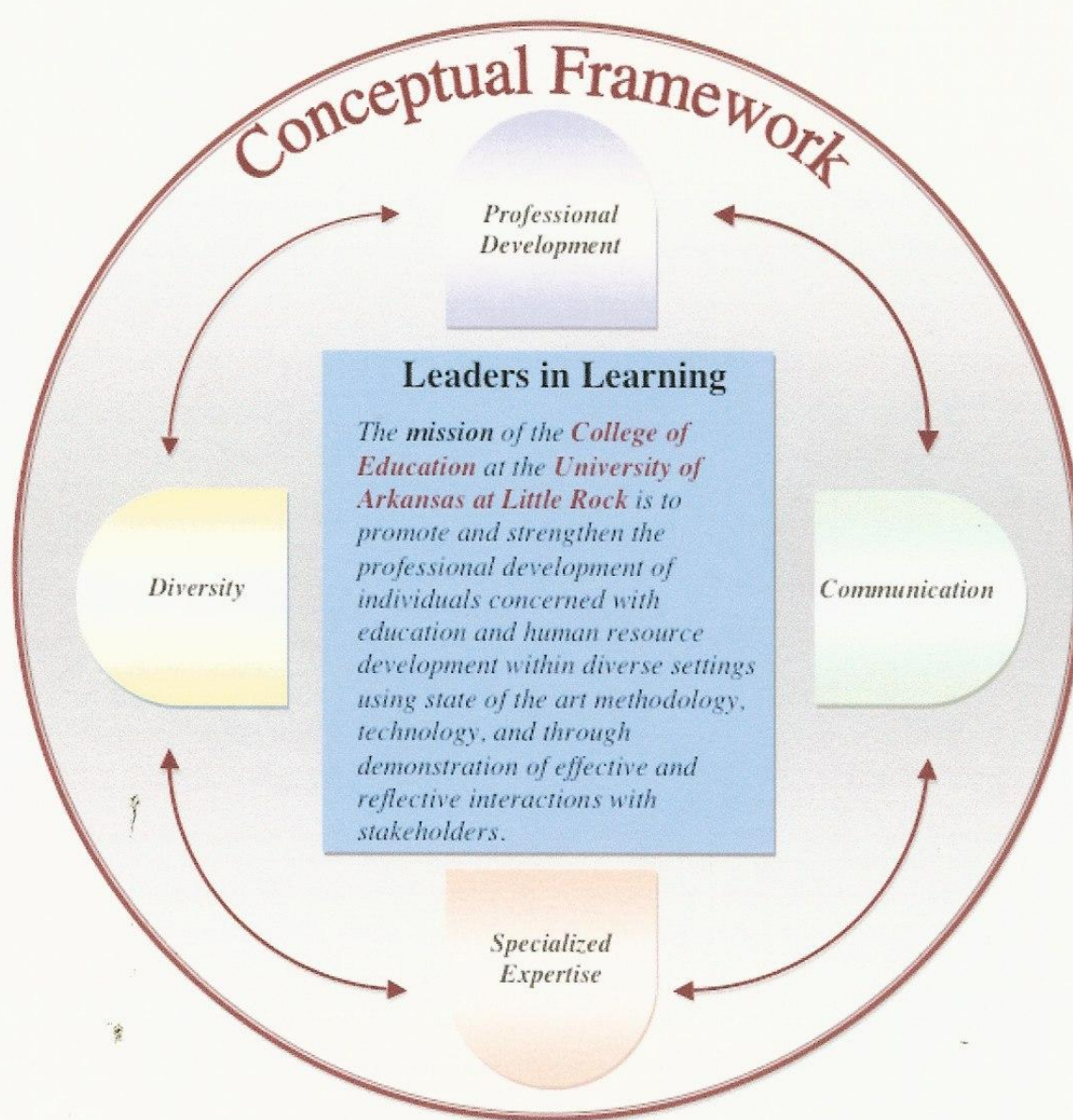


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in Teacher Preparation

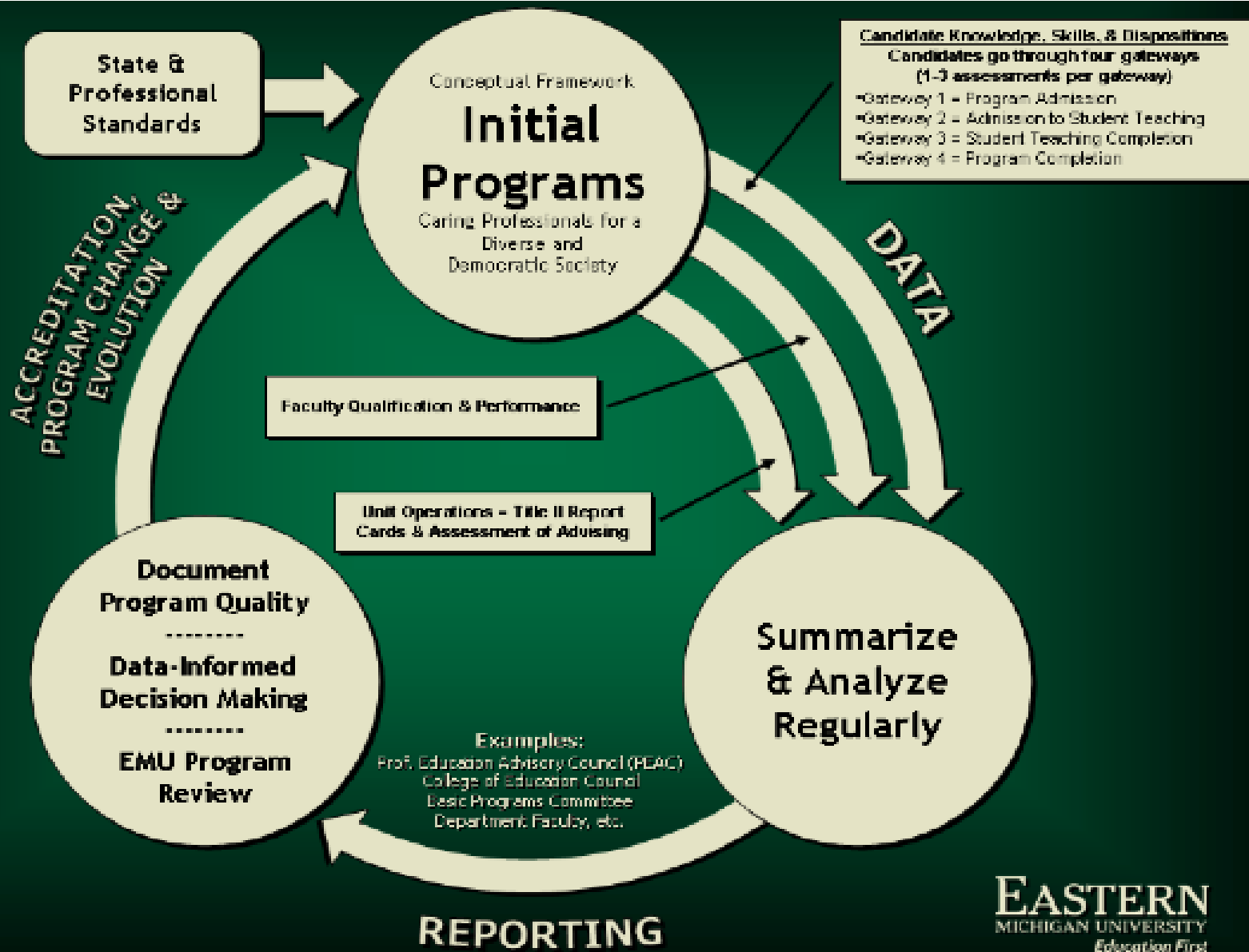
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# What do these excerpts from your conceptual framework MEAN AND HOW DO YOU develop and MEASURE THEM??

- Knowledge and skills encompass Jaspers' (1951) "cultural acquisition," Erikson's (1962) "tools of technology" or Bruner's (1996) "tool kit of symbolic systems."
- Candidates are introduced to the **State Learning Standards** in English Language Arts, Social Studies, and Math, Science, and Technology at the level that is appropriate to the certification they seek.
- Candidates must be able to **determine the widest and deepest potential knowledge base of each of their students** with the accompanying strategies

# What do these excerpts MEAN AND HOW DO YOU MEASURE THEM??

- Literature, history, philosophy, mathematics, natural and social sciences, art, and music—have value in themselves, a value that both **School of Education and liberal arts faculty communicate, deliberately and in passing, even in pedagogical courses.**
- **Inquiry** in the School is the process in which the **learner experiences a phenomenon of interest directly.** As much as possible, there are **no mediators** (e.g., texts, teachers, classification systems) that come between the learner and the phenomenon of interest.
- **Critical analysis** is an **integral part of all the coursework** of candidates training to be other professional school personnel.

# What do these excerpts MEAN AND HOW DO YOU MEASURE THEM??

- All graduates have the basic tools and the necessary dispositions to continue their development as educational professionals as well as learners.
- The School defines competence as having the knowledge and skills needed to be an effective educator in urban schools that serve a diverse population of children and families and the disposition to use the knowledge and skills to promote the learning of all children.
- Candidates study development in a cultural context and use their experience with diversity to foster a sense of community and appreciation of and respect for all individuals and groups
- They come to recognize the significance of changing family patterns and home environments for student learning



# What do these excerpts MEAN AND HOW DO YOU MEASURE THEM??

- There is **considerable agreement among most faculty of the School that learners are active and constructive problem-solvers and that learning is socially constructed** and is best promoted within **a caring and supportive environment.**
- Achieving positive outcomes for diverse groups of students depends on teachers who can **adapt instructional strategies to meet the learning needs of all students** and who can encourage all students' active participation. It also depends on teachers who have the skills to **work collaboratively with families and communities.**
- Candidates learn how **to use formal and informal assessments of students to plan instruction,** monitor student understanding, and **make instructional adjustments.**



# What do these excerpts MEAN AND HOW DO YOU MEASURE THEM??

- It is a goal of the School that teachers understand that students can best demonstrate their progress through **multiple forms of evidence; and that a range of assessments** can give a more accurate picture of a student's abilities; that students with different learning styles and strengths have **more opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge when their teacher is capable of using a variety of assessment techniques.**
- Standards- based assessments **include such things as performance formats, rubrics or scoring guides** for different levels of achievement, and models or benchmarks for levels of proficiency.
- **Candidates will develop dispositions to help all children learn, to become reflective practitioners, to celebrate diversity, to become life- long learners who seek out opportunities for professional development, and to participate in providing a sense of community in their school and classroom.**



# What do these excerpts MEAN AND HOW DO YOU MEASURE THEM??


- Modeling and giving candidates a real understanding of democratic classrooms will not only help to frame their teaching but will provide an important understanding about the meaning of a democratic society. Schools and classrooms should be places where students can see democracy in action; places where the ideas, opinions and voices of people are valued, listened to, and respected; places where students and teachers are not silenced.
- While even autocratic teachers can care deeply about their students, we feel that democratic teachers more effectively promote caring communities of learners.
- Caring classrooms and schools are those which often promote and support community service programs, which develop close ties with parents and families, and which involve students in collaborative, project-based learning with authentic outcomes often designed to improve their city, nation, or planet.
- Creating caring communities and more democratic classrooms can have a profound impact on the child's developing character and sense of morality.

# What do these excerpts MEAN AND HOW DO YOU MEASURE THEM??

- Demonstrate the ability to develop a democratic, respectful classroom by modeling caring, committed and ethical practices. (Treat all students with fairness)

Demonstrate professional dispositions that are expected of all candidates.

- 1. All students can learn.
- 2. All students **should** be treated fairly.
- 3. The classroom **should** be a caring and nurturing environment.
- 4. An educator's personal and professional standards **should** reflect the ethics and values of the teaching profession.
- 5. Reflective practice is essential for effective teaching and learning.
- 6. Individual and cultural differences **should** be respected.



**Your conceptual framework: does this “wordle”  
say what you expected as to what’s  
important??**





- **IT IS OFTEN THE CASE THAT INSTITUTIONS PLACE THE VISUAL REPRESENTATION OF THEIR CONCEPTUAL IMAGE SO IT CAN BE SEEN THROUGH THE FACILITY.**



# The Conceptual Framework should be **EVIDENT** in all standards

# The conceptual framework

- Conceptual Framework IS NOT a standard, but should affect every standard. It **establishes the shared vision for a unit's efforts** in preparing educators to work effectively in P–12 schools. It provides **direction** for programs, courses, teaching, candidate performance, scholarship, service, and unit accountability. The conceptual framework must be **knowledge based, articulated, shared, coherent, consistent with the unit and institutional mission, and continuously evaluated.**



# NCATE Unit Standards

- **Standard 1: Candidate Knowledge, Skills, and Professional Dispositions** Candidates preparing to work in schools as teachers or other school professionals **know and demonstrate the content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge and skills, pedagogical and professional knowledge and skills, and professional dispositions necessary to help all students learn.** Assessments indicate that candidates meet professional, state, and institutional standards



# NCATE Unit Standards

- **Standard 2: Assessment System and Unit Evaluation** The unit has an assessment system that collects and analyzes data on applicant qualifications, candidate and graduate performance, and unit operations **to evaluate and improve the performance of candidates, the unit, and its programs.**



# NCATE Unit Standards

- **Standard 3: Field Experiences and Clinical Practice** The unit and its school partners design, implement, and evaluate field experiences and clinical practice so that **teacher candidates and other school professionals develop and demonstrate** the knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions necessary to help all students learn.

# NCATE Unit Standards

- **Standard 4: Diversity** The unit designs, implements, and evaluates curriculum and provides experiences for candidates to acquire and **demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions necessary to help all students learn**. Assessments indicate that candidates can demonstrate and apply proficiencies related to diversity. Experiences provided for candidates include **working with diverse populations, including higher education and P–12 school faculty, candidates, and students in P–12 schools**.



# NCATE Unit Standards

- Standard 5: Faculty Qualifications, Performance, and Development Faculty are qualified and model best professional practices in scholarship, service, and teaching, including the assessment of their own effectiveness as related to candidate performance. They also collaborate with colleagues in the disciplines and schools. The unit systematically evaluates faculty performance and facilitates professional development.

# NCATE Unit Standards

- **Standard 6: Unit Governance and Resources**  
The unit has the leadership, authority, budget, personnel, facilities, and resources, including information technology resources, for the preparation of candidates to meet professional, state, and institutional standards.



# The big question

- Should we risk including elements in our conceptual framework that cannot be assessed using traditional methods?



**Good Luck!!!**

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