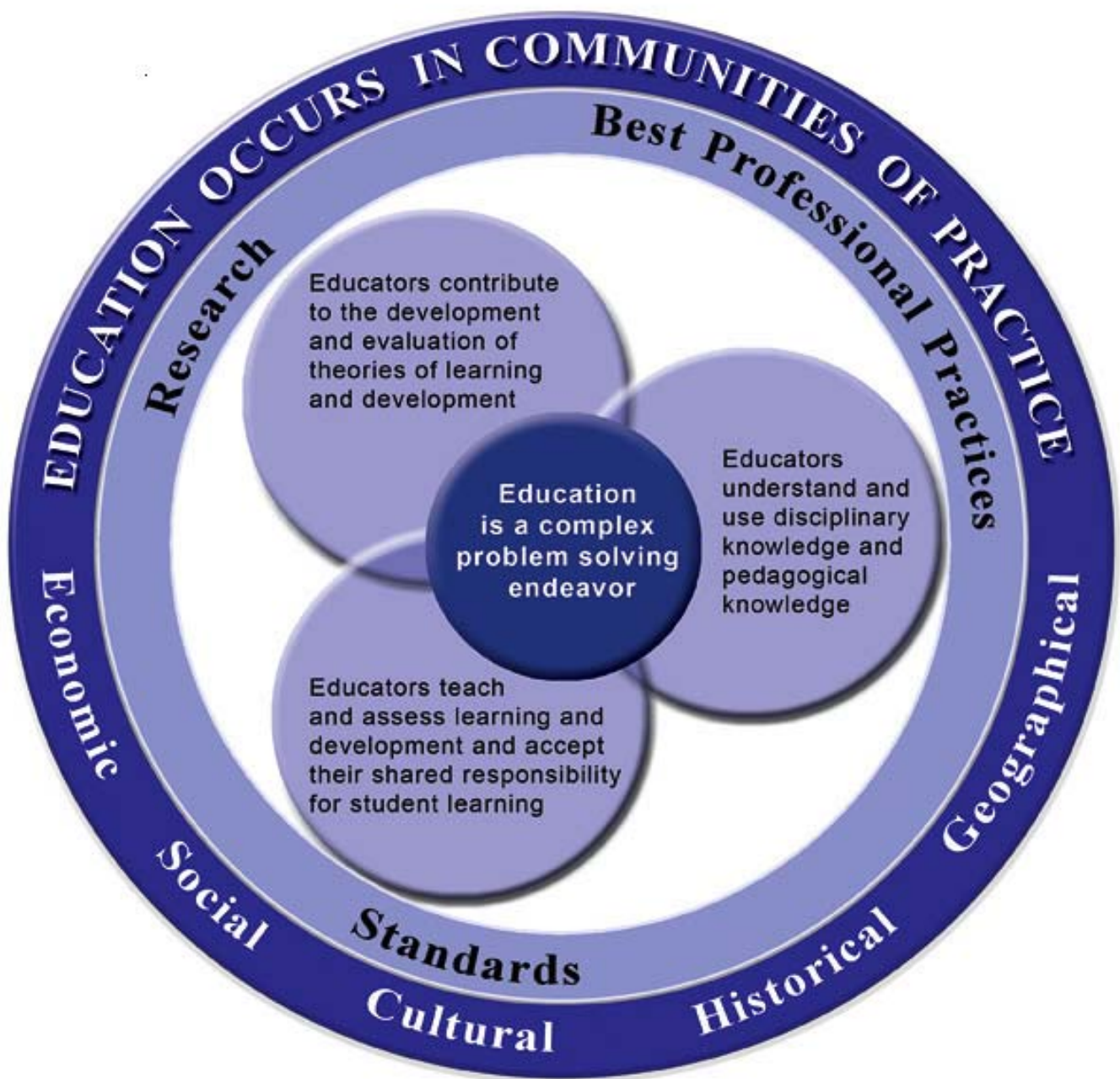


# PENN STATE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



# Penn State Conceptual Framework

## Philosophy:

Our academic programs are founded on the belief that education can materially affect the life experience of individuals and the nature of the world at large. Our central beliefs are:

- A literate and educated citizenry is vital to a viable democratic society.
- All people are entitled to a high-quality education, grounded in sensitivity to individual dignity, professional integrity, and a positive and nurturing environment.
- A dynamic education system fosters an equitable, productive economy in a global environment.
- Teaching and learning should be informed by scholarly research and effective practice.
- School improvement should be based on sound research, the application of theory as it relates to effective practice, policy development, and collaboration with practitioners.
- Technology should be used to improve the quality of teaching and learning, research and scholarship, and outreach to state, nation, and the world.
- Interdisciplinary programs should be used to enhance human learning, growth, and development across the life span.

## High Standards

Expectations for education professionals prepared at Penn State are fully aligned with national standards. The standards to which we hold our graduates and the expectations we have of them are:

### 1. **Education occurs in communities of practice.**

Penn State educators understand that education takes place in economic, social, cultural, historical and geographic contexts. Penn State educators learn that they are members of these multiple communities, working collaboratively on the evaluation and improvement of education settings for all learners. This offers an inclusive framework for creating dialogue around who and what is known as well as who and what we need to know.

*Upon graduation, Penn State educators are expected to:*

- be committed to an understanding of the competing and conflicting contexts in which education occurs;
- value and respect the diversity of the communities in which they teach as well as the diversity of the students within those communities;
- engage instructional practices that link education in meaningful ways with these communities.

### 2. **Education is a complex problem-solving endeavor.**

Penn State educators understand that education involves continually making collective and individual decisions about their work in order to best help learners develop as active, knowledgeable citizens in a

changing and complex global society. Problems are not fixed but instead shift and are negotiable. To understand the intellectual puzzles involved in education, inquiry and data are required.

*Upon graduation, Penn State educators are expected to:*

- be committed to ongoing analysis and continual improvement of teaching and learning;
- engage systematic ways to collect and analyze information about their practice and use that information to improve practice;
- display a commitment to ongoing learning and development of professional knowledge and skills;
- understand human development, subject matter and instruction, and the nature of the student/client to make and evaluate decisions about teaching/counseling/administering;
- seek professional development opportunities to deepen their own discipline and pedagogical understanding;
- seek and consider evidence of learner understanding in making instructional decisions.

### **3. Educators understand and use disciplinary knowledge and pedagogical knowledge.**

Penn State's programs require that students develop a rich understanding of the subject(s) undergirding their school assignments, including the specialized knowledge required to promote student understanding of the subject matter. Penn State educators work across disciplines to pose and solve problems.

*Upon graduation, Penn State educators are expected to:*

- have accurate and appropriate understandings of the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the disciplines taught;
- understand how knowledge of subject areas is created, organized, linked to other disciplines, and applied to real-world settings;
- understand the pivotal role of prior knowledge and experience in learning and development;
- understand and use a variety of subject-specific instructional strategies in order to teach for understanding;
- identify and use a variety of learning resources;
- understand and integrate technologies to enhance learning and development;
- understand national, state, and local goals for the pertinent disciplines;
- examine their own understandings of content to be taught.

### **4. Educators teach and assess learning and development and accept their shared responsibility for student learning.**

Penn State educators are dedicated to creating just and democratic learning environments that support the learning and development of *all* students and clients. They learn how to create, enrich, maintain, and alter education settings in order to best provide learning opportunities for all learners. Graduates can be expected to choose and use multiple pedagogical strategies and assessment approaches.

*Upon graduation, Penn State educators are expected to:*

- know that all students/clients can learn and develop;
- treat all students/clients equitably;
- understand and value individual differences, and accommodate the needs of diverse learners;

- design and maintain environments that effectively promote individual and group learning;
- create safe learning environments that support inquiry and intellectual risk-taking;
- create environments that encourage positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation;
- understand and use a variety of pedagogical and assessment strategies;
- establish environments that foster interaction, respect, and cooperation;
- explain instructional choices based on research-derived knowledge;

## **5. Educators contribute to the development and evaluation of theories of learning and development.**

Penn State educators recognize their responsibility as contributing members of the field of education. They consider problems of practice and engage tools of inquiry, reflection, and research to better understand instructional problems and possible solutions.

*Upon graduation, Penn State educators are expected to:*

- recognize that they are contributing members of the education profession;
- recognize the contextual and interactive roles of schools, communities, and the various levels of government;
- foster relationships with students/clients, colleagues, parents, and agencies;
- be knowledgeable about special community resources that can be used to enhance learning;
- reflect on learning and teaching individually and with colleagues;
- act in a professional, responsible, and ethical manner.