

PEDAGOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Purpose: The purpose of the **Pedagogical Framework** is to orient audiences to Relay's pedagogical approach to preparing teachers. It speaks to *why we are engaged in this work*, *what we want our students to know* leaving our programs, and *how we will develop our students' knowledge, skills and mindsets*. This document describes a holistic instructional approach to teacher preparation that is reflected throughout the design and implementation of Relay's teacher preparation programs.

The Why

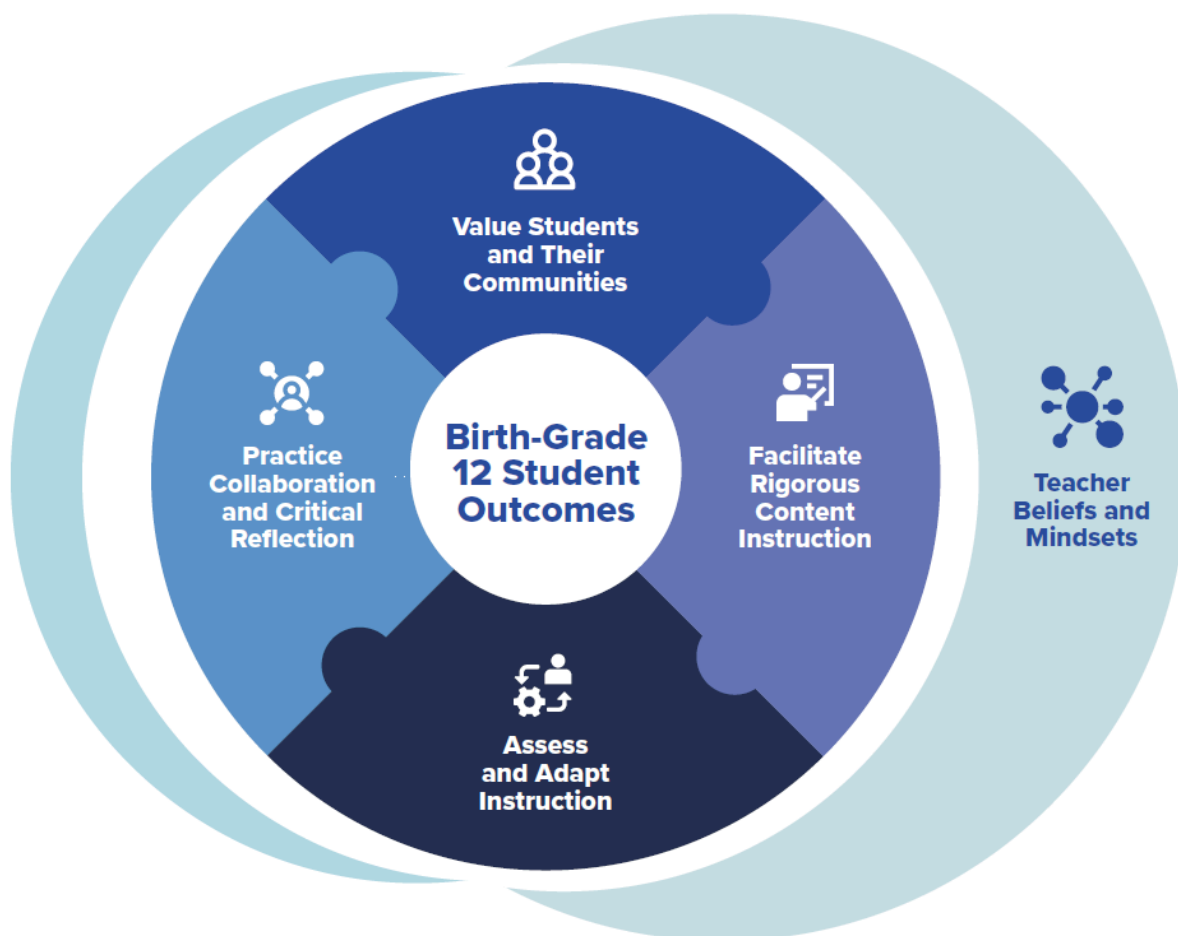
RELAY'S MISSION & VISION: Relay's mission is to ensure that all students are taught by outstanding educators. Our vision is to build a more just world where every student has access to outstanding educators and a clear path to a fulfilling life.

VISION OF A RELAY PREPARED TEACHER: By the end of their program, teachers will possess the knowledge, skills, mindsets and dispositions of a culturally responsive and inclusive educator who is well-versed in subject matter. They will demonstrate their ability to apply and integrate the practices of effective teaching within their discipline by demonstrating proficiency with Relay's learning outcomes, meeting professional standards, and positively impacting Birth-Grade 12 students' outcomes.

BIRTH-GRADE 12 STUDENT OUTCOMES: At Relay, we focus on helping teachers improve Birth-Grade 12 student outcomes in three areas: academic achievement, social-emotional learning, and student experience. Research highlights the strong connection among these dimensions and their collective impact on student success (Jackson et al., 2020). By prioritizing all three, Relay equips educators to foster students' holistic development and achievement of both academic and life goals.

The What

Relay's curriculum is built on evidence-based learning outcomes that define the knowledge, skills, and mindsets educators need to support strong Birth-Grade 12 student outcomes. The outcomes are informed by national (i.e. [InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards](#)) and subject-specific teaching standards and reflect a wide range of contemporary research on the science of learning and development, Culturally Responsive Teaching, adult learning, and teacher education.



Conceptual Model for the Relay Curriculum: Asset-based beliefs and mindsets guide four key areas of teacher development: valuing students and communities, delivering rigorous instruction, adapting teaching based on assessment, and engaging in collaboration and critical reflection. Relay students develop these competencies to improve student experience, social-emotional development, and academic achievement for Birth-Grade 12 students.

TEACHER BELIEFS & MINDSETS

At Relay, we explicitly support our students in developing the beliefs and mindsets of culturally responsive and inclusive educators. These beliefs and mindsets reflect the understanding that all learners and communities possess assets that should be leveraged to ensure all students have a positive experience and meet ambitious academic and social-emotional goals. Developing these beliefs and mindsets enables Relay students to enact the skills they learn in service of equitable outcomes for all students. These beliefs and mindsets are described in more detail in [Appendix A](#).

INSTITUTIONAL OUTCOME CATEGORIES

Value Students and Their Communities:

The knowledge, skills and dispositions that reflect a commitment to seeing students as whole individuals shaped by their identities, experiences, families, and communities. When these knowledge, skills, and dispositions are demonstrated in practice, teachers center learners' needs so that they feel supported, empowered, and connected to the classroom and school community.

Facilitate Rigorous Content Instruction:

Educators develop a deep understanding of both content and content-specific instructional practices. Through effective planning, evidence-based teaching, and higher-order thinking opportunities, educators help Birth-Grade 12 students engage deeply with content and make meaningful real-world connections. (Loewenberg Ball, Thames, & Phelps, 2008; Hill, Rowan, & Loewenberg Ball, 2005; Schulman, 1986).

Assess and Adapt Instruction:

An ongoing cycle in which educators use assessments, collect and analyze data, and adjust teaching practices based on evidence of student learning. Educators use organized data systems and multiple data sources to ensure instruction is responsive to students and focused on promoting growth and achievement for all learners.

Practice Collaboration and Critical Reflection:

The habits of critical self-examination, inquiry, collaboration, and action that educators apply to continuously strengthen their practice while ensuring every student has access to high-quality educational opportunities.

The How

Relay prepares teachers through a practice-based approach that prioritizes the application of knowledge and skills in authentic classroom settings. By connecting theory to daily instructional practice, teachers learn to make effective, evidence-based decisions that support student learning.

Relay's approach to instruction is characterized by the following features:

EXEMPLARY TEACHING FACULTY

Relay courses are facilitated by exemplary teachers who have demonstrated success in Birth-Grade 12 classrooms, possess deep theoretical and practical knowledge of program-level competencies, and contribute to their respective fields through scholarship. Relay faculty model the habits of mind of a culturally responsive and inclusive educator in their planning, instruction, and support of students. Through shared professional learning opportunities and collaboration, faculty continue to build their expertise to stay current in the field.

LEARN-PRACTICE-APPLY FRAMEWORK

Relay coursework emphasizes conceptual understanding of theories, pedagogical reasoning about the use of specific strategies, and application of knowledge and skills. This approach can be summarized by the Learn, Practice, Apply framework:

Learn: Teachers learn new knowledge, skills, and mindsets through knowledge building activities and experiential learning opportunities. Teachers engage with resources that support their understanding of the purpose of the instructional practice, help build their mindsets, and critique or challenge ideas and preconceptions. They then access and analyze examples of high-quality implementation of skills and mindsets.

Practice: We build opportunities to practice applying the knowledge, skills and mindsets represented by our competencies into courses. Practice opportunities are accompanied by opportunities for immediate feedback around shared criteria for success, and the opportunity to do it again to incorporate feedback given, in order to support teachers' transfer of theory to their Birth-Grade 12 classroom implementation.

Apply: We design authentic assessments to measure teachers' knowledge, skills and dispositions in applied contexts. Assessment tools for feedback and evaluation are designed in ways that allow teachers to use assessment outcomes as a means for reflecting on and improving their practice.

SELF-REFLECTION & FEEDBACK

Teachers grow in their practice through direct feedback and self-reflection on their craft. We offer opportunities for expert and peer feedback during asynchronous and synchronous coursework, through conversation with mentors, and on summative assessments.

INTEGRATING CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE AND INCLUSIVE PRACTICES

Adult learners bring diverse identities, experiences, ways of learning, and teaching contexts to their professional growth. Relay faculty incorporate culturally responsive and inclusive practices by creating opportunities for participants to reflect on and share their identities, experiences, and perspectives. We design our coursework to give students the opportunity to collaborate with one another to learn from multiple perspectives. We build community through active engagement in the content – e.g. discussion protocols, reflections, etc. Instruction incorporates examples and case studies that reflect the diversity of the teachers, students, and educational settings we serve. Faculty also use flexible instructional methods and materials to support meaningful engagement, reduce barriers to understanding, and support participants' ability to express their learning.

Appendix A: Teacher Beliefs and Mindsets

The list below represents beliefs or ways of thinking that effective teachers possess. When approaching the teaching and learning process through the lens of these beliefs and mindsets, (also known as “dispositions”) teachers promote equity through their teaching practice.

Anti-Racism

The teacher understands that systems of power and privilege rooted in racism perpetuate inequities in schools. They affirm the histories and experiences of people of color through their practice and take deliberate action to disrupt racist systems, policies, and practices in the pursuit of empowering our students to create a more equitable world.

Collaboration

The teacher acknowledges that it takes a network of educators, acting in alignment with one another, to strategically support the growth and development of all students. They embrace the responsibility of partnering with students and families in working towards collective goals for their students.

Continuous Improvement

The teacher understands that their response to feedback drives their ongoing professional growth and development. They routinely reflect upon their teaching practices so that they can identify and acknowledge their own strengths and respond to areas in need of growth through change in their practices.

High Standards in Service of Empowerment

The teacher believes that all students can reach ambitious, intentionally defined academic and social-emotional goals. They build all students' academic and social-emotional competence, confidence and independence by leveraging their strengths and assets in the learning process.

Inclusivity

The teacher sees it as their role is to ensure that ALL students have equal opportunity to instruction and resources that will result in student success.

Intentionality

The teacher understands that effective practitioners leverage evidence-based practices in ways that are responsive to the context in which teaching and learning takes place. They consider student cultures, social histories, ways of learning, prior educational experiences, and present levels of performance as they design and implement culturally responsive and inclusive learning experiences.

Personal Responsibility

The teacher believes that as educators, the conditions and experiences that are created for students in their classrooms are within their locus of control. They teach to the strengths of all of their students and advocate for them within their sphere of influence.

References:

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