

## Study Purpose & Methods

### Design

Derived from the foundation of a phenomenological study, which emphasizes the meaning of an experience for an individual or members of a group, the researchers specifically settled on the design of grounded theory (Creswell, 1998). This design is intended to generate or discover a theory, an abstract analytical schema of a phenomenon (the development of a specific course of advanced training and education for educational practitioners) that relates to a particular situation (the need in-field, for educational practitioners that can approach their practice within a context of situational leadership and be able to problematize their practice in order to function as adaptive change agents responsive to multiple stakeholder needs that may arise).

Grounded theory allows for the study of individuals as they engage in and respond to a phenomenon (Creswell, 1998). Researchers can study how individuals act within and react to this phenomenon by gathering data in the form of interviews, field observations, artifact review, and site visits. Researchers then analyze this data, developing a sense of interrelations among themes, connections, and then develop theoretical propositions or hypotheses in order to present a conceptual framework for the theory.

The purpose of this study is to identify thematic consistency among CPED institutions with regard to the Professional Practitioner Degree (PPD) or EdD program structure and expectations for practitioner outcomes and the alignment of industry expectations and established professional standards/competencies.

### Central Phenomenon

In attempting to harness the intellectual capital of leaders in educational practitioner development and to develop a conceptual framework through which we can define common program outcomes for those practitioners, we must assess the common ground on which we have built our developmental frameworks.

### Unifying Theme:

Educational practitioners are often held accountable for students' mastery of subject matter competencies; as mentors responsible for students' cognitive development; as trainers for workforce entrants expected to develop highly-qualified human capital; and as administrators responsible for matriculation, persistence, and retention numbers at the classroom, institution, or district level. Whether or not professional development initiatives within and outside the academy are contributive toward preparing practitioners to meet these diverse needs is a concern not only for Ed.D. program faculty, but also for the diverse groups of stakeholders that demonstrate a collective investment in the curricular and co-curricular efficacy of these PPD programs.

### Process Overview

The study is currently in its second phase of analysis and review. The first phase of data collection and analysis process commenced with the review of reports provided by partner institutions on their individual approaches to PPD program development

according to CPED organizational themes: signature pedagogy, capstone requirements, laboratories of practice, and conceptual approaches to practitioner preparation. The initial analysis of these reports yielded two concrete deliverables: a best practices document and a working taxonomic analysis representing six themes derived from the primary thematic analysis: Inquiry Stance, Equity Stance, Leadership, Human Capital, Community Engagement, and Continuous Improvement.

These documents were made available for electronic review to CPED partners prior to a member checking opportunity that was conducted at the 2009 American Educational Research Association meeting. This meeting took place in a loosely organized focus group format and researchers collected field notes and working group documents as artifacts to inform the second stage of analysis.

The second phase of data collection and analysis led to a second thematic analysis of the original partner institutional outcomes data viewed through the lens of new institutional perspectives resulting from the AERA meeting, as well researchers' consideration of certain professional standards (ISLLC and ELCC) that help ground the work we are doing within a national context.

#### Conceptual Framework: The Adult Learner & Communities of Learning/Practice

For the purposes of this study, we have chosen to examine the practitioner and doctoral education through the lens of adult learning theory. The PPD student represents a unique type of learner with motivations, capacities, and challenges unlike other students in higher education. Understanding PPD students by defining the ways in which they learn is essential to understanding how best we can harness the opportunities presented by their experiences-in-context to better promote their learning and development. Defining a learning context within this framework is also necessary to match the PPD curriculum to the way in which adult learners receive, even co-produce, knowledge. Communities of practice are discussed as contexts that optimize learning for adults, as they provide good person-environment fit according to the way in which adult learners develop most efficiently.

Knowles (1984) defines adult learners as individuals that need to know the reasoning behind the education they attain and why it is relevant to them. Adult students need to learn experientially and perceive the process of learning as a process of problem-solving. This definition is part of Knowles' theory of Andragogy, which attempts to describe the experience of adult learners. The theory assumes adult learners are self-directed and autonomous in their educational attainment. They engage the learning process and acknowledge responsibility for their learning gains.

According to Knowles, adult learners are driven by a number of motivating factors. These students need to make associations and form social relationships. Knowles describes adult learners as having a need to fulfill the expectations or recommendations of a formal authority figure. He also suggests that adult learners are generally altruistic and concerned with promoting the welfare of their community. They seek stimulation via their educational experience to achieve some degree of contrast to the other aspects of

their lives. They are interested in educational attainment for the sake of self-development and, in this regard, resemble the higher education ideal of the lifelong learner.

Adult learners require the freedom to direct their educational experience. PPD program faculty, as a result, are put in the position of creating circumstances under which these students can increase their level of involvement and participation in the learning process. Faculty are faced with the task of having to redefine their roles to serve as facilitators for adult learners. They have to determine adult students' perspectives on their educational attainment goals and create opportunities to co-produce a curriculum that allows students to pursue projects that reflect their professional interests.

Glowacki-Dudka & Helvie-Mason (2004) suggest that educators of adult learners have come to favor the adaptability of teaching and learning applications provided by students' attitudes toward their learning experience. However, educators also have to achieve a balance between the demands for specialized education made by adult learners and maintaining uniformity in the curriculum that can help establish the PPD as a formally recognized approach to educating educational practitioners.

Cross (1998) cites research on cognition and motivation conducted in the field of developmental psychology that can be applied to the benefit of PPD students. This research states that the development of what modern learning theorists call a *schema*, which is a cognitive map or network that reconciles individuals' own understanding of a concept with that of others toward a new understanding of that concept, is essential to students' developmental gains. Cross suggests that peer-oriented learning communities are key to the development of cognitive complexity in students. Adult learners are especially likely to achieve the greatest learning gains when involvement in such peer-relational environments contributes to the integration of theory and knowledge bases to their personal experiences in the field.

#### Considering Preliminary Outcomes Indicators for the Spencer Foundation

Researchers approached the identification of institutional outcomes through a secondary theoretical lens comprised of three areas of organizational design that intends to be the groundwork for a common assessment system for Ed.D. candidates:

- School leadership
- Clinical practice in teacher education
- Organizational leadership

Researchers considered the identification of what candidates should know, believe, and be able to do (following CPED's Habits of Mind, Heart and Hand concepts) in each of the aforementioned three areas with a description of appropriate levels of proficiency.

Researchers intend to demonstrate how each institution is both examining its own assessment protocol for the Ed.D. and the process for documenting the progress of programmatic change towards a new Ed.D; as well as a demonstration of shared accomplishments and challenges across CPED institutions, as new outcomes are piloted.

The reporting of the aforementioned outcomes criteria is intended to occur within the following parameters:

- Core/foundation coursework
- Inquiry coursework
- Capstone experiences
- Internship experiences (or laboratories of practice)

#### Data Source: Phase 1

Institutional Reports from CPED Partner Institutions:

These data artifacts were selected to comprise the data source for the following reasons:

- Access: Gatekeepers are readily available as critical friends within the CPED Initiative
- The Institutional Reports represent the most current and robust articulation of institutional program requirements, intent, and outcomes.

#### Data Collection and Organization Procedure: Phase 1

The sampling method for this study was primarily convenience sampling. All institutions providing reports did so in advance and at the behest of CPED leadership. The reports varied greatly in format and intent, though guidelines for producing these reports were provided by leadership. Not all reports yielded relevant data, nor the same quality and quantity of data. The basic format of the data protocols provided below is based on the two guiding themes mentioned above.

#### Data Analysis: Phase 1

A semi-structured thematic analysis was conducted, interrogating reports from CPED partner institutions that outlined the purpose, development, and implementation of select professional practice doctoral programs. Researchers brainstormed and developed two guiding themes (The Educational Leader; The Program Construct) that reflected the main points of inquiry set forth by the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate that were based on nascent themes drawn from research literature. All of the institutional reports that serve as data sources for this study were obtained from CPED partner institutions that maintain programs in varying stages of development and implementation.

After the initial review of institutional reports, researchers conducted a secondary in-depth analysis to compare emergent themes from initial findings in order to brainstorm a working list of domains. This analytical process resulted in a working taxonomy that has been represented in this report as the Draft Evaluation Rubric for interrogating PPD programs.

The thematic analysis process enabled researchers to look at emerging data with an eye for developing additional domains and to facilitate the identification of unexpected patterns or categories. Researchers modified the working taxonomy as the process of coding data protocols progressed. The taxonomy was further modified as the inquiry continued and domains were further deconstructed. This second analytical approach was a more refined and focused effort directly based on the broader approach of the initial

inquiry. The second examination of this data set yielded domains that resonated with researchers more as sub-domains to the initial set of themes extracted from the first data set – these domains yielded the indicators for Content Analysis.

Researchers coded protocols with an awareness of contextual elements that might not be readily evident from the institutional reports (for example, the nuances of the CPED lexicon and the intent of CPED leadership). The codes were then compiled and duplicate codes were eliminated. The presentation of findings in this report is also based upon foundational themes extracted from researchers' field notes obtained from the October 2008 Convening.

#### Data Source: Phase 2

Representative of PPD program leadership and faculty from select CPED Partner Institutions:

These individuals were gathered at the 2009 AERA Convention for a special “town hall” forum based on their availability and willingness to participate in a focus group discussion of the findings of the initial institutional outcomes analysis:

- Participant bias: Because the findings in question were derived from an analysis of data collected from the partner institutions' reports, researchers understood that program leadership/faculty opinions about the content would be partial to their specific culture or disciplinary preferences.

#### Data Collection and Organization Procedure: Phase 2

Though the primary data collection method for this phase of the study was focus group interviewing, the recording of subject interaction was performed through field notes and participant note-taking, rather than audio recording. The richness of data from this component of data collection was gleaned from multiple data collection approaches; both the participants and researchers kept notes. Researchers collected observations and notes that would be compared during the data organization. Participants were directed to engage in full group discussion, as well as breaking out into smaller groups and conducting reflective activity, while a scribe was assigned in each group to record the outcomes of said activities.

A specific interview and observational protocol was not utilized during this data collection effort, though researchers played an active part in facilitating group dialog and reflection and designed the group activity protocols that would define the structure of the town hall forum.

#### Data Analysis: Phase 2

According to grounded theory data analysis protocol, the general message of the focus group was defined by three main issue categories: Epistemological, Conceptual, and Process. Each issue category represents a distinct level of consideration among focus group participants that is dimensionalized on a continuum ranging from structures of consciousness (Epistemological) to concepts of systematic reflection and causality (Conceptual) to the conditions and constructs within which phenomena occur (Process).

The coding paradigm began with the exploration of interrelationships among categories; however the representation of data was most appropriate as a hierarchical schema.

### **Thematic Analyses of Institutional Reports: Phase 1**

#### Arizona State University

The Educational Leader:

- Problematize local practice and respond to critical issues; contextualize issues
- Seek guidance through literature in the field; function as active consumer of larger and smaller scale data
- Adapt theoretical frameworks to localized application
- Systemic view of institutional relationships; systematic inquiry following problems through holistic process toward root causes

The Program Construct:

- Three year time frame involving two major applied and localized research efforts developed through inquiry coursework culminating in dissertation capstone.  
Main project outcome: show local/community benefit through research.

#### California State University – Fresno State

The Educational Leader:

- The visionary leader is the prototypical graduate able to Problematize, assess, intervene, and evaluate. Able to gather information from the field and from literature, this leader can lead across educational silos and contribute to the field through outcomes-based studies conducted within a localized framework.

The Program Construct:

- Applied research efforts built on groundwork of diversity in education toward policy-based reform.
- Evidence-based decision-making among leaders who can function as consumers of general information regarding critical issues, as well as being able to delegate toward more specialized colleagues.
- Standard dissertation path.

#### Duquesne University

The Educational Leader:

- Functions within a culture of dialogic argument – a constructivist ideal that sees the leader work on a continuum of knowledge development that can benefit institutions through continuous improvement. The leader is always problematizing practice.

**The Program Construct:**

- The curriculum is focused on embedded inquiry concepts and emphasizes themes of social responsiveness and maintaining an audit trail that marks the process if accountability to stakeholders.
- Learning occurs primarily within field-based settings.
- Capstone assessment options are varied, but maintain the common theme of direct social contribution.

University of Kansas**The Educational Leader:**

- Governs with a foundational vision
- Values human capital and can connect skill sets with critical issues
- Implements evidence-based decisions and maintains transparency to all stakeholders
- Understands issues that occur on a localized basis within the larger context of literature surrounding these issues in the field
- Maintains a communication framework with varied constituencies in order to maintain a systemic understanding of local issues in a holistic context
- Values the constructivist ideal of pushing new knowledge from localized contexts outward to the field; encourages colleagues and staff to maintain high levels of professional growth to sustain this continuum

University of Kentucky**The Educational Leader:**

- Promotes community growth through workforce development.
- Understands the relational dynamics of localized issues within larger system contexts
- Approaches practice through an inquiry stance that enables localized inquiry outcomes to contribute to larger dialogs within the field, though such outcomes are not necessarily generalizable in the traditional sense
- Contextualizes the culture of the institution or organizational body in which critical issues arise; this localized understanding of dynamics serves to specify design concepts with regard to evaluation and implementation

**The Program Construct:**

- Three year process involves building a base of contextual understanding of the field and an inquiry skill sets in years 1 and 2, followed by a focus on student outcomes assessment and organizational management in year 3. This leads to a capstone experience comprised of team efforts toward development of research proposals with aims of direct local contribution.

University of Central Florida

## The Program Construct:

- Practitioners build on existing professional base, but view local contexts within larger theoretical framework within the field
- Learn to Problematize their practice within a framework of systematic inquiry
- With a focus on utilization, learn to use evaluation studies, reports, and research findings toward developing application-oriented plans of action in response to local critical issues
- Practicum experience involves applying aforementioned process to a specific, selected issue occurring in a local professional context; subject to evaluation by program leadership

University of Missouri – Columbia

## The Educational Leader:

- Transforms organizations through disruption of established beliefs/practices
- Focuses on continuous improvement
- Approaches practice with a constructivist vision and remains a step ahead of accountability mandates

## The Program Construct:

- Practitioners view organizations through a lens of reform
- Utilize theoretical frameworks to evaluate local contexts
- Develop an inquiry stance and select local critical issues to frame problems that can be diagnosed toward the development of interventions
- Maintain data sources regarding selected issues in context toward capstone work
- Demonstrate knowledge through relating inquiry process to program advisors
- Report and communicate findings regarding recommendations for improvement in local contexts resulting from inquiry process

Northern Illinois University

## The Educational Leader:

- Is reflexive within his/her practice
- Takes stakeholder dispositions into account when examining local problems in context

## The Program Construct:

- Core knowledge will reflect understanding of scholarship from the engaged consumer's perspective
- Ability to Problematize issues in practice
- Ability to engage in broad-based inquiry efforts throughout an organizations and the ability to garner support from all relevant stakeholders

- Capstone experience is intended to afford the practitioner the opportunity to synthesize knowledge gained and demonstrate contribution to the field

### University of Oklahoma

#### The Program Construct:

- Main outcomes/competencies: ability to apply research in local contexts; demonstrate sound judgment (evidence-based) in leadership; synthesize knowledge via capstone project
- Practitioners gain knowledge of various conceptual frameworks in education, including student affairs and organizational management through embedded field experiences
- Practitioners are consequently socialized into leadership frameworks
- The inquiry cycle is conducted entirely in-field
- 4 year program sequence culminates in a field-based practicum immediately followed by capstone work occurring in varied formats: grouped/thematic; localize problem; policy evaluation; traditional

### Pennsylvania State University

#### The Program Construct:

- Core focus on teacher education, specializing in Research in Teacher Education, The Role of Foundation Courses in Teacher Education, History and Policies of Teacher Education, The Role of Field Experiences in Teacher Education, The Role of Methods Courses in Teacher Education.
- Demonstrate inquiry stance through reflection and understanding problems of practice.
- Engage with faculty and other graduate students in grouped research projects
- Engage in at least two field-based practitioner rotations including: (1) research rotation; (2) teaching rotation; (3) supervision rotation; (4) community rotation.

### Rutgers University

#### The Educational Leader:

- Demonstrates leadership skills in three main areas: curricular design/implementation; organizational management; teacher development

#### The Program Construct:

- Program foci include: communities of practice; continuity of program facilitation in theme and faculty; explicit connections between theory and practice; capstone experience that demonstrates clear benefit to practice
- Core/inquiry focus: ability to identify knowledge gaps and consequently frame problems in order to develop inquiry approach
- Utilize field experience and in-field mentor relationships to build toward an applied capstone experience that demonstrates local contribution

University of Colorado – Denver

## The Educational Leader:

- Driven by an equity mind-set to problematize practice and ensure a standard of inclusiveness in education

## The Program Construct:

- Focus on extended interaction with traditionally marginalized members of the educational stakeholder community
- Develop holistic approach to framing problems in practice by taking non-school based advocates into consideration
- Pursue localized problem through guided research experience with program faculty
- Build toward grouped or individual capstone experience, working directly with representative of context in which localized problem is being studied

Lynn University

## The Educational Leader:

- Demonstrates proficiency in leadership, equity, accountability and assessment, and curriculum planning

## The Program Construct:

- 3 year process that includes development of inquiry stance intermixed with field study and application in years 1 and 2; year 3 involves the identification of a core problem and the application of the inquiry cycle toward a capstone experience

University of Connecticut

## The Educational Leader:

- Perceives the inquiry cycle holistically in order to maintain a systemic perspective on the process and not lose sight of key stakeholders or issues
- Problematize a specific issue in practice, but utilizes theoretical frameworks found in literature to re-vision the issue multiple times in order to gain a better understanding of the complexities of the problem and all contribution dynamics

## The Program Construct:

- All core program experiences are unified and build (regarding content and deliverables) toward the capstone experience
- Practitioners complete several cycles of inquiry in order to build toward the capstone project
- Develop ability to synthesize and deliver information in a variety of formats
- Practitioners mitigate their authority dependence and develop ability to be decisive based on their own interpretation of findings
- Years 1 and 2 involve developing knowledge base synchronized with practicum/field-base inquiry experiences. During year 3 the outcomes of these

inquiry efforts culminate in a draft capstone deliverable that is refined and defended through year 4

### University of Houston

#### The Educational Leader:

- Independently problematizes, assesses, designs and evaluates critical issues and responsive interventions in practice

#### The Program Construct:

- Development of inquiry stance occurs in a localized context and practitioner outcomes demonstrate community benefit
- Practicum experience models team-oriented facilitation as it would occur in the field
- Local educational leaders are active partners in the process of developing practitioners – college faculty collaborate with leaders to help vet the feasibility and relevance of practitioner research topics
- Practitioners engage in an action research cycle of: reflect → inquire → collaborate → share
- The capstone experience resembles a consultation model, providing recommendations to local stakeholders that demonstrate direct community benefit

### University of Louisville

#### The Educational Leader:

- Exemplifies core competencies: critical thinking; problem solving; leadership
- Conducts effective practice through constant reflexivity methods

#### The Program Construct:

- The inquiry process involves planning, implementation, and evaluation as interdependent steps, not discrete efforts learned in linear progression
- Curricular development is learner-centered and focused on the needs of candidates and the localized contexts in which they will be employed
- Experiential outcomes determine course content, not vice versa; problems in context drive learning
- Capstone experiences must demonstrate benefit to local contexts
- Capstone experiences must promote awareness; recommend action; or evaluate existing processes

### University of Maryland

#### The Educational Leader:

- Has a general awareness of the knowledge base of the field and can make informed inquiries into the general contexts surrounding specific critical issues

## The Program Construct:

- Develop strong competencies in evaluation; inquiry design; and communicating to various stakeholder groups with discrete dispositions
- Field experiences represent demonstration of synthesis of knowledge base

University of Nebraska – Lincoln

## The Program Construct:

- Necessary to acknowledge the parameters of professional practice education develop a strategic coalition responsive to the needs of all stakeholders: students, faculty, administration, and especially the leaders in the field; clear articulations should be made between progress in practice and impacts on scholarship and vice versa

University of Southern California

## The Educational Leader:

- Utilizes gap analysis method to problematize practice toward continuous improvement
- Localizes inquiry with a clear understanding of cultural dynamics specific to the institution
- Promotes the inquiry stance as an organizational attitude beyond the individual

## The Program Construct:

- Principles of core knowledge: leadership, learning, diversity and accountability
- Inquiry is a framework through which all experiences are conducted and an ongoing lens through which the practitioner evaluates learning
- Capstone experiences model real-world aspects of in-field problem solving including facilitating team dynamics and contextualizing localized issues.
- Field experience, like the inquiry stance, is linked to the overall program experience throughout is continuum

University of Vermont

## The Educational Leader:

- Focused on transforming the outcomes of individuals and institutions within local and specific contexts

## The Program Construct:

- Cohorts of practitioners focus on applied inquiry, leadership, and change within learning organizations
- Capstone experience is addressed early in the practitioner's tenure and planning begins within year 2 of a potentially 5-year stretch
- Capstone experience is problem-based and focuses on localized inquiry

Virginia Commonwealth University

## The Educational Leader:

- Engages critical issues through a variety of available theoretical and contextual lenses
- Extends the inquiry mindset toward the organizational to maintain a model of continual learning and improvement
- Has a global understanding of the learning organization and its localized dynamics, in order to implement multi-tiered inquiry/evaluation plans

## The Program Construct:

- Cohort model focuses on contextualized inquiry supported by a broad knowledge of the literature of the field
- Core competencies reflected throughout the curriculum: managing change; managing human capital; reflexivity within the individual and the organization; communicating to varied stakeholders; and evidence-based decision making; research literacy (rather than the production of new knowledge)
- Capstone experience is a client-response based consultation model
- Capstone experience reflects real-world team dynamics
- Faculty and field-based advisors review final content

Virginia Tech University

## The Educational Leader:

- Problematizes practice and seeks out ways to disrupt the status quo
- Demonstrates positive impact on local contexts
- Demonstrates positive impact on multiple tiers in the organization: from administration to the classroom – maintains a holistic perspective in management
- Engages in inquiry through multiple lenses
- Promotes the inquiry stance organizationally
- Perceives individual and organizational contexts beyond the classroom in order to best analyze problems

## The Program Construct:

- Focus on evidence-based decision making; equity; learner-focused inquiry
- Curricular inputs are aligned with localized contexts of need, as well as national standards in the field
- Mentorship is a strong input; students are shepherded throughout the program by scholars who are ongoing learners in their field as well

William & Mary

## The Program Construct:

- Core focus on planning and consumer utilization of existing research

Washington State University

## The Educational Leader:

- Problematizes practice and seeks out ways to disrupt the status quo
- Demonstrates positive impact on local contexts; focus on equity via social justice concepts
- Promotes the inquiry stance organizationally
- Perceives individual and organizational contexts on multiple levels in order to work from a perspective of holistic organizational improvement

## The Program Construct:

- Focus on evidence-based decision making; learner-focused inquiry; utilization focused intervention
- Curricular inputs are aligned with a mission of localized responsiveness
- Students work within an apprenticeship model and guided through their program via a network of scholars and practitioners

University of Florida

Data Unavailable

**Questions and Considerations Emerging from Initial Thematic Analysis**What instructional delivery model(s) is/are utilized within your programs?

1. What components signify problem-based inquiry?
2. How are practitioner competencies built-in/embedded within the coursework?
3. What aspects of teaming are utilized within instruction?
4. What aspects of co-production of knowledge are apparent?
5. What type of evaluation model(s) is/are utilized to assess student outcomes?

To what extent is curricular content based on perspectives from the field?

1. What does the field want from the leaders we produce?
2. What do we expect our graduates to know/be able to do?
3. How does your program teach students to think in a “larger” way?
4. Did program development begin with a set of graduate outcomes followed by ‘backward design’ to define program parameters?
5. What aspects of your program promote socialization into the field?

How is inquiry taught within the scope of your program?

1. Has a distinction been made/seen as necessary between the research methods content intended for Ph.D. students being trained for scholarship and Ed.D. students being trained for practice in the field?
2. How can we teach inquiry as a problem-solving skill set?
3. Is inquiry taught as a systematic concept throughout all the coursework?
4. How can we teach our students to deconstruct problems in-field?
5. Is inquiry discussed as a leadership skill?

6. Is communicating data taught as a primary skill-set?
7. Do we teach the utilization of data as a means to promote organizational learning?

Rather than being taught to conduct research, can practitioners be best served by being taught to:

1. Become good consumers of research
2. Interpret and present data
3. Assess intervention outcomes
4. Utilize GAP analysis: Where are we?  $\leftrightarrow$  Where do we want to be?
5. Think about inquiry as a problem-solving skill and not as a discrete set of techniques.

What evidence do we have that students, within their practice, actually utilize the skills we teach? Can previous graduates be utilized to mentor current students?

Student inquiry should be guided by how they frame their practice. Inquiry has to be a stance:

1. Adaptive vs. routine expertise.
2. Leaders should be able to teach teachers/staff how to conduct inquiry (develop an inquiry mindset/organizational culture of inquiry).

### Considering Capstone Concepts

What we know about the capstone experience:

- The capstone experience/process demonstrates learning
- Students are primarily part-time, but some are full-time
- Dissertations are of variable quality
- The capstone does not necessarily have to be a dissertation
- Many programs are not sure of the criteria for a good dissertation
- The capstone should represent a comprehensive demonstration of knowledge
- The capstone should be oriented toward the problems-of-practice; students should be able to gather and synthesize information
- The capstone should be individualized, written, and scholarly
- The Ed.D. capstone (demonstrates development of practitioner skill-sets) should be distinctive from the Ph.D. culminative experience (theory-building; generalizable)
- The capstone experience is highly variable across institutions
- The Ed.D. capstone concept is more applicable to practitioners than the Ph.D. dissertation concept
- Conventional dissertation work does not help the profession with the immediacy of issues-at-hand

What do we want to know about the capstone experience?

- How can existing dissertations be modified to fit the capstone model?
- If not a capstone, then what?
- What is the capstone experience? What qualities define this experience?

- How can Ed.D. quality of learning best be assessed?
- How can we get the capstone experience accepted as a legitimate higher learning activity?
- Should the capstone experience be individualized or grouped?
- Should the capstone experience occur only at the end of the program or be formative?
- Does the type of capstone experience offered affect the employability of the graduate? Do employers care about the capstone experience?
- Is the doctoral dissertation *not* a valid option as a capstone experience?
- Shouldn't students be able to connect the purpose of their learning/degree to their capstone experience?

#### Defining the capstone experience:

- Capstone projects require students to have specific knowledge of targeted literature to make informed decisions about policy and practice; this is a method necessary for practitioners and distinctive from exhaustive Ph.D. level knowledge development.
- The consultancy model: using clients such as school districts; institutions; state agencies:
  - Helps define an authentic problem to be studied
  - Helps define what is necessary to provide meaningful recommendations
  - Adaptive expertise: makes knowledge visible for practice
  - Analytic tools: this method provides an alternative focus for problem resolution; there are different levels of inference required for different types of inquiry

#### Suggested Capstone Components:

1. Utilized to identify, frame, and resolve problems of practice.
2. Not intended to broaden the literature base, but to enhance the discipline of professional leadership.
3. Faculty invite students to join in the consideration of problems of practice.
4. Collaboration of tenure track and clinical faculty.
5. Faculty role as coach; student as worker.
6. Building group dynamics among students eases the load for faculty regarding student accountability and mentorship – instead, a peer-based model is implemented.
7. Every student that goes out into the field is asking the same question regarding problems in practice.
8. Faculty work with students to develop their research/inquiry outlines.
9. Peer review: every student receives the benefit of input from all the others in the group. This strengthens cohort grouping and the professional learning community structure.
10. Students work with system leaders to discover their practice and processes.
11. Students conduct independent research in their own districts, but their literature reviews and methods sections are common – there is variation in the discussion of findings.

12. Thematic grouping requires advance planning, developing questions together, and knowing utilization goals.
13. Students are not meant to look at gaps in the literature, but for help in understanding the context of a problem.
14. Students often provide executive summaries and recommendations to institutions at which research is conducted.
15. Team leaders are appointed within groups to ensure workflow and accountability – in order to maintain the balance between shared work and individual work.
16. Students have 3 member committees, with fourth member as a practitioner-leader.

NOTE: Courses within PPD programs should be tied to the college and not to the faculty. Courses should not be taught only as faculty are available to do so – instead students should be able to expect a set course sequence and schedule, thus promoting program continuity and consistency.

### **Proposed Guidelines for Within-Institution Interrogation of Programs (Derived from Initial Analysis of Institutional Outcomes)**

#### ***Assessing Student Learning***

1. How did you define student learning outcomes for your students/cohorts?
2. How do you know whether the defined program outcomes are matching up with current students' learning progress?
3. How do you gather, analyze, and use student learning data to improve students' learning experiences?
4. How would you describe the degree to which students are taking ownership of their learning experiences?
  - a. How do your students address substantive problems or issues in their learning collectively and individually?
  - b. What are the artifacts that students produce that demonstrate mastery of concepts that are presented within their learning experience?
  - c. What course deliverables, oral and written, are expected?

#### ***Identifying Signature Pedagogies***

A signature pedagogy can help us organize what is already known in our field. It can also help us to see new relationships, such as ways to present valued public scholarship toward the strengthening of a programmatic content base that is systematically linked with the knowledge base used in-field. A signature pedagogy encourages ongoing collaborative inquiry between the academy and practitioners and policy-makers such that the co-production of knowledge maintains relevance to the field.

Given this definition of signature pedagogy, answer the following questions:

1. In preparing future practitioners for their professional work, what “suite of approaches” to teaching do you believe are most effective in developing successful educational practitioners?
2. How are these evident through your program?

***Describing the Core Curriculum***

1. Do you have a specific set of learning experiences and competencies that you believe all program graduates should possess?

***Defining Labs of Practice (practicum experiences)***

1. How are practicum experiences providing students with the experiences and skills necessary to be exemplary practitioners?
2. What are the 'job embedded' learning experiences that prepare students to be exemplary educational administrators?

***Evaluating the Student Experience******Constructive collaboration among students and program faculty***

1. Describe your methods for encouraging collaboration among students within the cohort.
2. Describe your methods for engaging students and building stronger faculty-student connections.
3. What options do students have for feedback in expressing their thoughts, ideas, and concerns about the program to faculty and administrators?

***Building the practical knowledge base***

1. Describe how you are working with students to use a 'hands-on' approach in identifying and addressing the challenges that occur on practical levels in their field.
  - a. How are students encouraged to use creativity in solving contemporary problems that exist within their field?
  - b. How are students being prepared to make decisions and solve problems using quantitative and qualitative evidence?
  - c. How are students being prepared to judge the value of existing research?

***Recommendation:*** A more in-depth content analysis of existing member institutions' programs, with regard to the aforementioned criteria, as well as a history of the modifications these programs have undergone to date, should be based on the following points of inquiry:

1. What are the contextual backgrounds for these programs?
2. What challenges have been addressed to date; through what methods?
3. What are the governance structures, organizational frameworks, and student support services frameworks that contextualize these programs?
4. Can the varied disciplinary foci for K-12, Higher Education, and Teacher Education programs be covered through a single core sequence?

**Secondary Analyses of Institutional Outcomes Data: Phase 2**

Findings derived from the analysis of focus group data, document analysis, and field observation conducted during the meeting of CPED partners during the 2009 AERA convention yielded three primary components of stakeholder response. CPED partners, in review of the initial findings of the institutional outcomes analysis, identified the

following critical themes intended to refine the approach toward the development of programs of instructional delivery through the PPD, as well as establishing a set of universal expectations that define the successful PPD graduate.

### Epistemological Issues

- We must perceive these outcomes through a lens of utilizing data in order to pursue purposeful practice.
- The practitioner we define must act with epistemological self-awareness.
- What is the PPD brand? What distinguishes this as a professional degree that is also distinctive from other professional degrees?
- How can practitioners demonstrate their responsibility toward the discipline. What does this mean/entail?
- We should not seek to establish best practices, but rather a typology for educational practitioners.
- Can we really measure outcomes for leadership capability?
- We will fail to succeed in our efforts toward this PPD if this type of program exists within another academic silo.
  - Can the PPD exist with an interdisciplinary core that represents core themes across institutional departments?
  - This core need not be represented by distinctive coursework; rather, it may be sufficient to expose students to the varied experiences across the disciplines.
- Can PPD students themselves look reflexively at the preparation of practitioners? How can they contribute to the co-development of this degree?
- How can we measure an individual disposition toward, for example, teaching excellence?
  - We must build into the curriculum the opportunity for students to practice the professing of a concept such as this.
- How can an individual know that she knows something?
  - How might she know otherwise?
- We must literally design activities that provide opportunity for demonstrating a learned concept: then student can then profess, exemplify, and practice that concept.
  - Can we assess, capture this process?
  - Can we build this process into the capstone experience?
  - Is there a normative component to the research questions students ask?
  - Every such research question should reflect the central philosophy of the program construct; this is a point of assessment in and of itself.
- Can practitioners take ownership of the standards for performance we set forth?
- How can we maintain program individuality while attempting to identify and institutionalize universal programmatic themes?

Conceptual Issues

- The best practices rubric should represent: highly qualified, qualified, and developmental levels for practitioner growth.
- Define leadership in terms of disruptive leadership, adaptive leadership, and social justice leadership (e.g., social justice leadership involves seeking equity for transitional populations).
- The programmatic concept of inquiry should represent a reflection on process.
- With regard to Equity Stance: do program specifics and the characteristics of the individual contradict one another?
  - The ideal practitioner should be able collaborate with leaders of local populations.
  - The culturally responsive leader must have a keen knowledge of deficit paradigms; she must build the cultural climate within the organization (Researchers' note: organizational climate and culture are distinctive concepts; climate is a more immediate concept and may change within shorter time frames; culture is a more macro-level concept; change may take 5-7 years to change or establish).
- The practitioner must identify when systematic inquiry is appropriate in practice.
- The practitioner must be able to make persuasive arguments.
- The practitioner must be able to produce different products for different settings.
- The capstone process should be:
  - Iterative and progressive through programs.
  - Evaluated by multiple stakeholders.
  - Demonstrated through exhibition; documentation should take shape within the form of treatise or oral presentation.
- What is the capstone?
  - What supports are needed for this process?
  - Should the construction of the capstone concept
- What type of infrastructure is needed to support the PPD program?
  - Type of program faculty.
  - Program coordination.
  - Curriculum and length of instructional delivery.
- Practitioner and program excellence should be articulated as a shared set of attributes.
- What are the attributes of the successful practitioner/program graduate in terms of:
  - Commitments
  - Dispositions
  - Values
- If the context of the program within the institution and the context of the individual within the program are pivotal considerations, then these should typify the theme of the program experience.
- Thoughts on Performance Rubric/Best Practices:
  - Rather than using data to drive decisions, students should be able to pursue purposeful practice.

- Rather than identifying problem areas within populations, students be able to identify challenges and opportunities in order to pursue purposeful practice.
- Rather than valuing the application of or applying theory in practice, the student should act with epistemological self-awareness.

### Process Issues

- The taxonomic analysis does not represent institutional outcomes as much as it does program characteristics.
- Most of the outcomes are process-oriented, rather than knowledge or content-based.
- The existing main and secondary themes represent broad generalizations: what are the local factors, for example, that contextualize a theme such as Equity Stance?
- The themes should be represented in more actionable language.
- With regard to inquiry, the specifics of program content and delivery will vary from institution to institution.
- The capstone process should be flexible and conducted within meaningful, rich inquiry constructs.
- What are the indicators of best practice regarding the capstone?
- We should utilize backward design within this developmental process: leap ahead to the process of assessing programmatic and individual success and then map backward to the defining of program constructs and practitioner competencies.
- We should consider moving away from program and practitioner standards and consider designing “situations” (presumably cases) that can test practitioner performance.
  - Again, through backward design, we can then move toward designing rubrics that systematize the demonstration of program and individual quality.

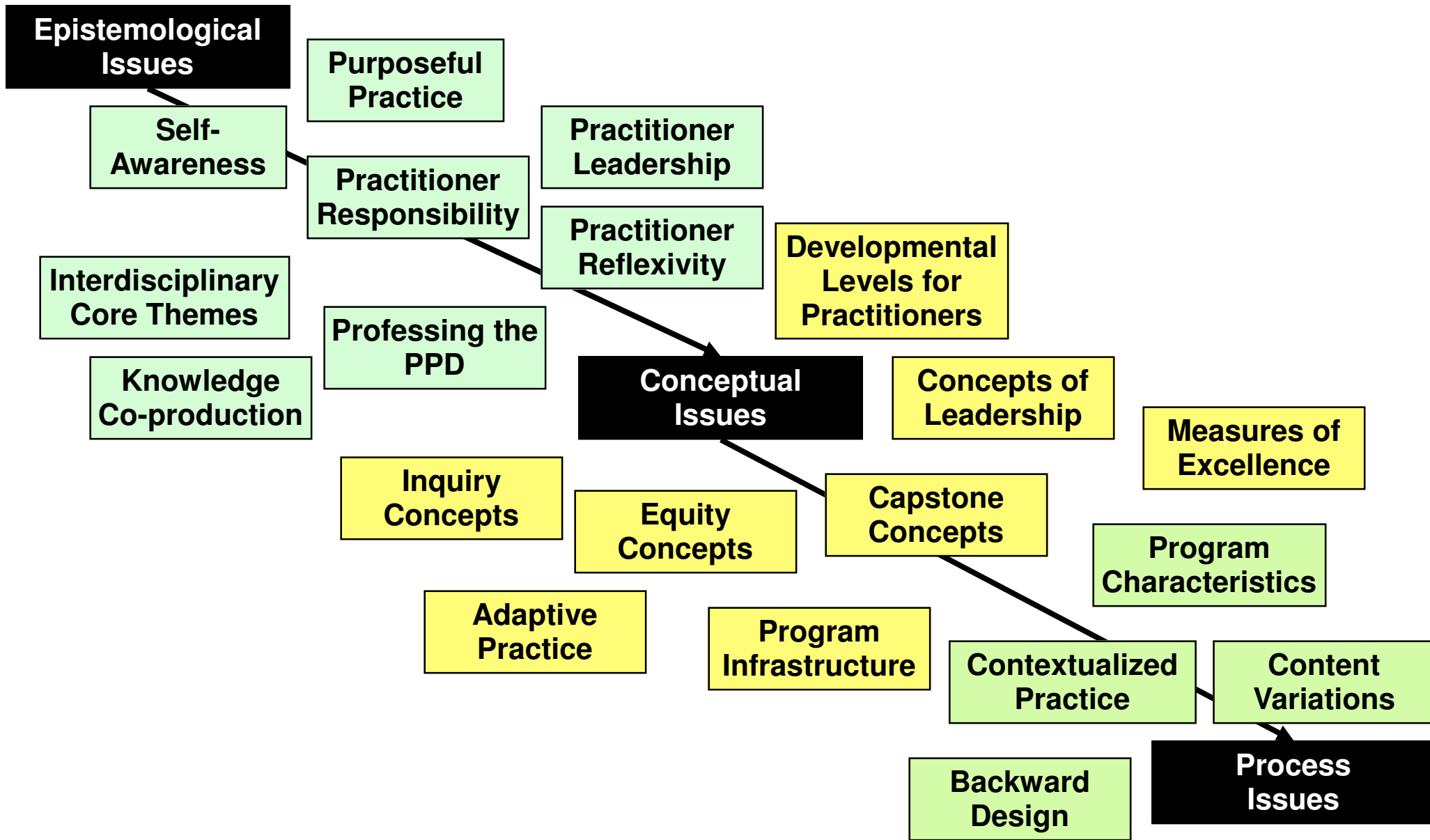
<b>Preliminary Identification of Candidate Performance Rubric/Best Practices According to Taxonomic Analysis</b>	
<b>Inquiry Stance</b>	
<b>Identifies Critical Issues</b>	Able to see beyond the driving and restraining forces impacting an issue and identifies the critical factors involved
<b>Uses Data to Drive Decisions</b>	Able to navigate databases and disaggregate data to identify problem areas within populations
<b>Translates Research to Practical/Localized Application</b>	Able to consider large-scale interventions found within the literature and modify the approach to suit localized needs
<b>Conducts Systemic Institutional Inquiry</b>	Approaches inquiry with a holistic view on the connections between levels of an institution, regardless of position within the institution
<b>Designs and Implements Utilization-focused Inquiry</b>	Able to design outcomes-based intervention with post-hoc knowledge of application and evaluation
<b>Values Application of Theory in Practice</b>	Encourages field-based, job-imbedded components to the learning process; practitioners-in-development are expected to test their change concepts in the laboratory of life
<b>Equity Stance</b>	
<b>Promotes Equity in Consideration and Stakeholder Inclusiveness</b>	Views the needs of the institutional community with equal consideration; considers voices across institutional silos
<b>Recognizes and Works within Contexts of Institutional Culture</b>	Builds strong support base with institutional gatekeepers and develops interventions with sensitivity to institutional mores and boundaries
<b>Leadership Capability</b>	
<b>Active Consumer of Research Literature</b>	Aware of current research in the field; considers impacts on the institutional level and all its derivatives
<b>Leads Across Institutional Silos</b>	Able to recognize driving and restraining forces in distinct institutional pockets; able to recognize the common connections between groups that can bridge the divide

<b>Governs with a Foundational Vision</b>	Connects decision making to guiding vision; sets the expectation that all decisions made are measured against the institutional vision
<b>Disruptive Leadership</b>	Seeks to disrupt the status quo and engage stakeholders in moving beyond accepted beliefs and practices to consider renewed approaches to practice
<b>Anticipatory Leadership</b>	Values the concerns of stakeholders across the institutional continuum; anticipates necessary change before accountability mandates require this change
<b>Community Engagement</b>	
<b>Promotes Decision Transparency to All Stakeholders</b>	Maintains a clear audit trail throughout the inquiry process so that stakeholders can be well-informed and can hold the inquiry team accountable
<b>Works within a Constructivist Framework that Promotes Dialogism within the Field</b>	Has knowledge of ongoing dialog regarding a certain issue and engages in inquiry that is open to diverse perspectives and critiques
<b>Communicated Across Stakeholder Silos</b>	Able to personalize reporting and communication of inquiry findings and outcomes through relevance structures specific to varied stakeholder groups
<b>Demonstrates Programmatic Benefit to Institutional Stakeholders</b>	Utilization-focused in evaluation; program implementation is accompanied by an evaluation framework intended to demonstrate benefits to stakeholders
<b>Maintains Open Communication with Institutional Stakeholders</b>	Values the input of all stakeholders involved in all aspects of institutional decision making; values the feedback loops created through this framework, as well as the new ideas that arise toward continuous improvement
<b>Harnessing Human Capital</b>	
<b>Harnesses Human Capital through Recognizing Connections between Skill-sets and Application</b>	Able to identify and capitalize on the varied skill-sets found within the team dynamic and can delegate tasks to appropriate individuals
<b>Leverages All Available Human Resources</b>	Recognizes value of not only working from the outside-in, but also from

	the inside-out; identifies leaders within local contexts and transitions them into positions as champions of the change initiative
<b>Engages in Succession Planning</b>	Utilizes change initiatives to socialize growing leaders into the culture of change and continuous improvement in order to ensure seamless transition of the human agents within the institutional growth process
<b>Recognizes Value of All Levels of Community through a Lens of Differentiated Consideration</b>	Focus on extended interaction with traditionally marginalized members of the stakeholder community
<b>Commitment to Continuous Improvement</b>	
<b>Promotes Professional Development through Cycles of Continuous Improvement</b>	Applies perspectives on continuous improvement to build strong networks of ongoing professional development; conveys a sense of value to stakeholders regarding the concept of institutional commitment to professional development.
<b>Problematizes Practice</b>	Works through a lens of evaluative consideration and continuous improvement
<b>Promotes Consideration of Multiple Perspectives</b>	Harnesses the valuable perspectives of various stakeholders by making them active participants in the process of: reflect → inquire → collaborate → share

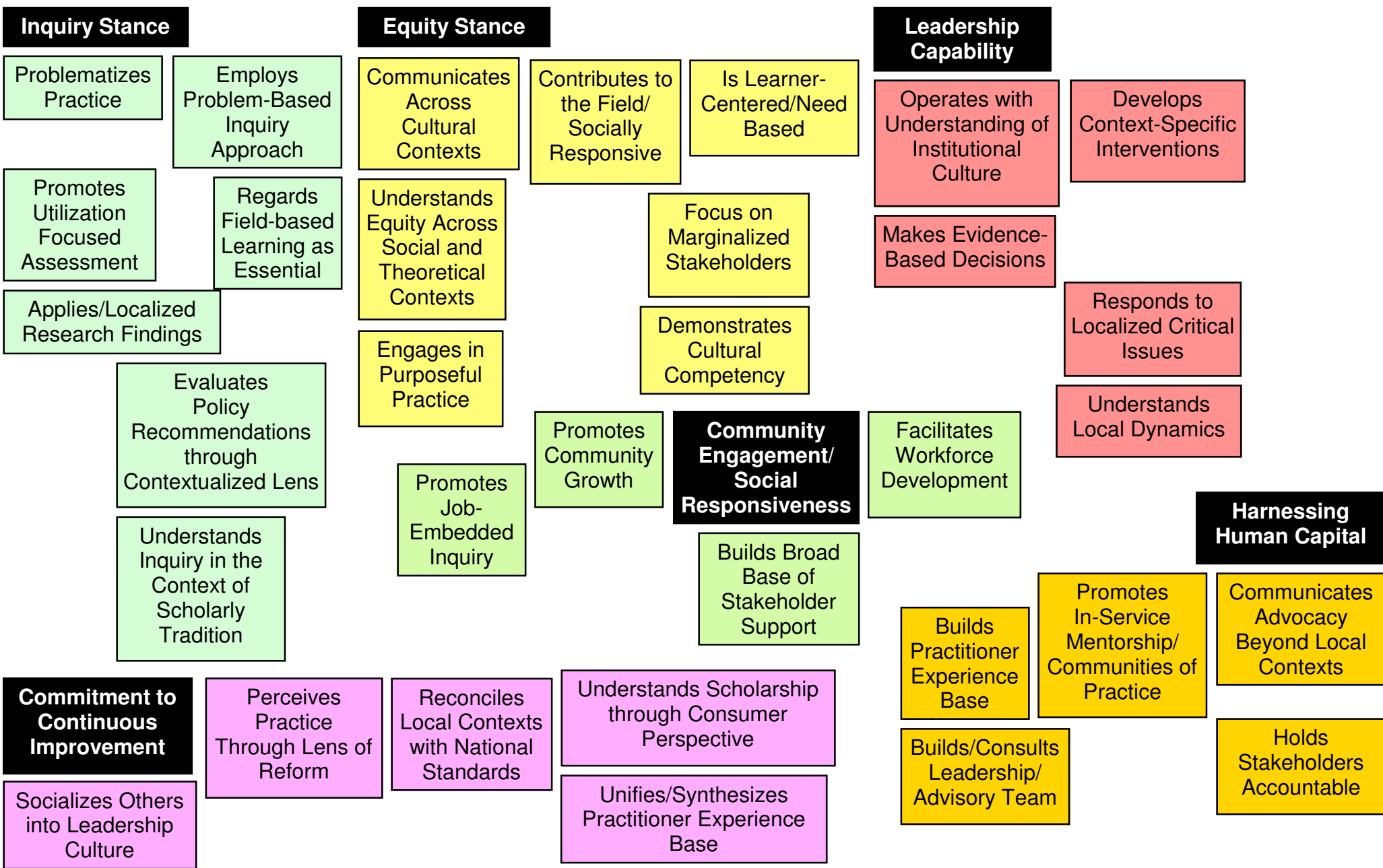
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# CPED Taxonomic Analysis: PPD Graduate Characteristics\*

\*\* Color indicates distinction; Position indicates thematic overlap.



\* Revisions to this document were made to reflect critique made at the Town Hall meeting held at the 2009 AERA Convention.