Conceptual Framework
Advanced Program Rationale Statement Samples from Capstone Portfolios

First example:

**Conceptual Framework Rationale Statement**

Conceptual Framework includes unit planning, implementation, evaluation, and reflection. I have become familiar with this framework throughout my graduate courses and teaching career and I understand its crucial role in education. I chose my STEM Unit on Runway Systems from STEM 670: Design Technology and Engineering for Elementary to meet Proposition 4, “Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.” I chose this artifact because it demonstrates my ability to create a standards-based unit that includes science, technology, math, language arts, and the Engineering Design Process. This unit requires students to work in small groups to create a runway system in which a rolling sphere travels through it from start to end. They use the Engineering Design Process, record their daily observations in science notebooks, and learn through trial and error. I followed the conceptual framework while creating this unit by including a thematic unit outline, lesson plans for each activity, multiple forms of assessment, and an evaluation spreadsheet of all the standards I met. These reasons demonstrate my knowledge of Proposition 4.

This artifact aligns with Proposition 4 and the VCSU Core Value of Expertise in Curriculum/Instruction. It shows my ability to teach a STEM unit for conceptual understanding through real-world situations. Students learn to think critically, analyze data, work collaboratively, and become problem-solvers. All of these things are 21st century skills that students should know to be successful in the real world. Teachers must know how to plan, implement, evaluate, and reflect, and my unit exemplifies my ability to do this.

While creating this unit, I learned how to incorporate the standards for each core subject into every lesson. Before STEM 670, I knew standards were important, but I did not always include them in all lessons. Creating this STEM unit on Runway Systems helped me make sure everything I teach is standards-based, has a precise purpose and focus, and follows the conceptual framework. This is becoming more crucial because of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Because of STEM 670, I now feel ready and capable to use the CCSS with fidelity, and my knowledge of the VCSU Core Value of Expertise in Curriculum/Instruction has strengthened and grown.

In the future, I plan to keep the conceptual framework mindset when planning lessons for my classroom. This is especially important when I feel overwhelmed with the day-to-day tasks and challenges of being a teacher. Using the conceptual framework will help me refocus and find the purpose of each lesson. If I continue to use the conceptual framework as my guiding tool, my lessons will be effective and engaging and my students will benefit from my teaching.
Second Conceptual Framework Rationale Statement Example:

The central thinking of an educator is constantly revolving around their ability to effectively plan, implement, evaluate, and reflect. While all of these skills require different amounts of effort and time, when they are used together, professional growth is continuous. During my graduate coursework at VCSU, I was required to focus on each piece of the VCSU conceptual framework individually, as well as combine them to learn how to create the most effective ELL learning environment. An example of how I used this framework to enhance my teaching is seen in a math lesson plan I completed for a graduate course in the ELL concentration area. The lesson was based on North Dakota Common Core Standards in Mathematics and integrated two second grade level standards using a combination of teaching mathematical knowledge as well as teaching language knowledge. During this lesson plan I was able to critically look at how my students were going to learn these concepts, how I was going to incorporate language learning, how to assess my student’s learning in an accurate way, and the overall integration of ELL strategies during the lesson. At the end of the lesson, I took a critical look at how this lesson differs from one intended for non-ELL students, and what difference that will make on my teaching.

Often times, the process of plan, implement, evaluate, and reflect happen subconsciously in my mind, however, taking opportunities to write down my thinking and take a critical look at how I’m doing is an important part of improvement in my profession. NBPTS proposition #2 and #4 align with the constant mind-set an educator needs to have toward their classroom teaching. The learning I have gained through my graduate coursework has allowed me to plan lessons suited to fit the needs of my students, as well as implement these lessons in meaningful and effective ways. I have seen my teaching strategies grow and I am now more aware of how to plan the content I teach. Since ELLs have a unique set of needs, the planning I do, and the implementation of my lessons has to fit hand in hand with the content as well as the language in order for my students to have meaningful experiences. In addition to this, evaluation cannot happen without knowledge of how to evaluate my unique learners. I also know that reflection guides future planning as well as fosters improvement when considering how my learners will progress from year to year. As an educator I am even more aware of how the VCSU framework fits into everything I do as a teacher. Gaining specific knowledge on how to meet the needs of an ELL learner, I now approach planning, implementing, evaluating, and reflecting with a different perspective in order to enhance my classroom.

Writing lesson plans is not new for me as an educator, and during my graduate coursework I was given several opportunities to show how my learning affects my lessons. Some of the most beneficial assignments I had to complete were ones that I could implement into my classroom the same week I wrote them. This math lesson plan showed me not only how to take the state common core standards and design instruction specifically intended for my ELL students, but also how I can effectively implement, evaluate, and reflect on the lessons I currently have to maximize student learning. While I do not always go in-depth with my lesson planning, as an educator I find it important to consistently revisit the framework in a very sequential manner in order to reinforce new learning. Being given the opportunity to explicitly write out my lesson plan reminded me of how intentional planning and well-thought out lessons allow for more meaningful teaching experiences.
Third Conceptual Framework Rationale Statement Example:

The conceptual framework at VCSU is plan, implement, evaluate, and reflect. I created a cross curricula unit during the course STEM 670, design technology and engineering for elementary. During the unit, my kindergarten students had to test different types of bags and figure out ways to make them stronger. The unit includes standards from technological literacy, science literacy, math literacy, and language arts literacy. I thought planning a unit across multiple subjects would be difficult, but once I started, it came together nicely. My students loved trying to figure out ways to strengthen the bags with different types of material.

Throughout the unit, I assessed the students via their engineering journal and observations. Each day the students had different items to complete in their journal. I was able to learn immediately if any students were struggling in any area. This unit aligns with the NBPTS proposition 3, “Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.” Monitoring student learning is a key step when implementing lessons. Monitoring allowed me to reteach right on the spot instead of waiting until the end of the unit.

Before this course, I did a field experience where I taught a project-based learning (PBL) unit. I had an easier time giving my students control of their learning during this unit because I had done it previously. I enjoyed watching my students using 21st century skills throughout the unit. Students were using critical thinking skills, problem-solving skills, and communication skill.

I used the conceptual framework throughout this unit. The framework is a continuous cycle. I spent a lot of time planning this unit and while implementing it I was continuously evaluating it. After the unit was finished, I reflected on the entire process and then planned some changes to the unit for next year.

A successful teacher is someone who is constantly trying new strategies and monitoring student learning as well as one’s own teaching. In the future, I will continue to use the conceptual framework in my teaching. I believe a unit is never complete; it is always a work in progress. There is always something new to try or tweak to help students be more successful.
Fourth Conceptual Framework Rationale Statement Example:

Throughout my course studies at Valley City State University, I have been exposed to the conceptual framework consisting of planning, implementing, evaluating and reflecting. To best demonstrate how I meet all aspects of this framework, I included my field experience proposal from EDUC 650, Field Design and Implementation. The proposal displays my ability to plan an integrated, standards-based unit, implement a variety of learning strategies, evaluate by using quality formative and summative assessments, and reflect on the successes and areas for improvement of the unit. The proposal directly correlates to NBPTS Proposition 1: Teachers are committed to students and their learning and 3: Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning. It relates to the VCSU core value that states graduates will be able to demonstrate expertise in Curriculum and Instruction.

The planning of a lesson is paramount in its success. The first step in planning an effective lesson is to determine what students should learn from the lesson or unit. For the PBL, I looked to curricular standards to help shape student learning outcomes. I also took into consideration the order learning should happen and the necessary items students would need. I aim to be very prepared when teaching to make the lessons transition as smoothly as possible and to keep students engaged and on task.

A perfectly planned lesson is useless if it is not implemented. Putting my PBL plan into action took 11 days. Within this time, I altered some of my plans to best meet the needs of my students. Teachers must allow for flexibility in their plans to expand teachable moments, yet maintain the plan to reach targeted learning goals.

I assessed my students throughout the project on their ability to make progress and meet their learning goals as well as their ability to work in a group. I made formal and informal evaluations and used formative and summative assessments to gauge student learning. I was reminded through my course work at VCSU that assessment does not need to be only summative or formal. Students can demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways. As their teacher, I encouraged my students to show what they learned in different areas of student strengths. This project gave me practice writing and utilizing rubrics instead of only relying on answers from worksheets, quizzes or tests.

The final step of the process is reflection. I kept a journal throughout the unit, which helped me internalize what students were learning, areas to improve upon and the successes of the unit. I can use this reflection in the future to focus on what worked or did not work and use the information to plan future lessons. The process begins again and is cyclical. Teachers should be reflective in their practice so they can continue to improve. Good teaching requires one to look at areas to improve upon and reading the reflection of a unit is a great way to find such areas. Similarly, such reflections pin point areas of strength to celebrate. All steps in the framework, planning, implementation, evaluation and reflection, come together to enhance teaching and learning.