Clinical Experiences in the Preparation of Candidates for Teaching Underserved Students

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Changing learning outcomes for the diverse student population served by public schools in the United States requires fundamental changes in teaching and teacher education. These changes involve disrupting long standing traditions in discourse, practices, perceptions, and relationships. These traditions are at the core of the ways faculty present and represent the tools of practice in the profession. These traditions are inscribed in the personal experiences, values, and perceptions that faculty and candidates bring to teacher education and that influence what is taught and what is learned for and about professional practice. Ohana (2004) reported that when candidates in one cohort encountered discrepancies between what was learned in methods courses and what was observed in their field experiences, they gave priority to their own personal experiences and those of their peers rather than consulting what was learned in their coursework for clarification or interpretation. Similarly, classroom teachers when teaching students whose experiential backgrounds differ from their own, call on personal experiences and perceptions rather than the research or theory to address learning challenges (Abbate-Vaughn, 2004). These habits of mind and practices limit opportunities for learning teaching practices that have integrity (appropriateness for the particular learning and context) and trustworthiness (the ability to generate the desired outcomes) for facilitating learning for students from diverse cultural and experiential backgrounds.

A   major challenge facing teacher educators is that of designing and consistently implementing an approach to clinical experiences that moves candidates beyond intuitive and idiosyncratic teaching practices to a systematic teaching process that achieves targeted learning outcomes for students from diverse cultural and experiential backgrounds.   This requires that faulty in preservice teacher preparation programs engage in extensive collaboration focused on (a) developing and instituting a shared vision for competent teaching practice, (b) delineating a theoretical perspective to guide practices in professional preparation, (c) establishing a clinical process for professional preparation, (d) conceptualizing an approach to clinical experiences, (e) situating clinical experiences in deliberative and purposeful contexts, and (f) engaging in collaborative dialogue and research with practitioners for the purpose of improving teaching practice. Each of these factors in developing a systematic approach to clinical experiences is addressed in the discussion that follows. Additionally, this discussion addresses a way of categorizing teacher preparation programs based on specific characteristics that enhance teacher preparation and advance practices in the field.

Developing a Vision for Competent Professional Teaching Practice

The quality of professional preparation candidates receive is influenced by the vision for competent teaching practice held by the program faculty; the extent to which this vision incorporate different contexts, circumstances, and populations of students; and the trustworthiness of the experiences provided to candidates for accomplishing the vision. The success candidates experience as beginning teachers is influenced by the quality of their preparation, the extent to which candidates have learned to adapt and contextualize teaching practices, and the vision for competent teaching practice held by those who hire novice teachers.

Ideally, the faculty in a preservice teacher preparation program work collaboratively with practitioners and other stakeholders in developing a shared *vision* for the preparation of teachers based on a common understanding of competent teaching practice and the process for learning to teach. Aspects of competent teaching that might inform such a shared vision include attending to students' academic and social growth and development, providing meaningful learning experiences for students, facilitating learning and developing equitable access for students from different cultural and experiential backgrounds, creating a supportive social context for learning in the classroom, engaging in ongoing inquiry for improving teaching and learning, and working collaboratively with colleagues in a community of practice. Aspects of learning competent teaching practice that might inform a shared vision include developing deep subject-matter knowledge; knowledge of specific learners, learning, and theoretical perspectives on learning; knowledge of human growth and development; knowledge of particular approaches and techniques for facilitating learning in different contexts and circumstances; and appropriate clinical experiences for learning teaching practice. Developing a shared vision in this way supports the design of a practice-based preservice teacher preparation program that incorporates the faculty's academic and research-based knowledge, the knowledge practitioners have developed based on their everyday experience that is context and situation specific, and the concerns and observations of other stakeholders. Further, this type of collaboration contributes to individual and collective investment in the design of preservice teacher preparation in ways that encourage coherence, continuity, consistency, and sustainability.

The conceptual framework for a teacher preparation program required by NCATE was one approach to a vision for teaching and learning to teach. Feiman-Nemser (2001) describes the function of a conceptual framework in the following statement:

> It provides a guiding vision of the kind of teacher the program is trying to prepare. It offers a view of learning, the role of the teacher, and the mission of schooling in a democracy. It provides a set of understandings about learning to teach. More than rhetoric, the values and ideas that make up a program's mission and conceptual framework inform the design and sequencing of courses and field experiences. They may get translated into specific themes or core abilities. They shape curriculum, culture, pedagogy, and assessment practices (p. 1023).

Feiman-Nemser further points out that:

> Teacher candidates must also form visions of what is possible and desirable in teaching to inspire and guide their professional learning and practice. Such visions connect important values and goals to concrete classroom practices (p. 1017).

Where teacher education faculty have developed a shared vision of teaching and learning to teach, the program can be carefully planned and enacted in ways that facilitate candidates' developing a vision for their own practice. This vision provides focus and a scaffold for learning to teach and for making sense of teaching practices.

The shared vision replaces the idiosyncratic judgment and preferences of individual faculty with the vision or conceptual framework for a program as the basis for determining course content for professional preparation including the research, theory, and pedagogy

candidates learn, and the learning experiences provided for candidates. Further, the relationship among courses and the ideas and experiences purposefully connected across courses emanate from the vision for competent teaching practice and learning teaching. In a well planned program, each course, module, or clinical experience is developed with a conceptualization of how it fits within the vision for teacher preparation based on a common understanding of competent teaching practice.

The vision for a preservice teacher preparation program provides guidance for all aspects of the program including clinical experiences, the selection of the context and sites for clinical experiences, and the selection and preparation of practitioners to support candidates' clinical experiences. The elements of competent teaching and learning to teach including the required activities, tasks, skills and sensitivities, and the clinical experiences that support developing teaching competence need to be made explicit within the design of the program. Ball & Forzani (2009) addressed the work of teaching and the challenge of teacher education in the statement that:

> The work of teaching includes broad cultural competence and relational sensitivity, communication skills, and the combination of rigor and imagination fundamental to effective practice. Skillful teaching requires appropriately using and integrating specific moves and activities in particular cases and contexts, based on knowledge and understanding of one's pupils and on the application of professional judgment. This integration also depends on opportunities to practice and to measure one's performance against exemplars. Performing these activities effectively is intricate work. Professional training should be designed to help teachers learn to enact these tasks skillfully" (p. 497).

A shared understanding of these broad and specific competencies, practices and sensitivities enables the integration of theory, pedagogy, and subject matter for teaching practice during clinical experiences. Further, this shared understanding supports the development of approaches to assessment, feedback, guidance, and the improvement of teaching practice and learning outcomes for students. Feiman-Nemser (2001) argues that "If preservice preparation has been successful, beginning teachers will have a compelling vision of good teaching and a beginning repertoire of approaches to curriculum, instruction, and assessment consistent with that vision" (1029). However, the ultimate assessment of the quality of preservice teacher preparation is the impact of program completers in facilitating student learning outcomes. This is consistent with the Learned Report on Teacher Education published in 1920 that called for clinically-based preservice teacher education with the competence of candidates measured by learning outcomes for their students (Imig & Imig, 2005).

<u>Delineating a Theoretical Perspective to Guide Practices in Professional Preparation</u>

Learning to teach is a complex process "embedded in the cultural, social, and cognitive histories of the candidates and the learners they will teach, and is situated in the cultural and social history of school practices located in particular communities" (p. 3, Hollins, 2011). The complexities of teaching challenge teacher educators to develop an approach for learning to teach that is powerful enough to enable candidates to build upon and extend their prior knowledge and experiences to accomplish the goal of competent teaching. The vision for learning to teach and competent teaching represents a shared understanding of a professional standard for the preparation of candidates.

The vision for competent teaching and for learning to teach is instrumental in developing curriculum content; however, it is important to develop theory-based opportunities for learning that take into account candidates' prior knowledge and experiences, where the theory can be used to interpret and explain candidates' progress and needs and to make adjustments as necessary to better facilitate learning.   The learning experiences provided for candidates in a preservice teacher preparation program serve two important functions. First, the learning experiences provide mediation between prior knowledge and experiences, and the professional knowledge included in the program. This means that the learning experiences assist candidates in developing new understandings that build upon, extend, or correct prior knowledge. Second, learning experiences provided for candidates serve as a model for the competent teaching practice described in the vision statement. Making explicit the theoretical perspective on which learning experiences are based, explaining the purpose of specific learning experiences, and in instances making thinking visible enables candidates to observe the modeling of competent teaching practice.

The theoretical perspective in a preservice teacher preparation program represents a shared way of making sense of the process for learning to teach, designing experiences to facilitate learning, making adjustments to increase the benefit of particular learning experiences, developing benchmarks, and assessing teaching competence. A theoretical perspective encourages the development of signature pedagogies that characterize a specific teacher preparation program. Signature pedagogies support coherence, continuity and consistency across courses in a teacher preparation program. For example, in a program where the faculty subscribe to a constructivist perspective, candidates might have repeated opportunities to participate in

authentic contexts where they construct meaning related to teaching practices and students' responses to their learning experiences.

Establishing a Clinical Process for Professional Preparation

The vision for competent teaching practice and the theoretical perspective for learning teaching support an overarching pedagogical framework in which the process for learning teaching is embedded. Hollins (2011) introduced the concept of epistemic practices as a pedagogical framework consisting of focused inquiry, directed observation, and guided practice. Focused inquiry is the examination and analysis of teaching practices, and the conditions within and outside of schools that influence teaching practices in different contexts, using different tools such as published research, document analysis, interviews conducted with participants, and observations. Directed observation is an extension of focused inquiry that engages candidates in examining particular phenomena such as conditions, behaviors, practices, procedures, and routines for particular purposes and through particular perspectives. Guided practice is a process for candidates to learn from teaching under the careful supervision of more accomplished and experienced teachers who provide opportunities for rehearsal of routines and procedures, scaffolded planning, engagement in practice in authentic contexts, and focused reflection. These epistemic practices are interrelated, overlapping and, ultimately, integrated. Focused inquiry and directed observation involve approaches to learning for and about teaching. Guided practice involves learning in and from practice, which simultaneously integrates focused inquiry and directed observation.

Embedded within these epistemic practices are specific procedures and routines grounded in a particular theoretical perspective and intended to result in candidates who meet the vision for

professionally competent teaching practice. Important characteristics of professions and many

occupations include established and recognized practices, procedures and routines, a shared

language that includes ways of engaging in the discourse of practice, and approaches to

preparation for practice (Grossman, Compton, Igra, Ronfeldt, Shahan, & Williamson, 2009;

Shulman, 1990). The preparation of professionals includes signature pedagogies derived from

essential practices in the field. The use of case studies in law schools is an example of a

signature pedagogy that is based on the application of case law in legal practice. Problems based

instruction is the signature pedagogy in medical school and is an essential skill in the practice of

medicine. These signature pedagogies are part of the well established practices and routines in

courtrooms and hospitals. Practices and routines are not as well established within and across

schools and teacher preparation programs as in courtrooms and hospitals.

Teacher educators frequently report engaging candidates in reflective practice, but the

approach and meaning vary within and across teacher preparation programs. However, it is

evident that reflective practice is an essential part of teaching and learning to teach where

teaching requires a firm understanding of pedagogy, subject matter and students, and the ability

to make appropriate adjustments in practices to accommodate student learning. The act of

facilitating student leaning involves the application of reflective practice. The teaching process

is at the heart of facilitating learning. The teaching process involves planning a segment of

instruction, enacting the plan, observing and interpreting student responses, translating students'

responses for instruction, and (re)enacting the plan (Hollins, 2011). The core of reflective

practice is observing, interpreting, and translating students' responses to learning experiences for

subsequent instruction. Developing competent teaching practice requires mastery of this reflective process.

Reflective practice can be identified as a signature pedagogy when it is embedded within the epistemic practices for the teacher preparation program, is part of the process for facilitating candidates' learning, is incorporated into the knowledge and skills candidates acquire for practice, and is applied under careful supervision during guided practice in authentic contexts. Candidates learn about reflective practice through various experiences in the teacher preparation program such as examining the research literature, analyzing case examples, and engaging in conversations with accomplished teachers about their practice. Additionally, teacher educators model reflective practice by making their thinking visible to candidates when making adjustments in practice to better accommodate learning.

Engaging in reflective practice requires that candidates understand complex moves, procedures, and routines of competent teaching. Facilitating candidates' ability to engage in the teaching process requires that teacher educators are able to make all of the parts of teaching visible to candidates. Grossman et al. (2009) described this process as consisting of three parts—representation, decomposition, and approximation where:

> Representations of practice comprise the different ways that practice is represented in professional education and what these various representations make visible to novices. Decomposition of practice involves breaking down practice into its constituent parts for the purposes of practice teaching and learning. Approximations of practice refer to opportunities to engage in practices that are more or less proximal to the practices of a profession (p. 2055-2056).

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Understanding the signature pedagogy, its relationship to the teaching process, and how to make the parts of teaching visible are essential aspects of clinical practice in preservice teacher preparation. Lampert & Graziani (2009) presented a teaching routine that makes visible the parts of teaching for observation, analysis, and rehearsal. The particular routine was located within the subject matter area of second language learning that involved "Conversation Rebuilding" through miming, drawing, and describing. One routine engaged novice teachers in rehearsing the skill of miming, checking for understanding, getting the first hypothesis proposed by a student repeated by others in the class, making student thinking public, and accepting and building on student thinking. These routines are rehearsed, enacted, and debriefed as part of the process for learning teaching. Establishing routines that all candidates learn in a teacher preparation program enable candidates to focus attention on adapting practices within these routines for students from different experiential backgrounds and with different learning needs. Lampert & Graziani indicated that "acts of judgment and invention take place inside a set of routines designed to be faithful to assumptions about what is to be learned and how it is learned—the rules of engagement of ambitious teaching" (500).

The routines described in Lampert & Graziani (2009) involve the integration of knowledge for and about teaching distributed across courses and experiences in the teacher preparation program. Shulman (1990) argued for complete integration of the curriculum in preservice teacher preparation. He was particularly concerned with integrating the content for foundations courses with pedagogy and subject matter. He argued that "foundations must be seen as an integral part of the connective tissue that gives shape and meaning to the education of teachers—as the framework for connecting and integrating the knowledge acquired in the liberal

arts and sciences with the practice of pedagogy" (p. 304). Shulman presented clear examples of this integration of pedagogy, subject matter and foundations in teaching an educational psychology course for secondary candidates during their internship by using discipline specific school texts to examine the types of reading challenges students might confront and how these challenges related to different perspectives on learning. Candidates' understanding of different perspectives on learning was contextualized within their daily experiences in the classroom and their knowledge of perspectives on learning was integrated into their knowledge of pedagogy and subject matter. Perspectives on learning became the scaffold for interpreting students' responses and planning learning experiences. The use of authentic cases taken from the context of candidates' ongoing experiences in real classrooms can provide meaningful opportunities for the integration of knowledge for teaching.

For example, authentic cases of formative assessment practices taken from the candidate's ongoing experiences in the clinical classroom further the candidates' perspectives of learning, pedagogy and subject matter. In the clinical classroom, candidates come to understand the purposes and the uses of assessment. One purpose of assessment is to evaluate the quality of students' learning. This ubiquitous practice is manifested as letter grades on homework, quizzes, end-of-semester examinations and report cards. Another purpose is to measure student achievement as in high stakes standardized tests such as the ACT, GRE and MCAT to gain admissions into university programs and those used by school districts to establish each school's annual yearly progress, which was mandated in the NCLB legislation for accountability purposes. Yet another purpose of assessment, and the one least practiced, is to monitor student learning to improve teaching and learning.

Assessments that serve the purposes of evaluating the quality of student work or measuring student achievement are often referred to as summative assessments. Assessments that serve the purpose of improving teaching and learning are referred to as formative assessments. Stated differently, summative assessments are evaluative, or, assessments *of* learning, whereas formative assessments are assessments *for* learning (e.g, Black & Wiliam, 1998; Torrance & Pryor, 1998).

Formative assessment is an essential practice in teaching because it requires the use of evidence of learning and clinical judgment to determine the appropriate instructional decisions that forward student learning. It entails epistemic practices and constitutes signature pedagogies that teacher candidates explore and develop in their preparation programs. Moreover, researchers have documented that when used effectively, formative assessment practices result in significant learning gains (Phelan, Choi, Vendlinski, Baker & Herman, 2011; Ruiz-Primo & Furtak, 2007), especially for underperforming students (Black & Wiliam, 1998;). Therefore, formative assessment practices should be a core competency for teacher candidates.

According to Black and Wiliam (2009):

Practice in a classroom is formative to the extent that evidence about students' achievement is *elicited*, *interpreted*, and *used* [emphasis added] by teachers, learners, or their peers, to make decisions about the next steps in instruction that are likely to be better, or better founded, than the decisions they would have taken in the absence of the evidence that was elicited (p. 9).

To *elicit* evidence of learning, teachers draw from a broad array of products and engage in several instructional processes. They elicit data from classroom products such as daily work, homework, quizzes, portfolios and through processes such questioning, interviewing, administering diagnostic interviews and the like. Data, such as student responses to teacher questions, are *interpreted* in *real-time* classroom instruction and *used* to make subsequent pedagogical decisions to forward thinking. Data, such as daily work products, are interpreted after the lesson and used to inform the development of the lesson or lessons to be taught the next class meetings. In either situation, informed instructional decisions are made to promote student understanding of a pre-determined learning goal.

Researchers document that teachers have difficulty employing instructional actions that support students' expressions of mathematical thinking and responding appropriately to students' misconceptions (Cohen, 2004; Heritage, Kim, Vendlinski, Herman, 2009). In the clinical classroom, this is directly addressed as a problem of clinical judgment, the candidate's inability to make sense of the evidence of learning. Candidates' clinical judgment is developed and enhanced by examining classroom discourse, instructionally embedded tasks and lesson products such as student work for its *formative* use in teaching and learning.

In sum, the clinical process is comprised of carefully mediated and purposefully guided experiences for learning the work of teaching where faculty and accomplished classroom teachers enact particular epistemic practices and signature pedagogies to facilitate learning for candidates in a preservice teacher preparation program. These epistemic practices and signature pedagogies are embedded in a particular theoretical perspective on learning to teach that results in purposefully designed sequences of learning experiences each with a predetermined focus.

These sequences of learning experiences support candidates in synthesizing, integrating, and contextualizing academic knowledge about teaching and learning for practice in authentic contexts.

<div align="center">Conceptualizing an Approach to Clinical Experiences</div>

The approach to learning in and from clinical experiences in an authentic context is influenced by the vision for competent teaching, the theoretical perspective on learning to teach, and the pedagogical framework for a particular teacher preparation program. For example, faculty employing a constructivist or sociocultural perspective might select a laboratory-type approach for learning teaching. Faculty subscribing to a more cognitive perspective might select an apprenticeship-type approach for learning teaching.   Shulman (1998) references Dewey (1904) in differentiating between apprenticeship and laboratory approaches in professional preparation. Shulman pointed out that:

> The apprenticeship looks backward; the laboratory looks forward. The apprentice learns from the demonstration of and exercise of "best practice." The laboratory is a setting for experimenting with new practices and essaying yet-untested proposals. The apprenticeship is tradition; the laboratory is science. The concept of apprenticeship rests on modeling after and imitating the wisdom of experience and practice, seeking to consolidate the hard-won gains of past traditions of practice. Apprenticeships are local, practical, situated. Laboratories produce more general knowledge that is portable, cosmopolitan, and broadly transferable" (512).

Determining the approach employed in a clinical experience is a complex decision given the present state of public education in the United States, especially the conditions in urban schools. The high frequency of low performing schools and the low frequency of high performing schools in urban settings make it difficult to engage candidates in an apprenticeship-type clinical experience in the urban context. However, it is essential for candidates to understand different ways to provide meaningful learning experiences with integrity and trustworthiness for students from different cultural and experiential backgrounds attending urban schools. In an apprenticeship-type approach candidates can thoroughly examine and learn to replicate the practices of an accomplished teacher working in a particular classroom situation. The challenge for the candidates is learning to transfer these practices to a different classroom situation. In a laboratory-type clinical experience candidates examine different approaches and experiment with different learning sequences based on their understanding of the students, learning, pedagogy, and subject matter. The laboratory-type approach provides opportunities for candidates to deepen their understanding of the relationship among learner characteristics, pedagogical practices, and learning outcomes.

<u>Situating Clinical Experiences in Deliberative and Purposeful Authentic Contexts</u>

The setting in which a clinical experience is situated is a very significant part of the curriculum for learning to teach. Each setting represents a social milieu characterized by specific norms, perspectives, practices, values, and relationships. Over time, the participants in these different settings have developed a shared ideology—a way of engaging in the social discourse in the community, and the habits of mind and behaviors that are characteristic of membership. Participating in several different clinical settings provides candidates opportunities for observing

differences in discourse, ideologies, and practices. Candidates can benefit from guidance in focusing attention on the relationship between student behaviors, learning outcomes, and the discourse and practices in different teacher communities. It is well documented that the ideology and practices in teacher communities in urban schools can be a primary factor in students' academic performance in high performing schools (Hollins, 2012; Wilson, Corbett, & Williams, 2000) and in low performing schools (Abbate-Vaughn, 2004; Sipe, 2004). These different clinical settings provide opportunities for candidates to gain awareness of these differences in ideologies and practices in teacher communities, and to learn appropriate collaborative practices that advance their own knowledge and skills as well as that of their colleagues, and that improve student learning outcomes. In these different clinical settings, candidates and practitioners benefit from engaging in discourse that makes individual and collective thinking visible in examining the integrity and trustworthiness of teaching practices.

Authentic contexts for clinical experiences need to be carefully and purposefully selected, located in rich environments for learning to teach, and engage candidates in a deliberately guided and focused process. Clinical experiences can be located in clinical classrooms, partnership schools, and university classrooms. Clinical experiences in authentic settings serve multiple purposes including learning teaching practice and learning the practices and discourse of the professional community such as how to learn from the experience of teaching and to engage in dialogue with colleagues to examine practices, student responses, and relationships among students and between students and teachers. Clinical experiences involve the interpretation, translation, and integration of academic knowledge for practice into application in authentic contexts or in situations that are contrived, electronic, or vicarious. In this process candidates

learn the professional practices of competent teaching as envisioned by the faculty responsible for implementing the program.

Clinical Classrooms

Ideally, rich environments for learning to teach are those with diverse students from different cultural and experiential backgrounds, with a wide range of learning needs and interests, and who are, under the guidance of their teacher, making good progress in overcoming traditional challenges. These individual teachers' classrooms can serve as clinical sites for candidates in understanding how to facilitate learning for diverse and underserved students at particular grade levels or in particular subject matter areas. These teachers can work collaboratively with university faculty to learn about and provide feedback on practices in the preservice teacher program and to identify ways to further improve learning for urban students. Ideally, the teaching practices in this environment will be consistent with the faculty's stated vision for competent teaching practices. In this context, the work for candidates is not learning to replicate the practices of the teacher, but rather learning to use the knowledge and skills from their coursework to make sense of teaching practices in this rich and complex learning environment.

Demonstration Schools

The purpose for demonstration schools is for faculty in schools of education to provide models of good practice in leadership, teaching, and other services for students from diverse cultural and experiential backgrounds, and with different academic and developmental needs. In these schools, every classroom is a clinical setting where candidates for teaching and other

school related preparation engage in focused inquiry and directed observation. Additionally, faculty conduct research studies focused on the documentation and investigation of different approaches to improving teaching and other services to students. Schools of education have full responsibility, or equal or greater responsibility for the leadership, management, and/or decision-making as any other agency participating in the operation of the demonstration school.

<u>Partnership Schools</u>

In the inner city, frequently there are more low-performing schools serving low-income and minority students than there are high-performing schools. The demanding work these schools require makes it difficult for teachers and administrators to take time to work with university faculty and candidates in supporting the learning to teach process. This is a very complex and challenging situation because these are the schools that have the highest teacher turnover rates and the most positions available for first year beginning teachers. Beginning teachers placed in low-performing urban schools often complain about not feeling prepared. This situation needs to be addressed by teacher educators and public school practitioners. Part of the challenge is in determining how to initiate and sustain a relationship between university faculty and public school practitioners in low-performing urban schools that is mutually respectful, supportive, and has reciprocal benefits.

In many instances the tendency is for university faculty to want to provide professional development for practitioners in low-performing schools; however, this may not be the best or most productive approach. Providing professional development assumes that faculty know what practitioners need to understand and be able to do to improve their practices, the conditions in urban schools, and learning outcomes for urban students when this might not be true. Also,

faculty's willingness to provide professional development for practitioners in low-performing urban schools might indicate a trust that practitioners have an authentic insider's perspective on the issues and problems in the schools they serve when this may not be the case.

Faculty can create a reciprocal learning community where faculty participate in dialogue with practitioners not for the purpose of making suggestions or sharing their expertise, but for listening and asking critical questions that help to better inform teaching practice in urban school settings and to support better preparation of candidates for teaching underserved students. Such practices are observable at the Bank Street School for Children where teachers regularly engage in collaboration to improve the curriculum and teaching practices at the school, and to improve their ability to facilitate children's growth and development. Faculty at the Bank Street College regularly engage in dialogue to improve their practice in facilitating candidates' learning to teach and participate in dialogue with teachers at the children's school to gain a deeper understanding of their perspective and teaching practices.

University partnerships with low-performing urban schools employing a mutual and reciprocal collaborative inquiry stance such as that described here can provide many opportunities for collaborative documentation and research leading to new insights about what candidates and teacher need to know and how they need to know it to improve teaching and learning for urban students. Over time it is expected that such collaborative inquiry can result in models of productive teaching practices that will transform urban schools from low performing to high performing.

University Classroom-based Experiences

Where clinical experiences occur within a university classroom embedded within focused inquiry, it is important for the instructor to locate the experience within a particular context such as Shulman (1990) illustrated with teaching learning theory through the text materials and experiences of candidates enrolled in an internship. These course embedded experiences were not physically located in a classroom with children, but used the materials from that context and engaged candidates in reflection on experiences within that context. This type of clinical learning experience requires that candidates give attention to what their students already know and can do, what challenges they are likely to experience in learning new concepts and skills, and how to think about supporting students' learning. This *guided and focused process* of learning through reflection and application in a particular context is an essential aspect of clinical learning experiences. Other approaches to clinical experiences embedded in coursework in university classrooms such as the analysis of video-taped classroom events needed to follow a similar guided and focused process.

Engaging in Research that Advances Practices in Professional Preparation

Presently, research conducted by individual faculty members in schools of education serve a wide range of purposes and addresses a wide range of issues and problems. Many of these research studies build upon and extend existing bodies of research and are based on the interest and expertise of individual faculty researchers acting alone or with a small group of colleagues with similar interest and expertise. Some studies introduce and test new conceptualizations and new innovations. Most studies contribute to the field and extend knowledge of practice or the context for practice in some way. However, there are persistent and

systemic problems of practice in the field that are studied and theorized less frequently. Many of these persistent problems and issues are complex and multifaceted requiring the work of a cross-disciplinary team of researchers examining different interrelated aspects of the problem from different perspectives. This suggests that it would be beneficial to the field to encourage schools of education to develop lines of research on which to focus faculty expertise and resources.

Encouraging schools of education to develop lines of research located in authentic contexts, that address persistent and systemic problems, and on which to build a reputation requires a system for reward and recognition that can be incorporated into the accreditation process. One approach to developing such a system is to establish concrete standards for accreditation in particular categories. In this conceptualization, there are three categories with the first representing the gold standard for the preparation of candidates for professional practice (see table 1). In each category, the unit meets all of the standards for initial and advanced preparation of candidates for serving the academic, developmental, and quality of life needs for children, youth, and adults. Additionally, in Category I faculty engage in a well-articulated line of research that results in publications addressing long-term and persistent problems of practice in the preparation of candidates and/or practice in the field; and maintain a demonstration school or laboratory where exemplary practices can be observed and studied, and where faculty engage in ongoing investigations of new conceptualizations, interventions, and innovations. In Category II faculty are regularly engaged with practitioners in collaborative and publishable research on long-term and persistent problems of practice that benefit clients and candidates, especially those in the urban core; and faculty collaborate with practitioners in advancing practices in partner schools and for candidates assigned to partner schools for clinical experiences. In Category III

faculty have documented evidence of collaborative dialogue with practitioners regarding the improvement of practice in candidate preparation programs and for teaching and learning at partner schools, especially those for underserved students; however, faculty are not regularly engaged in publishable collaborative research or conceptual work.

The use of categorization in the accreditation process serves three important purposes. First, the use of categories establishes a clearly delineated and concrete basic standard that all units are required to meet for basic accreditation the third category. Second, the use of categorization changes the relationship among schools of education such that those previously viewed as exemplars (outliers) become the gold standard for candidate preparation. Third, the use of clearly delineated categories supports schools of education in developing an identity, purpose, and vision for candidate preparation and faculty engagement.

<u>Summary</u>

In this discussion clinical experiences are represented as the cornerstone for learning to teach. Clinical experiences provide a context for candidates to construct an understanding of how schools and classrooms work, and for understanding the work of teaching. Well-planned clinical experiences are based on a vision for competent teaching, a theoretical perspective on learning teaching, and a clinical process that integrates coursework and practice in authentic contexts. The vision for competent teaching is the basis for developing the goals and purpose for curriculum content, learning experiences, and the benchmarks and assessments for candidate progress in learning teaching. The theoretical perspective is a tool for understanding the process of learning to teach that provides guidance in framing the curriculum, designing learning

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experiences, determining signature pedagogies, and selecting an approach to be used in clinical experiences. Signature pedagogies are grounded in a particular theoretical perspective on learning to teach and are purposefully designed or selected to enhance and deepen learning by developing particular habits of mind that are reinforced within and across courses. Epistemic practices are the core of the clinical process and provide a pedagogical framework that serves as an organizational structure that supports coherence, continuity, and consistency within and across clinical experiences, and links clinical experiences to coursework.   The settings for clinical experiences are an essential aspect of the curriculum and should be deliberately and purposefully selected authentic contexts.

Finally, there are many areas of clinical experience and clinical practice that need further study. Faculty working in teams on lines of research addressing long-term and persistent problems holds the greatest promise for improving candidates' professional preparation. This approach is most likely to occur when supported through the accreditation process.

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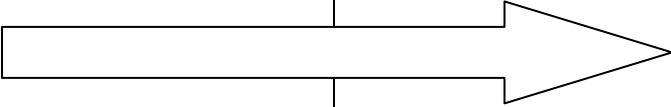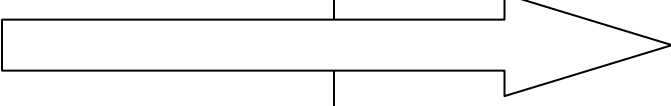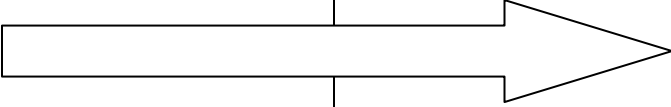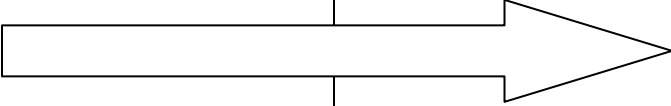
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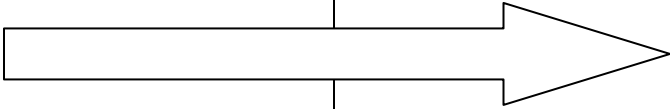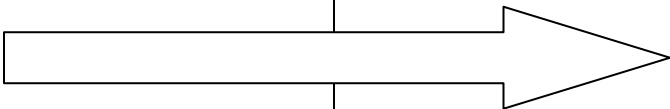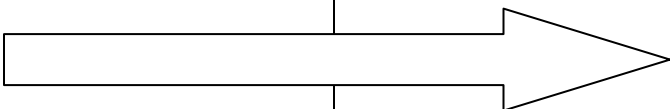
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Table 1. Standards for Preservice Teacher Preparation Programs

Category I	Category II	Category III
A clearly stated *vision* for competent teaching practice and teacher preparation that is evident in practices that support candidates in accomplishing this vision.		
Well articulated *conceptual* and *theoretical* frameworks that support accomplishing the vision; that are evident in the design of courses and *clinical experiences* for candidates; and that bring coherence, continuity, and consistency to the program.		
Epistemic and routine practices and *signature pedagogies* are embedded within the conceptual and theoretical frameworks, and are evident in the design of courses and clinical experiences.		
Initial clinical experiences are embedded within courses and focused on major concepts and skills that are linked to observation of practices in classrooms, and		

enacted during guided teaching practice.		
Clearly established benchmarks for _learning teaching practice_ with documented evidence of progress towards accomplishing the vision for competent teaching practice in settings with diverse and underserved students.	⟶	
A cumulative and summative assessment of teaching competence that provides evidence of the candidate's ability to facilitate learning for diverse and underserved students.	⟶	
The vision for competent teaching practice and teacher preparation; the conceptual and theoretical frameworks; epistemic and routine practices; and signature pedagogies are well understood and embedded in the practices of _participating practitioners_ at partner schools or in _clinical classrooms_ that support candidates' learning to teach.	⟶	
Faculty are regularly engaged with practitioners in collaborative publishable research	Faculty are regularly engaged with practitioners in collaborative publishable research	Faculty have documented evidence of collaborative dialogue with practitioners regarding the

and/or conceptual work that contribute to improving teaching and learning in the teacher preparation program and for students in partner schools, especially underserved students.	and/or conceptual work that contribute to improving teaching and learning in the teacher preparation program and for students in partner schools, especially underserved students.	improvement of practice in the teacher preparation program and teaching and learning for students at the partner school, especially underserved students. Faculty is not regularly engaged with practitioners in publishable collaborative research and/or conceptual work.
A well designed school for children and/or youth administered by the unit that serves as a model for competent teaching practice and provides evidence of high academic performance for traditionally underserved students.		