

***From Conceptualization to Reflection: A Transnational Model for Preparing and Ensuring Robust Clinical Experiences in Teacher Preparation Programs***

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**Abstract**

The Association of Teacher Educators (ATE) suggests that “standards of practice for teacher educators should represent agreements about what teacher educators should think about, know, and be able to do (ATE, 2003). “Building knowledge about teacher preparation, as in any field of scholarly inquiry, requires ambitious and creative approaches to empirically examining causal relationships. It is very important to connect what occurs in preparation programs to the characteristics of their graduates, to the ways those teacher-graduates interact with their students, and to learning outcomes for those students” (National Research Council, 2010). The most important demonstration of this critical integration of academic content knowledge, pedagogy, subjects, the use of research-based, scientifically proven strategies and assessment practices, and the understanding of the culturally and linguistically diverse learning needs of students at various developmental levels is during the supervised clinical practice experience. Therefore, guiding teacher candidates in thinking about, planning, implementing and reflecting on their teaching practices require a systematic approach. This transnational model provides such an approach for ensuring robust clinical experiences for pre-service teachers as they navigate the journey from student to professional teacher. Although teacher preparation programs vary in design and developmental levels, this seven-step process for clinical practice addresses these differences and can be easily adapted for use with varying student populations across the globe.

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**Introduction**

Teacher candidates must acquire and demonstrate that they have the professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions to interact successfully with diverse learning communities. Not only are colleges and universities expected to produce teachers to fit the mold of “highly qualified,” but they are also required to demonstrate that their education degree programs include extensive practical experiences for teacher candidates (NCATE, 2008, CAEP, 2013).

For early childhood teacher preparation, candidates must demonstrate knowledge and understanding of child development from birth through age 8 and the central value of play in the lives of children. They should be skilled in “academic disciplines or subject matter areas, including understanding of content/core concepts/ tools of inquiry, and applications in curriculum development” (NAEYC, 2001). However, it is through multiple early field and clinical experiences that “candidates are best able to translate knowledge into deep understanding and professional skills” (NAEYC, 2008).

Clinical practice experiences, the supervised internship in teacher preparation programs must be “carefully administered, sequenced, and supervised in all areas of the elementary curriculum” and should provide candidates with experiences in a variety of diverse settings. Candidates should also have a broad knowledge base, be adept at creatively using appropriate materials and resources, including technology, and should be able to collaborate effectively with other professionals in the field in order to enhance student learning (ACEI, 2002, 2007).

For candidates pursuing special education as a career path, the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) requires that “all special educators are well-prepared, career-oriented professionals with the conditions that allow them to provide individuals with exceptional needs the most effective interventions and that encourage entering special educators to become career-oriented special education professionals” (CEC, 2002, Gersten, Keating, Yovanoff, & Harniss, 2001; Darling-Hammond and Baratz-Snowden, 2005). Demonstration of preparedness is observed through the clinical practice experience when aspiring special educators translate their theoretical knowledge base in practical situations.

This transnational clinical practice model for teacher candidates is one that is rigorous in many ways. First, it ensures that candidates acquire in-depth knowledge of all the critical academic content areas: English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, the Arts, Health Education and Physical Education to teach all students. Teachers need to “understand subject matter deeply and flexibly so they can help students create useful cognitive maps, relate one idea to another, and address misconceptions. Teachers need to see how ideas connect across fields and to everyday life. This kind of understanding provides a foundation for pedagogical content knowledge that enables teachers to make ideas accessible to others” (Shulman, 1987).

Second, it ensures that teacher candidates acquire knowledge and skills in special education to meet the needs of diverse and exceptional learners. “Teaching in ways that connect with students also requires an understanding of differences that may arise from culture, family experiences, developed intelligences, and approaches to learning” (Grimmet & MacKinnon, 1992). To help all students learn, teacher

candidates need to think about what it means to learn different kinds of material for different purposes and how to decide which kinds of learning are most appropriate in different contexts. Teachers must be able to identify the strengths and weaknesses of different learners and must have the knowledge to work with students who have specific learning needs (Shulman, 1992).

A third area of rigor involves a series of early field experiences that precede the clinical practice experience to ensure that candidates know how to collaborate with school partners, design and implement multiple learning and assessment tools, including the use of technology, and engage in action research and supervised practice with individual and small groups of learners in diverse settings. “Teacher candidates get a more coherent learning experience when they are organized in teams with experienced teachers and college faculty. Experienced teachers deepen their knowledge by serving as mentors and teacher leaders. The early field experiences in partner schools help to create the synergy between theory and practice, while creating the move from the pre-professional to the professional role for candidates as they construct knowledge that is more useful for both practice and ongoing theory building” (Darling-Hammond, 1994).

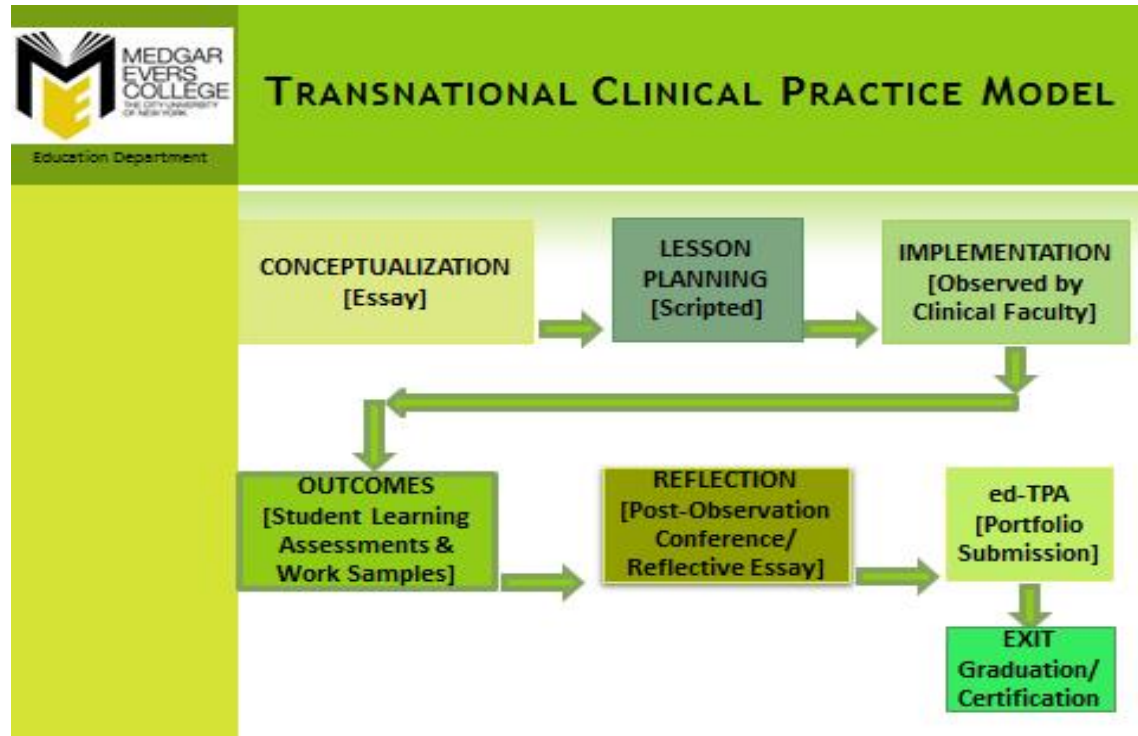
Fourth, the model includes collaborative and interdisciplinary seminars and workshops to enhance candidates’ content, pedagogical and professional knowledge, skills and dispositions. Acquiring this sophisticated knowledge and developing a practice that is different from what candidates themselves experienced as students requires learning opportunities for teacher candidates that are more powerful than simply reading and talking about new pedagogical ideas (Ball & Cohen, 1996). Teachers learn best by studying, by doing and reflecting, by collaborating with other teachers, by looking closely at students and their work, and by sharing what they see. The interdisciplinary seminars provide this professional development experience for pre-service teacher candidates.

The pressure for enhanced teacher preparation is directed primarily by the results of performances on national assessments. However, teacher education and professional performance are much more complex than test scores. For students with disabilities, for example, the chances of achieving proficiency in academic content areas are even more daunting. Confounding the problem is the fact that most of the schools under review for failure to meet content standards are those schools identified as “high-need” – comprised of minority overrepresented groups of students – students with language differences and other socioeconomic disadvantages. The correlation between cultural competency and content knowledge and skills is evident. Medgar Evers College has addressed these issues in its teacher preparation programs and continually evaluates candidates’ ability to develop and teach developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically responsive lessons to students in urban schools.

The pinnacle of teacher preparation is the Clinical Practice experience, which emphasizes the integration of theoretical constructs, acquired knowledge, skills and dispositions into carefully structured supervised experiences that develop the proficiencies required for “highly qualified” teachers. This process provides opportunities for pre-service teacher candidates to engage in preparing and delivering content-rich and standards-based academic instruction for diverse learners in inclusive

and special education settings. To achieve this goal, candidates engage in a process that starts with *conceptualization* and ends with *reflection* to demonstrate what they know, understand, and can teach.

## THE TRANSNATIONAL CLINICAL PRACTICE MODEL



### Precursor to Instructional Planning and Delivery: THE CLASSROOM PORTRAIT

Candidates are required to submit a School and Classroom Portrait to their College Clinical Supervisor during the first week of Clinical Practice. This Portrait provides a snapshot of the setting in which candidates are student teaching and includes details about the school/setting, administration, community, student profiles, resources, and activities. More importantly, the classroom portrait provides information about the characteristics and needs of young children and students so that clinical faculty can accurately judge whether candidates are catering to all the diverse needs of their learners in their conceptualizing and planning of instruction. In addition, a technology inventory informs the clinical faculty and the candidate about the resources available to support their instructional practices or the need to provide additional technology resources, including assistive and augmentative technology to implement lessons. This section closely aligns with the *Context for Learning* segment of ed-TPA.

#### Components of School and Classroom Portrait

- ✚ Demographics of School/Community
- ✚ Demographics of Classroom
- ✚ Special Characteristics of Students, Teachers, Families
- ✚ Technology Inventory

### STEP 1: CONCEPTUALIZING ESSAY [ASSESSMENT PART I: PLANNING]

During **Conceptualization**, candidates are required to articulate their knowledge of content garnered from general education liberal arts and sciences curriculum, education foundations, professional and pedagogical coursework, and discuss ideas for each observed lesson with the cooperating teacher. The Conceptualizing Essay and Lesson Plan are done simultaneously to comprehensively reflect the thought process used for planning instruction for diverse learners. On completing each conceptualizing essay and the lesson plan, the candidate submits these planning documents to their college supervisor who reviews their work, assesses it for readiness to implement and provides feedback to the candidate. The college supervisor uses a prescribed assessment rubric to evaluate the candidate's conceptualizing essay and lesson plan. This evaluation is also formally discussed during the pre-conference meeting between the college supervisor and the candidate to ensure that the candidate is confident about the lesson objectives and teaching points as articulated in the written planning documents, as well as to provide opportunities for clarity of any recommendations made by the college supervisor and cooperating teacher.

### **Components of the Conceptualizing Essay**

- ✚ The academic and non-academic content to be learned by the students
- ✚ The purpose and use of the content for students
- ✚ The Common Core Learning goals addressed in the lesson
- ✚ The Candidate's alignment with specialty professional Standards
- ✚ The Candidate's knowledge base that influences the lesson (courses, literature, theories, research-based strategies, etc.)
- ✚ Any special characteristics about the students that will influence how candidates develop and implement the lesson, e.g. ELL, disability areas, special accommodations, modifications, differentiation, etc.

### **STEP 2: LESSON PLANNING**

Teacher candidates are required to adopt an inclusive stance to planning instruction for their learners. By inclusive, the author posits that a combined focus on general education curriculum content (academic subject areas) as well as individualized curriculum goals (based on the individual learning needs of students) form the basis for instructional planning. The aim of each lesson is to ensure that subject area knowledge is adapted to meet the individual needs of all learners. A lesson plan format helps to guide candidates in addressing all the various components to consider when planning instruction for diverse learners with diverse abilities. This guide also serves as an audit for instructional planning in that it allows candidates to zero in on the key considerations for each lesson. The components of the conceptualizing essay and lesson plan are closely aligned with specialty professional association Standards and assessments to ensure robust practice.

### **Feedback and Revisions**

Prior to teaching an observed lesson, candidates meet with both their cooperating teachers and college supervisors to discuss their ideas for each lesson based on their classroom portraits, learning goals and curricula content to be covered by students in their respective settings. Using a **Planning Rubric**, candidates receive detailed and descriptive feedback from first the Cooperating teacher and then the College Clinical Supervisor on their lesson plans and conceptualizing essays. Candidates use this feedback to make adjustments or revisions before teaching each lesson.

### **STEP 3: IMPLEMENTATION OF LESSON [ASSESSMENT PART II]**

**PART II** of the clinical practice assessment includes **three subsections** that focus on: (a) **demonstration of culturally and linguistically responsive teaching skills**, (b) **application of developmentally appropriate academic content**, and (c) **candidate dispositions as they interact with students**. These dimensions are aligned mainly with CEC Skill-Based Standards from the CEC Initial Level *Skill Sets* in the Individualized General Education Curricula (IGC). During observation sessions, teacher candidates are evaluated by partner school cooperating teachers and college clinical supervisors on the dimensions listed below.

#### **(a) *Demonstration of Teaching Skills***

**Teaching Students with Diverse Needs** - Candidates' lessons must reflect their awareness of the diverse characteristics presented by the students they are teaching and show that they are implementing adequate supports for them [CEC 2: ICC2K1, ICCEK2].

**Using Adaptations for Diverse Learning Differences** - Candidates' instructional delivery must show how they use individualization, differentiation, accommodations and modifications to meet the individual learning styles and needs of their students [CEC 3: ICC3K5].

**Using Effective Strategies to Promote Active Engagement in Learning**, including Technology-Enhanced Instruction – Candidates' lessons must highlight the use of evidence-based effective strategies, including the use of technology to teach requisite academic and nonacademic content. They must demonstrate their abilities to select, adapt and use these strategies efficiently to promote active student learning [CEC 4: ICC4S3, IGC4S1, IGC4S7, IGC4S10].

**Practices and Behaviors of Developing Career Special Education Teachers** – Candidates' demonstration of teaching students with ELN must reflect their abilities to manage their classrooms effectively using positive behavioral intervention and supports, restating behavior expectations with students, and providing clear instructions for smooth transitions from activity to activity. Candidates must demonstrate positive teacher attitudes towards their students, other teachers and paraprofessionals in the classroom [CEC 5: ICC5S1, ICC5S5, ICC5S15].

**Effective Communication** – Candidates must model effective language with their students and use communication strategies and resources that promote student understanding of subject matter as well as enhance student communication skills,

including the use of alternative and augmentative communication systems, when and where necessary [CEC 6: ICC6S1, ICC6S2, ICC6S4].

**Using Effective Instructional Plans** – Candidates must show connections to the scope and sequence and identify the learning objectives they are addressing in their lessons based on NY Content Area Curriculum. Their lessons must reflect adaptations of instruction and environment, and incorporation of instructional and assistive technology as needed to meet the individual needs of their students [CEC 7: ICC7S1, ICC7S9, ICC7S11, ICC7S12, ICC7S13, ICC7S15, IGC7S1, IGC7S2].

**Using Appropriate Assessments for Instruction** - Candidates must demonstrate their use of Curriculum-Based Assessments, as well as informal assessments throughout their lessons to monitor students' understanding and mastery of subjects. They must show how they use assessment results, such as anecdotal notes to inform and guide their instruction, and provide feedback to students [CEC 8: ICC8S2, ICC8S4, ICC8S8; IGC8S3].

**b) *Content Area Knowledge and Skills***

**Application of Developmentally Appropriate Academic Content**

Teacher candidates must demonstrate proficiencies in teaching academic content to students with diverse learning needs. As such, they must show how they integrate and adapt instruction, assessments and environments, including making appropriate modifications and accommodations to meet the individual needs of their students. These considerations are aligned mainly with specific elements from the Individualized Common Core and General Curriculum of CEC Standards 4 – Instructional Strategies, 7- Instructional Planning, and 8-Assessment. Candidates must demonstrate and are evaluated on their abilities to teach lessons in the following four academic content areas, including the use of instructional and assistive technology:

**(i) English Language Arts** – Candidates must demonstrate the use of reading methods that are appropriate for students with disabilities (IGC4S4) and guide students in identifying and organizing critical information (IGC4K7). They must teach students to use important concepts, vocabulary and content across the general curriculum (IGC4S13) and use strategies and techniques to strengthen and compensate for any deficits in perception, comprehension, memory and retrieval (IGC4S11). When teaching ELA content, candidates must demonstrate the use of systematic instruction to teach accuracy, fluency, and reading comprehension as well as writing (IGC4S14, IGC4S16). CSE candidates must evaluate their teaching of ELA and show how they are monitoring the progress of their students during and after teaching each lesson (ICC8S8).

**(ii) Mathematics** – The main objective of teaching mathematics to students is to increase their accuracy and proficiency in math calculations and applications (IGC4K6), and as such, candidates must demonstrate the use of appropriate methods to teach mathematics to students with ELN (IGC4S5). Candidates must use appropriate adaptations and technology (IGC4S7), use responses and errors to guide instructional decisions and provide feedback to students (IGC4S12), and use task analysis approaches (ICC7S5) when teaching mathematics content to students with ELN. Candidate must demonstrate ways that they are evaluating and modifying instructional practices in response to ongoing assessment data (ICC7S15), and show

their modified and differentiated individualized assessment strategies that they use to evaluate instruction and monitor progress of their students with exceptional learning needs (ICC8S4, ICC8S8).

**(iii) Science** – In teaching science content, candidates must demonstrate their abilities to select, adapt, and use instructional strategies and materials according to the characteristics of their students (ICC4S3). They must use appropriate adaptations and technology (IGC4S7), and identify and teach essential science concepts, vocabulary, and content across the general curriculum (IGC4S13). Candidates must demonstrate the use of task analysis (ICC7S5), and prepare and organize their materials to implement science lesson plans (ICC7S11). Candidates must develop, modify and use individualized assessment strategies to accommodate the unique abilities and needs of individuals with exceptional learning needs (ICC8S3), and evaluate instruction and monitor progress of their students during their lessons (ICC8S8).

**(iv) Social Studies** – Candidates must demonstrate their abilities to select, adapt, and use instructional strategies and materials to teach social studies content based on the characteristics of their students (ICC4S3). They must show that they are able to develop and select instructional content, resources, and strategies that respond to cultural, linguistic, and gender differences (ICC7S8), use appropriate adaptations and technology (IGC4S7), and identify and teach essential social studies concepts, vocabulary, and content across the general curriculum, including teaching students about diversity (IGC4S13). Candidates must prepare and organize their materials to implement social studies lesson plans (ICC7S11) so that all students are purposefully engaged in the lessons. Candidates must evaluate instruction and monitor progress of their students during their lessons (ICC8S8).

**(c) Candidate-Student Interactions: Dispositions Assessment**

Candidates are also assessed on 13 dispositions to evaluate their competencies in working with diverse students. The disposition competencies are aligned with CEC Standards 4 and 5, but specifically to elements in the Core Curriculum and the Individualized General Curriculum. Elements in Standard 4 that are addressed assess candidates' modeling of self-assessment, problem-solving and critical thinking strategies as they teach students to use these techniques (ICC4S2) and their ability to modify the pace of instruction and provide organizational cues for students (IGC4S6). Candidates are required to demonstrate the use of student responses and errors to guide their instruction and provide timely feedback to students (IGC4S12). In reinforcing effective candidate-student interactions during instruction, elements of Standard 5 are assessed. Candidates must ensure safe, equitable, positive and supportive learning environments by giving students equal turns (ICC5S1), encourage active participation in individual and group activities by providing individual help, affirming students' correct responses, giving praise and citing the reasons for praise, and teaching students how to give and receive meaningful feedback from others (ICC5S4; IGC5S4). Candidates must model respect and use skills to resolve conflicts (IGC5S5), and create an environment that encourages self-advocacy, positive intracultural and intercultural experiences for students by listening to them and accepting their feelings (ICC5S9, ICC5S13). College clinical supervisors and cooperating teachers provide adequate feedback on dispositions to candidates so that they can continually grow into their professional roles as teachers.



## **OBSERVERS' FEEDBACK – POST OBSERVATION CONFERENCE**

A post-observation conference with the candidate, cooperating teacher and the college clinical supervisor is held immediately after each observed lesson to provide timely feedback to the candidate regarding professional demonstration of instruction. Following this conference, candidate must **submit reflections on student outcomes** based on assessments used during lesson implementation, including **samples of student work** and **data tables**. Candidates must also **write a reflective essay** that summarizes the practical experience and their self-evaluation of their instructional delivery.

### **STEP 4: OUTCOMES [PART III: STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES].**

Candidates are required to use assessment data and feedback from observers to reflect on their practices as teachers of students with diverse learning needs. **PART III** of the Clinical Practice Assessment focuses on Outcomes of each observed lesson and reflection on student learning. Candidates must show how the students' performance data tables from the evaluation of each lesson taught inform them about what children know, learned and need to practice more, about which children master the content taught, which ones are getting it but need more practice, and which students may need a re-teaching of the concept. Candidates' extension activities are included so that students gain more opportunities in and beyond the classroom environment to generalize and maintain knowledge of concepts learned. Teacher candidates in conjunction with their cooperating teachers continue to review and incorporate prior knowledge in subsequent lessons to monitor students' progress and to ensure that all students master the content.

By engaging in the above activities, **CEC Standards 4, 8, 9 and 10** are further addressed in candidates' assessment and reflections on student work, and on their self-reflections for all lessons taught. Having collaborated with their cooperating teachers and, sometimes, grade level curriculum teams (CEC 10: ICC10S9, IGC10K4), candidates must discuss how their assessments confirm children's learning, how children varied in their responses to the assessments and why, and provide possible revisions to the assessments given the results and their own thoughtful critiques (CEC 8: ICC8S5, ICC8S7).

In their overall self-reflections, candidates are required to reflect critically on lessons taught to consider how to provide more productive learning opportunities for children and how to shape their own teaching to do so (CEC 9: ICC9S8, ICC9S9, ICC9S11). They must consider in these reflections how the children in their classrooms differ and how that knowledge informs them about using families, colleagues and the larger school community, as well as the larger surrounding community to support children's learning (CEC 4: ICC4S4).

## **STEP 5a: REFLECTIVE ESSAY [PART IV: REFLECTION]**

Teacher candidates are required to reflect on the outcomes of each lesson. In their reflective essay, candidates discuss the outcomes of the lesson in relation to how they conceptualized and implemented it. They reflect on the feedback from their cooperating teacher and clinical supervisor during the post-observation conference as well as their own feelings about what worked and what they could have done differently. Candidates analyze the student performance data to further understand the impact of their instruction on student learning. They discuss how they will use this information to enhance their own practice and improve student learning in future lessons (CEC 9).

In addition to reflecting on their own teaching and student outcomes, candidates also reflect on other dimensions that influence their clinical experiences, including classroom management practices, their dispositions and their collaboration with classroom personnel. As special educators, teacher candidates are required to demonstrate their ability to work collaboratively with other professionals and support personnel to ensure that all children have appropriate and adequate support and guidance during instruction (CEC 10). They must also demonstrate the appropriate dispositions to promote social learning and engagement among students and show that they know and can use research-based behavior management strategies to maintain a positive learning environment (CEC 5).

## **STEP 6: TEACHING VIDEO [ed-TPA Submission]**

One of the most authentic assessments of instructional delivery and its impact on student learning is through the review of videotaped lessons. From 2007, this model emphasized this element of teacher preparation as part of the reflective process. CEC Standards 3, 8, 9 and 10 are further addressed in candidates' assessment and reflections on student work, and on their self-reflections for all four lessons taught. Having collaborated with their cooperating teachers and, sometimes, grade level curriculum teams, candidates must explain how their assessments confirm children's learning, how children varied in their responses to the assessments and why, and provide possible revisions to the assessments given the results and their own thoughtful critiques.

In their overall self-reflections, candidates are required to reflect critically on lessons taught to consider how to provide more productive learning opportunities for children and how to shape their own teaching to do so. They must consider in these reflections how the children in their classrooms differ and how that knowledge informs them about using families, colleagues and the larger school community, as well as the larger surrounding community, to support children's learning.

Candidates are required to videotape two lessons they conduct over the one-year experience of Clinical Practice. In the past, the videos were watched only by candidates and their college supervisors. During January, 2008 semester in which candidates attended winter intercession workshops provided through a US Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) grant, the videos were used as a way to reflect on the first semester of clinical practice before candidates proceeded to their second semester-long experience. There was great

success with this, and this practice was incorporated into the model so that this video critique and deconstruction became a regular part of all candidates' learning.

Videos are accompanied by a copy of the candidates' lesson plans, so that candidates can talk about and reflect on the relationship between planning and implementation. However, the entire video is viewed so that candidates can talk about motivation in learning, classroom climate, lesson and demonstration effectiveness, and dispositions. Candidates also learn how to talk critically about teaching and learning. This kind of critique is used constructively to improve teaching, not to destroy the confidence of the candidate. All of this has had a positive effect on how well candidates are learning to teach: viewing videos together brings out the areas for explicit assessment, so that everyone is privy to this knowledge and candidates are exposed to how their peers teach. Such knowledge assists their own teaching by providing positive models and ways to reimagine what candidates already can do.

### **STEP 7: PROFESSIONAL PORTFOLIO PRESENTATION AND EXIT CONFERENCE**

The Exit process is the informal discussion between each candidate and clinical faculty about the overall clinical experience and includes the candidate's evaluation of placement sites and their cooperating teachers. It is where candidates provide evidence of their knowledge, skills, and dispositions related to professional practice of teaching and learning. They review their lesson packets, student outcomes data, the feedback from cooperating teachers and clinical faculty, their prior reflections on the observed lessons and write a new reflective essay of their growth in the professional field. This self-evaluation also includes their assessment of how they met professional standards based on their respective specialty organizations, always with the constructive eye on lessons learned and areas for improvement.

### **CONCLUSION**

The *Conceptualization to Reflection* Transnational Clinical Practice model for teaching diverse students has proven to be a useful tool in the evaluation of teacher candidates' knowledge, skills and dispositions in the following ways:

1. It shows candidates' ability to think deeply about appropriate and effective instruction for diverse learners;
2. It shows candidates' own knowledge of subject matter as they prepare lessons in all critical academic content areas;
3. It shows candidates' ability to connect theory to practice as they utilize some of the scientifically proven approaches and research-based strategies for teaching all students, including students with various disabilities;
4. It reflects candidates' attitudes towards teaching students in various settings and under practical, real-life circumstances; and
5. It reflects candidates' ability to work collaboratively with others in the entire school community to meet the needs of ALL students.

With the recent adoption of ed-TPA (2013) as a New York State requirement for initial teacher certification, this model was well ahead of the curve in adopting frameworks for assessing effective teaching. Candidates will already have had the

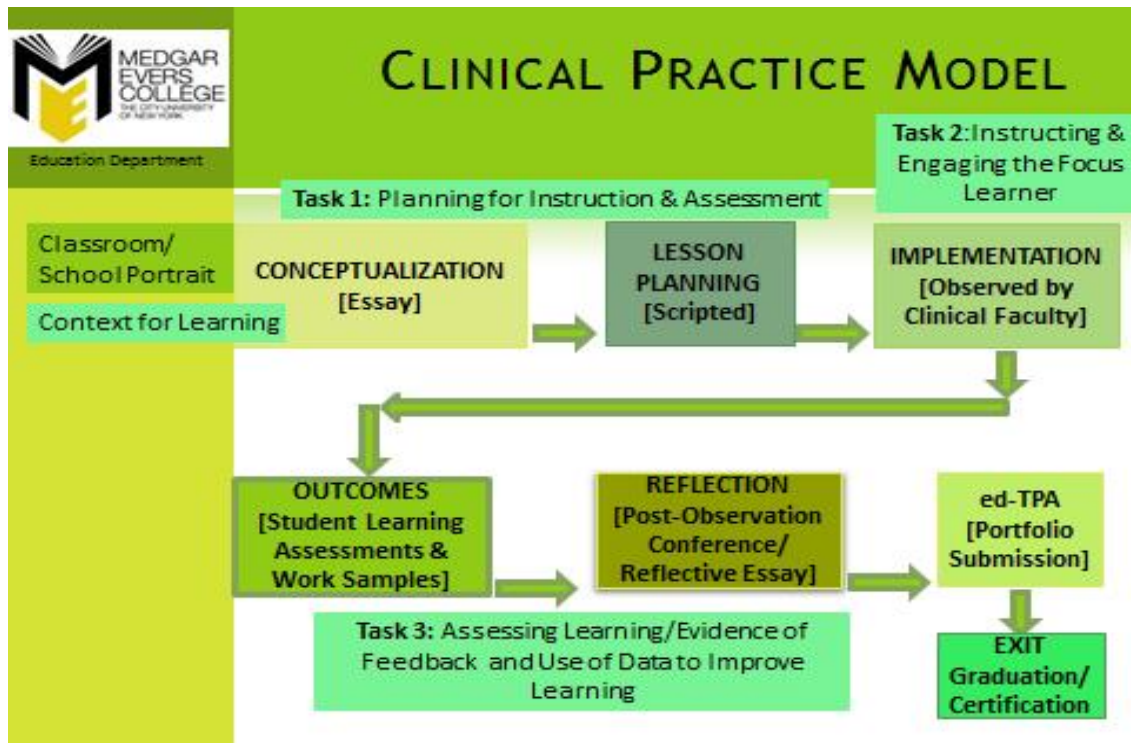
experience of conceptualizing and contextualizing the art of teaching, receiving and giving constructive critique and engaging in reflection on and about their formal evaluations of their teaching. These practices have led to increased recruitment, hiring and retention of dual-certified teachers graduating from Medgar Evers College into “high need” public and charter schools serving diverse students, including English Language learners and students with disabilities.

According to Ronfeldt (2012), “Teachers who learned to teach in field placement schools with higher proportions of black, poor, and low achieving students were no more or less effective as permanent teachers, nor likely to remain teaching in NYC schools.” However, the College’s emphasis on serving these underserved groups contributes to the consistent pattern of recruitment and retention of its teachers in Central Brooklyn and environs. From 2008 to 2013, 90-95% of graduates gained employment in urban schools and retained their positions, while 80-85% continued graduate studies towards the professional licensure and tenure track. MEC’s teacher candidates reflect the characteristics of the students they serve and bring to their practice the first-hand knowledge of the students they serve and provide the cultural responsiveness to teaching them.

The *Conceptualization to Reflection* Clinical Practice model was piloted in 2004 and was tested and revised over the years as feedback from cooperating teachers, partner schools, candidates, clinical faculty and professional accreditation organizations helped to refocus and refine the assessment instruments. The result of this continuous improvement in the clinical practice experiences for teacher candidates is a very intensive and comprehensive process that takes teacher candidates *from conceptualization to reflection* over a one-year period of on-site supervised teaching practice, working with diverse learners in different settings in urban schools.

This model shows a very close alignment with the new ed-TPA framework for teacher certification in some US States, including New York State, as it includes all aspects of the requirements for effective preparation, thereby providing validation for this model as a “best practice” (see *Figure 2*). Moreover, recent editorial reviews of this model (*American Journal of Educational Research, 2015*) agree that it can be easily adapted to satisfy the clinical requirements for teacher education programs, since it takes into account and pays particular attention to first identifying the complex and diverse needs of today’s learners, and uses this information to create positive learning experiences for both students and beginning teachers.

*Figure 2: Alignment of Transnational Clinical Practice Model with ed-TPA Components*



More importantly, what began as a unique departmental process has morphed into a transnational model since it was tested in many different settings in a State and City with the most diverse student population, including students with a wide range of developmental, learning, social, economic, cultural and linguistic differences. Understanding and knowing how to connect pedagogy and culturally different learning styles positively impacts students both socially and academically (Gay, 2002). Therefore, this Transnational Clinical Practice Model has valuable implications for teacher educators, clinical supervisors and cooperating teachers as they share the responsibility for shaping culturally and linguistically responsive teachers for schools across the globe.

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