

**School of Education  
The City College  
The City University of New York**

**Conceptual Framework**

**April, 2008**

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This version of the School's Conceptual Framework was produced in spring 2008 through minor editorial changes to the spring 2001 document prepared by an ad hoc committee consisting of Professors Joseph Davis, Gretchen Johnson, Sylvia Roberts, Norman Shapiro, and Edwin Farrell (ex officio). It builds on a previous version prepared by Professor Hope Hartman and faculty from the College of Liberal Arts and Science and the individual program philosophies as submitted to the State of New York for re-registration of the College's education programs.

## **I. Mission of the Institution**

### **The City College**

The City College was founded in 1847 to offer a chance for higher education to the children of the working class and immigrants, so that “the children of the whole people” might “take their seats together and know of no distinction save that of industry, good conduct and intellect.” Since that time, the College has remained dedicated to expanding access to higher education with academic rigor. The College has been the primary avenue to economic and social advancement for generations of New Yorkers.

## **II. Mission and Shared Vision of the Unit**

### **The School of Education**

The City College School of Education provides access to the field of education, teaching and non-teaching, for all who show promise of contributing to New York City schools and to the education of the City’s children. In keeping with the historical mission of the College, the School opens its doors to those who, because of national origin, native language, or economic condition might otherwise find a career in education to be effectively out of reach.

The preparation of teachers in the United States is intended to meet the needs of a democratic society. In New York City, this is extended to preparing educators to work with students who are diverse in all respects. To that end, the School seeks to draw upon the varied strengths of candidates while ensuring that they all acquire the academic, pedagogical, professional, and personal skills required of a teacher in the urban setting. The School commits itself to ensuring that its graduates can demonstrate solid grounding

in the liberal arts and sciences, a deep understanding of public purposes of education in a democracy, thorough training in effective teaching skills, and the professional and affective dispositions to work successfully with students, families, colleagues, and supervisors in the field.

Additionally, the School expects that its graduates will carry into the field a social conscience, a concern for the lives of children and for the welfare of the larger society in which those children will in turn become participants and leaders.

### **III. Themes of the Conceptual Framework: Commitments and Dispositions**

#### **A. Developing In-depth Knowledge About the World**

City College candidates preparing to work in schools in teaching or supervisory roles know and demonstrate the content knowledge and skills necessary to help all students learn. The College's educational programs attempt to meet the *Characteristics of Excellence* developed by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education; these programs display academic content, rigor, and coherence that are appropriate to the institution's mission. On the broadest level, these knowledge and skills encompass Jaspers' (1951) "cultural acquisition," Erikson's (1962) "tools of technology" or Bruner's (1996) "tool kit of symbolic systems." In the university, they are the liberal arts and sciences presented in the most up-to-date technology. There is a consensus among educators from the progressivism of Dewey (1916) and Mead (1906) to the traditionalism of Ravitch and Finn (1987) that literature, history, philosophy, mathematics, natural and social sciences, art, and music must be part of a university curriculum.

To that end, City College requires a core curriculum emanating from its College of Liberal Arts and Sciences which includes study in a language other than English. The

School of Education, because its graduates go on to teach, adopts and enhances this curriculum by requiring of its undergraduate candidates more mathematics and science courses than are in the original liberal arts core. Candidates, in addition to their pedagogical courses, must complete an academic major if they wish to teach a specific subject or, if they wish to teach students in childhood or middle childhood, a concentration in one of the liberal arts or sciences or an interdisciplinary program in language and literature, social, or natural sciences.

In addition to these requirements, the required pedagogy courses echo the content of the liberal arts core and concentrations. History and philosophy are revisited in appropriate education courses as are the social sciences. To take one example, mathematical knowledge is utilized in educational foundations courses when ethnic differences in school performance are analyzed statistically. The poetry of Pablo Neruda and Garcia Lorca, the art of Frieda Kahlo, the music of Mikos Theodorakis have been reported on and written about by candidates in Inquiry courses.

Content knowledge is demonstrated as well in specific methods courses: language arts, social studies, mathematics, and science. In these courses, candidates are introduced to the New York State Learning Standards in English Language Arts, Social Studies, and Math, Science, and Technology at the level that is appropriate to the certification they seek. Through their use of content knowledge, candidates must be able to determine the widest and deepest potential knowledge base of each of their students with the accompanying strategies that range from direct instruction to inquiry so that the student can, from textual and electronic sources, obtain, rehearse, recall, apply, and transfer new knowledge to routine and new learning contexts. Knowledge of students and pedagogy, or method, goes hand in hand with content knowledge, or subject matter. Dewey (1916)

tells us that “[m]ethod is a statement of the way the subject matter of an experience develops most effectively and fruitfully.”

The broad knowledge areas of a university curriculum—literature, history, philosophy, mathematics, natural and social sciences, art, and music—have value in themselves, a value that both School of Education and liberal arts faculty communicate, deliberately and in passing, even in pedagogical courses. These faculties work together on the conceptual framework, curriculum, and on faculty search committees. Only if they share and transmit the value of these knowledge areas will candidates develop a disposition to continue experiencing these areas and participate in lifelong learning. If they are not disposed to recognize this value they will not be able to pass it on to their students. The target for both teacher and other professional school personnel candidates with regard to content knowledge includes in-depth knowledge of the subject matter to be taught. According to this standard, candidates demonstrate this knowledge through (1) inquiry, (2) critical analysis, and (3) synthesis of the subject or subjects they plan to teach.

1. Inquiry in the School is the process in which the learner experiences a phenomenon of interest directly. As much as possible, there are no mediators (e.g., texts, teachers, classification systems) that come between the learner and the phenomenon of interest. As learners experience the phenomenon, they develop a sense of ownership over it, they decide what questions they want to ask of it, they construct its meaning. Learners must come to value the meanings that others, including their peers, place on phenomena. When learners have constructed a meaning for a phenomenon and have developed the sense of ownership over it, they then profit by seeing what meaning others have attributed to it. They may seek further explanation and verification of their meanings by

consulting texts, teachers, or other learners. But it is the *experience* of the direct inquiry that drives the learner to consult mediators, not the other way around.

2. Critical analysis is engaged in by teacher candidates in their course work in educational foundations. They analyze philosophy and history of education, theories of development and learning, and current problems in education and society. Critical analysis is an integral part of all the coursework of candidates training to be other professional school personnel. Candidates' analytical abilities continue to be honed throughout their undergraduate and graduate programs.

3. Synthesis of content knowledge and skills is constantly engaged in because it is essential to the educational endeavors of preparing lessons, creating or supervising curriculum. These cannot be successfully carried out without a high degree and application of content knowledge. In addition, content knowledge is always re-synthesized as lifelong learning continues. Discussions of educational issues, historical contexts, and cultural factors must precede the action plans of teachers and other school personnel. The choice of which science, which social science, which literature to teach involves synthesis of the content knowledge available to candidates.

Some candidates are able to meet target levels of performance by graduation from the programs of the School. Others, at that point in their development as educators, meet acceptable levels. But all graduates have the basic tools and the necessary dispositions to continue their development as educational professionals as well as learners. If our graduates are ultimately able to meet target levels of performance, they will have to continue to develop their content, as well as their professional knowledge.

Amongst the proficiencies for candidates based on this theme are:

1.1. \_\_\_\_ Utilize content knowledge to organize, plan and implement lessons.

- 1.2. \_\_\_\_ Utilize knowledge of the developmental characteristics of the age group to organize, plan and implement lessons.
- 1.3. \_\_\_\_ Plan lessons aligned to the NYS learning standards
- 1.4. \_\_\_\_ Utilize a variety of teaching methods that encourage students' development of critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills.
- 1.5. \_\_\_\_ Challenge students to develop skills that would advance their level of understanding. (Belief that all students can learn)
- 1.6. \_\_\_\_ Demonstrate a desire to deepen own knowledge of subject content, curriculum and how children learn.

## **B. Becoming Skillful, Reflective Practitioners**

Research indicates that the competence of teachers is a primary influence on student learning (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Comer, 1999). A critical dimension of teacher competence is pedagogical knowledge and skills. The School defines competence as having the knowledge and skills needed to be an effective educator in urban schools that serve a diverse population of children and families and the disposition to use the knowledge and skills to promote the learning of all children.

In order to articulate clearly the School's purposes and goals, pedagogical competence is here divided into six parts. These are: (1) a deep knowledge of human learning and development; (2) the ability to support learners who can actively inquire and construct understandings about the world; (3) the ability to recognize and respond to all learners; (4) skills in using technology appropriately; (5) a broad range of instructional and assessment strategies that are effective with all learners; (6) competence in applying theory and knowledge to practice in real-world situations

### **1. Knowledge of Human Learning and Development**

Prospective teachers build their pedagogical competence on a foundation of knowledge of theories of human development and the opportunities to apply these theories to education, and especially to urban classrooms (Elkind, 1988; Piaget & Inhelder, 1969; Vygotsky, 1978). Thus field experiences are an integral part of all

foundations study. Field experiences begin early so that candidates have an opportunity to begin applying strategies that foster student learning and promote students' active engagement in learning. Foundations study allows candidates to understand human developmental processes and variations and to use this understanding to foster student learning. Candidates learn to observe children carefully and then use the knowledge they have gained to begin to organize learning environments and learning experiences. Study of human development and learning allows candidates to begin to understand characteristics and needs of students with disabilities, developmental delays and exceptional abilities. Candidates study development in a cultural context and use their experience with diversity to foster a sense of community and appreciation of and respect for all individuals and groups. They also come to recognize the significance of changing family patterns and home environments for student learning (Lightfoot, 1975; Marjoribanks, 1980, 1987; Meier, 1995).

In foundations courses, candidates also engage in critical analysis of schooling in the United States and the situatedness of learning. This analysis is essential to their understanding of urban education (Banks, 1994; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Kozol, 1991) as it helps candidates understand how home, school, and community factors can affect learners. Candidates use this knowledge to begin to create classroom environments within which all students can grow and learn.

To develop into competent teachers, candidates must understand the learning process; analyze the factors that influence student learning; understand the processes by which students construct meaning; and begin to gain knowledge of specific instructional strategies that promote students' independent thinking and learning and sense of ownership and responsibility for their own learning. Candidates investigate the various teacher

and student roles and communication modes that affect learning processes and outcomes, and the motivational principles and practices that promote children's active engagement in learning (Armstrong, 1994; Gilligan, 1983; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Phye, 1997).

## 2. Knowledge of Constructivism and Inquiry Learning

There is considerable agreement among most faculty of the School that learners are active and constructive problem-solvers and that learning is socially constructed and is best promoted within a caring and supportive environment. Many faculty engage candidates in inquiry learning projects by providing opportunities for inquiry within the various disciplines as well as within family, community, and educational settings. Faculty model constructivist approaches and discuss the origins of the constructivist theory of knowledge and learning in the work of researchers such as Piaget, Dewey, Kohlberg, and Vygotsky (Brooks & Brooks, 1993; Bruner, 1966; Fosnot, 1989, 1996, 2001; Piaget, 1963; Zahorik, 1995).

Competent teachers provide students with opportunities to explore, inquire, discover, and problem-solve. Such teachers bring students into contact with physical phenomena and important issues and ideas because they realize that real-life situations offer learning opportunities and chances to make connections. Candidates learn a variety of ways to make connections between curriculum and the learner's experiences and among subject areas using inquiry approaches.

Competent teachers teach for understanding and learn to balance their goals for the students with the learners' interests and understandings. They gather evidence about the learners and use this information to make instructional decisions that help promote learning. They also understand that social interaction is critical to learning (Bruner, 1960; Carini, 1986, 1987; Fosnot, 1989, 2001; Gardner, 1983; Piaget & Inhelder, 1970;

Sprenger, 1999; Vygotsky, 1978; Weber, 1991). Group and cooperative approaches, done skillfully and in appropriate contexts, have a positive impact on student learning and also help students grow in their regard for each other. This regard includes an appreciation for racial, cultural, and ethnic differences, as well as their peers' differing talents and interests.

Candidates apply information they have gained from observations and assessments of student learning, gradually implementing a wider range of instructional practices in the field with diverse groups of students. They are given opportunities to reflect on their practice (Henderson, 1996) as they continue to develop their pedagogical skills and dispositions and construct their philosophy of education.

### 3. Knowledge of Pedagogical and Behavioral Approaches to Working with Students with Special Needs

Candidates constructing their own educational philosophy who have already experienced a range of coursework emphasizing the appropriate use of the constructivist model of learning, and the inquiry opportunities offered by many classrooms, go on to experience in special education classes an alternative or complementary approach to the education of children with special needs. Majors in special education and candidates who take special education courses as electives will integrate these approaches with their own emerging philosophy of education, for example by using the support of applied behavioral analysis to successfully implement inquiry approaches in the classroom.

### 4. Use of Instructional and Communications Technology for Teaching, Learning and Assessment

The School promotes the skillful use of instructional and communications technology with a predominantly “across the curriculum approach” based on the

philosophy that technology can and should be used to support students' learning.

Technology can be used as a tool for active learning, collaborative projects, student-centered lessons, and research (Guzdial, 1998; Willis, Stephens, & Matthew, 1996). The School believes that competent teachers need to learn to use developing technologies for their own learning and to develop the disposition to provide the same learning tools to their students.

The concepts and skills of information and communication technology are best mastered in the process of completing class assignments and fieldwork, and when the knowledge and its applications are sequenced across coursework and field experiences and supported with regular workshops and tutorials. Over the course of their teacher preparation, candidates will design and implement instruction that incorporates various technologies, communicate via technology, submit assignments electronically, and incorporate instructional and communications technology into inquiry projects. Candidates will participate in assessing the quality of instructional technology and in designing activities at several different levels of cognition (Seamon, 2001).

In most programs in the School, knowledge and application of information and communications technology will culminate in a completed electronic portfolio. The electronic portfolio, set up early in the program, will continue throughout a candidate's course of study and include a record of the candidate's developing skills and dispositions as a teacher and the construction of his or her philosophy of education.

## 5. Knowledge, Ability, and Dispositions to Put into Practice Multiple Teaching Strategies and Multiple Assessment Approaches

### a. Multiple Teaching Strategies

An important part of the mission of the School is to improve urban education and urban public schools, and to prepare teachers who can meet the needs of urban children through strong content and pedagogical knowledge and the ability to work in and create a community of learners and a caring community. An important component in achieving this mission is to prepare teachers who have the knowledge and ability to implement multiple teaching strategies and multiple assessment approaches in order to build on the knowledge and strengths children bring to school and to differentiate instruction for diverse learners. The teacher preparation programs based on this mission represent a strengths-based approach to observing and assessing children, and to instruction and curriculum development. Achieving positive outcomes for diverse groups of students depends on teachers who can adapt instructional strategies to meet the learning needs of all students and who can encourage all students' active participation. It also depends on teachers who have the skills to work collaboratively with families and communities (Delpit, 1995; Meier, 1995).

The School considers important aspects of teacher competence to be: an understanding and appreciation of people whose cultural experiences are different from one's own; an understanding of the influence of gender, family, and culture on learning (Banks, 1994; Gilligan, 1983; Gerston & Jiminez, 1998) and the understanding that multiple factors can lead to learning differences such as behavioral, cognitive, language, and neurological challenges or emotional and motivational difficulties. Such teachers understand how students differ in their approaches to learning and are on the way to becoming skilled in differentiating instruction for the needs of diverse learners (Armstrong, 1994; Tomlinson, 1999)

b. Multiple Assessments

In foundations courses, candidates learn how to use formal and informal assessments of students to plan instruction, monitor student understanding, and make instructional adjustments. They learn to evaluate a variety of assessment techniques for their limitations and appropriateness for a given situation. In methods courses, candidates must build on this foundational knowledge by practicing a variety of assessment techniques to assess children's knowledge and by using that information to plan instruction in specific content areas. It is a goal of the School that teachers understand that students can best demonstrate their progress through multiple forms of evidence; and that a range of assessments can give a more accurate picture of a student's abilities; that students with different learning styles and strengths have more opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge when their teacher is capable of using a variety of assessment techniques (Darling-Hammond & Falk, 1997). Candidates should come to understand rubrics and how they can be used for standards-based assessments.

A range of assessment strategies is introduced to candidates such as inquiry assessments that enable a teacher to find out what a student knows, how he or she knows it, and his or her strengths and vulnerabilities. These assessments make possible a wide range of information because the context of the assessment is used in the analysis of the student's learning (Kamii, 1985, 1989). Competent teachers are knowledgeable and comfortable with a wide range of assessment strategies including assessing individuals' growth in relation to themselves, teacher- and student-kept records, documenting of group learning (Edwards, Gandini, & Forman, 1998), collaborative assessment conferences (Seidel, 1998), and standards-based performance assessments. Standards-based assessments include such things as performance formats, rubrics or scoring guides for different levels of achievement, and models or benchmarks for levels of proficiency.

## 6. Fieldwork and Student Teaching

The School understands that knowledge, skills, and dispositions develop over time and that this development depends on thoughtful sequencing of coursework, fieldwork and supervised student teaching. Developing or novice teachers gain entry-level pedagogical skills that include reasoning and problem-solving, principles and procedures for organizing and implementing instruction, and understanding multiple approaches to instruction. Through sequenced fieldwork, they grow in their ability to apply these skills in teaching practice with urban students. Both fieldwork and coursework provide opportunities for candidates to develop the skills for direct work with diverse students and their families.

Candidates who are currently teaching and who are pursuing professional certification further develop their ability to work effectively with diverse students and their families and engage in a formal inquiry into their teaching practice. They have the opportunity to specialize in literacy development, content and pedagogical content knowledge in a discipline; or working with students who are English-language learners, children who have special needs, or the early childhood years.

The School has expectations that candidates will develop dispositions to help all children learn, to become reflective practitioners, to celebrate diversity, to become life-long learners who seek out opportunities for professional development, and to participate in providing a sense of community in their school and classroom.

Field-based learning is integral to knowledge of learners, knowledge of pedagogy and participants' growth as teaching professionals. The School believes that sequencing of field and clinical experiences is critical to the preparation of a competent teaching professional. Therefore, field experiences are a part of all foundations, core, and methods

coursework, with age/grade levels and number of hours specified. To maintain a close connection between coursework and application of concepts and teaching strategies in the field, course instructors must design, assign, and grade field assignments. Instructors in a given program coordinate assignments so that the most effective sequence of assignments can be developed. It is important that field assignments include a variety of school and other educational sites (e.g. museum education) that illustrate exemplary teaching. It is also important that candidates apply their knowledge of human development, learning theories and pedagogy by completing a variety of assignments that call on them to observe teachers, students, and classroom environments; study communities; assess students; and conduct individual and small-group instruction.

Because so many candidates work, the School tries to provide alternative ways to study children and exemplary classrooms. Candidates in foundations courses can learn the skills of on-line tutoring. A project funded by a grant from the National Science Foundation is producing videotapes and CD-ROMS for early childhood and elementary mathematics methods courses. These interactive video programs bring exemplary teaching into the college classroom (Fosnot, 2001).

The School maintains ongoing relationships with a number of urban public schools and cooperating teachers. Convinced of the value and importance of professional development schools (PDS), the School is engaged in the ongoing construction of PDS sites (Darling-Hammond, 1992)

Amongst the proficiencies for candidates based on this theme are:

- 2.1. \_\_\_\_ Demonstrate strategies that create a positive learning environment. (Treat all students with fairness)
- 2.2. \_\_\_\_ Utilize multiple forms of assessment to evaluate instruction (Treat all students with fairness)
- 2.3. \_\_\_\_ Assess and analyze student learning outcomes and make appropriate adjustments to instruction (Belief that all students can learn)
- 2.4. \_\_\_\_ Utilize school based expectations for students in order to plan short and long-range goals

2.5. \_\_\_\_\_ Reflect on teaching practice and suggestions of cooperating teacher and/or college supervisor to inform subsequent lesson planning and instruction.

### **C. Educating for and About Diversity**

The great strength of City College is and has long been the diversity of its students and faculty. As a public institution in the City of New York, the College has in place a policy of non-discrimination on the basis of age, color, disability, national or ethnic origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, and veteran or marital status. As a campus situated at the center of one of the world's most diverse metropolises, moreover, the College has enjoyed the opportunity of making that pledge a living reality.

The School subscribes wholeheartedly to the policy of non-discrimination and to the goal of full, including linguistic, diversity and so works continuously to ensure that the diversity of the New York City population, and particularly of the surrounding local community of upper Manhattan, is reflected in the make-up of the faculty and in the perspectives, concerns, and materials taken up throughout the curriculum. Central to the School's mission is access to the benefits of education and to careers in teaching for the widest possible representation across the City's population. Indeed, in view of the wider variety of options in the field of education that are available to the economically more advantaged, the School seeks especially to provide access to the field for those students who are economically disadvantaged. Mechanisms to provide such access include low tuition, the provision of information on financial support, the provision of academic support services, and the scheduling of classes to accommodate candidates who work.

Moreover, in the School, particularly, the diversity of students and faculty is viewed not just as an obligation or an opportunity but as an educational resource. While a multicultural education does prepare learners for the diversity of the world outside the

classroom (Gollnick & Chinn, 1994), a diverse classroom actually brings that reality into the educational process itself. In a true community of learners, where each member of the community contributes to the learning process, it must be the case that a greater diversity of lived experience among the learners results in a richer learning experience for the community (Selase, 1991; Díaz Soto, 1993; Gándara, 1995; Alger, 1997; Bowen & Bok, 1998; Farai, 2000). For the City College School of Education candidate, diversity is more than a fact of the outside world, the City, and the public school classroom, something *about which* the candidate must learn; it is a fact of the candidate's own classroom, something *through which* the candidate can learn and provide for individual and/or group needs. It is the responsibility of faculty, then, to draw upon the diversity in the School in order to enrich the learning process for all candidates. Such practice serves as a model for candidates in their own teaching. The learning process must be omni-directional; each candidate who contributes his or her own experiences also accepts the contributions of others. In other words, a multicultural education entails not only the representation of one's own culture in the school but also the enrichment of one's own perspective through that of others. It is therefore important for our candidates to value their students' culture and language backgrounds.

The School is working towards finding ways to promote understanding across experiential divides. Particularly where native cultures, languages, and dialects differ from candidate to candidate, candidate to instructor, and faculty member to faculty member, it can be challenging to appreciate and accurately assess the value of another's contribution (Cummins, 1984). It can also be challenging to prepare candidates to meet the demands of state and professional assessment instruments which may not be sufficiently sensitive to cultural and linguistic differences. The school believes these demands can be met without sacrificing either academic rigor or cultural and linguistic pluralism. To that end, the School continues to work to provide the necessary support services to help candidates meet such uniform standards while pursuing the goal of full diversity.

Amongst the proficiencies for candidates based on this theme are:

3.1. \_\_\_\_\_ Provide for individual and/or group needs in the classroom. (Belief that all students can learn and Treat all students with fairness)

3.2. \_\_\_\_\_ Demonstrate attempts to learn more about the students' culture and/or language backgrounds. (Treat all students with fairness)

## **D. Nurturing Leadership for Learning**

### **1. General Preparation**

Our goal is to develop the capabilities of candidates to assume leadership roles in their classrooms, schools, and communities. Whether or not candidates eventually assume a formal leadership position, it is our belief that the acquisition of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions required for providing leadership serves to enhance teaching and learning at the classroom, school, and community levels. Accordingly, developing the capacity to apply leadership skills that foster the development of community in multicultural, multilingual schools is a theme that is embedded and reinforced in the course content, fieldwork, research requirements, and internship experiences offered by all the programs in the School.

An ever-widening body of research has identified the skills necessary for educators to serve as leaders (Barth, 1990; Elmore, 2000; Lambert, 1998; Schlechty, 1997; Senge, 1990; Sergiovanni, 1994). The literature describes the new expectations for instructional leaders within the current models of school reform and the conditions that must be established to support these new roles. In line with the emerging body of literature, we require that our candidates have a knowledge of the theoretical underpinnings of these leadership and management practices which support ongoing change and learning in schools. They must acquire the ability to lead and participate in decision-making bodies that address the academic content and management structure of the various programs in their schools. They must be prepared to engage in collaborative processes that encourage the mutual efforts of teachers, administrators, parents, and staff

to work and learn together to support students' learning and well-being. They must be skilled at collegial planning and evaluation; managing conflict; and reflecting and dialoging on their own professional practices. Teacher-leaders must also be imbued with the skills and dispositions needed to assume responsibility for professional development, for coaching of other teachers and for methodically deliberating on their own instructional behavior. The acquisition of these behaviors and dispositions, which is an integral aspect of the teacher-preparation programs at the School, prepares our teacher candidates to become powerful voices for instructional reform when they enter the professional arena.

Our preparation programs are grounded in the central problems of teaching and learning in a culturally diverse context. Our candidates are therefore required to engage in ongoing examination and refinement of the beliefs that they hold about the instructional process and the achievement of all their students. By developing professional portfolios—rooted in the research examined in their coursework and grounded in the inquiry, reflection, and analysis in which they engage as part of their course of study—our candidates are able to document the development of their beliefs about learning, leadership, and teaching in culturally diverse communities. One of the anticipated outcomes of this process is that they are imbued with a clearer understanding of the value of diversity and that they acquire a deeply felt concern and sensitivity for promoting educational equity in the schools. Through this process we ensure that our candidates have an in-depth understanding of the cultural context within which schools operate and the ability to offer leadership at the district, state, and federal levels. It is consistent with the mission of the College that they acquire these leadership behaviors as they enable

them to contribute to the shaping of public policy that impacts on the urban schools in which most of our candidates will serve as educators.

These leadership dispositions and practices, all of which are associated with the paradigm of the school as a community of learners, are systematically developed and modeled across the educator programs at the School. This approach to the development of leadership skills can be observed in the pedagogical and curriculum planning processes utilized by the faculty in all of our programs. It provides our candidates with the skills they need to become lifelong learners in a community of leaders and to support the learning and leadership development of other educators and of their students.

## 2. Preparing Candidates for Formal Leadership Positions

In addition to the traditional management function associated with leadership in the schools, the research literature has identified a new set of skills and dispositions which much be acquired by those who are planning to assume formal leadership roles. As discussed by Barth (1990), a leader must guide a school to become a community of leaders. Barth elaborates that “principals who have been most successful as leaders themselves are somehow able to enlist teachers in providing leadership for the entire school.” Accordingly, an underlying theme in the formal leadership preparation programs at the School is the recognition that although leadership begins with a formal leader, a formal leader cannot reform a school alone. All candidates in the leadership preparation programs are expected to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to obtain the commitment of other individuals in their school community to the philosophy, vision, and mission of their schools. It is also expected that they acquire the expertise and the disposition needed to galvanize the energy of the school community into translating this commitment into the implementation of the school’s goals and objectives. To

accomplish this, across coursework in the leadership preparation programs, the faculty utilize case study methodology, problem-based learning, and cooperative learning strategies, to prepare our candidates to understand the process of developing and articulating a vision and its related goals, to acquire the skills and dispositions needed to relinquish authority to teachers and staff, to understand and appropriately involve others in decision-making processes, to appropriately delegate authority, and share credit with others for the successes enjoyed by a school or other institutional unit. This instructional approach prepares our candidates with the understanding, knowledge, strategies, and dispositions needed for building a culture of cooperation and collaboration in their schools. It results in the development of candidates who are prepared to harness the energy of their teachers and staff to accomplish their stated mission and meet the challenges embodied in improving urban education.

Amongst the proficiencies for candidates based on this theme are:

- 4.1. \_\_\_\_\_ Foster relationships with colleagues and members of the school community to support students' learning and well-being.
- 4.2. \_\_\_\_\_ Demonstrate a willingness to improve in areas that needed strengthening.

### **E. Building Caring Communities**

To address our mission of improving urban education, the School needs to be about working to find ways of helping teachers and future teachers create caring communities in schools and classrooms. Community-building must be at the heart of any school improvement effort (Sergiovanni, 1994). Caring communities are places where teachers and children support and celebrate each other's learning and general well being. They are places where students feel cared about and where they are encouraged to care about each other. In such places, children and teachers experience a sense of being

valued and respected; they matter to one another and become part of an “us.” Such classrooms are places where care and trust are emphasized above restrictions and threats, where unity and pride in accomplishment and purpose replace winning and losing, and where each person is asked, helped, and inspired to live up to such ideals and values as kindness, fairness, and responsibility.

In caring communities, it is not only individuals who are cared about. Students and teachers care about the work of the community, because that work is felt to be relevant or meaningful, or in some way connected to and important to the community. An ethos of caring in a school mitigates the all too often held feelings of alienation and isolation that students often feel toward school and its purposes. It is our belief that caring communities are best created in democratic schools, where inquiry is valued and where teachers understand key human values and how these values are modeled in their teaching and in the ways they relate to children.

### 1. Democratic Classrooms and Schools

Understanding what democratic classrooms and schools look like and what value they have is a critical element in the teacher education process. Too often the kind of knowledge valued in schools is knowledge that controls students and teachers, not knowledge students and teachers make for themselves. Lester and Onore (1991) see more autocratic classrooms built on an objectivist view where knowledge is transmitted, as compared to more democratic classrooms, which are built on a constructivist view. In autocratic classrooms teachers and their knowledge are at the center of learning. Teachers are the experts; knowledge is a fixed entity bounded by teachers' interpretations, understandings, texts, tests, and time. Knowledge does not seem to have been produced by anyone. The role of the teacher is as transmitter and teacher talk dominates. Real

questions that engender genuine exchanges of ideas are rarely posed or answered. This undermines controversy, discussion, and critical thinking.

In contrast, democratic classrooms are places where learners are not passive but are building constructively, actively, and passionately a theory of the world in the head (Onore & Lester, 1991). Democratic classrooms are places where learners' intentions and purposes are voiced, where open-mindedness, authenticity, and whole-heartedness are central to learning. Learners must feel free to voice their feelings and beliefs and test out their understandings. In such a way, communities of learners are formed. Classrooms should be places where students are engaged in solving problems that will involve them in acquiring and using existing information and knowledge. This kind of learning is inquiry-based and constructivist but, at the same time, in allowing students to share the intentions and purposes for learning, classrooms can be transformed into places where genuine intellectual inquiry is supported.<sup>1</sup> The caring community is supported because student voice, opinions, and purposes for learning can be expressed. The role of the teacher shifts toward that of co-intentional learner, coach, or facilitator.

In autocratic classrooms, where power over the content and process of learning is consolidated in the teacher, students often resist, disbelieve or drop out (McNeil, 1986). American schooling has been dominated by the autocratic model, which has been characterized largely by rote memorization, is teacher-centered and competitive. Democratic schools, in contrast, stress understanding and critical thinking, are learner-centered and collaborative. Democratic schools are important as models not only for children but as models for the ways teachers should conduct their collaborative planning and work as well as for the ways in which teachers work with administrators. If we want our teacher candidates to create more democratic classrooms, our faculty need not only to

model but to explore with the candidates their dynamics and the reasons why they are important.

Finally, modeling and giving candidates a real understanding of democratic classrooms will not only help to frame their teaching but will provide an important understanding about the meaning of a democratic society. Schools and classrooms should be places where students can see democracy in action; places where the ideas, opinions and voices of people are valued, listened to, and respected; places where students and teachers are not silenced (Fine, 1991). They are also places where a variety of positive and developmentally appropriate classroom management techniques are utilized; where students and teachers have rights as well as responsibilities; and where truth is valued. While even autocratic teachers can care deeply about their students, we feel that democratic teachers more effectively promote caring communities of learners.

## 2. Teachers as Models of Caring, Values, and Moral Behavior

The ethos of caring does not limit itself to the particular community within which one is a member. Caring classrooms and schools are those which often promote and support community service programs, which develop close ties with parents and families, and which involve students in collaborative, project-based learning with authentic outcomes often designed to improve their city, nation, or planet. Caring classrooms and schools make time to deal with the other than academic needs and interests of students, sometimes in “family” or “advisory group,” sometimes in “homeroom,” sometimes through instruction and sometimes informally. Meier (1991) laments that “kindergarten was one place—maybe the last place—where you were expected to know children well... Kindergarten teachers know that learning must be personalized.” But to know youngsters in order to teach them well means knowing them first as persons (Sizer,

1986). All teachers need to know their students well and to the extent possible, personalize instruction and provide advice, nurturing, and counseling where needed. Faculty in the School need to know our candidates well and help candidates identify ways to know their students and to express interest in and caring for them. Candidates need to remember details about children's lives, keep notes, call and visit their homes, respond authentically, and ask students what they think and care about. Most of all, candidates need to learn that being a caring teacher is not playing a role. They must be persons before they can be caring persons. To be a person in front of children leaves one vulnerable and candidates need to be able to deal with that vulnerability.

Embedded in the caring community is a sense of shared values. Respectfulness of others is a value most caring communities would agree on. “Teachers can't educate if they don't have the respect of their students and families. They can't get such respect if they don't give it. They can't give it if they don't have a chance to get to know each other...” (Meier, 1991). Trusting, valuing people, and collaborative work are also important values to a caring community. Decency, which is comprised of fairness, generosity, and tolerance, is an important value, yet “it is difficult to find many schools today that both formally articulate decency as an aim and precisely outline how students can achieve it” (Sizer, 1992). These and other values need to be identified in the teacher education program and strategies explored to make them explicitly and implicitly part of the fabric of classrooms and schools.

Creating caring communities and more democratic classrooms can have a profound impact on the child's developing character and sense of morality. Dewey (1909) argued that where the impact of teaching character and morality directly is slight, where it is developed through all the agencies, instrumentalities, and materials of school

life, it is more powerful. “Morals are taught at every moment of every day—teachers don't teach about morals but because their own characters, or their school atmosphere and ideas, or their methods of teaching, or subject matter which they teach, are not such in detail as to bring intellectual results into vital union with character so they become working forces in behaviors.”

Caring classrooms and schools can help to produce morally educated persons, which Chazan (1985) defines as individuals who reflect on and reason about moral issues, confront moral issues with feeling and passion (conscience), feel part of a social group/community, and are informed and affected by them.

Just as we would have our candidates model caring and democratic communities, so too must School faculty model a caring community for our candidates. This includes more than behaviors faculty exhibit in their classrooms, but behaviors that define the ways in which faculty relate to each other.

Amongst the proficiencies for candidates based on this theme are:

- 5.1. \_\_\_\_ Demonstrate the ability to develop a democratic, respectful classroom by modeling caring, committed and ethical practices. (Treat all students with fairness)
- 5.2. \_\_\_\_ Utilize a variety of positive and developmentally appropriate classroom management techniques.
- 5.3 \_\_\_\_ Demonstrate professional dispositions that are expected of all candidates.

These outcomes can be assessed by the instructor and cooperating teacher during student-teaching through conversations with and observations of the candidate. They can also be assessed through examination of the student's electronic portfolio. On a graduate level, teachers can design questionnaires to elicit some of their classroom dynamics and distribute them to their students. In-service candidates would score and analyze the results, developing an action plan with specific steps that they would take to make their classrooms more caring and democratic. Questionnaires would be re-administered

periodically. Results and reflections on those results would be part of the graduate student's electronic portfolio.

#### **IV. Dispositions**

In order to realize the five themes of the conceptual framework we seek to instill in our candidates the following dispositions:

1. All students can learn.
2. All students should be treated fairly.
3. The classroom should be a caring and nurturing environment.
4. An educator's personal and professional standards should reflect the ethics and values of the teaching profession.
5. Reflective practice is essential for effective teaching and learning.
6. Individual and cultural differences should be respected.

#### **V. Assessment**

Success in the School's programs and in the State certification processes can be measured only by performance. The five themes for carrying out the School's mission—A. maintaining a strong content core, B. assuring the acquisition of pedagogical knowledge and skills, C. respect for diversity, D. providing leadership for multicultural schools, and E. creating caring communities—become meaningful when they are put into action by candidates, faculty, and the School itself. Action includes demonstrating knowledge; working with candidates, students, and schools; creating and becoming reflective practitioners. These actions generate data which become the bases for assessment.

##### **A. Knowledge About the World**

Assessment of content knowledge is done in a variety of ways. Transcripts of candidates, graduate or undergraduate, who have taken some or all of their liberal arts course work elsewhere are carefully examined by faculty to insure that they meet School requirements. Those who do not are either conditionally accepted with the requirements as prerequisites or rejected if it is determined that the prerequisites are insurmountable.

State teacher certification tests, class examinations, and portfolio materials are used as measurable performance outcomes for candidates' knowledge of content and skills. In the portfolios that are completed at graduation, candidates address elements from each of the knowledge areas of a university curriculum, as outlined above, in papers, instructional plans, materials for students, write-ups of field trips, all within an educational context. Knowledge must be put to use; the parts of candidates' content knowledge that they choose to be integrated into work with students indicate a special familiarity and appreciation. The acquisition of the dispositions of lifelong learning and liberal arts content as having a value in itself are partially evidenced in methods courses and included in candidates' portfolios. Whether a candidate meets target levels of performance in content knowledge is measured by GPA, test scores, and use of knowledge as described in professional, state, and College standards. Candidates demonstrate the use of inquiry in their course projects and portfolios. They demonstrate the results of critical analysis in papers and projects, which are graded and critiqued by faculty and included in their portfolios. Synthesis of content knowledge and skills is also demonstrated on papers, discussions, and examinations. In addition, candidates engage in synthesis when choosing the methods and materials they use in preparing lessons. The ultimate demonstration is carried out in field experiences, internships, and practica where candidates create or supervise content lessons.

### **B. Skillful and Reflective Practitioners**

The learning outcomes for acquiring pedagogical knowledge and skills, as outlined above, include the observation and analysis of students' behaviors, the teaching of principles, concepts, and skills delineated in professional and State standards — including inquiry, critical analysis, and synthesis, the ability to assess student achieve-

ment in multiple ways and to reflect on practice so as to be able to makes changes to improve instruction, the demonstration of integrating school, family, community and cultural contexts in instruction.

The extent to which these outcomes are met, as in the case of content knowledge, is measured by GPA, test scores, and the achievement of individual course objectives which reflect professional and State standards. Case studies of students, candidates developing philosophies of education, lesson plans, and samples of student work are included in candidate portfolios, completed in accordance with clear faculty-developed rubrics. Portfolios are upgraded every semester when candidates meet with their advisors. On the graduate level candidates have a required course in which they learn to understand and apply empirical research culminating in a final written project. Professional knowledge is demonstrated in school contexts. Evaluations of candidate performance in field work, internships, and practica are reflected in course grades. In addition, and more importantly, four observations each semester are written up for the candidate and filed in the Office of Advisement to be included in candidate portfolios.

Certain dispositions are related to the development of pedagogical knowledge and skills in candidates. One is the disposition to learn and use multiple approaches to instruction and multiple assessment strategies, including instructional and communication technology, in order to reach learners with diverse needs. Others are: the disposition to seek out knowledge of families, the school, and the community in order to connect concepts to children's experiences; and the disposition to reflect on one's practice and make changes necessary to promote the learning of all children. These dispositions will be assessed through candidate portfolios, design of independent research studies, and performance in field assignments and student teaching.

### **C. Diversity**

Candidates' knowledge of issues of diversity and their relation to pedagogy is assessed through: performance in required course work depending on the candidate's program, including but not limited to courses in child and adolescent development, school in American society, sociolinguistics, multicultural education, and the education of students with disabilities; portfolio materials; scores on the State's certification exam for pedagogical knowledge (ATS-W). Candidates' practical experience with diversity in the classroom, as well as candidates' disposition toward diversity, is assessed through field work, student teaching, and practica.

### **D. Leadership for Learning**

The leadership knowledge and skills of teacher education candidates are assessed in their course work, documented in their portfolios as required by each program, and monitored and assessed during their field work experiences. In their course work candidates are assessed on their skills and projects which require that they demonstrate the capacity to work collaboratively and lead groups in decision-making and consensus-building activities. These skills are also assessed during internships and through an analysis of the content of the candidates' portfolios.

In all components of the Graduate Programs in Educational Administration and Supervision, an assessment is made of the degree to which candidates preparing for formal leadership positions have achieved the learning outcomes established for the programs. Assessment occurs in all of the programs' core courses. Candidates performance on faculty-developed, course-related tests, which reflect the knowledge, skills, and standards set forth by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium are reviewed and evaluated as part of the assessment process.

Content knowledge and skill development in leadership are additionally assessed through three learning modalities: case studies analysis, comprehensive problem-based learning activities, and leadership simulations. Candidates engage in case study analysis and problem-based learning projects in which they demonstrate and reflect on their skills in providing the leadership needed to build learning communities. The outcomes of these activities are analyzed and presented orally and in written form. The candidates are assessed on their capacity to work collaboratively in groups; to provide group leadership; and to communicate and use influence effectively when working in cooperative teams established to achieve complex organizational goals. These activities also include reflective questions for which faculty use checklists and both group and individual interviews to assess and document candidates' growth and mastery in analyzing interpersonal issues and equity principles associated with providing leadership for multicultural schools.

Candidates' leadership knowledge and skills are also assessed during an intensive year-long site internship. This internship is designed to provide the realistic and practical experiences essential to preparing candidates to perform effectively in formal leadership positions. Candidates are required to develop and implement a proposal with objectives drawn from identified essential areas of the leadership process which must be approved by the faculty. Assessment takes place through three mechanisms: (1) candidates create portfolios documenting all internship activities which are analyzed by a faculty member who provides year-long, on-site observation and supervision of the internship, (2) candidates provide their faculty supervisors with weekly reports detailing their internship activities which are discussed in seminars and assessed in individual candidate-supervisor interviews, (3) faculty supervisors, during on-site visits, observe the

interns and meet with site administrators to further document and assess candidate progress.

### **E. Building Caring Communities**

Building caring communities includes both knowledge and performance. The learning outcomes for candidates based on this theme are: knowing how classrooms and schools become learning communities, knowing how classrooms and schools become more democratic, recognizing behaviors and forces that mitigate against caring democratic classrooms, exhibiting caring and democratic behaviors in their education classes, and defining the values their classrooms will support and knowing how these values will contribute to building character in children.

These outcomes are assessed by the instructor and cooperating teacher during internships and practica through conversations with and observations of the candidates. They are also assessed through examination of papers and a regularly emended educational philosophy that each candidate begins in his or her first pedagogical course and continues to graduation. These are included in candidate portfolios. In appropriate graduate level courses, teacher-candidates design questionnaires to measure their own classroom dynamics and distribute them to students. In-service candidates score and analyze the results and develop action plans to make their future classes more caring and democratic. Results and reflections on these results become part of graduate portfolios.

### **F. Assessment of the Faculty and School**

In addition to the performance measures of the five themes outlined above, the faculty and the School are constantly assessed. The faculty of the College demonstrate the knowledge, teaching ability, professional involvement, experience, and credentials to deliver the content and methodology of the programs of the School, to put these in

practice in supervised fieldwork, and to develop the appropriate dispositions in candidates.

Knowledge is demonstrated directly by faculty in their engagement in scholarship and indirectly by the performance of candidates on certification examinations. Teaching ability is demonstrated by candidate evaluations of instructors and formal observations by other faculty. Professional involvement is demonstrated by service to the unit, the College, and professional organizations. Of equal importance is active engagement in urban schools, both in supervising candidates and participating in staff development in those settings. Experience and credentials are demonstrated by faculty vitae. Professional development is ongoing; faculty make presentations to their peers, engage in mutual informal class observations, and critique each other's manuscript submissions.

The School as well is continually assessed. Ultimately, the success of the School is assessed through its accomplishment of its mission, the preparation of teachers and educational leaders for New York City schools. That accomplishment is measured most directly through the absolute numbers and the proportion of graduated candidates annually winning State certification. More indirectly, it is measured through the numbers of graduated candidates who remain in the field and who rise to positions of leadership. The School continuously collects and keeps data on candidates' success on State certification exams. The School makes efforts to track alumni/ae and to keep them involved in the work of the School.

The School can accomplish its mission only if it has the resources to do so. These resources include: adequate numbers of qualified full-time faculty and part-time instructors, at a ratio deemed best for the School's functioning; adequate support staff with the skills and dispositions to work with candidates and faculty; a functioning and welcoming

physical plant; and up-to-date supplies and equipment, including communications and computing technologies. Faculty and student questionnaires continuously assess this.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that behavior modification techniques are not considered inimical to the concept of a democratic classroom if practiced openly and with the consent of parents and students.

<sup>2</sup> The concept of “character” is best expressed by Martin Buber. “I call a great character one who by his actions and attitudes satisfies the claim of situations out of deep readiness to respond with his whole life, and in such a way that the sum of his actions and attitudes expresses at the same time the unity of his being and its willingness to accept responsibility.” Building this kind of character is obviously what one wishes for even if few, faculty or candidates, achieve it.

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