

# **Leveraging Best Practice in Teacher Residency to Enhance Teacher Preparation**

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Critical teacher shortages in the U. S. drove the development of the Teacher Residency model to improve recruitment, preparation, and retention of highly qualified educators within public schools. Faculty and staff involved in the Teacher Quality Partnership project, a U. S. Department of Education funded teacher preparation program at the University of Central Florida, identified parallels between the National Center for Teacher Residencies' competencies for effective teacher residency programs and the project's clinical internship experience. This manuscript details these parallels and discusses the potential to expand the project to meet all residency competencies as a pre-baccalaureate teacher residency program.

## **Introduction**

### **Literature Review**

First-year and early career teachers are more likely to work in high-need schools (HNS) than teachers further into their careers (Bruno, Rabovsky, & Strunk, 2019). Insufficient preparation and support for working in these settings leads to high teacher turnover (Goldhaber, Lavery, & Theobald, 2015; Isenberg et al., 2016; Sass, Hannaway, Xu, Figlio, & Feng, 2012), which contributes to the on-going teacher shortage crisis in the U. S. (Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, & Carver-Thomas, 2019) and impacts student achievement (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019). University teacher preparation programs play a key role in retaining educators, resulting in higher retention rates than alternative certification programs (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Zhang & Zeller, 2016). Authentic pedagogical training received through four- and five-year university preparation programs create a foundation from which teachers feel prepared to teach in a variety of settings and protects against attrition (Gray, Taie, & O'Rear, 2015; Ingersoll, Merrill, & May, 2014; Marinell, et al., 2013).

Investment in best practice for teacher preparation is imperative in stemming teacher turnover and ensuring students receive consistent, quality instruction from well-prepared teachers.

In response to the critical teacher shortage in the U. S. and the need for stronger preparation practices, the Teacher Residency (TR) model was developed to improve recruitment, preparation, and retention of highly qualified educators within public schools (Guha, Hyler, & Darling-Hammond, 2016). The National Center for Teacher Residencies (NCTR) describes TRs as district-serving programs which provide rigorous co-requisite courses and connect theory to practice through a full-year classroom apprenticeship with effective teacher-mentors (NCTR, 2020). Founded in 2007, NCTR is a not-for-profit organization established to develop, launch, and support TR programs across the country. Over a decade of research and development from NCTR resulted in the NCTR Standards for Effective Teacher Residency (NCTR, 2018). Although TR programs are typically for master's degree programs (NCTR, 2020), there are also examples of pre-baccalaureate

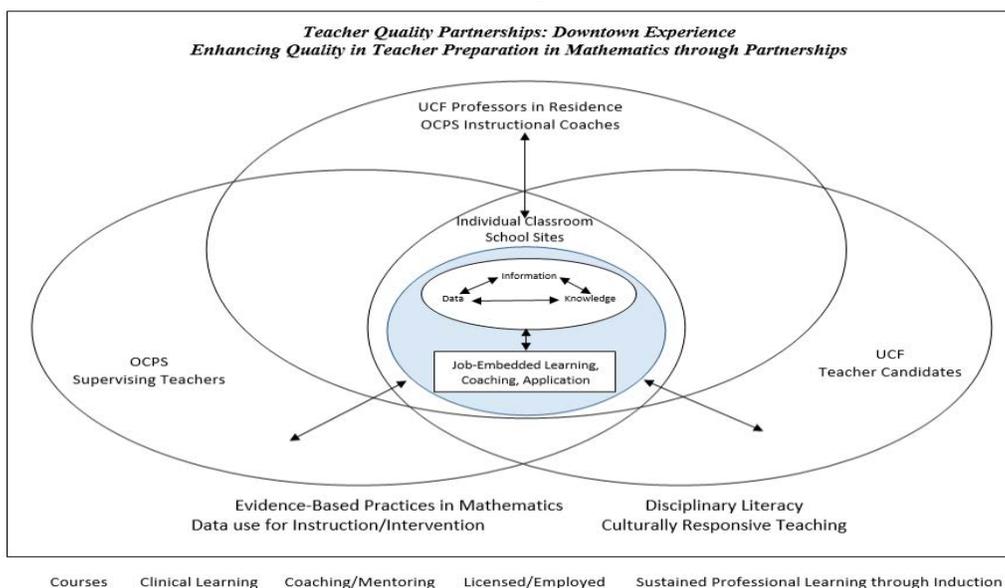
TR programs (University of South Florida, 2020; Roosevelt University, 2020). Studies have shown the effectiveness of TR programs across the country in meeting the goals of recruitment, development, and retention of highly-qualified educators (Barnett et al., 2008; Guha et al., 2016). Residency models are linked to increased teacher awareness of diversity and issues of equity, improved teacher perceptions of urban schools, and higher levels of perceived preparedness to teach, especially in urban and HNS settings (King & Butler, 2015; Schaffer, Gleich-Bope, & Copich, 2014). The TR model was also included in The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, 2015) as an endorsed model for preparation.

### The TQP Project

The Teacher Quality Partnerships: Downtown Experience (TQP) project is designed to recruit, prepare, and sustain highly-effective teachers through specific foci in mathematics, disciplinary literacy, and supporting students with diverse learning needs in HNS. The project utilizes a randomized control trial design to assess the

differences in outcomes between teacher candidates (TC) in HNS engaged in a typical, ‘business as usual’ preparation program and TCs receiving the TQP Enhanced Preparation Model (EPM). As illustrated in Figure 1, faculty and staff from the University of Central Florida (UCF), Orange County Public Schools (OCPS) teachers and administrators, and national and state partners collaborate through the TQP project to co-construct the EPM. Partnership teams collaborate to create a shared vision for best practices that connect with what TCs learn in university courses and utilize district resources. Collaborative support and resources for enhancements are aligned between courses, district curriculums, and school sites and delivered to TCs in the EPM treatment group. Essential to the TQP project and the implementation of the EPM are the university professors-in-residence (PIR) assigned to each partner school site. The PIRs deliver EPM curriculum, resources, and coaching to TCs and serve as a linchpin between the project and the district partner schools.

**Figure 1**  
**UCF and OCPS Collaboration and Resource Alignment**



During the development of the EPM, project stakeholder research into evidence-based teacher preparation practices resulted in a pool of studies related to TR models. Specific parallels were evident between the TQP project foci and the standards and goals in Competency Area III: Residency Year Experience of the NCTR Standards for Teacher Residency. This competency area encompasses much of the TQP project's senior internship experience and many elements of the competence are reflected in the TQP project EPM. This article details the current parallels between TQP project practices and the NCTR framework, and discusses ongoing reflection and reform within the project to further framework alignment and maximize TC outcomes. By sharing the early experiences of the TQP project, the authors hope to provide insight as other institutions

seek to design and reform their own undergraduate programs to prepare TCs to work in HNS.

### Current Project Parallels

The TQP project aims to enhance the preparation of students seeking a bachelor's degree in education at UCF and support the project partner district in improving education for students within HNS. The development of TCs during their clinical internship is a project priority with a goal to develop, pilot, implement, evaluate, and disseminate an EPM focused on evidence-based instruction and interventions. Figure 2 illustrates the current alignment between NCTR Competency Area III standards and the TQP project clinical internship for TCs receiving the EPM. A discussion of each standard and project parallels follows.

**Figure 2**  
*NCTR Competencies and TQP Project Crosswalk*

<b>Competency Area III: Residency Year Experience</b>		
<b>Standard 1.</b> Residency programs prepare residents to become student-ready teachers of record.		
<b>Goals</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>TQP (UCF/OCPS)</b>
<b>Goal 1</b> Residents learn the competencies of an effective teacher.	A. Program determines the competencies of an effective teacher.	Curriculum Frameworks Clinical Observation Tools
	B. Program develops and provides residents with integrated clinical experiences and coursework.	Ongoing collaboration among UCF Faculty, TQP staff, and OCPS Leadership
	C. Program develops and provides residents with multiple opportunities to learn, rehearse, enact and reflect on the competencies of an effective teacher.	PIR observations/coaching ST observations/coaching Internship coursework
<b>Goal 2</b>	A. Program builds and implements performance benchmarks to assess resident effectiveness.	Clinical Observation Tools Interviews/Focus Groups

Program improves resident effectiveness.	B. Program provides residents with feedback on development and competence.	Instructional Practice Guide Observation Conferences
<b>Standard 2.</b> Teacher educators prepare residents to become student-ready teachers of record.		
<b>Goal 1</b> Teacher educators guide residents to develop the competencies of an effective teacher.	A. Program determines the competencies of an effective teacher educator.	Clinical Supervision course ST criteria and requirements
	B. Program pairs residents with effective teacher educators in a clinical setting, full-time, for one academic year.	Opportunity to remain at same site for Internship I and II placements
	C. Teacher educators provide residents with multiple opportunities to learn, rehearse, enact and reflect on the competencies of an effective teacher.	ST observations/coaching Internship coursework Collaborative planning School-wide events
<b>Goal 2</b> Program collects and uses data to improve teacher educator effectiveness.	A. Program builds and implements performance benchmarks to assess teacher educator development and competence.	TQP evaluation team On-going meetings with PIRs
	B. Program provides teacher educators with consistent feedback on development and competence, and targeted training.	PIR and ST relationships Professional learning opportunities
	C. Program shares and analyzes teacher educator and resident data with all stakeholders to improve program design and implementation.	Advisory Committee Meetings

### Competency III, Standard 1

Competency Area III, Standard 1 addresses program design in preparing TCs to become “student-ready” teachers of record. TR programs prioritize rigorous coursework focused on teaching and learning, blend theory and practice within a clinical internship, and align content and experience to what matters for K-12 students (Guha et al., 2016; NCTR, 2020a). A discussion of the individual goals and indicators within Competency Area III, Standard 1 reveals the strong alignment of TQP project practices in clinical internship with NCTR competencies.

**Goal 1.** Standard 1, Goal 1 addresses teaching TCs the competencies of an effective teacher. An internship rubric and observation tool was developed by the UCF School of Teacher Education through a collaboration between faculty and the Office of Clinical and Field Experiences. The rubric and observation tool focuses clinical field experiences around the Florida Educators Accomplished Practices (FEAPs). The FEAPs are the essential knowledge and skills educators need and inform teacher preparation programs in developing courses and tools for pre-service teachers (FEAP, 2011). The TQP project aims to enhance the

foundation of the university rubric and observation tools through the EPM delivered to the treatment group. The EPM provides additional tools, resources, coaching, and application opportunities in alignment with district and school practices to authentically prepare TCs for the environments they will be working in following graduation.

Faculty put in extensive time and effort at the outset of the TQP program to co-construct a curriculum for TC's in the EPM group to explore within their internship. The first TQP project Advisory Council meeting led to EPM curriculum foci in culturally responsive teaching and social emotional learning, in addition to content expertise. University Faculty and TQP project leaders also considered the internship assignments within co-requisite courses when developing the TQP project EPM Curriculum Scope and Sequence (Appendix A). PIRs implement this Scope and Sequence with TCs in the EPM treatment group throughout their internship. The "Related Internship Assignment" column in the Scope and Sequence explicitly connects TC course assignments to enhanced resources, coaching, and experiences facilitated by the PIR weekly. A Lesson Plan Development Guide was created to further align course theories with classroom application, illustrating explicit connections between instructional resources available to TCs from the university and the partner district. The EPM curriculum, Lesson Plan Development Guide, and internship assignments create a foundation from which TCs can explore lesson planning on a deeper level, hone their craft, and engage in reflective practices focused on student learning outcomes.

**Goal 2.** Goal 2 of Standard 1 in Competency III focuses on TC effectiveness within an improvement cycle. Within the TQP project, PIRs support TCs in reflecting on and strengthening their instructional practice. The Instructional Practice Guide from Achieve

the Core (Student Achievement Partners, 2018) is an essential tool used in the improvement cycle for TCs in the EPM treatment group. The PIR uses the Instructional Practice Guide to view the TC's mathematics instruction through a specified lens and is designed as a coaching tool to support planning, reflection, and collaboration. In addition to using an improvement cycle to support TCs, the TQP project also undergoes an improvement cycle to refine program practices based upon the unique goals of the project. This assessment protocol will be outlined in "Data Collection and Analysis."

### **Data and Analysis**

At the outset of the project, data collection and analysis related to TC clinical experience consisted of an assessment protocol to monitor TC growth during their internship and develop fidelity within the EPM. The protocol is comprised of evidence-based measurement tools from recognized leaders in the field and tools created by TQP project personnel to measure the unique goals of the project. Pre and post surveys are administered to TCs and STs at the start and completion of internship placements to measure aspects of teacher beliefs, such as self-efficacy and perception of working in an HNS. The TQP evaluation team also facilitates multiple interviews and focus group sessions with TCs throughout the internship placement to gain insight into the experiences of those receiving the EPM and those in the 'business as usual' group. Interviews and focus groups containing questions about perceptions of TC experience and growth are also conducted with STs, principals, and PIRs. Regular meetings are held with PIRs to gather information based on their observations of TCs and STs within the school site. Additionally, PIRs document their observations, coaching sessions, and

interactions with TCs and STs in a digital log created by the TQP evaluation team.

Responses from surveys, interviews, focus groups, and PIR meetings and logs serve to illustrate TC experiences in clinical placement and help to identify areas in which TCs need more support in their preparation. The TQP project evaluation team employs both quantitative and qualitative measures and analysis to integrate this data into annual reports to shape recommendations for improving the EPM and the project. For example, feedback from the first full semester of the project revealed STs were unclear on the specific roles of the PIR. To address this, the TQP team is currently developing specific guidance documents and examples to better communicate and clarify the responsibilities and actions of the PIRs in relation to the school-sites, TCs, STs, and principals. Response data is analyzed by the evaluation team to guide the development of additional support and coaching for TCs, and changes, additions, or supplements to professional learning opportunities within the EPM. Based on this data, the TQP project utilizes Technical Working Groups, comprised of university faculty, TQP project staff, OCPS district administrators, school site administrators and teachers, and national partners, to develop resources for EPM professional learning and curriculum. For example, the Mathematics Technical Working Group created the aforementioned Lesson Plan Development Guide to bridge an identified gap between TC coursework and school practices. To include all stakeholders in reviewing and using data to make improvements, the TQP project also holds regular Advisory Committee meetings with OCPS, the UCF School of Teacher Education, and the UCF College of Community Innovation and Education administration. Feedback, data, and insight from all parties are used in these meetings to

enhance TQP program design and implementation.

### **Project Next Steps**

During initial development of the TQP project, focus was placed on enhancing the program design and TC learning and growth, in line with Competency Area III, Standard 1. Moving forward, the project is adding efforts to focus on how the residency program supports teacher educators (STs) in preparing TCs to become “student-ready” teachers of record. This aligns with NCTR Competency Area III, Standard 2. During the upcoming semesters, the TQP project will develop professional learning and resources for STs. An improvement cycle based on data and feedback will also be created to strengthen the effectiveness of STs in mentoring TCs.

The first goal in the NCTR Competency Area III, Standard 2 focuses on how STs mentor TCs as they learn the practices of an effective teacher. It targets how a TR program determines the competencies of an effective ST and ensures TCs are in a supportive environment. The TQP project and OCPS currently requires all STs to have at least three years of teaching experience, be evaluated as “effective” or “highly effective,” and complete a Clinical Supervision course. In addition, the TQP project asks STs to complete a book study during this course using the text “Mentoring Pre-Service Teachers Through Practice: A Framework for Coaching with Care” (Wetzel, Hoffman, & Maloch, 2017). Goal 1 also highlights the importance of STs providing multiple opportunities for TCs to learn, practice, implement, and reflect on effective teacher competencies. Project next steps include the development of professional learning opportunities for STs related to coaching and mentoring TCs. School site PIRs will support STs in applying their new learning and coaching practices. Feedback, observations, and data collected from this

professional learning and coaching for STs will be used as part of an improvement cycle to strengthen this area of the TQP project. The evaluation team and project Technical Working Groups are currently working on identifying and creating measurement tools to structure this improvement cycle and further project alignment with this aspect of the NCTR standards.

### Implications

TR models are designed to provide rich clinical experiences to education scholars through an innovative program structure and partnerships between universities and local school districts. The NCTR framework guides the development of TR programs and ensures universities and school districts interested in implementing a TR model have considered all necessary components for effective teacher preparation. The TQP project at UCF, in partnership with the OCPS district, are using this framework to reflect on their current internship model and inform next steps. Information about the TQP project's TR program alignment process can inform best practice in teacher education modalities and provide data to support further enhancements in the field of teacher preparation. Teacher preparation programs can utilize processes and techniques employed by the project in forming a residency model to strengthen their own clinical experience programs. Approaches used in the TQP project can be replicated by preparation program administrators to individualize and implement TR model standards to best meet the unique characteristics of their institutions program and local district schools. Programs might also consider how they can establish and implement a PIR-type role within their model. The PIR serves as a liaison between the university and the district school sites, provides valuable observations and insights into internship experiences, and most

importantly, delivers enhanced coaching and support to TCs, STs, and partner school personnel to bridge theory to practice.

Overall, the TQP project's community and district partnerships, situation within HNS, and focus on mathematics can lend valuable insight into these areas individually and collectively, contributing to the greater picture of comprehensive, authentic teacher preparation.

A few key implications for future research stem from this project. More studies are needed to comparing the benefits of establishing a few professional development schools/sites with concentrated support within a district and adopting internship models that disperse placements and support to reach all schools. Investigating the benefits of the same faculty teaching both methodology and practice courses within a preparation program would also be important. Research into the key aspects and different roles of a PIR (or similar position) and their impact on TC learning, program development, and university-district partnerships could also contribute to the development of preparation program best practices.

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## Appendix

### TQP Teacher Candidate EPM Curriculum Scope & Sequence

Week	Topic	Resource	Related Course Assignments*
<b>*EDE 3942: Internship I; MAE 4326: How Children Learn Mathematics; RED 4942: Practicum for Assessment &amp; Instruction of Reading</b>			
1	Building Relationships with Teacher Candidates	Clinical Experiences Handbook	EDE 3942 First Day Report
2	Relationship building	A Classroom Where Everyone Feels Welcome	
3	What is coaching?	Role of a PIR (PIR Guide)  Achieve the Core Instructional Practice Guide	
4	Bridging expectations with classroom reality	Lesson Plan Development Guide with Corresponding Video  Upcoming Mathematics Lesson Plan PowerPoint Presentation (OCPS CRM or Lesson Progression)	MAE 4326: 1 <sup>st</sup> Math Lesson Plan RED 4942: Case Study
5	Culturally Responsive Teaching	CEEDAR: Culturally Responsive Teaching (strategies)	MAE 4326: 1 <sup>st</sup> Math Lesson Plan RED 4942: Case Study
6	Connecting the nature of stress in the mind and the body (Intern I)	Counseling Session Differences between “good” and “bad” stress on Mind/Body  Preservice teachers will develop a wellness action plan	
7	Creating a Climate of Inclusivity to Increase Access and Engagement	Classroom Management Resources	EDE 3942: Midpoint Paperwork  RED 4942: Case Study
8	Flex week		

9	Classroom culture/Relationships	<i>Revisit: A Classroom Where Everyone Feels Welcome</i>  Implicit Bias: What it Means and How it Affects Behavior	MAE 4326: Plan for Lesson Plan 2
10	Setting expectations through clear language	Wong & Wong, <i>The First Days of School</i> - Classroom Management  Well-Managed Classroom Observation Tool	
11	Social Supports as Saving Graces within and outside the school group (Intern I)	Counseling Session  Building Social Support Networks  Developing Mentorship Map	RED 4942: Case Study Part 2
12	Characteristics of a Star Teacher	Beliefs and Behaviors of Star Teachers	MAE 4326: Lesson Plan 2
13	Flex week	Professional Development Plan (PDP)	EDE 3942: Final Paperwork
14	Celebration		

Week	Topic	Resource	Related Course Assignments*
<b>*EDE 4943: Internship II</b>			
1	Building Relationships with Teacher Candidates	Student Teaching Handbook	EDE 4943: First Day Report
2	Relationship building	Classroom Where Everyone Feels Welcome  Teacher Work Sample (TWS)	TWS Part 1 – Contextual Factors
3	Coaching as a Vehicle for Self-Reflection	Professional Development Plan (PDP)  Role of PIR (PIR Guide)  Achieve the Core Instructional Practice Guide (Coaching Tool)	Professional Development Plan
4	High Leverage Practices in Lesson Planning and Lesson Delivery	High Leverage Practice: Establish a Consistent, Organized, & Respectful Learning Environment (video)  High Leverage Practice: Use Strategies to Promote Active student Engagement (video)	TWS Part 4

<b>5</b>	Planning for your Teacher Work Sample: Bridging expectations with classroom reality	Lesson Plan Development Guide & Video  Upcoming Lesson Plan PowerPoint Presentation	TWS Part 4
<b>6</b>	Engagement Strategies	Activity Conditions of Learning  Bring Excitement to Any Lesson	
<b>7</b>	Developing positive communications with students	Assertiveness Self Reflection Activity	EDE 4301: PDP Mid-Point Reflection
<b>8</b>	Disciplinary Literacy – Comprehension in Mathematics	Reading Math from the Start Article	
<b>9</b>	Multiple Modes of Representation	CAST Universal Design for Learning Framework	TWS Part 4
<b>10</b>	Culturally Responsive Teaching in Mathematics	How do I Teach Mathematics in a Culturally Responsive Way?	
<b>11</b>	Social-Emotional Learning: Looking at the Whole Child, including the use of data	Social and Emotional Learning Chart (front and back)	
<b>12</b>	Reflective Practice as an Educator – Finding your Voice and Mentorship Mapping	Counseling Session  Aligning Time with Priorities	
<b>13</b>	Flex week		EDE 4943: Final Paperwork
<b>14</b>	Celebration		