LATE to the Party: A New Theoretical Framework of Liberal Arts Teacher Education

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Abstract

A theoretical framework is introduced that articulates the complex nature of what liberal arts teacher educators do, what teacher candidates learn, and the enduring tension inherent in that work. The researcher surveyed liberal arts teacher educators ($n = 64$) regarding beliefs about seven enduring tensions in education—content knowledge/pedagogical knowledge, leading/following, differentiation/standardization, theory/practice, individual needs/group needs, global issues/local issues, and professional needs/personal or social-emotional needs. The pairs consist of education topics that are potentially, but not necessarily, at odds. Participants indicated which concept in each pair they believe is more important or indicated that the concepts were equally important for teacher candidates to learn. Participants then reported which of the concepts in each pair received more time in their teacher preparation program or if the concepts received equal time. Data were analyzed to inform the development of the Liberal Arts Teacher Education (LATE) theoretical framework presented. The LATE framework includes traditional teacher knowledge (content and pedagogy) and the moral, ethical, cultural, and relational dimensions of teaching (pedagogical and professional discernment). Of the participants, 97.9% believed personal/social-emotional needs (i.e., facilitating work-life balance, strategies to avoid burnout) were as or more important for teacher candidates to learn as professional needs (i.e., licensure requirements). Yet, only 29.7% reported that the social-emotional needs of teachers got as much or more time in the program as professional needs. The LATE theoretical framework emphasizes teacher well-being and social-emotional learning. The author

recommends embedding social-emotional learning skills for teacher candidates throughout the program so teacher candidates are equipped to navigate the enduring tensions of the profession productively, persist in the field, and love their work.

Keywords: liberal arts, teacher education, pedagogy, social-emotional learning, discernment

Making a case for a liberal arts college education is challenging, in part, because its value is difficult to communicate in sound bites (Jaschik, 2017; Zinser, 2013). Training for a specific profession is traditionally at odds with common definitions of the liberal arts (Kimball, 2013), so making a case for liberal arts teacher preparation programs can be even more difficult. As a teacher educator in a small private liberal arts college, I can attest to the enduring tension between the liberal arts and teacher preparation but suggest that preprofessional teacher preparation is at its best when framed in the liberal arts from start to finish.

> The aims of a strong liberal education include: developing the intellect and the capacity for lifelong learning; shaping ethical judgment and the capacity for insight and concern for others, our habitats, and the future; increasing understanding of cultures, languages, and societies, and the connections among them; comprehending relationships between landscapes and built environments, institutional systems and conditions of populations; expanding scientific horizons and mastering common scientific literacy and technological competence; nurturing democratic and global knowledge and engagement. (Zinser, 2013)

A liberal arts education is designed to produce lifelong learners and thoughtful, culturally responsive citizens (Jaschik, 2017). These goals are surely consistent with what one would expect of an effective educator.

The purpose of this research was to develop a liberal arts teacher education (LATE) framework with merit (that is logistically sound, clear, and straightforward [Lincoln & Guba, 1980]) and worth (that represents the complexities of teacher preparation well and is useful [Lincoln & Guba, 1980]). The LATE theoretical framework can be used to (1) communicate the mission of liberal arts educator preparation programs (EPPs), (2) inform program design and instructional methods, and (3) guide future research. Having a model that demonstrates the complexities of what liberal arts teacher educators do and teacher candidates must learn could (1) facilitate recruitment of more teacher candidates to our programs, (2) improve collaboration with institutional and community partners, (3) strengthen support from college

administrators and faculty, and (4) be used in accreditation reports.

To practice what we preach, we must use theory to inform practice and guide research. Access to a common theoretical framework could also facilitate efficient collaboration among EPPs. Given the small size of many liberal arts EPPs, such cooperation is invaluable. The theoretical framework presented here articulates the complexities of what teacher educators do and what teacher candidates learn. It also acknowledges the difference between learning traditional teacher knowledge and the discernment required to apply that knowledge effectively.

Arriving at the LATE Framework

Teacher educators Schnellert, Richardson, and Cherkowski (2014) described the importance of self-study, critical reflection, and reflexivity to navigate the tensions in their work and how "narrative forms of inquiry and reflexive analysis supported them to enact their learning" (p. 233). Likewise, arriving at the LATE theoretical framework presented here was, in large part, the result of my self-study, critical reflection, and reflexity as a teacher educator. For the past three years, I have listened carefully to students and colleagues talk about their teaching experiences to better understand the complexities and nuances of teaching and teacher education to prepare educators more effectively.

This project began in July 2017, at the Wye Faculty Seminar: Citizenship in the American and Global Polity in Queens, Maryland (Aspen Institute, n.d.). In the spirit of full disclosure, I did not attend a liberal arts college. Yes, I was late to the party. Attending this seminar was my first immersive liberal arts learning experience, and I was hooked. The experience changed how I think and teach. I left the seminar committed to makeover my education classes to be more aligned with the mission and methods of the liberal arts. Realizing I had more to learn, I applied to be an Honors Fellow so that I could collaborate with faculty from other departments to redesign the introduction to the liberal arts seminar in the Honors program. This work afforded an indepth opportunity to read, think, and explore how the teacher preparation program could leverage the benefits of a liberal arts

education to prepare more discerning teacher candidates. It was difficult, stimulating work.

Next, I redesigned my special education methods class to have a more liberal arts feel while still addressing the required preprofessional content. Previous iterations of the course emphasized a long list of pedagogical methodologies using a traditional methods textbook. That strategy seemed adequate but disappointing every semester. While we covered a great deal of material, it felt like browsing a catalog of products the shoppers may or may not ever buy. After the course makeover, I focused on the development of preservice teachers' pedagogical discernment, collaborative problem-solving skills (Wolfe, 2010), and new educator survival skills (Billingsley, Brownell, Israel, & Kamman, 2013). The objective of the redesign was to build pedagogical content knowledge *and* the discernment required to use that knowledge in practice. Instead of utilizing a traditional methods textbook, students (1) discussed philosophical texts, a veteran teacher's memoir (Hankins, 2003), and numerous student-selected texts related to education; (2) searched for current, relevant education blogs, books, and instructional resources and reported what they learned with classmates, and (3) collaboratively created an online special education toolkit they could use long after the final exam. Methodological content was embedded in a semester of collaborative and constructivist learning endeavors. Discussions and assignments were designed to foster preservice teachers' understanding of the complexities of teaching, the importance of thinking deeply about curricular decisions and instructional strategies from varied perspectives, and their responsibilities as professional educators and global citizens. Preservice teachers still learned about methods and instructional strategies, but in a more interdisciplinary way. Students engaged socially, worked collaboratively, and regularly reflected together. They learned about teaching methods with an emphasis on "generativity, active discovery, reflectivity and metacognition, cooperation, and community" (Mintrop, 2001, p. 208).

Enduring Tensions

Redesigning the methods course resulted in teacher candidates

having a better understanding of the many enduring tensions in the profession of teaching. I noticed that class discussions frequently included the phrase, "Yes, but" and paid attention to which concepts resulted in "Yes, but" (or similar) responses. For example, when discussing the importance of differentiated instruction to meet individual student needs, teacher candidates responded with "Yes, but." They wanted to know how to differentiate in an era driven by pacing guides and frequent standardized benchmark tests. The liberal arts makeover of the course seemed to work as teacher candidates demonstrated a growing understanding of the challenges and constraints they would face as teachers. No longer were my students browsing a catalog of instructional methods; instead, they were discerning how and why instructional decisions are made.

It was at this point that I developed a list of the seven conceptual pairs in Table 1. The conceptual pairs emerged over time

Table 1
Conceptual Pairs: Enduring Tensions in Education

Content knowledge	⟷	Pedagogical knowledge
Meeting needs of individual students	⟷	Meeting needs of groups of students
Differentiation–providing instruction that is modified to meet the needs of diverse learners	⟷	Standardization–providing instruction that is aligned with established standards
Global issues in education	⟷	Local issues in education
Professional needs of teachers (i.e., licensure requirements, additional professional development opportunities)	⟷	Personal and social-emotional needs of teachers (i.e., facilitating work-life balance, strategies to avoid burnout)
Learning educational theories	⟷	Clinical practice
Teaching candidates to be effective leaders	⟷	Teaching candidates to follow directives

Note: Each conceptual pair represents an enduring tension that teacher candidates must learn to navigate to be effective professional educators. The list of concepts is not intended to be exhaustive, but rather, represents a purposeful sampling of enduring tensions in the profession.

through discussions with students and colleagues about teaching that led to more "Yes, but" responses. The conceptual pairs are potentially, but not necessarily, at odds. For example, yes, teachers are called upon to be leaders in their classrooms and school community, *but* they must simultaneously follow required school protocols and administrators' mandates. While one hopes that classroom leadership naturally aligns with following school policies and protocols, there are times when teachers must advocate for change or an exception to meet students' needs. Thus, being both a leader and follower can be an enduring tension of the profession. The seven pairs were not intended to be exhaustive, but rather, represent a useful sampling of enduring tensions in the field. I believed my students needed to consider and learn to navigate these enduring tensions to be discerning educators. Having developed the list of enduring tensions through my own experiences, observations, and reflexive analysis, I wanted to explore the perspectives of other liberal arts teacher educators about these enduring tensions. I surveyed teacher educators at AILACTE institutions.

The proposed theoretical framework evolved as a result of reflection, reflexive analysis, and the survey data. Like Schnellert, et al. (2014) explained, for reflexive research-practitioners, "research and practice are continuously informing one another" (p. 235).

The survey results confirmed that liberal arts teacher educators acknowledged these enduring tensions are relevant to a LATE curriculum. Navigating these and other enduring tensions with integrity, wisdom, and empathy requires discernment; these are the moral, ethical, cultural, relational dimensions (AILACTE, n.d.) of teaching in the LATE framework.

Literature Review

Darling-Hammond and Bransford's (2005) framework for teaching and learning is provided in Figure 1 (see appendix, page 19). The framework presents a "vision of professional practice" (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005) that incorporates three overlapping components of traditional teacher knowledge, including knowledge of (1) learners and learner development, (2) subject

matter and curriculum goals, and (3) teaching or pedagogy. Of course, having this knowledge does not assure teacher candidates will be able to apply it effectively in the messy and unpredictable reality of real classrooms. Darling-Hammond (2006) acknowledges "they must learn to deal with 'the problem of complexity' that is made more intense by the constantly changing nature of teaching and learning in groups" (Darling-Hammond, 2006, p. 6).

Van Manen's (1986, 1991, 2000) writing about pedagogical thoughtfulness and tact addresses the interpersonal, moral aspects of teaching. To have pedagogical thoughtfulness is to have an insightful, empathetic way of being with students, to understand how the student is experiencing a situation and responding with care (Van Manen, 1986). It is a way of connecting that makes students feel seen, heard, respected, and understood (Van Manen, 1986). "To exercise tact means to *see* a situation calling for sensitivity, to *understand* the meaning of what is seen, to *sense the significance* of this situation, to *know how and what to do*, and to actually do something right" (Van Manen, 1991, p. 146).

Van Manen (1991) suggested that pedagogical thoughtfulness and tact cannot be taught, yet teaching it is what teacher educators are tasked to do. Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) Standard 2 specifies that each teacher preparation program assures that candidates develop the "professional dispositions necessary to demonstrate positive impact on all P–12 students' learning and development" (CAEP, 2019, p. 1). Even if " 'pedagogical thoughtfulness and tact' are unlearnable as mere behavioral principles, techniques, or methods" (Van Manen, 1991, p. 8-9), I believe these traits can be cultivated incrementally over time with purposefully designed learning experiences.

I use the term pedagogical discernment in the LATE framework. I define pedagogical discernment as the ability to read how students experience a situation and respond with empathy and wisdom so that students feel seen, heard, respected, and understood so that learning is likely. Pedagogical discernment enables one to be an insightful planner, problem-solver, and culturally responsive teacher. It encompasses Van Manen's (1986, 1991, 2000) ideas of pedagogical thoughtfulness and tact; it is the

moral, ethical, cultural, and relational application of pedagogical knowledge. In the same way one can develop critical thinking skills, I suggest that teacher candidates can increase pedagogical discernment as part of a LATE program.

I also include professional discernment in the LATE framework. Professional discernment is defined here as the ability to navigate workplace dynamics effectively—with wisdom, integrity, and collegiality. It is the ability to read how colleagues and stakeholders experience a situation,so that others feel seen, heard, respected, and understood. Professional discernment facilitates productive mediation of conflicts and progress toward goals. It makes one an insightful collaborator, problem-solver, and culturally responsive colleague. Professional discernment is the moral, ethical, cultural, relational dimension of being a professional educator. I suggest that in the same way one can develop critical thinking skills, teacher candidates can increase their professional discernment as part of a LATE program.

There is little research specifically addressing the impact of liberal arts teacher education on teacher candidate effectiveness (Mackler, 2014). Of the recent literature found, there is a tendency toward defensive posturing that may be more problematic than helpful (Kimball, 2013; Liston, Whitcomb, & Borko, 2009; Mackler, 2014). Liston et al. (2009) reported that "significant and powerful countervailing pressures exist and act against a liberal arts-based approach," including a tendency for education programs to focus too narrowly on a single, dominant educational framework that does not necessarily work well in today's public schools.

> Candidates should not be trained or molded to fit a particular educational path—at least not without their informed and educated consent. Today, however, many (certainly not all) university-based teacher candidates are being inculcated to see teaching and schooling within a dominant, progressive paradigm. Given the range of possible paths and the admixture of educational orientations that have and could exist, a rather narrow, and some would argue ineffectual, path is being taken. (Liston, et al. 2009, p. 107)

Liberal arts teacher education programs should not succumb to an overly simplified, one-size-fits-all approach. We need a

theoretical framework that articulates the benefits of LATE and can be used to design programs that prepare candidates to teach well, navigate challenges with discernment, and persist in the field because they enjoy this vital work.

Method

This project was a qualitative, exploratory study of liberal arts teacher educators' perceptions regarding the following guiding research questions. Data were analyzed to inform the development of the LATE theoretical framework presented.

1. How do liberal arts teacher educators prioritize the importance of concepts in Table 1 *(page 6)* that represent enduring tensions teacher candidates need to learn to navigate?
   a. Do they rate one concept as being more important than the other, or do they believe the concepts are equally important?
   b. Do they report that one concept gets more time and attention in their EPP, or do they believe the concepts get equal time and attention in their EPP?

Upon approval of the affiliated institutional review board, liberal arts teacher educators were solicited to participate in the study ($n = 64$). For each of the seven conceptual pairs in Table 1, participants were asked, "In your opinion, which of these is most important for teacher candidates to learn?" Participants responded by indicating which of the two concepts they believe is more important or indicated that the two concepts are equally important. After identifying which concept was more important of the two, participants were asked another question about the same conceptual pair—"In your opinion, which of these gets the most time and attention at your teacher preparation program at your institution?" Participants then indicated which concept gets more time and attention or if they believe the concepts get equal time and attention.

Participants

A purposeful, snowball sample of teacher educators from 107 AILACTE member institutions was solicited via email invitations

to the designated contact listed in the AILACTE institution membership directory. I invited the designated AILACTE contact to solicit up to three participants from their institution to complete the online survey. The contact could participate as one of the three. The link was included in the email invitation. I excluded the institution where I teach from the study. Participation was voluntary, and no identifiable information about the participant or institution was collected. I wanted respondents to answer candidly without concern that their answers might reflect negatively on their institution. The survey was open for a month, and a short reminder email was sent to the designated contact after the survey had been open for a week. The roles of participants in LATE are provided in Table 2.

Table 2
Participants

Role	Percentage	$n=64$
Teacher preparation administrators with no teaching responsibilities	7.8%	5
Teacher preparation administrators with teaching responsibilities	25%	18
Teacher preparation faculty	64.1%	41
Teacher preparation instructors	3.1%	2

There is not enough information to ascertain the response rate for survey. A total of 107 AILACTE institution liaisons were invited to invite up to three teacher educators from their institution to respond to the survey, resulting in a minimum possible N of 107 and a maximum of 321. Thus, with $n = 64$, the response rate is between 19.9% and 59.8%.

Results

Responses to the questions are provided in Table 3 *(page 12)*. Most respondents rated the concepts in every pair as being equally important for teacher candidates to learn. At least 75% of the respondents rated five of the seven conceptual pairs as being equally important for teacher candidates to learn.

Believing the concepts were equally important did not result in concepts getting equal time and attention in the EPP. Most

Table 3

Teacher Educators Report Their Perceptions of Which Concepts are More Important for Teacher Candidates to Learn and Which get More Time and Attention at their EPP

	Theory	Practice	Equal
Imp.	3.1%(*n*=2)	20.3%(*n*=13)	76.6%(*n*=49)
T&A	10.9%(*n*=7)	20.3%(*n*=13)	68.8%(*n*=44)
	Standardization	Differentiation	Equal
Imp	3.1% (*n*=2)	40.6%(*n*=26)	56.3%(*n*=36)
T&A	25.0%(*n*=16)	28.1%(*n*=18)	46.9%(*n*=30)
	Groups	Individuals	Equal
Imp.	4.7%(*n*=3)	17.2%(*n*=11)	78.1%(*n*=50)
T&A	28.1%(*n*=18)	12.5%(*n*=8)	59.4%(*n*=38)
	Global	Local	Equal
Imp	7.8% (*n*=5)	31.3%(*n*=20)	60.9%(*n*=39)
T&A	7.8% (*n*=5)	50.0%(*n*=32)	42.2%(*n*=27)
	Content	Pedagogy	Equal
Imp.	1.6%(*n*=1)	12.5%(*n*=8)	85.9%(*n*=55)
T&A	7.8%(*n*=5)	45.3%(*n*=29)	46.9%(*n*=30)
	Followers	Leaders	Equal
Imp	3.1% (*n*=2)	21.9%(*n*=14)	75.0%(*n*=48)
T&A*	19.0%(*n*=12)	49.2%(*n*=31)	31.7%(*n*=20)
	Professional	Personal/SEL	Equal
Imp.	3.1%(*n*=2)	17.2%(*n*=11)	79.7%(*n*=51)
T&A	70.3%(*n*=45)	1.6%(*n*=1)	28.1%(*n*=18)

Note: Imp=Survey Question: In your opinion, which of these is most important for teacher candidates to learn?; T&A=Survey Question: In your opinion which of these gets the most time and attention at your teacher preparation program at your institution?; Equal=Rated as equal; Theories=Learning educational theories; Practice=Clinical practice; Standardization=Providing instruction that is aligned with established standards; Differentiation=Providing differentiated instruction that is modified to meet the needs of diverse learners; Groups = Meeting needs of groups of students; Individuals = Meeting needs of individual students; Global = Global issues in education; Local = Local issues in education; Content = Content knowledge; Pedagogy = Pedagogical knowledge; Followers = Teaching candidates to follow directives; Leaders = Teaching candidates to be effective leaders; Professional = Professional needs of teachers (i.e., licensure requirements, additional professional development opportunities); Personal/SEL = Personal and social-emotional needs of teachers (i.e., facilitating work-life balance, strategies to avoid burnout)
*n = 63 for this question; n = 64 for all other questions in Table 3

respondents reported that only two pairs representing enduring tensions received equal time and attention at their EPP—education theories and clinical practice (68.8%); and meeting the needs of groups *and* individuals (59.4%). While 85.9% believed pedagogy and content were equally important, only 46.9% reported these as getting equal time and attention. Leading and following were considered equally important by 75% of participants, but only 31.7% reported that these concepts get equal time and attention.

The most striking discrepancy had to do with meeting the professional needs of teachers (i.e., licensure requirements, additional professional development opportunities) and meeting the personal and social-emotional needs of teachers (i.e., facilitating work-life balance, strategies to avoid burnout). An overwhelming majority of participants, 96.9%, believed the personal and social-emotional needs of teachers are equally important (79.7%) or more important (17.2%) than professional needs. Yet, only 29.7% of respondents reported that the personal and social-emotional needs of teachers received more time (1.6%) or equal time (28.1%) than the professional needs of teachers in their EPP.

Discussion and Framework

Initially, I envisioned the enduring tensions listed in Table 1 *(page 6)* as defining features of a new LATE framework, but my thinking evolved as I continued to read, discuss, and reflect on all that LATE is or should be. The conceptual pairs are only a sample of the enduring tensions, or "Yes, but" issues, that teaches must learn to navigate. There are many other essential concepts and skills required of teachers that do not fall into the enduring tension category. For example, pedagogically discerning teachers must know how to be culturally responsive, anti-racist educators (Hammond & Jackson, 2015). To be a culturally responsive, anti-racist educator really is an essential aspect of pedagogical and professional discernment. There is no "Yes, but" about it. Culturally responsive, anti-racist teaching must be a "Yes, period" aspect of LATE. A robust theoretical framework should account for all that teachers must know and navigate, and that is what this framework aspires to do.

While the LATE theoretical framework can be seen in Figure 4 *(page 22)*, the full model's robust nature is best explained by first examining the model's four foundational components *(see Figure 2, page 20)*. Traditional teacher knowledge includes content knowledge and pedagogy. The moral, ethical, relational dimensions of teaching include pedagogical and professional discernment. There is an enduring tension between the left and right sides of the framework—traditional teacher knowledge and the moral, ethical, and relational dimensions of teaching. These aspects can, at times, seem to be at odds. I propose there is an enduring tension between the top and bottom of the framework as well—meeting the needs of the students and meeting the needs of the school or district. Ideally, these work in tandem, but that is not always the case. High-stakes testing, budget constraints, and bureaucratic mandates required for the system are not always in the best interest of students, so the tensions must be navigated.

The framework articulates what teacher educators do in LATE and what we are training teacher candidates to do in P–12 schools. The model also articulates the knowledge and qualities teacher educators must model in an effective LATE program. Teacher candidates must acquire both traditional teacher knowledge and the moral, ethical, cultural, and relational dimensions of teaching to be effective educators. In practice, teacher candidates will utilize the knowledge and enact the qualities concurrently and iteratively in various educational settings with myriad diverse stakeholders.

Another layer of enduring tensions can be seen in Figure 3 *(page 21)*. The moral, ethical, cultural, and relational dimensions on the model's left side tend to be qualitative. Both pedagogical and professional discernment are ways of responding to complex situations in real-time. It is the interactive application of traditional teacher knowledge—a qualitative way of thinking, being, and using knowledge. Discernment can be identified as a present quality but is difficult to quantify.

Traditional teacher knowledge is more often approached quantitatively by accrediting agencies and state boards of education. The current culture of high-stakes testing in P–12, "What Works" (What Works Clearinghouse, n.d.), and accountability policies skew heavily toward quantitative approaches. Teacher education

accreditation requirements also tend to favor quantitative evidence.

Pedagogical knowledge and pedagogical discernment are focused on students' well-being. It is likely visions of student-focused teaching that attract many idealistic teacher candidates to the profession. Indeed, being an effective educator, persisting in the field, and enjoying the job requires that teachers maintain a strong focus on students' needs despite bureaucratic mandates and education politics.

Content knowledge is determined and assessed by systems—schools, accrediting agencies, and state boards of education; system-focused assessments serve as system well-being measures. Professional discernment has to do with navigating the system, and thus, is also focused on system well-being.

The complete LATE theoretical framework in Figure 4 *(page 22)* is a result of reflexive analysis over time and the survey data. The four foundational components in the LATE framework are situated in a larger circle labeled "Teacher Well-Being" and "Social-Emotional Learning," because the personal, social-emotional skills of teacher candidates were rated as being more or equally important than professional needs by 96.9% of study participants. The data suggest that AILACTE teacher educators believe developing social-emotional skills in our teacher candidates is a vital part of our job. I agree. Well-prepared teachers are well, prepared teachers. Unfortunately, it appears our beliefs are not yet reflected in the time and attention devoted to developing social-emotional well-being in our teacher candidates. Future research exploring how to develop social-emotional health in teacher candidates would be helpful. Does social-emotional health positively impact a teacher's ability to navigate enduring tensions and persist in the field? If so, we would be wise to embed it into our programs generously and as soon as possible.

Conclusion

A theory of liberal arts teacher education is needed to help us reflect on practice to determine the extent to which lessons, courses, field experiences, and programs are congruent with the liberal arts mission—that what we intend "to take place in the program is what actually occurs" (Pepper & Hare, 1999, p. 358).

Disseminating the LATE theoretical framework for critique is the next logical next step so that others can evaluate its merit and worth (Lincoln & Guba, 1980). Is it logistically sound, clear, and straightforward? Is it a useful tool? Program evaluations, course evaluations, and education research using the LATE framework are needed to answer these questions. The initial phase of this project included open-ended questions on the survey; the analysis and results of that data are beyond the scope of this article. I plan to interview LATE stakeholders in the next phase of this research. I also plan to embed more social-emotional learning throughout my courses and to research the efficacy of instructional strategies intended to develop discernment in teacher candidates.

> Liberal education is a liberating education in that it frees the mind to seek after the truth unencumbered by dogma, ideology, or preconceived notions. A liberally educated person can think for himself or herself, is both broad- and open-minded, and is, therefore, less susceptible to manipulation or prejudice…A liberal learner is an active participant and a partner in his or her own education and in the education of others, engaging in forms of inquiry that train the intellect through a focus on real-world problems that draw the learner into relationship with others (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2020, p. 9-11).

This description of the liberal arts education from the AACU's vision document summarizes the outcome desired for liberal arts teacher candidates. I hope the LATE theoretical framework will be a useful tool as we work together to develop discerning, knowledgeable, effective educators who productively navigate the enduring tensions in the profession and love their work.

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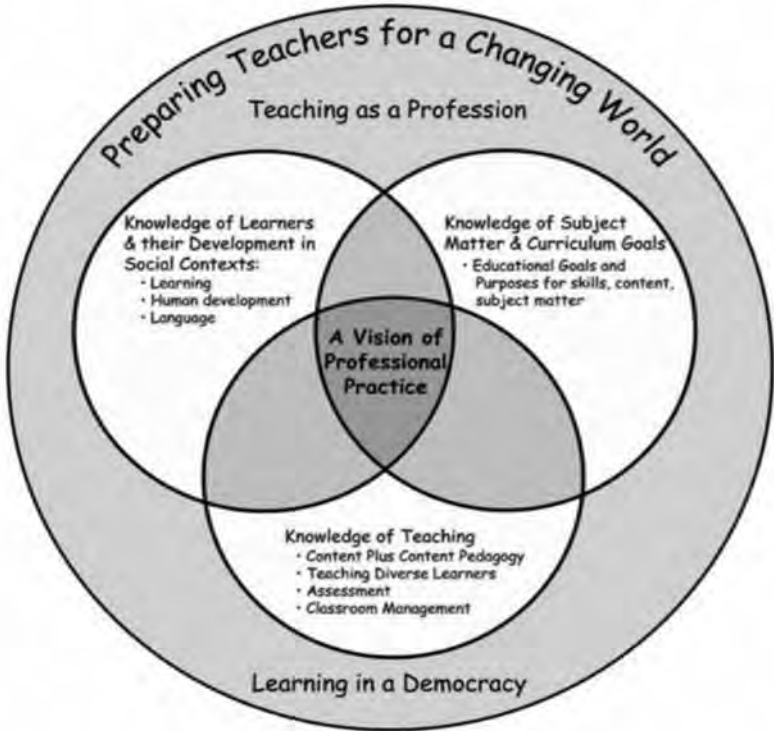
Appendix

Figure 1
"Framework for Understanding Teaching and Learning" by
Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005, p. 11) in Darling-
Hammond, L. (2006). Constructing 21st-century teacher
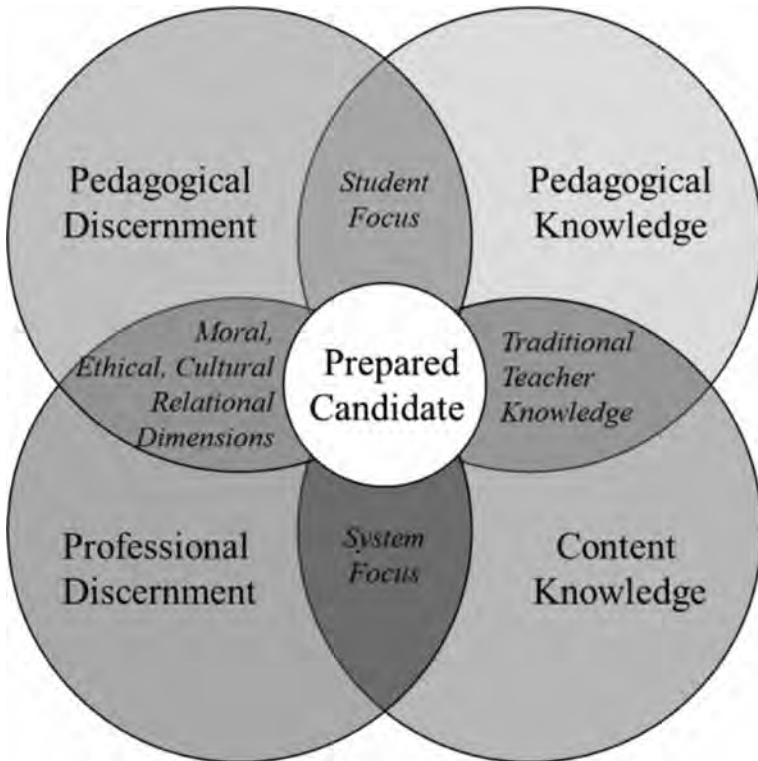education. *Journal of Teacher Education, 57*(3), 300–314.
https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487105285962

Figure 2
The four foundational components of the LATE theoretical
framework include pedagogical knowledge and content knowl-
edge (traditional teacher knowledge) on the right side and
pedagogical discernment and professional discernment (the moral
and interpersonal dimension of teaching) on the left side. The
top components are student focused. The bottom components are
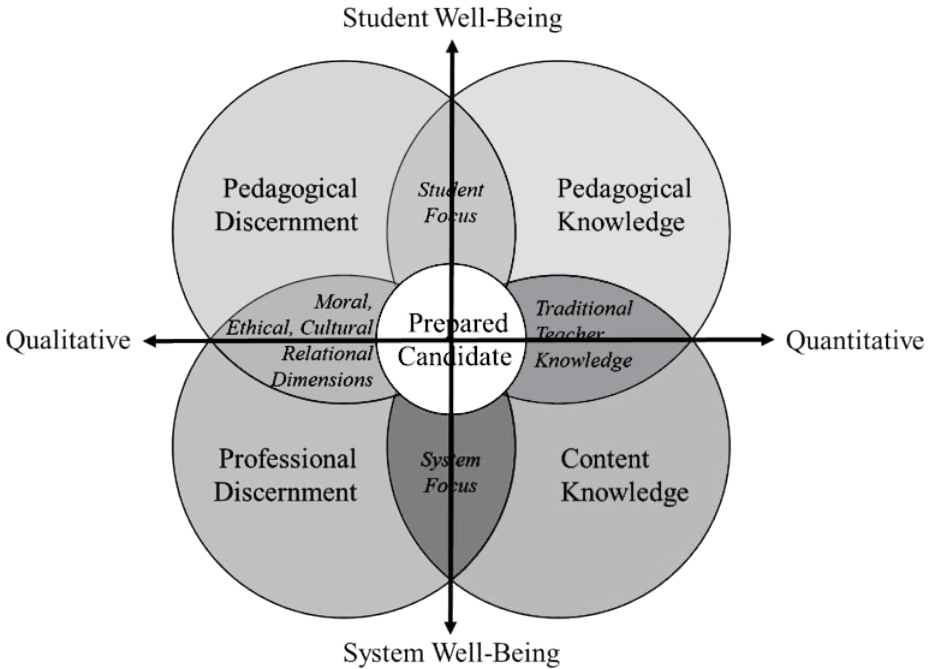system focused.

Figure 3

The moral, ethical, and relational dimensions on the left side of the model tend to be more qualitative. Traditional teacher knowledge tends to be approached quantitatively by accrediting agencies and state boards of education. Pedagogical knowledge and discernment are focused on students' well-being. Content knowledge is determined and assessed by school systems and state boards of education; it is system-focused, and assessment serves as a measure of the system's well-being. Professional discernment is also focused on system well-being.
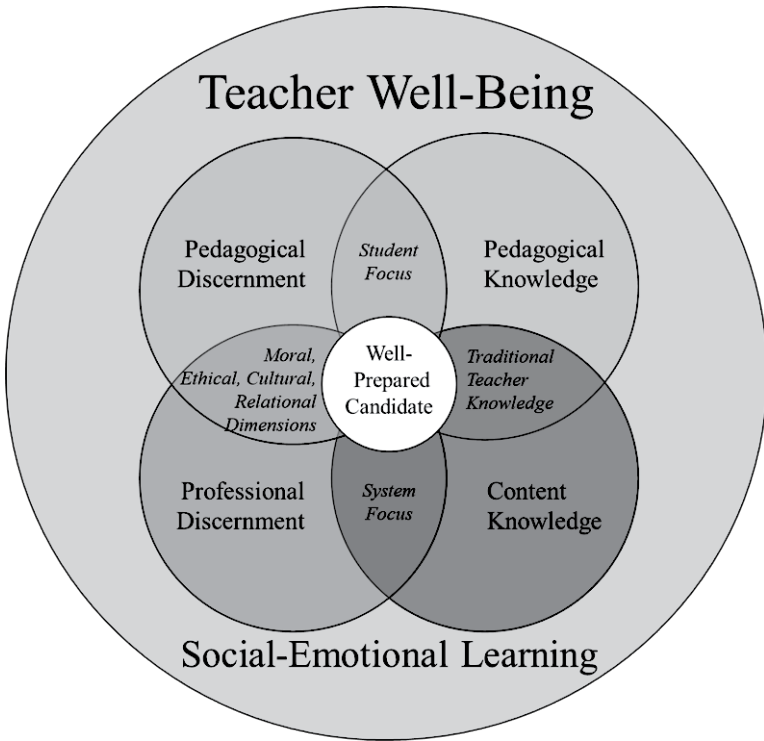
Figure 4

The four foundational components in the LATE framework are situated in a larger circle labeled "Teacher Well-Being," because the personal, social-emotional skills of teacher candidates were rated as being more or equally important than professional needs by 96.9% of study participants. A well-prepared teacher is a well, prepared teacher.