



Higher education is at the core of preparation-of 'highly effective' teachers in this country. (AACTE, 2011; Clotfelter, Ladd & Vigdor, 2007). This is supported by results from separate research studies showing that teachers who enter the profession after having completed an accredited teacher education program are prepared better to work with students than beginning teachers from non-accredited and non-higher education-based programs (Boyd, Grossman, Lankford, Loeb & Wyckoff, 2006; Darling-Hammond, Holtzman, Gatlin, & Heilig, 2005; and Kane, Rockoff & Staiger, 2006). In its conceptual framework, the Teacher Education Unit at Lock Haven University (LHU) emphasizes elements that are identified as having a profound effect on producing effective teachers in the 21st century.

Current research is clear that effective teachers positively impact the learning of K-12 students previously taught by teachers not identified as being effective (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2013). The importance of these elements is supported by recent guiding documents from. These include the United States Department of Education's (USDOE) *Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)*, the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation's (CAEP) *Transforming Teacher Education Through Clinical Practice*, Pennsylvania Department of Education's (PDE) *Common Core Standards*, the Pennsylvania State Schools of Higher Education's (PASSHE) *Strategic Vision*, and LHU's *Vision, Mission, Strategic Plan*."

The LHU Conceptual Framework of the Teacher Education Unit is a comprehensive model that is organized around Charlotte Danielson's four major elements in her Framework for Teaching which is critical to LHU's preparation of beginning teachers (Danielson, 2011). These elements are:

- Content Knowledge: Concepts and Skills
- Pedagogy: Research, Theory, and Practice
- Contextual Factors: Learners and the Learning Environment
- Professionalism: Ethics and Dispositions

LHU pre-service teachers are prepared for a profession that is ever changing to meet the needs of students. This ongoing transformation of teacher education and the needs of PreK-12 students highlights LHU teacher education values that are common to teacher preparation efforts globally. LHU teacher education students will complete their certification programs with a solid preparation that incorporates technology in teaching

and standards-based assessment of learning, with a significant focus on clinical practice in partnership with PreK-12 partners. This partnership allows pre-service teachers to use best practices early in their programs and enter the profession with the competencies necessary for beginning teachers to teach effectively.

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Element One – Knowledge: Concepts and Skills

In order to prepare effective beginning teachers today, it is important that teacher education knowledge, tools, and strategies be aligned with what is happening globally in the preparation of teachers (Delandshere and Petrosky, 2004; Darling-Hammond, et al., 2009; Wang, Lin, Spalding, Odell, & Klecka, 2011). Not only do we need to prepare teachers for what is happening now, but teachers should be adaptable for what education will be like in the future. Current reform in teacher education centers on global knowledge in a global context and how we can increase the likelihood that teachers will be highly effective in educating students for success in the context (Darling-Hammond, et al., 2009; Kane, Taylor, Tyler, & Wooten, 2011). There are two questions that we must answer to prepare our citizens to flourish in the worldwide economy: 1) What skills, knowledge, and concepts should our students have to succeed in today's global, technologically advanced society and make informed decisions regarding worldwide problems. 2) How do we train and produce the teachers needed to teach and use these skills and knowledge effectively?

What Students Should Know

The Pennsylvania Department of Education has established rigorous academic standards and assessments to evaluate student achievement. The academic standards therein describe the knowledge and skills which students will be expected to demonstrate before graduating from a public school in Pennsylvania. The PDE standards encompass the following subject areas: Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening; Mathematics; Science and Technology; Environment and Ecology; Social Studies; Arts and Humanities; Career Education and Work; Health, Safety and Physical Education; Family and Consumer Science; and World Languages. Not only does LHU's teacher education unit emphasize the importance of preparing our pre-service teachers to align instruction with PDE's standards, but also with the standards such as those developed by the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC).

The INTASC Standards (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2011) recommend that teachers must have a deep and flexible understanding of their subject areas so that they can access and apply ever-changing subject-matter knowledge. Teachers must be able to help students to see the interconnectivity of ideas regarding local and global issues. Of course, we believe that this is accomplished best at a university-based teacher education program that focuses not only on developing content knowledge, but the pedagogical skills that enable our pre-service teachers to employ best practices for teaching the content to PreK-12 students (Heineke, Carter, Desimone, & Cameron, 2010; Robertson & Singleton, 2010; Shaw, 2008).

The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE/CAEP) recommends that PreK-12 student learning include not only basic skills but also the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed as a responsible and productive citizen. Curriculum integration has long been proposed as a way of organizing the "common learnings" or life skills considered essential for citizenship in a democracy (Vars & Beane, 2005). The intent should be to help

students make sense out of their life experiences and to make informed decisions that affect them and those around them. (Beane, 1997). Recently, the Pennsylvania Department of Education (2010) adopted the Common Core Standards for Mathematics and Language Arts in order to ensure that students graduating from Pennsylvania schools will learn the information and skills needed to succeed in a global world. Much of this resonates with the philosophy espoused by John Dewey (Boydston, 1989; Cochran-Smith, Feiman-Nemser, McIntyre, & Demers, 2008; Dewey, 1989; Kolb, 1984), who suggested that schools should produce young people who are ready to take their place in a democratic society.

In addition to PDE, national organizations such as Specialized Professional Associations (SPAs) affiliated with the program review and accreditation process for certification degree programs are currently working to reform education in the United States. Many have published guidelines and standards not only for what school students should know and be able to do by the time they graduate from secondary schools, but also how instruction and teacher preparation should be conducted to achieve the visions of the various reform movements. The teacher education programs at LHU are designed to meet the expectations and guidelines set forth by these professional associations.

How we Prepare Teacher to Convey Knowledge

The university receives guidance from numerous sources regarding teacher preparation, including PDE, the United States Department of Education, and various national professional associations. For example, the federal *No Child Left Behind Act* of 2001 (NCLB) requires local school districts to ensure that all teachers hired to teach core and other academic subjects are impacting student learning effectively.

The fundamental knowledge requirements for proficient teaching are relatively clear. These include (a) a broad grounding in the liberal arts and sciences; (b) knowledge of the subjects to be taught, of the skills to be developed, and of the curricular arrangements and materials that organize and embody that content; and (c) the skills, capacities and dispositions to employ such knowledge wisely in the interest of students (Croffordt, Pederson, & Garn, 2011). Helping students develop rich understandings of important content requires teachers to possess understandings that go far beyond the knowledge and skills officially being taught. Many believe that teachers should know the content that they teach, including about the creation, discovery, and testing of new knowledge; major debates and disagreements in the field; principle perspectives or “schools of thought”; how the field has developed; and key contributors to the discipline (Craig & Ross, 2008; Shulman, 1986, 1987). The Teacher Education Unit at LHU highly values these components that are required to provide the necessary content knowledge for beginning teachers to be effective in impacting student learning. We require all prospective teachers at LHU to complete a rigorous program of general education studies at a high level of proficiency (minimum overall GPA of 3.0). Secondary education majors at LHU complete what is nearly the equivalent of a pure degree in their chosen field in addition to the general education requirements with the same high level of expectation. Likewise, PreK-4 early childhood education majors, special education majors with dual certifications, middle level education

majors, music education and health and physical education majors, and graduate students in educational leadership complete very specialized coursework appropriate to their fields of licensure. Subject matter knowledge, while no guarantee of effective instruction, is nevertheless a necessary and critical component of reflective practice.

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Element Two - Pedagogy: Research, Theory, and Practice

Subject-matter knowledge is important for teachers to impact student learning effectively. Not only should teachers have specialized understanding of the content that they teach (Etkina, 2010), but they need to be able to deliver content appropriately and pace the amount of content taught at any given time (Johnsen, 2010). Many reform efforts are calling for changes in our educational system that will help students to develop rich understandings of important content, think critically, construct and solve problems, synthesize information, invent, create, express themselves proficiently, and leave school prepared to be responsible citizens and lifelong learners. Although strong content knowledge and verbal skills have been linked to higher student achievement, this may not be sufficient for quality teaching and learning (Appleton, 2008; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Kane, Rockoff, & Staiger, 2006). In addition, we recognize the increasingly important role that globalization, technology, clinical practice, and assessment have in the education of future teachers.

Research shows that the connection between teachers' subject knowledge and student achievement is mixed, positively influencing student learning up to a certain level of basic competence but becoming less important after a certain point (Appleton, 2008; Darling-Hammond, 2000, 2006; Darling-Hammond, et al., 2008; Grossman, 2005). More recent research by Wenglinsky (2002) revealed that the greatest influence of teachers on students' achievement comes from classroom practices and professional development that supports the students' efforts. Wenglinsky's research indicates that "regardless of the level of preparation students bring into the classroom, decisions that teachers make about classroom practices can either greatly facilitate student learning or serve as an obstacle to it" (p.7). That is, teachers' pedagogical decisions and activities, separate from but related to teacher subject matter knowledge, greatly affect student achievement (Roberts & Singleton, 2010).

The classroom practices of teachers are in large part shaped by their personal life experiences (Cain & Cain, 2012). Furthermore, according to Dewey (Kolb, 1984), life experiences do not occur in a vacuum, but are a result of contact and communication with others in social situations. Dewey maintained that experiences are akin to building blocks: present experiences are built on ones of the past and serve as the base for ones to come in the future (Kolb, 1984). Thus, experiences occur in continuity with one another and are constantly being changed and negotiated. Vygotsky (1978) also mentions that development or transformative practice is socially and culturally constructed. Development is related to students understanding the world in new ways (Kozulin, 2003, Vygotsky, 1986). Several researchers (Cochran-Smith & Demers, 2009; Darling-Hammond, et al., 2008; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Little, Gearhart, Curry, Kafta, 2003) have called for educators to exemplify a thorough understanding of the developmental processes and needs that students demonstrate. In order to assess those needs continually, teaching and assessment must be closely linked processes. The faculties in LHU's teacher education programs believe that the implementation of standards-based assessment-guided instruction is an extremely important practice and directly relates to appropriate pedagogy. Teachers

systematically assess student progress by employing multiple authentic assessment strategies during all phases of instruction. Then, by using this assessment data, teachers are able to make judgments about the relative progress of students in their classrooms and subsequently formulate plans for future lessons and activities. This allows teachers to track what students are learning as well as what they, as teachers, are learning about their students and appropriate pedagogy (Ormrod, 2006). This is also seen in current practices involving Response to Intervention (RTI) strategies such as instructing so that the entire class can continue learning while simultaneously adjusting small-group instruction based on student needs (Peterson, 2011). Not only are LHU preservice teachers prepared to adjust instruction based on students' needs, but also how they interact with students in lessons is a part of the pedagogical preparation of the preservice teachers. This supports Pianta's work which provides evidence that how teachers interact during lessons with students makes a difference in how well students learn (Pianta, et al., 2008; Pianta, Belsky, Howes, & Morrison, 2007; Pianta, Howes, Burchinal, Bryant, Clifford, Early, & Barbarin, 2005).

Taking into account the research findings that show the pedagogical skills for effective instruction, the LHU teacher education programs provides several opportunities and experiences for beginning teachers to develop and be able to make wise pedagogical decisions, appropriately incorporate technology into their teaching, and properly assess their students as well as their own instructional effectiveness. This is done in part through the completion of required courses that include appropriately sequenced field experiences in which students can practically apply the techniques discussed in courses. In addition, LHU's programs require students to reflect on the theories presented and their implementation in the classroom and connect the theories with the clinical practices in which they engage.

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Element Three - Contextual Factors: Learners and the Learning Environment

The LHU teacher education faculty believe that candidates in the teacher preparation programs at LHU must demonstrate proficiency in identifying and addressing important contextual factors that affect teaching and learning. Contextual factors include, but are not limited to, *community* environments; *family* environments; the *characteristics* of the children themselves, and the *school and classroom* environments. These factors often play a direct role in a student's ability to engage in the lessons being taught.

Community. Community and school populations, often defined by socioeconomic levels as well as racial and ethnic composition, are important considerations in planning effective educational programs. Current research suggests that community characteristics have a measurable impact on child development and student learning (Holloway, 2004). When teachers are aware of the challenges and opportunities associated with particular community characteristics they can more effectively match teaching practices to address these and improve student learning and development (Peters et al., 2010).

Today, more than three quarters of public school teachers in the United States are monolingual English speaking (National Center for Education Statistics, 2011). Most, however, are working in classrooms that are increasingly racially, ethnically and linguistically diverse (Gay, 2005). It is critical for future teachers to learn how to effectively approach education with diverse student populations, particularly when the background of the students differs from that of the teacher (Delpit, 2006; Genesee, Paradis & Crago, 2004; Howard & Aleman, 2008; Ramsey, 2004). Even those who end up teaching in a context where not much diversity exists will need to prepare these children to live in the wider, multicultural world (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2006). We provide preservice teachers completing the LHU programs with appropriate opportunities to work in classrooms with children from various types of diverse backgrounds as part of their early clinical practice placements as well as student teaching placements.

Family. The home is the first learning environment for children and remains an important context throughout their formative years. Teachers need to consider home environment, family structure, and level and type of parental involvement when planning for instruction. Equally important is that teachers help students connect school experiences with outside learning activities (Bransford, Brown & Cocking, 2000). This connection builds on students' prior knowledge and helps them see the value in the education received in the school environment, creating a basic understanding of how the school-based learning experiences can be applied in home, community, and work settings. In order to facilitate home-school connections and build on out-of-school knowledge children have acquired, teachers must be aware of family context. The family context is where children first develop a sense of self in the world. The self that develops is shaped by social, cultural and economic factors in the family. We believe that our LHU preservice teachers should not only know about the family contextual influences but experience working with students' family members whenever appropriate and possible.

School and Classroom. As children grow, the classroom becomes an increasingly important learning environment. Classroom environment refers to the pervasive atmosphere, ambience, tone, or climate within a particular setting (Dorman, 2002). Evidence links positive classroom communities to increased student achievement. These positive learning communities are created through teachers' use of effective management and guidance techniques (Fields, Perry & Fields, 2010; Jones, 2010; Weinstein & Novodvorsky, 2011). Creating a positive learning environment requires the classroom teacher to foster relationships with and between students that demonstrate acceptance of, and respect for each other. These relationships form the foundation of a classroom climate in which all students are encouraged to learn. This positive learning environment is further established when the classroom teacher constructs a learner-centered environment whereby students are prompted to develop their own knowledge structures by predicting and explaining various situations (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000). Learner-centered environments require an understanding by the teacher of the students' knowledge, skills, and personal beliefs that are brought to the educational setting (Ladison-Billings, 2001). We believe that teachers who strive for positive learner-centered environments are more responsive to student diversity, thereby maintaining students' positive self-identity while fostering academic success (Phuntsog, 1999).

Characteristics of Children. Effective teachers are able to individualize instruction based on knowledge of the individual characteristics of children including developmental characteristics and those that arise from particular family contexts. Knowledge of child and adolescent development is critical to understanding their learning and to the construction of effective teaching and learning environments (Pianta, Hitz & West, 2010; Snyder & Lit, 2010). It is important to understand not only the developmental level of children, but it is equally important to understand the range of special needs children may have and how to effectively address these in an inclusive classroom setting (Polloway, Patton & Dowdy, 2012).

Developmental level is only one form of diversity in a classroom. Diversity can also include differences in race, ethnicity, gender, language, disability, socioeconomic status, interests, and learning styles. Attention to the full range of diversity factors is essential to creating an effective teaching and learning environment (Gonzalez-Mena, 2008; Klein & Chen, 2001; Obiakor, 2001). Through coursework and clinical practice opportunities, LHU preservice teachers gain the knowledge and ability to plan instruction for children based on individual learning needs.

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Element Four – Professionalism: Ethics and Dispositions

Perhaps the most important trait of teachers is that they care about students and about the teaching-learning process. LHU's teacher education programs expect that candidates consistently demonstrate professional behaviors and attitudes that are essential to the teaching profession. LHU's teacher education programs also maintain screening and assessment procedures to assure that teacher candidates without positive dispositions are provided opportunities to adjust those dispositions before being permitted to move forward in our teacher education programs. This is valued at LHU because teachers with positive professional dispositions tend to act in ways that elevate the profession of teaching in the eyes of others (Ros-Voseles & Moss, 2007). It is no longer sufficient for teachers to have knowledge and skills in academic subjects; they must also have employability skills (Wayda & Lund, 2005). Professional dispositions are those observable and measurable teacher behaviors such as punctuality and oral communication skills that often determine the success or failure of a beginning teacher (Goodlad, 2002). Developing professional behaviors, including dispositions, ethics, and caring communication skills, is an integral part of LHU's teacher education programs. This can be seen in the personal traits, characteristics, and ethics of teachers. It is evident as professionals engage in life-long learning and in teachers who care that their students learn and are successful in life.

Personal Traits, Characteristics, and Ethics

Professional dispositions are determined by a person's professional dispositions. According to Wayda and Lund (2005), a positive disposition toward being a teacher is indicated by a preservice teacher who values learning and knowledge, diversity, collaboration, professionalism, and personal integrity. The teacher education programs at LHU recognize the importance of modeling and assessing candidate dispositions that we believe are necessary for teaching effectiveness and attractive to potential employers in PK-12 schools. These skills are necessary and valued skills of all teachers. They include initiative, dependability, commitment to the profession, interpersonal and oral communication skills, resourcefulness, and reflection. Research findings recommend that teachers also develop the ability to identify, analyze, and resolve ethical issues that they face in the classroom, school, and community (Benfu, 2000; Johnson & Reiman, 2007) and plan for and teach strategies for moral development (Benninga, Berkowitz, Kuehn, & Smith, 2003; Bebeau, Rest, & Narvaez, 1999; Ignico & Gannon, 2010; Parkison, 2009).

Life-long Learning

Professionalism also requires a commitment to being a life-long learner. Commitment to life-long learning is evident in those teachers who: continuously self-reflect; accept feedback from mentors, peers, and supervisors; and seek professional development opportunities outside of the classroom. The concept of self-reflection is based on Dewey's theoretical perspective of critical inquiry and how it relates to practice (Van Gyn, 1996).

Reflection allows the teacher to identify effective practices through a careful investigation of his or her own teaching experiences so that intellectual and professional growth may take place (Malm, 2009). Preservice teachers must develop the skill of self-reflection in order to continuously grow as professionals, especially within and beyond the university setting. Research also emphasizes the importance of expanding the teacher's knowledge of discipline and pedagogical skills through peer evaluations and feedback on observed lessons and participating in professional development programs, as well as keeping abreast of new developments in the field by researching findings reported in current literature. Because we live in a changing society, life-long learning is essential for the on-going development of knowledgeable citizens (National Commission on Teaching, 1996; Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 1999) that are able to compete successfully in a global economy.

Caring

Effective teachers care for their students and recognize that students need to be aware that others care about them. Teachers and students must effectively communicate their mutual consideration. According to Kessler (1999), teachers who care about their students help them to develop a sense of belonging to a community. LHU requires teacher candidates to demonstrate caring communication skills. These skills can be defined as the ability to recognize and respond to individual differences, needs, and desires of students in order to facilitate developmental growth and learning. Rogers and Webb (1991) underscore the importance of caring by reporting that good teaching is inextricably linked to specific acts of caring. In order for caring to be evident, teachers must develop a wide range of strategies to effectively communicate with students in the class, the parents in the home, the teachers and staff in the school, and the administrators in the school district. Notes, checklists, report cards, phone calls, and teacher-parent conferences provide a variety of communicative methods through which teachers demonstrate to all students that they are cared for in the classroom and beyond. Moreover, each day teachers need to provide a safe learning environment where students are valued for who they are and in which their individual perspectives are considered. LHU's teacher education programs are designed to develop the necessary dispositions, skills, and knowledge to prepare our teacher candidates to become effective, reflective practitioners. Students typically sense when teachers care and it often results in a greater effort to be engaged in the learning process (Lumpkin, 2007). Of course, the literature is clear that student-centered lessons are typically found in classrooms of effective teachers (

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