

The Crescent-Star Model in Education: A Holistic Framework for The Guiding Teacher and The Inclusive Classroom

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Abstract

Teacher education scholarship has developed along two largely separate paths: a technical tradition focused on what teachers need to know and do (Content Knowledge, Pedagogical Content Knowledge, Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge), and an ethical-critical tradition emphasizing the moral commitments and intellectual depth that give teaching its purpose. This article addresses the disconnect between these traditions by proposing the Crescent-Star Model—a conceptual framework that articulates how technical and foundational competencies relate to one another. The model employs Schön's concept of generative metaphor to organize existing concepts into an integrated structure. The "Star" represents the Guiding Teacher through five competencies arranged as functional anatomy: Content Knowledge (head), PCK and TPACK (arms), and two foundational dimensions—Intellectual and Cultural Foundation and Ethics of Care and Moral Stance (legs). The model's central claim is architectural: foundational competencies do not merely accompany technical ones; they support and direct them. This hierarchical relationship enables the transition from routine expertise to adaptive expertise. The "Crescent" represents the Inclusive Classroom—a learning environment characterized by psychological safety, recognition of diversity in all its forms (cultural, linguistic, religious, cognitive), and an ethos of mutual support. Drawing on Hatano and Inagaki's distinction between routine and adaptive expertise, Noddings's Ethics of Care, Giroux and McLaren's transformative intellectuals, and Ladson-Billings's culturally relevant pedagogy, the article argues that teacher education programs concentrating exclusively on technical competencies are structurally flawed. The article concludes with implications for program design: integration of foundational and technical dimensions throughout preparation, extended clinical experience with structured reflection, cultivation of intellectual foundations, centering of care ethics, and comprehensive attention to diversity.

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Introduction

Teaching has always been complex, but contemporary educators face challenges of unprecedented scope. Artificial intelligence is transforming how students access and process information; classrooms are increasingly diverse in cognitive profiles, cultural backgrounds, and learning needs; and concerns about students' socio-emotional well-being have become central to educational discourse (Trilling & Fadel, 2009; UNESCO, 2023). These converging pressures bring a fundamental question into focus: What kind of teachers should we be preparing?

Tezgiden Cakcak (2016), drawing on Kumaravadivelu's (2003) typology, frames this question in terms of three possible orientations: preparing "passive technicians" who implement prescribed curricula, "reflective practitioners" who examine their pedagogical choices, or "transformative intellectuals" who understand teaching as a moral and political endeavor. This typology reveals a persistent tension in teacher education scholarship between two largely separate traditions.

The first tradition focuses on what teachers need to know and do—the technical competencies that make instruction effective. Shulman's (1986) work on Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) addressed what he called the "missing paradigm" in educational research: the question of how teachers transform subject matter knowledge into forms that learners can grasp. PCK represents the distinctive expertise that separates a teacher from a subject matter specialist—knowing which representations, analogies, and examples make concepts accessible, anticipating student difficulties, and understanding how to sequence ideas for learning. Mishra and Koehler (2006) extended this framework with Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK), recognizing that contemporary teachers must also integrate technology meaningfully into instruction. Together, Content Knowledge (CK), PCK, and TPACK form a powerful framework of technical competencies that has shaped teacher preparation programs worldwide.

Yet there is a significant limitation when these technical competencies are treated as the complete picture of teacher expertise.

Hatano and Inagaki (1986) distinguish between "routine experts" and "adaptive experts." Routine experts excel at executing familiar procedures with speed and accuracy, but as the authors note, they "are outstanding in terms of speed, accuracy, and automaticity of performance, but lack flexibility and adaptability to new problems". Their knowledge is procedural rather than conceptual; they know what works but not why, which limits their capacity to respond when standard approaches prove insufficient. This distinction matters profoundly in teaching, where classrooms present what Schön (1987) called messy, ambiguous situations that resist technical formulas.

The second scholarly tradition addresses what the first neglects: the ethical commitments and intellectual depth that give teaching its purpose. Noddings (1984) placed caring relationships at the heart of educational practice, arguing that genuine morality lies not in abstract principles but in the quality of attention we bring to those in our care. Giroux and McLaren (1986) called for teachers to be "transformative intellectuals" whose practice is "grounded in forms of moral and ethical discourse exhibiting a preferential concern for the suffering and struggles of the disadvantaged and oppressed". From this perspective, a teacher's most important qualities are not techniques but commitments—to justice, to student dignity, to education as a humanizing force.

This second tradition points toward Hatano and Inagaki's (1986) concept of adaptive expertise. Adaptive experts possess conceptual understanding that "gives meaning to each step of the skill and provides criteria for selection of possible alternatives". They can explain why their methods work, modify approaches when conditions change, and generate new solutions for unfamiliar problems. Crucially, Hatano and Inagaki identify the conditions that foster adaptive rather than routine expertise: exposure to genuine variability in practice, freedom from excessive pressure for immediate efficiency, and a culture that values understanding over mere performance. These conditions are ethical and intellectual, not merely technical.

The central argument of this article is that teachers' technical competencies—CK, PCK, and TPACK—realize their potential only when supported by two foundational dimensions: an Intellectual and Cultural Foundation, and an Ethics of Care and Moral Stance. Without this support, even sophisticated pedagogical techniques become disconnected from purpose, context, and genuine care for students. The foundational dimensions provide the "why" that gives direction to the "how."

This argument has direct implications for teacher preparation. Programs that concentrate exclusively on CK, PCK, and TPACK may produce graduates who teach competently in familiar situations but lack the adaptive capacity to respond to uncertainty. Such teachers may struggle to exercise what Biesta, Priestley, and Robinson (2015) call "teacher agency"—the ability to make purposeful decisions in pursuit of educational goals that matter. They can implement lessons but cannot truly guide learners, because guidance requires understanding why one approach serves students better than another.

Despite the richness of both scholarly traditions, the literature has not offered a comprehensive framework showing how technical and foundational competencies relate to one another—specifically, how foundational dimensions should support and direct technical ones. This article proposes such a framework: the Crescent-Star Model.

The model uses what Schön (1983) called a "generative metaphor"—a cognitive tool that helps professionals understand complex situations where standard procedures fall short. The "Star" represents the Guiding Teacher, with five points corresponding to five competencies: Content Knowledge (the head), PCK and TPACK (the arms that reach toward students), and Intellectual-Cultural Foundation and Ethics of Care (the legs that ground practice). The model's central claim is architectural: just as a star cannot stand without legs, technical skills cannot function meaningfully without foundational support. This hierarchical relationship—where foundations support and direct technique—is what enables the transition from routine to adaptive expertise.

The "Crescent" represents the inclusive classroom—the diverse learning community that receives the teacher's guidance. Like the crescent moon growing toward fullness, the classroom holds potential for development and transformation. Its embracing shape symbolizes the psychological safety and belonging that make genuine learning possible.

Method

Research Design

This article is a work of theoretical modeling constructed through integrative synthesis of relevant literature. Its purpose is not to test a hypothesis or measure an effect, but to build a coherent conceptual framework that addresses the fragmentation identified in the Introduction—the disconnect between technical and ethical-critical traditions in teacher education scholarship.

Theoretical modeling serves a specific intellectual function. As Shulman (1986) observed, knowledge becomes difficult to recall and apply when it exists as disconnected lists; it becomes powerful when "organized in some coherent form, lodged in a conceptual or theoretical framework that is generative" (p. 10). Similarly, Mishra and Koehler (2006) argued that developing a framework "goes beyond merely identifying problems with current approaches; it offers new ways of looking at and perceiving phenomena and offers information on which to base sound, pragmatic decision making" (p. 1019). The present study aims to provide such a framework—one that reorganizes existing concepts into new relationships.

The study employs Schön's (1983) concept of the "generative metaphor" as its primary conceptual tool. Schön recognized that in complex professional fields, practitioners cannot rely on technical rationality alone. The problems they face are messy, indeterminate situations that resist standardized approaches. In such contexts, metaphors do important cognitive work: they restructure how we understand problems and open new possibilities for action. A generative metaphor is not merely decorative language but a way of seeing that shapes subsequent thinking and practice.

The selection of "Crescent-Star" imagery follows this generative logic. These symbols were chosen for three reasons. First, they possess semiotic resonance across human cultures—the star as guidance and illumination, the crescent as growth and embrace—making them cognitively accessible. Second, their conjunction predates modern nations by millennia, appearing across ancient Mesopotamian, Persian, Byzantine, and Central Asian civilizations, lending them universality beyond particular political associations. Third, the visual structure maps productively onto the conceptual relationships the model establishes: the five-pointed star provides a natural anatomy for five teacher competencies, while the crescent's curved form captures the inclusive nature of the learning environment.

The model's construction proceeds by taking concepts that exist separately in the literature—Adaptive Expertise (Hatano & Inagaki, 1986), Pedagogical Content Knowledge (Shulman, 1986), TPACK (Mishra & Koehler, 2006), Ethics of Care (Noddings, 1984), Transformative Intellectuals (Giroux & McLaren, 1986), Socio-Emotional Learning (CASEL, 2020), Universal Design for Learning—and reorganizing them into a unified structure where their relationships become visible and actionable. This is theoretical synthesis aimed at transforming fragmented insights into an integrated framework for understanding teacher competence.

The Crescent-Star Model: Conceptual Framework

The Crescent-Star Model consists of two interlocking components: the Star, representing the Guiding Teacher, and the Crescent, representing the Inclusive Classroom (Figure 1). Together they form a dynamic system in which educational quality emerges from the relationship between teacher

competence and learning environment.

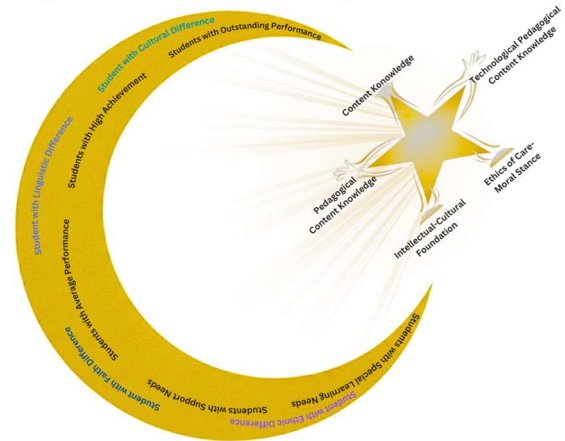


Figure 1. The Crescent-Star Education Model

The Star: The Guiding Teacher

The Star's five points correspond to five dimensions of teacher competence, arranged as a functional anatomy: a head, two arms, and two legs. This anatomical structure is not arbitrary. Just as the human body requires coordination among its parts, effective teaching requires the integrated functioning of all five dimensions. And just as legs support the body and enable purposeful movement, foundational competencies must support and direct technical ones.

The Head: Content Knowledge

At the apex sits Content Knowledge—what teachers understand about their subjects. This placement reflects Shulman's (1986) insight that deep subject matter understanding is the starting point of professional identity. Content Knowledge encompasses not merely facts and procedures but the structure of a discipline: its central concepts, organizing frameworks, rules of evidence, and ongoing debates. As Mishra and Koehler (2006) emphasize, teachers who lack such understanding "can misrepresent those subjects to their students" (p. 1026). Content Knowledge is necessary but not sufficient; knowledge must be transformed before it can be taught.

The Arms: PCK and TPACK

The two arms represent the teacher's capacity to translate knowledge into instruction—to reach toward students and make learning possible. These are the technical

competencies that have dominated teacher education discourse.

The right arm represents Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK). As Shulman (1986) defined it, PCK includes "the most useful forms of representation of those ideas, the most powerful analogies, illustrations, examples, explanations, and demonstrations—in a word, the ways of representing and formulating the subject that make it comprehensible to others". PCK also includes understanding what makes specific topics difficult and what misconceptions students typically bring. The teacher must possess what Shulman called "a veritable armamentarium of alternative forms of representation".

The left arm represents Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK). Mishra and Koehler (2006) developed this concept because technology in education was often treated as separate from content and pedagogy. TPACK insists that meaningful technology integration requires understanding how technology, pedagogy, and content interact. A teacher with TPACK does not simply add technology to existing lessons; she understands how particular technologies can transform the representation of particular content for particular pedagogical purposes.

Both arms share a common characteristic: they address the "how" of teaching—questions of method, technique, and tool selection. They are indispensable for effective instruction. But method without purpose is mechanism. This is where the legs become essential.

The Legs: Intellectual-Cultural Foundation and Ethics of Care

The model's distinctive claim concerns the legs. These foundational dimensions do not merely accompany technical competencies; they support and direct them.

The right leg represents the teacher's Intellectual and Cultural Foundation. This dimension extends beyond expertise in a single subject to encompass broad engagement with human thought: philosophy, history, arts, social sciences, history of science. Such breadth matters pedagogically because it enables teachers to connect their subjects to the wider

world of meaning that students inhabit. A mathematics teacher grounded in intellectual culture can situate the Pythagorean theorem within the history of human inquiry, connect it to architecture and art, and help students see mathematics as a living endeavor rather than arbitrary rules.

This intellectual foundation aligns with Giroux and McLaren's (1986) vision of teachers as "transformative intellectuals"—educators who understand schooling as connected to broader social realities and who help students think critically about the world. It also provides the cognitive resources for what Hatano and Inagaki (1986) term adaptive expertise. Where routine experts efficiently execute familiar procedures, adaptive experts understand why those procedures work and can modify them when circumstances change. The intellectual foundation supplies the conceptual depth that makes such adaptation possible.

The left leg represents the teacher's Ethics of Care and Moral Stance. Teaching is not a morally neutral technical activity; it is, as Noddings (1984) argued, fundamentally relational and ethical. The Ethics of Care locates morality not in abstract principles but in the quality of attention we bring to those in our care. For teachers, this means attending to students as persons whose flourishing matters, not as objects to be processed.

Ladson-Billings (1995) found that effective teachers of African-American students shared what she called "a common thread of caring"—not merely affection but "concern for the implications their work had on their students' lives, the welfare of the community, and unjust social arrangements" (p. 474). This caring stance informed every aspect of their practice. It was not an add-on to technical competence but the foundation that gave competence direction and meaning.

The Relationship Between Legs and Arms

When teacher education focuses exclusively on the arms—PCK, TPACK, instructional techniques—it risks producing what Kumaravadivelu (2003) called "passive technicians": practitioners who execute methods efficiently but cannot judge when those methods serve students well. Such

teachers correspond to Hatano and Inagaki's (1986) routine experts—effective within familiar parameters but unable to adapt when circumstances demand creative response.

When the Intellectual-Cultural Foundation and Ethics of Care are strong, they provide both the "why" and the "for whom" that direct the technical "how." The teacher with strong legs but weak arms may be thoughtful but cannot teach effectively; the teacher with strong arms but weak legs may be skilled but teaches without wisdom or care. Both dimensions are necessary, but the relationship is not symmetrical: the legs support and direct; the arms execute. Purpose grounds technique; technique serves purpose.

The Crescent: The Inclusive Classroom

If the Star represents the teacher who guides, the Crescent represents the learning environment that receives and nurtures. The crescent shape captures something essential about what a classroom must be for genuine learning to occur: a space that holds potential for growth, embraces diversity in all its forms, and provides safety for intellectual risk-taking.

Growth, Embrace, and Reflection

The Crescent carries three interrelated meanings. First, it signifies growth and potential. The crescent moon is not a finished state but a phase in an ongoing cycle—the promise of fullness to come. Similarly, the classroom is not where completed knowledge is deposited into passive recipients; it is where understanding develops and transforms over time.

Second, the Crescent represents embrace and protection. Its curved form suggests an enclosing space—not closed but sheltering. This corresponds to psychological safety: the felt sense that one can take intellectual risks, make mistakes, and express confusion without fear of humiliation. As the CASEL (2020) framework emphasizes, effective social-emotional learning requires "nurturing, safe environments characterized by positive, caring relationships among students and teachers."

Third, the Crescent reflects the Star's light. The moon does not generate its own

illumination; it receives light and makes it visible. This captures the relational nature of teaching and learning. The teacher's knowledge and care are received, interpreted, and transformed by learners who bring their own perspectives and experiences. The reflection is not passive reproduction but active meaning-making.

The Architecture of Inclusion

The inclusive classroom rests on the fundamental recognition that learners differ—and that these differences extend far beyond academic readiness levels. Contemporary classrooms bring together students from diverse cultural backgrounds, religious traditions, linguistic communities, and migration histories. Students may be native-born or recent immigrants, refugees fleeing conflict, or children of migrant workers. They may speak the language of instruction as their mother tongue, as a second language, or as one of several languages in their repertoire. They come from majority and minority ethnic groups, from secular and religious households, from varied socioeconomic circumstances. Each brings distinct funds of knowledge, cultural practices, and ways of making meaning.

This diversity is not an obstacle to be managed but a resource to be engaged. As Ladson-Billings (1995) demonstrated in her study of effective teachers of African-American students, culturally relevant pedagogy requires teachers to view students' cultural backgrounds as assets rather than deficits. These teachers worked to "develop a community of learners" where students "learn collaboratively and be responsible for another" (p. 480). They recognized that academic success and cultural identity need not be in tension—that students can achieve academically while maintaining connection to their home cultures, languages, and communities.

The inclusive classroom therefore demands multiple pedagogical responses. Differentiated Instruction (Tomlinson, 1999) addresses variation in academic readiness through systematic modification of content, process, and product. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) provides multiple means of engagement, representation, and expression, reducing barriers before they arise. But

inclusion requires more than these technical accommodations. It requires what Gay (2010) calls "culturally responsive teaching"—instruction that uses students' cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and frames of reference to make learning meaningful. It requires attention to linguistic diversity—valuing multilingualism as cognitive resource rather than treating non-dominant languages as problems to overcome. It requires sensitivity to religious diversity—creating space where students of all faiths and none feel respected and included. And it requires awareness of the particular challenges facing immigrant and refugee students—who may be navigating not only a new educational system but also trauma, family separation, and uncertain legal status.

The second foundation of inclusion is cultivation of socio-emotional competencies alongside academic ones. The CASEL (2020) framework identifies five domains: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. These competencies matter for all students, but they take on particular significance in diverse classrooms. Social awareness includes "recognizing strengths in others," "demonstrating empathy and compassion," and "identifying diverse social norms, including unjust ones." Relationship skills include "demonstrating cultural competency" and "standing up for the rights of others." These are not additions to academic learning but prerequisites for it—and they are essential for building classroom communities where difference is valued rather than merely tolerated.

The third foundation is what Ladson-Billings (1995) called an "ethos of reciprocity and mutuality." Effective teachers insisted "that one person's success was the success of all and one person's failure was the failure of all" (p. 481). One teacher captured this: "We're a family. We have to care for one another as if our very survival depended on it... Actually, it does!" This ethos transforms the classroom from a collection of individuals competing for scarce rewards into a genuine community where members—regardless of their backgrounds—support one another's growth. Such communities do not emerge spontaneously; they must be intentionally cultivated through the teacher's Ethics of Care and Moral Stance.

The Dynamic Relationship

The Star and Crescent form a dynamic system. The teacher's foundational competencies—particularly the Ethics of Care—create conditions of psychological safety and belonging where students from all backgrounds can thrive. The teacher's Intellectual and Cultural Foundation enables genuine recognition and valuing of diverse perspectives, languages, and ways of knowing. And the teacher's technical competencies—PCK and TPACK—provide tools for differentiation, culturally responsive instruction, and flexible assessment that make inclusion practical rather than aspirational.

Conversely, the classroom environment shapes what teaching becomes possible. In a climate where certain cultures, languages, or religions are devalued—whether explicitly or implicitly—even skillful techniques fail to reach students who have withdrawn into self-protection or silence. In a community characterized by genuine respect for diversity, mutual support, and shared purpose, teaching can become transformative. Neither Star nor Crescent is complete without the other.

Conclusion and Implications

Summary of the Model

The Crescent-Star Model offers a framework for understanding teacher competence that addresses a persistent gap in the literature: the disconnect between technical and ethical-critical traditions in teacher education scholarship. The model's central claim is architectural. Technical competencies—Content Knowledge, Pedagogical Content Knowledge, and Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge—are necessary but insufficient. They function effectively only when supported and directed by foundational competencies: an Intellectual and Cultural Foundation that provides conceptual depth and critical perspective, and an Ethics of Care and Moral Stance that grounds practice in genuine concern for student flourishing.

This hierarchical relationship distinguishes the model from frameworks that treat various teacher competencies as parallel or

interchangeable. The foundational competencies are not supplements to technical skill; they are what transform technical skill from routine procedure into adaptive expertise. They provide the "why" and "for whom" that direct the technical "how."

The Crescent completes the model by representing the inclusive classroom—a learning environment characterized by psychological safety, recognition of diversity in all its forms (cultural, linguistic, religious, cognitive), and an ethos of mutual support. The Star and Crescent exist in dynamic relationship: the teacher's foundational competencies create conditions for genuine inclusion, while the inclusive classroom enables teaching to become transformative.

Contributions to the Literature

The model makes three contributions to existing scholarship.

First, it provides a synthesis that bridges traditionally separated domains. Technical frameworks (PCK, TPACK, Differentiated Instruction, UDL) and ethical-critical frameworks (Ethics of Care, Transformative Intellectuals, Culturally Relevant Pedagogy) have largely developed in isolation, generating separate research programs and professional development emphases. The Crescent-Star Model demonstrates that these domains are necessarily interconnected—that technical competence without ethical grounding produces what Hatano and Inagaki (1986) called routine expertise, while ethical commitment without technical skill cannot translate into effective practice. By articulating the specific relationship between these domains, the model offers conceptual architecture for integration.

Second, the model expands the concept of inclusion beyond cognitive differentiation. Contemporary discourse on inclusive education often focuses primarily on academic readiness levels and learning disabilities. The Crescent pushes further, insisting that genuine inclusion must address cultural, linguistic, religious, and socioeconomic diversity. It connects inclusion to Noddings's (1984) Ethics of Care and to the socio-emotional competencies identified by CASEL (2020), arguing that the classroom ecology involves emotional and cultural dimensions alongside cognitive ones.

Third, the model functions as what Schön (1983) called a generative metaphor—a cognitive tool for professional thinking rather than a prescriptive checklist. It does not dictate specific techniques but provides a heuristic that teachers can apply across varied contexts, content areas, and student populations.

Implications for Teacher Education

Based on the analysis conducted within the framework of the Crescent-Star Model, it could be argued that teacher education programs concentrating exclusively on technical competencies are not merely incomplete but structurally flawed. They treat foundational dimensions as optional enrichment rather than essential support. The following implications emerge for program design.

Integration Rather Than Addition

Foundational and technical competencies should be developed together throughout the program, not sequentially. Currently, courses addressing ethics, philosophy, or cultural foundations often appear at program margins—as prerequisites completed and forgotten, or as capstone reflections disconnected from methods courses. The model suggests a different architecture: every methods course should include sustained engagement with the ethical and intellectual questions that give method its purpose. Teaching differentiated instruction, for example, should involve not only techniques for tiered assignments but exploration of why differentiation matters—as an expression of care for each student's dignity and learning right, not merely as classroom management strategy.

Extended Clinical Experience with Structured Reflection

Adaptive expertise, as Hatano and Inagaki (1986) demonstrated, develops through exposure to genuine variability in practice combined with opportunity for reflection. Brief practicum experiences focused on performance evaluation cannot cultivate such expertise. Teacher candidates need extended immersion in diverse classroom settings, beginning early in their programs rather than concentrated in a

final semester. This clinical experience must be accompanied by structured reflection—journals, case discussions, video analysis of one's own teaching, regular dialogue with mentors—that develops the capacity Schön (1983, 1987) identified as reflection-in-action.

Cultivating Intellectual Foundation

Programs should expand engagement with the intellectual traditions that inform educational practice. This means treating educational philosophy, history, and social foundations not as background knowledge to be surveyed but as living resources for professional thinking. It also means developing what Giroux and McLaren (1986) called the capacity for transformative intellectual work: analyzing how curricula embody particular values, examining how school practices reproduce or challenge social inequalities, imagining more equitable arrangements.

Centering Ethics of Care

The Ethics of Care cannot be taught through a single course on professional ethics. It must be cultivated through the relational pedagogy that pervades the entire program—through teacher educators who model caring relationships with candidates, through clinical experiences that foreground relational dimensions of teaching, through explicit attention to trauma-informed practice and socio-emotional learning as core competencies rather than electives.

Attending to Diversity in All Forms

Inclusion must be understood comprehensively. Programs should prepare teachers not only for cognitive differentiation but for culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2010), for working with multilingual learners, for sensitivity to religious diversity, and for understanding the particular needs of immigrant and refugee students. This requires both coursework and clinical placements that expose candidates to genuine diversity.

Limitations and Future Directions

The Crescent-Star Model is a theoretical framework, not an empirically tested intervention. Its value lies in organizing existing

concepts into productive relationships and generating hypotheses for practice. Future research might examine how programs that integrate foundational and technical competencies compare to traditional programs in developing adaptive expertise. Studies might also investigate whether teachers whose preparation emphasized the model's foundational dimensions demonstrate greater capacity for culturally responsive practice and ethical judgment in diverse classrooms.

The model's cultural symbols, while chosen for their cross-cultural resonance, may carry unintended associations in particular contexts. Practitioners adapting the framework should consider whether alternative imagery might better serve their purposes while preserving the model's structural logic.

Closing Reflection

The challenges facing contemporary education—artificial intelligence, increasing diversity, socio-emotional crisis among young people—cannot be met by teachers trained only to implement predetermined curricula. They require teachers who understand their work as fundamentally moral practice, who possess the intellectual resources to respond thoughtfully to unprecedented situations, and who genuinely care about the flourishing of every student in their charge.

The Crescent-Star Model is a call to prepare such teachers. It argues that the technical competencies dominating current discourse—however necessary—are insufficient without the foundational competencies that give them direction and meaning. The Star cannot guide without legs to stand on. And the Crescent cannot nurture growth without a Star to illuminate the way.

Data Availability

The datasets generated during and/or analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Conflict of interest

None

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