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## Using a Teaching Philosophy Statement as a Professional Development Tool for Teacher Candidates

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## Abstract

Most new teachers are expected to develop a teaching philosophy statement (TPS). In the present paper, we describe some of the major functions of a TPS and how it can be beneficial to the professional development of teacher candidates. We then describe a case example of a Residency I program and how the features of that program help teacher candidates write an effective TPS. Seventy-three senior-level teacher candidates at a large public, comprehensive southeastern U.S. university participated in the study. At the end of their Residency I semester, they completed a survey in which they rated the importance and influence of the different program components on their TPS. It was determined that most of the curricular aspects promoted deep thinking and reflection on beliefs about teaching. Features that had the greatest impact on teacher candidates' teaching philosophy are discussed as well as implications for the findings.

## Keywords

teaching philosophy statement, residency program, curriculum

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## Using a Teaching Philosophy Statement as a Professional Development Tool for Teacher Candidates

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Most new teachers are expected to develop a teaching philosophy statement (TPS). In the present paper, we describe some of the major functions of a TPS and how it can be beneficial to the professional development of teacher candidates. We then describe a case example of a Residency I program and how the features of that program help teacher candidates write an effective TPS. Seventy-three senior-level teacher candidates at a large public, comprehensive southeastern U.S. university participated in the study. At the end of their Residency I semester, they completed a survey in which they rated the importance and influence of the different program components on their TPS. It was determined that most of the curricular aspects promoted deep thinking and reflection on beliefs about teaching. Features that had the greatest impact on teacher candidates' teaching philosophy are discussed as well as implications for the findings.

### INTRODUCTION

As part of their education and training, teacher candidates are frequently encouraged to write a teaching philosophy statement (TPS). In fact, writing one or more TPSs is a common practice for teacher preparation, both in undergraduate and graduate programs. By writing a TPS, it is anticipated that teacher candidates will engage in deep reflection, create a vision and purpose for their teaching, set priorities, and eventually engage in informed, deliberate, and thoughtful pedagogical and sociocultural practices in their own classrooms (Hollins, 2011; Zauha, 2008). Sometimes a TPS is written with the guidance of university faculty during coursework (Beatty, Leigh, & Dean, 2009; Moreland, 1997). Sometimes it is written after students observe teaching, interview teachers, or conduct an in-depth study of teaching and learning (Goodyear & Allchin, 1998; Pike, Bradley, & Mansfield, 1997). TPSs are also used in higher education as a way for tenure-track faculty to stay "academically viable" (Hegarty, 2015, p. 28).

The components of a TPS should include a conceptualization of teaching, a conceptualization of learning, and an implementation plan for the philosophy (Chism, 1998). Beatty et al. (2009) advise to have an indication of the teacher's and student's role in the learning process and the goals and values of education. Zauha (2008) claims that a TPS should include the teacher's commitment to quality teaching and include the learning practices of the teacher. Beatty et al. (2009) suggest that it is important to acquaint oneself with elements of philosophy, namely idealism, realism, pragmatism, existentialism, and critical theory in order to consider a conceptual framework from which to think about one's philosophy of education.

The research literature indicates that a TPS can serve many functions. When recruiting for a teaching position, prospective employers (at least in the U.S.) routinely require a TPS to be included with application

materials (Beatty et al., 2009). During the interview process, it can act as a catalyst to promote critical conversations about teaching and learning (Chism, 1998; Grundman, 2006). A TPS can be a form of self-expression and a way to promote oneself as a teacher (Zauha, 2008). It can also be used as a self-reflective tool that can indicate growth over time when revisited and rewritten (Beatty et al., 2009; Chism, 1998). In addition, it can be used as an assessment tool when given to students who provide feedback of the accuracy of the teacher's TPS at the end of a course or academic term (Brinthaupt, Decker, & Lawrence, 2014).

The process of writing a TPS has many possible benefits for teacher candidates, even if they do not yet have teaching experience. For example, writing a TPS promotes intentional, worthwhile practices and can act as the first step in helping students to become reflective practitioners (Chism, 1998; Zauha, 2008). It can help teacher candidates connect theory to practice by integrating course content and field experiences into a philosophical and operational framework for student teaching and beyond (Beatty et al., 2009; Chism, 1998; Moreland, 1997; Pike et al., 1997). Writing a TPS is useful for promoting reflection on beliefs, self-confidence, and a sense of empowerment among teacher candidates (Zauha, 2008). Developing a TPS can also enhance the professional growth and development of new teachers and help them to compare a variety of teaching beliefs and practices (Goodyear & Allchin, 1998).

Whereas there is a considerable amount of information on how to write an effective TPS (Beatty et al., 2009; Goodyear & Allchin, 1998; Grundman, 2006), there is a limited amount of information on how teachers develop a philosophical perspective on teaching (Hollins, 2011). The present study describes the process by which senior undergraduate teacher candidates, in the first semester of a year-long residency (Residency I), developed and wrote a TPS and their perceptions of which aspects of the course

had the greatest impact on the development of that document.

### **A Case Example of a Residency I Program**

In 2013, the College of Education at a large public, comprehensive university in the Southeast U.S. heeded the call to improve teacher education by completely revamping its teacher preparation program. The effort incorporated what Darling-Hammonds (2010) suggests as evidence of teacher program improvement, including incorporating strong clinical experiences and focusing on critical areas (student learning, assessment, and pedagogical content knowledge). One facet of the overhaul included a year-long residency during the teacher candidates' senior year. The second semester, Residency II, is considered traditional student teaching. For secondary education preservice teachers, the first semester, Residency I, is a school immersion experience that involves teacher candidates observing many different subject areas and grade levels two days a week as well as a weekly, three-hour seminar at the university. Teacher candidates experience both the culture of theory building provided by the university and the culture of decision making with real children in a school setting (Boyd, Boll, Brawner, & Villaume, 1998).

*Theoretical Underpinnings of Residency I.* The redesign of this teacher preparation program was based on a theoretical framework that is informed by situated cognition (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989), social constructivism (McMahon, 1997), and adult learning (Knowles, 1984). The synthesis of these theories resulted in the development of a problem-based learning (PBL) model for teacher preparation. PBL allows for contextualized experiences in a culture of collaborative learning. Adult learners prefer problem-solving situations that require practical applications of learning, utilizing their prior knowledge and skills, applying their learning directly to their own life situations (Hmelo-Silver, 2004; Murray-Harvey, Curtis, Cattley, & Slee, 2005). Writing a teaching philosophy in a teacher preparation program aligns with these theoretical constructs. Residency I students actively pursue, observe, and employ their knowledge in the context and culture of the schools in which they are placed and within the culture of their professional learning community. By actively engaging in problem solving and applying their learning through the PBL approach, candidates are connecting theory to practice and building deeper understanding of issues and elements of teaching, learning, and education, which becomes evident in their teaching philosophy statements. The program includes several components that, among other purposes, serve to help students to develop their own unique teaching philosophy. A description of the key components of Residency I follow.

*Field Experiences.* During field experiences in a public school (high school, middle school, or a K-12 unit school), Residency I teacher candidates have a mentor teacher with whom they spend part of their time observing, assisting in the classroom, getting to

know students, and preparing and teaching a week-long learning segment. They also observe and assist many other teachers and staff in different contexts in order to get a better understanding of the culture of their assigned school. Each week, teacher candidates write journal reflections on their observations from their field experiences answering specific prompts (based on the state adopted teacher observation rubric) and recording what was impactful about each experience.

*Professional Learning Communities and Problem-Based Learning.* During the weekly, three-hour seminar, Residency I teacher candidates participate in a small professional learning community (PLC) with 6-8 other teacher candidates that are in the same school during the field experiences. The 3-4 small PLCs in the Residency I seminar course act as a larger PLC for the students. Within the small PLCs, teacher candidates engage in problem-based learning (PBL) events that mimic real-life school and classroom experiences (Hmelo-Silver, 2004; Murray-Harvey, Curtis, Cattley, & Slee, 2005). During a PBL event, teacher candidates identify what they know, what they need to know, and how they will learn more. They divide up learning tasks, research topics, make observations in their school, interview school personnel, reflect in their journal, and then prepare a research brief that they share with their colleagues. During the course of the semester, teacher candidates experience four PBL activities. Residency I facilitators (university faculty) provide the first three PBLs and the fourth is written by each small PLC. This fourth PBL activity reflects issues that the teacher candidates observed during their field experience and/or information not addressed in the previous three PBLs that they identify as important. After each small PLC writes their own PBL activity, they exchange PBLs and solve them.

*Guest Speakers.* In addition to experiencing PBL activities during the weekly seminar and researching them in their field experiences and online, teacher candidates encounter expert guest speakers in the areas of special education, gifted education, English language learners, professional learning communities, educational technology, differentiating instruction, accountability and assessment, professionalism, and school culture. Speakers are principals, superintendents, teachers, district office staff, and university faculty. After each presentation, the Residency I teacher candidates reflect on 1-2 topics or themes that resonated with them and participate in an online discussion regarding their key takeaways from those topics.

*Education Teacher Preparation Assessment.* Another aspect of the Residency I experience that impacts both the field experience and seminar is the education teacher preparation assessment (edTPA), a teacher performance-based, subject-specific assessment that measures teacher candidates' readiness to teach. The three tasks measured in edTPA are planning, instruction, and assessment (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 2016). During Residency I, teacher candidates practice Task 1 Planning and parts of Task 2 Instruction. Teacher

candidates plan a weeklong learning segment and write responses to all five of the edTPA Planning Commentary prompts over the course of the semester. The Residency I facilitators provide feedback as the teacher candidates draft and finalize their learning segment and commentary responses. The students then teach their learning segment towards the end of the semester to their mentor teacher's class(es). Teacher candidates are videotaped during their teaching and are provided feedback by their mentor teacher, which they use for reflection.

*I Believe Statements.* Residency I teacher candidates are required to complete at least 10 "I believe" statements by the end of the semester, which act as a scaffold for their TPS. These statements are based on their experiences during Residency I, both in the field and in seminar. Students support what they believe with an explanation and evidence, which can be a combination of cited research, teacher interviews, and observations. In addition, they include how what they believe will impact their practice. Below is a student example:

**Claim:** Students need affirmation and encouragement to stay motivated and engaged.

**Because (with citation):** Students want to succeed, even if their behavior says otherwise (guest speaker class presentation, April 20, 2016).

**This I will do:** Strive to support and encourage my students to create a safe, supportive classroom environment (Patrick, Ryan, & Kaplan, 2007, p. 93).

*Individual TPS.* Based on the previously described activities and experiences, teacher candidates in Residency I write their personal TPS as a separate assignment with instructions to use their "I believe" statements to inform their thinking. While there is not a minimum number of pages required, TPSs are typically 2-4 pages in length. Facilitators provide feedback to both highlight well-articulated ideas as well as foster reflection and metacognition. Whereas teacher candidates are not given examples of previously written teaching philosophy statements, they receive a rubric to guide their writing.

*Final Poster and Group Project Presentation.* Teacher candidates create a poster illustrating the synthesis of their individual learning through the semester that is displayed during the end-of-term Presentation Night. Posters include an outline of their TPS, their core "I believe" statements, key findings from all of the research briefs presented, a graphical or pictorial representation of their learning, and key indicators of their field and seminar experiences. Teacher candidates receive a rubric to guide the development of their personal posters. They also create and share a group project that represents their PLC's collective learning through the semester. Group projects include research, field experiences, and seminar experiences. Examples of projects include hand-made 3D objects (large flowers, trees, first aid

kits, space craft navigation panels, super hero city scenes, etc.) that have components representing different aspects of Residency I and what the students learned. Other examples include skits, songs, video presentations, PowerPoint or Prezi presentations, and sometimes combinations of several of these features. In order to prevent the suppression of the kind of creativity that we are looking for, the group project is not assessed based on a rubric but is based on inclusion of research, field, and seminar experiences, with the freedom to demonstrate their learning in ways that the group members prefer.

In summary, the Residency I program is designed to provide teacher candidates with ample opportunity to develop and reflect on their emerging teaching philosophies. Using the semester's activities and experiences, they receive guidance and feedback about their teaching. This process helps to ensure that the TPS produced by students is an accurate reflection of their teaching philosophy and approach.

## PURPOSE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The purpose of this study was to examine how the experiences of Residency I teacher candidates related to the development of their teaching philosophy statements. Two research questions guided this study:

1. What curricular aspects of the Residency I program were most useful in helping teacher candidates develop their teaching philosophies?
2. How did the amount of time spent in the field during Residency I relate to the perceived influence of curricular features on developing one's teaching philosophy?

Developing a teaching philosophy statement is a deeply personal endeavor that draws on educational experiences as a student, in education courses, and in field-based experiences. Drawing on the work of Pike et al. (1997), the theoretical framework of this research is grounded in the idea of bridging theory and practice. The university setting provides the foundation for educational theory and perspectives, while time spent in schools as interns provides practical experiences that shape teacher candidates' perception of what actually happens in classrooms and schools. Also framing this work is the evidence that writing facilitates learning, makes the invisible visible, promotes ownership of ideas, can increase confidence, and invites reflection (Connelly, 1989; Langer & Applebee, 1987; Marwine, 1989; Rivard, 1994).

Stating beliefs in a teaching philosophy statement is way to connect thoroughly with the reason why one chooses to go into the teaching profession; it can create a deep sense of connectedness with students as well as other education professionals. The process helps teacher candidates develop a more complete conceptualization of the purpose, process, and meaning of the art and science of teaching (Hollins,

2011). The impact that teacher beliefs have on practices and ultimately students' outcomes is well documented (e.g., Askew, Rhodes, Brown, Wiliam, & Johnson, 1997; Giboney Wall, 2016; Hancock & Gallard, 2004; Muijs & Reynolds, 2002). Teachers' beliefs influence the expectations they have of their students, which has been shown to have a direct correlation to how students perform (Rosenthal, 1994); the learning environment is shaped around the beliefs of the teacher (Kagan, 1992); and beliefs are indicators of what teachers value, their perceptions, and judgments, which in turn impact their practices. (Pajares, 1992).

## METHOD

### Participants

Seventy-three senior undergraduate teacher candidates (40 women, 32 men, 1 missing) from a large public, comprehensive university in the southeastern U.S. participated in this study during an academic year: 42 students during the fall term and 31 students during the spring term. Teacher candidates (with the exception of one student with missing data) were pursuing an education minor and a major in one of the following disciplines: math ( $n = 8$ ), science ( $n = 5$ ), English ( $n = 15$ ), history ( $n = 7$ ), business ( $n = 1$ ), art ( $n = 6$ ), physical education ( $n = 8$ ), health ( $n = 1$ ), music ( $n = 14$ ), foreign language ( $n = 2$ ), or agriculture ( $n = 5$ ).

Two sections of Residency I are offered each academic term. One section has field experiences on Mondays and Wednesdays and seminar Wednesday evenings and the other section has field experiences Tuesdays and Thursdays and seminar Thursday evenings. The teacher candidates' section placement depended in some cases on their major. For example, the math and science teacher candidates were all placed in seminar on Wednesday evenings and only spend half a day in the field on Wednesdays. This group has more field experiences earlier in their program than the rest of the teacher candidates, so they have less time in the field during Residency I. The K-12 teacher candidates (art, music, physical education, health, and agriculture) are in the field one day a week with Residency I and one day a week with their methods class in their respective majors. The liberal arts majors (English, history, and foreign language) are in the field two days a week with Residency I.

### Procedure & Materials

At the end of the academic term, we invited all Residency I teacher candidates to complete a research survey pertaining to their experiences in the program. The survey included 10 statements that teacher candidates rated using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*). Six items addressed the usefulness of each aspect of the Residency I curriculum for candidates' teaching philosophy described earlier. The other four items addressed the effects of the TPS assignment and candidates' TPS experiences prior to taking the course. After making

their ratings, candidates could write open-ended comments in response to each item. The survey items appear in Table 1.

The Residency I teacher candidates attended the weekly seminars and field experiences throughout the semester. They engaged in all weekly assignments (PBLs, guest speaker discussion boards, and edTPA assignments) as well as writing their personal teaching philosophy, and preparing and presenting their individual poster and group project at the end of the semester. On the last night of class, Presentation Night, the teacher candidates completed the TPS survey. We informed them that the survey was designed to determine if their experiences in Residency I affected their teaching philosophy and TPS.

Before giving out the survey, we explained the purpose of the research study and answered questions. We explained that, by completing the anonymous survey, they were providing consent for us to use their data. We then invited the teacher candidates to complete the survey, indicating that participation had no bearing on their grades. The survey took between 5-10 minutes to complete. This was an Institutional Review Board approved study, with all ethical practices followed.

## RESULTS

Table 1 provides the descriptive statistics for the survey items. There were no significant gender differences in the ratings of any of the items. The first research question addressed the relative usefulness of the different curricular features of the Residency I program by course. As the table indicates, the students found that most of the curricular components were useful in helping them to develop their teaching philosophy. The pattern of means indicated that students rated the guest speakers, "I believe" statements, and working in the PLC as most useful. The students rated the edTPA process and their PBL experiences as least useful.

The second research question addressed the relationship of time spent in the field during Residency I to the perceived influence of curricular features on developing one's teaching philosophy. We examined this question by comparing students in the K-12 ( $n = 35$ ), liberal-arts ( $n = 25$ ), and math and sciences ( $n = 13$ ) course types. K-12 teacher candidates spent one day in the field with their Residency I instructor and one day in the field through their methods course per week; liberal arts teacher candidates spent two days in the field with their Residency I instructor per week; math and sciences candidates spent one half day in the field per week (they have earlier field experiences than the other groups). On the ratings of the usefulness of their field experiences, there was no statistically significant difference among the liberal arts, K-12, and sciences teacher candidates,  $F(2, 70) = 2.60, p = .082$ .

In addition to the usefulness of the Residency I curricular features, teacher candidates rated more general aspects of their teaching philosophy. These ratings (see items 7-10 in Table 1) indicated that the

teaching philosophy assignment forced the students to think deeply about their teaching beliefs, even though most of them had created a teaching philosophy and their beliefs about education were fairly well established prior to their Residency I program. Students also tended to disagree that Residency I had little effect on their teaching beliefs and philosophy.

**TABLE 1. Descriptive Statistics for Teaching Philosophy Items**

	M	SD	t
1. The "I Believe" Statements were useful to me in developing my Teaching Philosophy.	4.22	1.06	9.85*
2. My field experience in Residency I was useful to me in developing my Teaching Philosophy.	4.03	1.05	8.33*
3. The edTPA process we experienced in Residency I was useful to me in developing my Teaching Philosophy.	3.01	1.20	0.10
4. The guest speakers in Residency I were useful to me in developing my Teaching Philosophy.	4.56	0.71	18.88*
5. The Problem-Based Learning experiences were useful to me in developing my Teaching Philosophy.	3.67	1.11	5.18*
6. Working with my PLC was useful to me in developing my Teaching Philosophy.	4.16	1.01	9.81*
7. Creating the Teaching Philosophy made me think deeply about my beliefs about teaching.	4.47	0.96	13.06*
8. I had already created a Teaching Philosophy prior to Residency I.	4.22	1.58	6.58*
9. Residency I as a whole had little effect on my beliefs about teaching and thus my Teaching Philosophy.	1.92	1.18	7.86*
10. Prior to Residency I my beliefs about education were fairly well established.	3.45	0.98	3.86*

Note.  $N = 73$ . Means were tested against the scale midpoint (3). \* $p < .001$ .

We conducted additional analyses to examine the relationships among the rated items. Correlations indicated that all of the curriculum features except the PLC item were positively and significantly related to the thinking deeply about one's teaching beliefs item, with  $r$ s ranging from .24 (PBL experiences) to .47 ("I believe" statements).

The more students agreed that their beliefs about education were fairly well-established prior to Residency I, the less likely they were to agree that creating the teaching philosophy made them think

deeply about their teaching beliefs ( $r(71) = -.25$ ,  $p = .03$ ), the less likely they were to agree with the usefulness of the "I believe" statements ( $r(71) = -.24$ ,  $p = .04$ ), and the more likely they were to agree that the program had little effect on their teaching beliefs and philosophy ( $r(71) = .30$ ,  $p = .01$ ). However, having already created a teaching philosophy prior to the program was unrelated to students' ratings for any of the curricular component items.

## DISCUSSION

Residency I is a semester long, school immersion experience at a large public university in the southeastern U.S. that incorporates a variety of curricular features for its senior undergraduate teacher candidates. The teacher candidates rated the impact of these features on their teaching philosophy statements (TPS), which were written at the conclusion of the course. Responding to an anonymous questionnaire, teacher candidates identified which aspects of Residency I most influenced their TPS as well as responded to prompts regarding their experiences and beliefs prior to the course. Our first research question addressed which curricular aspects of the Residency I program were most useful in helping teacher candidates develop their teaching philosophies. In addition to the teaching philosophy rating data, students provided open-ended responses in support of their ratings. We discuss each program aspect and its rated impact in the following sections, as well as include some example responses that reflect and support the pattern of ratings.

*Guest Speakers.* It was not a surprise that teacher candidates rated the guest speakers highest for impact on their teaching philosophies. In the comment section of the survey, some teacher candidates remarked specifically about a particular speaker. For instance, one student wrote "Mr. Harrison (pseudonym) made me really dive into myself as a teacher and my beliefs."

The teacher candidates also participated in discussion board topics after each speaker. While not part of the data collection in this study, these comments and discussions provided rich information regarding what the teacher candidates identified as salient and significant points that the guest speakers made. Their posts reflected these sentiments and much more regarding the usefulness of the guest speakers. The teacher candidates considered all of the guest speakers "experts" in their field and appreciated their practical advice and wisdom.

*"I Believe" Statements.* The teacher candidates also rated the "I believe" statements highly for impact. We expected this result as the facilitators were explicit that the "I believes" were to be used to scaffold the TPS process and the TPS would be assessed based on the "I believes" included in it. Comments made regarding the impact of the "I believe" statements on the TPS involved their usefulness in a mechanical sense. For example, one student said, "It was what helped me with my philosophy – an outline." Others made comments regarding the cognitive aspect of using the

"I believe" statements to inform their TPS, "They ["I believe" statements] really made me think about what was important to me!" and "They really made you think about what you believe." As other teacher candidates reported, "It forced me to nail down and express into words what I knew" and "I honestly wasn't sure what 'the point' was, but once I had all the beliefs worked out, I rewrote a philosophy statement I had done a year ago. I [now feel] more confident and aware of my own 'philosophy.'" Some students felt hampered by the structure of the "I believe" statements and the requirement to base it on research as evidenced by the following quote, "Due to the requirement to cite sources, I felt that I was not stating what I believe but what I could find in research. This could have been so much more meaningful if I could have just said what I believe and defend it."

*Professional Learning Communities.* The next highest rated program feature were the professional learning communities (PLCs). This aspect of Residency I was interwoven throughout the semester as teacher candidates worked collaboratively on assignments, interacted as colleagues, and held each other accountable to their group-established norms. Many of the teacher candidates experienced PLCs at their field placement schools as well. Some were able to sit in on meetings and witness a PLC in action in a school setting. Our goal was to not only have teacher candidates see PLCs in action in a school, but engage as a PLC with their teacher candidate colleagues since many school systems have adopted a PLC model. Teacher candidates' comments on the impact of PLCs on their TPS were varied. One student said, "No information from this was used." Another student said, "Seeing them [PLC] regularly and sharing ideas and methods did change my thinking some." One student said, "PLC collaboration was my favorite component." Frequently students said that they loved working with their PLC and that it was "fun" and "helpful." One student said, "I loved my PLC and they inspired and supported me."

*Field Experiences.* We were surprised to find that the teacher candidates rated their field experiences as only moderately useful, compared to the previously mentioned program features. The field component is the most time consuming program feature and it is representative of what teacher candidates will likely experience in their student teaching and as new teachers. Teacher candidates' comments about this program feature varied greatly. Several teacher candidates commented on the usefulness of the field experiences, how they would have liked more time in the field, and that it was an affirmation of what they want to do. For example, one student reported "I saw a lot of things while in the field this semester, some I agreed with and some I did not. All of these experiences helped me to form my philosophy thus far in my career." One student was explicit regarding his TPS, "[I] used the [field] experience to mold my philosophy." Others indicated that the field experience did not impact their TPS. As one student noted, "My philosophy was already established."

Some of the teacher candidates taught a one-week learning segment, some taught more, and some did not teach at all. There were comments that they needed more teaching time, or in the case of someone who did not teach, the field experience question was not applicable since they did not have that experience. Several students noted that the field experience confirmed their beliefs or that they already had their beliefs established, so the field experience was less likely to be useful for their teaching philosophy.

*Problem-Based Learning.* We used the PBL program feature to engage the class in learning essential content and dispositions. The four PBL activities allowed students to identify important topics, identify problems, and look at potential solutions. The PBL strategy for learning is to not give direct answers, but rather create a solution space in which learners can operate. This form of guided inquiry is rooted in real-life experiences and requires practice and patience on the part of students. The PBL approach is likely to be foreign to and frustrating for many students, and it can at times be challenging, tedious, and ambiguous. It was therefore not surprising that the teacher candidates rated this curricular aspect of Residency I as less useful than most of the other program aspects. Again, students' comments varied about the usefulness of this feature. Many commented on the usefulness of the research and learning things that they did not know. One student said, "I learned a lot of things I didn't know teachers had to go through. It was influential in my papers." Another teacher candidate said, "I used research found in my research briefs to construct both my 'I believe's' and my teaching philosophy statement." As one teacher candidate noted, "It [PBL] taught us to really dig deep and analyze information." A less satisfied teacher candidate said, "At times these seemed pretty arbitrary and disconnected."

One student said it was fun, another said it was not useful, and another teacher candidate said that the guest speakers and field experiences were comparatively more effective. Overall, students appeared to see less direct connection of the PBL activities to their teaching philosophies than other activities.

*edTPA.* The edTPA is a subject-specific performance-based assessment for teacher educators. In the Residency I program, teacher candidates practice the first of three tasks on the edTPA and part of the second task, which included responding to five prompts, providing a detailed commentary on each prompt, and writing a learning segment that consists of three to five consecutive lessons that revolve around a central focus or theme. The edTPA aspect of Residency I is important to give teacher candidates practice for a high-stakes assessment that occurs in Residency II. It is also an important factor in determining whether they receive their teaching license. Given the purposes and emphasis of this program feature, it was not surprising to us that teacher candidates rated it as least useful for the development of their teaching philosophies.



Given the lack of usefulness of edTPA with respect to the students' teaching philosophy, it seems that we have missed an opportunity. For example, it might be possible to make explicit connections between what the edTPA requires teacher candidates to do in the planning commentaries and how that demonstrates educative practices that are rooted in the belief that all students can learn. It is our responsibility to get to know our students, to know what they know, and articulate how what we plan to teach them will support their needs, interests, and readiness levels.

Our second research question pertained to whether amount of time spent in the field during Residency I was related to ratings of the usefulness of the curricular features for developing one's teaching philosophy. There was a non-significant trend toward group differences. It is possible that having larger sample sizes might result in a significant group difference. Future research might provide a better test of the relationship of time spent in the field to students' developing teaching philosophies.

The correlational results and the ratings of the general items of the survey indicated that most of the Residency I components were successful in inducing reflection and deep thinking regarding students' beliefs about their teaching. These trends were present, despite the fact that most of the teacher candidates reported already having a teaching philosophy and beliefs about education that were fairly well established before they participated in the Residency I program. These results are encouraging and they help to confirm that the TPS focus within Residency I was effective in helping teacher candidates to develop further their teaching philosophy.

On the other hand, teacher candidates who reported having more established beliefs about education prior to Residency I also reported reduced effectiveness of the TPS assignment and program components. The Residency I program, and programs of a similar nature, might therefore be limited by the strength or stability of teacher candidates' existing beliefs about education.

The findings could indicate that teacher candidates, while mostly well established in their belief system about education at this juncture in their education, were allowed to explore and reflect on their ideas during the Residency I school immersion experience. Teacher candidates frequently enter the teaching profession with deeply held beliefs that stem from approximately 13 years of their own school experiences (Marks, 2007; Wall, 2010). Perhaps some of their beliefs were confirmed and conceivably new ideas and beliefs began to take root through one or more of the curricular features of Residency I. Future research could help to determine the extent that students' beliefs about themselves as teachers and about education can be changed after participating in programs like Residency I. It would also be interesting to explore how teacher candidates' teaching philosophies, developed in Residency I, evolve as they begin their careers as teachers.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHER PREPARATION

In light of the present findings, teacher preparation programs may want to consider the value they place on teacher candidates' teaching philosophy statements and how they can be used as a professional development tool to foster deep thinking and reflection on beliefs about education. Suggestions for teacher preparation programs include having teacher candidates create belief statements in advance of crafting their philosophy statement, making teacher candidates' TPS documents public within their current course, and measuring impact of curricular aspects on the TPS for programmatic feedback.

Creating "I believe" statements during the semester of Residency I prior to crafting a TPS allowed students to think about their beliefs while engaging in the seminar activities (guest speakers, problem-based learning scenarios, professional learning communities, and practicing the teacher performance assessment) and their field experiences. Teacher candidates kept a journal that included not only their general observations, but also their observations of aspects of teaching and learning that are measured on the state teacher evaluation model, which is based on what research indicates are best practices (National Comprehension Center for Teacher Quality, 2012). The "I believe" statements included the reason for their belief (based on theory, practice, personal experience, etc.) and actions they would take in their own classroom because of their beliefs. Having teacher candidates write their "I believe" statements certainly scaffolds their teaching philosophy statement; however, it could be used throughout the teacher preparation program to act as a fluid and growing document that reflects their journey on becoming a teacher.

Beatty et al. (2009) suggest making teaching philosophies public as a means of accountability. Brinthaupt et al. (2014) suggest a "student-directed" TPS whereby teaching philosophies are given to students with the intent of getting feedback and determining if instructor actions match their articulated beliefs. Making philosophies public within a teacher preparation program could be a way to have teacher candidates articulate and defend their beliefs and receive constructive feedback. This practice could invite reflection not only on one's own beliefs, but also reflection and consideration of the beliefs of others. Certainly by making beliefs explicit about teaching and learning, the TPS can act as a guide for teacher candidates as they make instructional decisions and deal with educational difficulties when they enter into student teaching and ultimately their classrooms. Writing and regularly referring to one's TPS makes the scholarship of teaching more rigorous and meaningful, which is why teacher candidates should reflect on their classroom experiences and check for alignment between beliefs and actions. (Beatty et al., 2009; Hegerty, 2015).

Teacher preparation programs could engage in a scholarship of teaching and learning by using their teacher candidates' teaching philosophy to determine what beliefs are articulated, how those beliefs connect to the curriculum, and what beliefs may be absent. Trends in stated beliefs could be an indication of desirable outcomes, misconceptions, or even gaps in learning. Understanding that the TPS is a tool that can promote self-expression (Zauha, 2008), create dialogue on teaching and learning, and serve as a critical part of the employment process, teacher preparation programs may want to determine what curricular aspects of their program have the greatest impact on their teacher candidates' teaching philosophies in order to inform their curricular decisions.

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