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ABSTRACT

Elementary and secondary preservice teachers' philosophical perspectives were examined before and after their participation in field-based activities in a professional development school. A philosophical perspective survey was administered at the start and again at the end of the semester. The five categories were existentialism, behaviorism, perennials, essentialism, and progressivism. The preservice teachers were enrolled in university courses conducted at public school sites taught by a faculty member from the university. T-tests were conducted to examine whether or not overall differences occurred in philosophical outlooks for both the elementary and secondary preservice teachers. The interns had a statistically significant difference in their student-centered-progressive outlook. The elementary interns were more existentialist than the secondary interns, and the secondary interns held a stronger view regarding behaviorism. Qualitative data were collected from the secondary preservice teachers' journals. Generally, both quantitative and qualitative data suggested that the program was influential in affecting philosophical changes, in particular a trend toward combining existentialism and progressivism. The experiences that the interns faced during their program at the public school changed their outlook toward stronger student-centered views of teaching. Recommendations for improving a professional development school are provided. The philosophical perspective survey is appended. (Contains 16 references.) (Author/ND)

Field-based Interns' Philosophical Perspectives on Teaching

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Abstract

Elementary and secondary preservice teachers' philosophical perspectives were examined before and after their participation in field-based activities. A pre- posttest philosophical perspective survey was administered at the start of the semester and at the end of the semester. The five categories were Existentialism, Behaviorism, Perennials, Essentialisim, and Progressivism. The preservice teachers were enrolled in university courses conducted at public school sites taught by a faculty member from the university. T-tests were conducted to examine whether or not overall differences occurred in philosophical outlooks for both the elementary and secondary preservice teachers. The interns had a statistically significant difference in their student-centered-Progressive outlook $t(56) = 2.06$, $p < 0.05$. The elementary interns were more Existentialist than the secondary interns $t(54) = 1.75$, $p < 0.05$, and the secondary interns held a stronger view regarding Behaviorism $t(54) = 1.69$, $p < 0.05$. Qualitative data were collected from the secondary preserve teachers' journals. The experiences that the interns faced during their program at the public school changed their outlook toward stronger student-centered views of teaching. Recommendations for improving a professional development school are provided.

Introduction

Teacher education programs at various institutions are in the process of program changes. In light of evolving changes in teacher education, the University of Texas at Brownsville (UTB) has developed a program using the Professional Development School (PDS) model. The PDS program includes a field-based component that enable preservice teachers to become actively involved in public school classrooms. The PDS center for the Brownsville area, in its third year, is named The Lower Valley Center for Professional Development and Technology. A goal of the Center is to maximize the competence of preservice teachers so that they may successfully encounter the challenges of learner-centered instruction.

The Holmes Group (1995) has called for more research on the work of the PDS and for schools of education to serve the needs of young people while concentrating on the professional education of K-12 teachers. The call encourages schools of education to place a great deal of effort and resources toward the improvement of education in the public schools and implement a student-centered approach to teacher preparation. If preservice and inservice teachers are to develop teaching strategies that focus on student-centered instructional activities, then a philosophical perspective conducive for student-centered instruction is necessary to facilitate the development of such activities. This paper focuses on the work at a PDS to gauge changes in preservice teachers' philosophical beliefs concerning teaching and learning as a result of completing their coursework and field experiences.

Conceptual Framework

Green (1971), contended that belief systems develop and are transformed through teaching. The close connection, suggested by Green, between knowledge and beliefs cannot be ignored. Practical knowledge of teaching continually evolves through various experiences and active reflection on actions taken. The experiences and the act of reflection

on those experiences are influential in the development of particular beliefs, and affect what both preservice and inservice teachers do in the classroom (Richardson, 1994). A teacher's practical knowledge is in flux and depends on the various situations or contexts which the teacher faces on a daily basis (Clandinin and Connelly, 1987). Significant teacher change can occur through active reflective practices as part of building personal practical knowledge (Clandinin, 1986). Through active involvement in field work, preservice teachers in a PDS gain practical knowledge and develop beliefs associated with their experiences.

Preservice teachers bring with them, into a teacher education program, beliefs influenced by the way they approach teacher education and what is learned from it (Brookhart & Freeman, 1992; Calderhead & Robson, 1991) suggesting that preservice teachers have the potential to modify their belief system through participation in pedagogical methods courses. Yet, this influence is minor in comparison to the experiential effects of personal life, previous schooling, and student teaching (Brousseau, Book, & Byers, 1988). Hence, beliefs form an integral factor in the teaching practices of both in-service and preservice teachers, and they contribute to the development of particular teaching methods.

As mentioned, previous researchers have indicated that beliefs are influential in shaping the actions that teachers take during instruction and that pedagogical education received by teachers prior to their professional career has little influence on shaping particular beliefs related to teaching and the curriculum. McDiarmid (1990) contended that preservice teachers' beliefs are extremely difficult to change. Similar studies found that many beliefs and conceptions did not shift in the desired direction (Ball, 1989; Civil, 1993; Simon & Mazza, 1993). Apparently, preservice teachers beliefs are slightly influenced by encountering a teacher education program.

According to Richardson (1996), some preservice teachers do not have their beliefs challenged in the classroom when they enter their program. Moreover, perceived changes

in preservice students' beliefs may be transitory and not be effective in driving their actions when they become teachers. Preservice teachers should have opportunities to explore classroom contexts, discuss with practicing teachers aspects of pedagogy, and perform field work (Richardson, 1996). These activities are a part of a field-based teacher education program. Students get their "hands dirty" by participating in actual classrooms with certified classroom teachers as mentors.

Studies have been conducted to ascertain preservice teachers' beliefs, but there are few studies that have examined the beliefs of preservice teachers who are a part of a Professional Development School (PDS). The present study sought to examine preservice teachers' philosophical beliefs, who were enrolled in a field-based teacher education program. The study was organized to provide an answer to the research question: What philosophical change(s) occur as a result of experiencing pedagogical content in a Professional Development School setting?

Methodology

Background. The purpose of the PDS is to blend theory and practice in a field-based preparation program. The center was established in the fall of 1994 with the support of the Texas Education Agency, thus forming a school-university collaboration to restructure the teacher education program. The PDS consists of two elementary, and one participating high school. The schools are in a city situated at the lower end of the Rio Grande River.

The public schools were selected as sites based on academic need. Their students consistently have had low scores on the state's standardized achievement tests. The school district's student population is 97 percent Hispanic, 40 percent of whom are students in bilingual and ESL programs. All students are permitted to participate in the free lunch program. To help meet the needs of this student population, there are several staff

development efforts underway in the district to improve the teaching practices, especially in mathematics and science.

Program Description. The university instructor focused on student-centered instructional practices and activities that encouraged active student involvement and encouraged higher order thinking. Efforts were made to facilitate reflective inquiry, by the interns, of their own teaching practice. Interns were required to plan and teach at least three lessons, under the mentor's guidance, during the semester. Also, there was an emphasis placed on blending practice with theory as well as the notion that professional development of preservice teachers involve becoming a part of a larger, integrated whole that includes the community, students, parents, and faculty. Often, when interns are placed in a classroom, their direct experiences with the students are initially limited. However, the program encouraged the interns to take an expanded role by actually planning and presenting lessons under the guidance of the mentors - public school teachers, and university professors.

The interns are defined as field-based, UTB undergraduate students enrolled in the teacher education program. The interns were placed with a mentor at one of three sites, and they attended university classes on the public school campuses in order to gain the benefit of direct experiences with both mentors and their students. Each intern was required to complete three hours of observations per week in a mentor's classroom. This requirement was flexible, depending on the preservice teachers' needs. For example, interns had the option of shadowing students or observe in a second mentor's classroom. Under this mentorship, interns were expected to link effective teaching practices with theory and incorporate appropriate technology (Telese, 1996). As one example of this technology, the interns were asked to include a multimedia presentation using software such as PowerPoint.

As part of their field experiences both in the schools and community, interns fulfilled academic requirements through an ongoing process of reflection and action. The

content features of the university field-based courses included a theoretical, research-proven knowledge base, reflective practice, experiential problem-based learning as well as exposure to the use of instructional technology. The university professor provided instruction on various aspects of pedagogy including lesson planning, questioning techniques, discovery learning, cooperative learning, and the use of instructional technology. The interns had opportunities to apply theoretical perspectives in the classroom setting, Hence, the focus of the university classroom experiences on site was the development of learner-centered instructional practices where by interns were encouraged to draw from a knowledge base of content, pedagogy, and technology in order to provide relevant and meaningful experiences for all students.

The students were required to maintain a reflective journal in response to particular events that occurred in the public school classroom. During the first few weeks of the semester, interns reflected on the physical arrangement of the classroom, policies, and student-teacher interaction. As the semester progressed, interns were directed to reflect on the role(s) that teachers have, observing a particular student, discussing with the classroom teacher concerning particular concept taught in the class and teaching strategies. At the end of the semester, the interns were asked to reflect on their experiences and write a philosophy of teaching.

Data Collection.

Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected. The quantitative data consists of a philosophy of teaching questionnaire. The qualitative data included excerpts from the secondary interns' journal entries. The interns were administered a philosophical perspectives survey, adapted from Sadker and Sadker (1994), at the beginning of the Fall 1995 semester, and again near the end of the semester. The survey gauged interns' tendencies toward the following perspectives: Perennialism, Essentialisim, Progressivism, Existentialism, and Behaviorism.

The definitions for each category of the philosophical perspective survey are presented below. The definitions are based on Armstrong (1989).

i) Perennialism-the belief that a school's task is to bring learners into contact with the great thinking of the past in order to face the challenges of a modern society. Perennialists favor a common school program drawn heavily from literature, humanities, and the classics. The classes must be rigorous.

ii) Essentialisim-the belief that there is basic, practical information that all learners should know. There is a heavy emphasis placed science and technical fields, prizing other areas that have a connection to the world of work. A teacher with this perspective maintains a disciplined classroom and believes in hard work.

iii) Progressivism-a belief that student should develop the ability to think and solve problems, favoring a curriculum that requires students to develop problem solving skills in response to the changing conditions learners will face in a world of change. Learners should make some personal learning choices in order to function in a democratic society.

iv) Existentialism-a belief that individual choice, freedom, and personal responsibility are important and imposing one's values on another is to be avoided.

v) Behaviorism-a belief that one must first identify the nature of a terminal behavior and then design instruction accordingly, often utilizing highly controlled feedback systems. Instruction is sequenced which will lead to the intended outcome by studying learners' observable behaviors at each step, providing rewards and immediate feedback, moving from simple to complex tasks, and stating a desired performance in advance.

The interns responded by using a Likert scale from one to five where a one indicated that the statement on the questionnaire "is least like me" and a five indicated that "the statement is most like me." It was determined that two of the philosophical perspectives on the survey that aligned closely with the learner-centered proficiencies were Progressivism and Existentialism. There were 10 items associated with each of the five

perspectives; a total of 50 indicated a best fit between each statement and the intern's philosophy. Scores in the 40's indicated a strong alignment with the tenets.

Results from *t* tests will be discussed. The treatment was considered enrollment in the field-based courses, including their field experiences. The analysis consisted of a break down by gender, and teaching levels-elementary and secondary. There were 27 secondary interns, and 34 elementary interns. When appropriate, paired t tests were used which reduced the number in the sample used for analysis.

Results

An overall analysis was conducted on each of the five belief categories (see Table 1). The philosophical perspective that had a statistically significant change was Progressivism with a $t(56) = 2.06$, $p < 0.022$. The mean for this belief category in the beginning of the semester was 41.11 and standard deviation (SD) of 5.08, and at the end of the semester, the mean increased to 42.68 with an SD of 3.85. This result indicated that interns from both the elementary and secondary levels gravitated towards a Progressive outlook of teaching. In addition, the Progressive perspective had the largest mean score in both the pre- and post treatment categories. The lowest mean pre and post scores were associated with Existentialism, 28.63 with and an SD of 6.2 and 28.41 and an SD of 6.49. The interns maintained a constant philosophical perspective within four of the five categories implying that the interns held four different perspectives towards teaching.

Table 1

Means for Philosophical Perspectives

	Pre (n = 57)	Post (n = 57)	p < T
Perennialism	30.37 (5.84)	30.12 (6.12)	0.420
Essentialisism	34.98 (5.17)	34.74 (6.59)	0.200
Progressivism	41.11 (5.08)	42.68 (3.85)	0.022
Existentialism	28.63 (6.20)	28.41 (6.49)	0.669
Behaviorism	29.81 (4.47)	29.91 (5.6)	0.454

Note: Standard Deviation is in parenthesis.

The philosophical survey analysis was partitioned by elementary and secondary grade levels. The students who identified themselves as all-level were grouped with the secondary students for the analysis. Table 2 presents the results of *t* tests for each philosophical category by the interns' teaching levels. The analysis compared both the elementary and secondary interns' data separately for a pre- and post test.

Table 2

Means for Philosophical Perspectives Comparing Elementary Interns and Secondary Interns

Philosophical Perspective	Pre Elementary n = 31	Pre Secondary n = 27	Post Elementary n = 34	Post Secondary n = 23
Perennialism	30.71 (6.51)	29.67 (5.15)	29.59 (6.42)	31.09 (5.60)
Essentialism	34.68 (6.08)	35.33 (3.97)	35.09 (5.43)	33.96 (8.12)
Progressivism	41.29 (6.27)	40.63 (3.45)	43.26 (4.37)	41.83 (2.81)
Existentialism	30.55* (6.29)	26.26* (5.27)	28.79 (6.75)	27.17 (6.11)
Behaviorism	22.47** (4.74)	28.41** (3.67)	29.62 (5.93)	30.35 (5.17)

* $p < 0.003$
** $p < 0.011$

Before the semester began, there was a statistically significant difference between the elementary and secondary interns' philosophy regarding Existentialism with $t(54) = 1.75$, $p < 0.003$. The secondary interns had a mean of 26.26 with an SD of 5.27, and the elementary interns had a higher mean of 30.55 with an SD of 6.29 indicating that the elementary interns were in moderate agreement with the tenets of Existentialism in comparison to the secondary interns who were in less agreement with the Existentialist philosophy. The elementary interns felt stronger than the secondary interns that individual freedom and personal responsibility are important. There was also a statistically significant difference between the elementary and secondary interns regarding the Behaviorist perspective at the beginning of the semester $t(54) = 1.69$, $p < 0.05$. The mean for the elementary interns was 22.47 with an SD of 4.74, and for the secondary interns, the mean

score was 28.41 with an SD of 3.67 with $p < 0.011$. This indicated that the secondary interns held a stronger belief at the beginning of the semester that they should state the terminal behavior and should be in control of the teaching process with little individual freedom and responsibility for learning.

The standard deviations indicated that the elementary interns had greater disagreement among themselves as they rated each statement at the beginning of the semester. The secondary interns tended to have a firmer grip on their philosophical perspective as indicated by the lower standard deviations regardless of philosophical perspective-Essentialism, Progressivism, and Behaviorism both at the beginning and at the end of the semester. However, toward the end of the semester, the secondary students began to change their views widely as indicated by the standard deviations. This indicates that the secondary interns began to question their belief systems. The secondary interns had greater agreement with the Progressivism perspective near the end of the semester where the mean was 41.83 and a SD of 7.88.

Initially, the interns were split regarding Existentialism and Behaviorisim perspectives. The elementary interns held a Existensialist outlook while the secondary interns held a Behavioristic view of education. However, this pattern changed toward the end of the semester. There were no statistically significant differences between the elementary and secondary interns' philosophical perspectives at the end of the semester. This indicated that, apparently, the secondary and elementary interns became more aligned with each other in their beliefs about teaching.

The data were further disaggregated to determine any significant changes within the elementary and secondary groups as they progressed through the semester. Table 3 presents *t*-test data for both the elementary and secondary interns at the beginning of the semester (pre) and the end of the semester (post). The data showed that there were no statistically significant changes in philosophical perspectives within the two groups of interns. However, for both groups the greater mean scores were for the Progressivism

perspective. The elementary interns grew slightly less Behavioristic as indicated by the pre, post mean scores of 31.00 with an SD of 4.74 and 29.61 with an SD of 5.92 respectively; the secondary interns grew slightly more Behavioristic in perspective as indicated by the mean pre, post scores of 28.96 with an SD of 3.52 and 30.35 with an SD of 5.17 respectively. Both the elementary and secondary interns, however, remained Progressive in their philosophical perspective as indicated by the larger mean score. There was a slight increase in the mean from the beginning to the end of the semester for each group of interns. This indicated that, generally, the interns held the same perspective at the end of the semester as they did at the beginning of the semester.

Table 3

Pre and Post Paired Means for Philosophical Perspective of Elementary and Secondary Interns

	Elementary		Secondary	
Philosophical Perspective	Pre n = 31	Post n = 31	Pre n = 23	Post n = 23
Perennialism	30.71 (6.51)	29.42 (6.58)	29.48 (5.17)	31.09 (5.60)
Essentialism	34.68 (6.08)	34.77 (5.19)	35.21 (4.08)	33.96 (8.12)
Progressivism	41.29 (6.27)	42.87 (4.27)	40.87 (3.66)	41.83 (2.81)
Existentialism	30.55 (5.52)	28.61 (5.35)	26.26 (4.82)	27.17 (5.23)
Behaviorism	31.00 (4.74)	29.61 (5.92)	28.96 (3.52)	30.35 (5.17)

Note: the standard deviation is in parenthesis.

Table 4 presents the t-test means for gender. The Progresssive view retained its standing with the greatest mean score for both the female and male interns at the beginning

and at the end of the semester. The data revealed statistically significant mean differences at the 0.05 level for Progressivism $t(54) = 1.75$, Essentialism $t(54) = 1.77$, and Perennialism $t(54) = 1.71$ at the end of the between the male and female interns. The Perennialism mean for male interns was 33.88 with an SD of 4.43 and for female interns was 29.5 with an SD of 6.15. The female interns held a stronger Progressive view than did the male interns at the end of the semester as reflected in the mean scores of 43.15 with an SD of 3.64 and 40.22 with an SD of 4.24 respectively.

Table 4

Pre- and Post Philosophical Perspective Means for Gender

	Pre		Post	
Philosophical Perspective	Male n = 12	Female n = 46	Male n = 12	Female n = 46
Perennialism	31.92 (5.83)	29.78 (5.88)	33.88* (4.43)	29.50* (6.15)
Essentialism	36.42 (5.9)	24.73 (4.97)	37.88* (4.23)	34.02* (6.81)
Progressivism	40.17 (4.13)	41.20 (5.37)	40.22* (4.24)	43.15* (3.64)
Existentialism	25.92 (6.64)	29.24 (5.94)	27.56 (6.62)	28.25 (6.53)
Behaviorism	29.83 (3.04)	29.78 (4.76)	27.78 (6.57)	30.31 (5.39)

* Significant at the 0.05 level for the post test.

Qualitative Data

The qualitative data were obtained from the secondary interns' journals. The researcher required the interns to reflect on their experiences including their coursework and participation in field-based activities and integrate them into a teaching philosophy that they could adopt. Excerpts were taken from 9 interns' portfolio sections entitled, my

philosophy of teaching . The names have been changed to maintain anonymity. Entries were selected from a group of 19 secondary interns. Each selected entry is followed by an interpretation.

Pedro: A future Spanish teacher.

> The classroom environment is established by my attitude and the classroom rules. . . I should create a positive atmosphere where the students are encouraged to give their opinions and want to participate. . . Classroom rules are important in creating a positive environment. . . Discovery lessons are more student centered, and cooperative learning allows students to work together to solve a problem. . . Some students will need to have their work modified. I had to modify my lesson to meet the needs of the students that are visually, hearing or learning disabled. Using technology can help the instructor to be more creative.

Pedro holds the belief that through good classroom management, he would be able to create a positive classroom environment. He leans towards a student-centered curriculum through his view that students should actively participate in classroom discussions. He also prizes discovery type lessons where the students have the opportunity to communicate content, and work cooperatively toward problem solving. He also sees the need to modify activities to meet the needs of students with varying abilities. Technology can be used to help him be more creative, gain students' attention, and facilitate lesson modification. This response also typifies the nature of the mixed quantitative results, where Behaviorism is blended with Progressivism.

Susan: A future English teacher.

> To be an effective teacher, there are certain elements a teacher must possess. Some of those elements include writing objectives that inform the students what is to be accomplished and written to reach all levels of Bloom's taxonomy, modeling, and having closure. . . Personally, I feel very lucky to have gained the knowledge and especially the hands on experience while completing my internship here at the High School.
>
> I know that my involvement and interaction with students alone has had a positive effect on some of the students. . . I basically want to be able to contribute to my students the best education possible by keeping abreast of new and innovative techniques and approaches; teachers can never stop learning.

> Because every child's needs differ, it is the teacher's responsibility to incorporate methods that will help the student to comprehend and retain the material.

Susan is displaying a Behavioristic trend blended with a student-centered learning in her views. She believes that a teacher should be able to write objectives that inform the students what is expected of them, a belief that would develop a more teacher centered activity. She is concerned about using a lesson cycle effectively as indicated by the former statement and the statement about including closure in a lesson. Her tendency towards student-centered instruction is indicated by her statement about getting involved directly with the students through her internship experiences. Another indicator of student-centered attitudes is her statement that about every child is different and teachers should find ways to help all students learn the material. She contends that teachers need to continue learning and constantly seek to find and improve techniques. This is indicative of a strong professional growth and development attitude.

Rosie: A future math teacher.

> I believe that the purpose of the school is to meet the needs of the whole child. The curriculum should be geared to meet the individual needs and strengths of each student. . . Learning should be enhanced by means of cooperative learning, community projects, and presentations. . . My responsibility as an educator is to ensure academic success for each individual according to their learning styles, and the curriculum should have elements to develop the ability to critically analyze information, offer opportunities for students to give opinions and support them with verbal and written arguments.

Rosie holds a fairly strong student-centered belief. Her comments about the curriculum indicates that student-centered instruction should be ingrained with the curriculum and classroom experiences. She feels that teachers should capitalize on their students strengths rather than emphasizing their weaknesses. Cooperative learning is featured in her future classroom where students will investigate problems related to the community and thus, to the students' lives. Higher order thinking skills are important for her to develop in her students through problem solving and critical analysis of information.

Student involvement in class discussions, and valuing students' opinions are important features of her future classroom.

Jennifer: A future science teacher.

> A good teacher has to know how to teach the information. . . A lesson needs to be interesting and challenging to the class. . .I plan on using discovery and cooperative learning lessons most in my class.
>
> Discovery lessons encourage a student to learn for themselves. They have to use higher order thinking, the goal of teaching, and to achieve a result form their own accomplishments. . . Students need to be able to work with others . . . because students learn differently, a teacher must be able to adjust the lesson when necessary. . .
>
> I feel that having good classroom management is essential for a room to run efficiently . . . with a detailed set of policies and procedures. Students need to know what is expected of them and what the consequences will be.
>
> Not only did I learn things from the actual classroom experience, the university class portion also proved beneficial. . . I now know the different types of lessons that I can use in the classroom, how to prepare them, and which may be more appropriate to use in a specific situation. . . I benefited from dealing with technology and computer software.

Jennifer holds a strong student-centered view. When lessons are interesting and relevant to the students' lives or daily activities, they will be more motivated to learn and participate in classroom activities. She also thinks that discovery lessons and cooperative learning activities are important to incorporate with her instructional plans. Students will "learn for themselves" through their use. This is highly valued by Jennifer because higher order thinking skills have a greater opportunity to develop. Teaching for her is more of a facilitating activity rather than dispensing information.

She also realizes that students differ in ability and how they learn; hence, a teacher should modify instruction to meet the needs of students. Yet, she leans towards a Behavioristic tradition relative to classroom management. Students ought to be aware of teacher expectations.

Jennifer reflected on her experience in the field. She felt that her experience was very beneficial and, as a result, she can begin teaching with confidence to plan student-centered lessons using technology where appropriate.

Ricardo: A future science teacher/coach.

> A teacher is made up of three important components. One is being a good leader. The class depends on good leadership ability and by giving good leadership ability the teacher also sets a good role model for students in the future. The second component for a teacher is one of flexibility. The teacher should bend but not break. . .The third component is that the teacher should be a professional.
>
> I would try to instill a team concept for the class, helping one another to succeed. I would try to mix my lesson plans up with some type of lab activity with team learning, and peer teaching. I would try to use many different types of visual, auditory, and hands on learning.

Ricardo, in essence, demonstrated some uncertainty in his views. He has a stronger Behavioristic approach to teaching as illustrated by his comments that the teacher should be a good leader. However, he thinks that the teacher should be flexible which is an indication that seed of student-centered instruction has been planted. The indication that the seed is growing is his comment that he would like to use lab activities, peer teaching, and attempt to teach to various learning styles.

John: A future social studies teacher.

> All students should know that they have limitless potential with hard work. Critical thinking skills, and reflection of how society developed, . . . and how it is will help prepare students to face the challenges of the future. . . There is more to education than the importance of job preparation. The right education will make the student a better person. . . . As a teacher, I will help my students achieve future goals and careers.
>
> I strongly agree with the idea of the teacher as a facilitator for student learning as opposed to a reservoir of information that dispense knowledge to students. I cannot state enough how important student involvement is to the success of learning. . . When I asked a student an analysis question and he gave me a great answer, I could see pride written all over his face, earlier, he identified the meaning of a vocabulary word and had no emotion.
>
> Because of this class, I am far better prepared for student teaching as well as my teaching career. I have the know-how to teach my classes in the most effective manner possible. Most importantly, I have learned that I can teach and motivate students. I am both confident and excited to be moving towards becoming a full-fledged teacher.

John's comments illustrate that he has a strong student-centered teaching perspective coupled with the Essentialist notion that students can succeed through hard work. He

understands that critical thinking is an important ability to have in order for students to become productive citizens and to face the future with confidence.

However, he maintains a Deweyian outlook that education is more than preparing students to hold jobs. Education should prepare the whole child. His statement, "teacher as facilitator" is a bold one. This clearly indicates his student-centered notions. Without being a facilitator, it is difficult to be student-centered.

John's success in the use of higher order questioning techniques was an exciting event for him. He was able to see the distinction between what occurs when a teacher use higher order questions versus recall questions. This provided a stimulus for him to continue asking higher order questions. John's high potential for tremendous professional growth is indicated by his final comments; "I have learned that I can teach and motivate students." He has the confidence and know-how to become a professional teacher with his own class.

Alberto: A future math teacher.

> As a teacher, I believe in the following: student success, student motivation, and a positive and productive classroom. . .
> I consider student success to be very important. I greatly believe that teachers should teach each student to feel successful and proud of themselves and their heritage. Since student success depends on more than just getting good grades in school, we as teachers should prepare the students to make wise and meaningful decisions that students will appreciate in the future. . . I will try to motivate students by having in-class discussions to promote student feedback and group projects, pop-quizzes that would only benefit exam grades by adding points to exams, make the class interesting by relating math to their lives. . . It does help to know that teaching is a profession that requires a lot of work and dedication, but the reward always pays-off at the end.

Alberto's statement suggests that he is struggling with student-centerness. He mixes student-centered ideas like class discussions, projects, and providing opportunities for student success with pop quizzes and stressed exam grades rather than alternative forms of assessment. Yet, his student-centered beliefs are strong, and he is greatly concerned about his future students' well-being both academically and socially. He views teaching as a profession which requires one to be dedicated to teaching and to the students.

Eliza: A future science teacher.

> I oppose teacher centered education where the instructor does most of the talking and a scarce portion of listening. I prefer a student centered classroom. The student should be allowed to take part in classroom activities. He or she should place an effort to search beyond what the teacher proclaims. In student centered classroom, students are given the opportunity to ask as many questions as they wish, and they could bring out their interests and curiosity.

She states unequivocally that teacher centered instruction is not for her, rather she prefers a student-centered classroom. To her, it is very important that students take an active role in learning, and students should strive to extend the information provided by the teacher to reach their own conclusions. Science teaching for her would include relating science concepts to the students' interest, capitalizing on their curiosity.

Christina: A future mathematics teacher.

> Education is not only the enforcing of learning academic subjects; it also involves the learning of certain skills to meet the total needs of the student. . . Curricula have to balanced between subject matter and students' needs. . . in part, it has to be a subject-centered system . . . curricula can be transformed into a student-centered system by introducing and expanding choices for students. Evaluation should be based on the students' total role in the classroom.

Christina is feeling a dissonance between Behaviorism, Progressivism and Existentialism. In her view, students should learn about academic subjects as well as develop skills so that students can be successful at life. Moreover, she blends Progressivism and Existentialism by suggesting that curricula be balanced. A balance that equally weighs the objectives of the curricula and students' needs. For Christina, students should be allowed to make curriculum related choices. She also extends her student-centered beliefs to assessment such that traditional type of assessments like tests, worksheets, and quizzes should have a decreased emphasis, or at least include assessment activities that relate to what students have done or performed in class like projects, group work, and research.

Discussion

Results from the t tests should be viewed with caution due to the small number in the sample. However, the results are enlightening, providing an indication of interns' philosophical perspective toward teaching and learning, at the beginning and at the end of the semester. Generally, both the quantitative and qualitative data suggested that the program was influential in affecting philosophical changes. In particular, the interns grew more Progressive in their teaching philosophy. Moreover, their philosophical perspective showed a trend toward combining Existentialism and Progressivism. They believed that students should develop the ability to think, reason and solve problems because the world is changing; but in order to accomplish this goal, the interns see the importance of motivating students by showing applications of content to real-life, adapting instruction to meet individual needs, and maintaining a disciplined classroom where their students should work hard.

A greater tendency towards demonstrating a stronger child-centered view of teaching-a belief that there should be individual choice, freedom, and personal responsibility toward learning, was held by the elementary interns than the secondary interns. However, by the end of the semester, the secondary interns had changed their philosophical perspective toward a more student centered view. This was evident by the higher mean score for Existentialism and from their journal excerpts. The change towards a student-centered view was an important change for the secondary interns although it was, statistically, a slight change. The journal comments revealed a stronger change in comparison to the results of their philosophical perspective survey. This may be due to the opportunity interns had to express themselves, through the journal, in a fashion that permitted a clearer picture of their outlooks.

Differences, in philosophical perspectives existed from the beginning of the semester between the elementary and secondary interns. This was brought to light through the survey results. The secondary interns, at the start of the semester, held a stronger

Behavioristic view towards teaching than did the elementary interns. This may be due to an emphasis placed on the secondary interns' certification process within a content area, and that secondary educators tend to be more behaviorist in methodology. Elementary teachers tend to become teachers of younger children because of their desire to teach younger children; whereas, secondary teachers choose teaching older children because of a love for the content that they teach and not necessarily because of the age group.

However, throughout the semester, both groups of interns maintained a Progressive as well as an Existential outlook (a student centered view), which developed into a stronger foundation for both the elementary and especially the secondary interns. In comparison to the elementary interns, the secondary interns became less Essentialists throughout the experience while developing a stronger view of Behaviorism, possibly as a result of field experiences in the classroom where teachers followed a specific teaching prescription such as, stating the objective in behavioral terms, and emphasizing the completion of assigned tasks. The elementary interns maintained a relatively strong Essentialist outlook during the semester. This result may be due to their field experiences where the teachers are encouraged to teach certain skills necessary for elementary students to obtain.

The gender results for the philosophical survey should be considered carefully due to the limited number of male interns. However, it is interesting to note that both male and female interns at the beginning of the semester held a similar Progressive perspective-considered here to be a student-centered view, but at the end of the semester the female interns developed a stronger Progressive view than the male interns. This indicated that the male interns grew less child-centered in their teaching views than the female interns. The female interns also became less Essentialistic than the male interns.

Conclusion

The results from the philosophical perspective survey and journal entry excerpts indicated that the program was successful in improving the attitudes and actions of field-based interns' toward student-centered instructional practices. The interns gained the ability and confidence to face the challenges of learner-centered instruction and are better prepared to meet those challenges as student teachers. Interns indicated through their journals that they will aspire to design and present student-centered instructional activities as student teachers.

As a collaborative effort between the university and public schools, the program facilitated a bond between the interns, university faculty, mentors, and public school students. From journal entries, interns in the PDS program have indicated a greater tendency to establish professional relationships with students, faculty, and administrators than they would if the interns were participating in a traditional teacher preparation program. As one secondary intern commented, "What I liked most about this experience was the interaction and involvement with teachers, administrators and students. I think it's a great idea to really *teach* [author's italics] lessons and be actively involved in the school's functions like in-services, field trips, and open house. The more exposure we get, the more we seem to *learn about ourselves*, [author's italics] teachers, students, parents, faculty/staff and the community."

The words of this intern reflect the goals of the University of Texas at Brownsville's Model School program: to develop the beliefs that learner-centered instruction is crucial to K-12 student success, and the interns' professional development in learner-centered instruction involves more than just taking university courses. These university goals are being accomplished by getting the interns out of their university classroom setting and immersing them into K-12 classrooms of area public schools, as active, self-reflective participants in the various aspects of the teaching profession. Hence,

through the Professional Development School program, the interns had many opportunities to engage in teaching activities and to grow professionally as preservice teachers.

Suggested recommendations to improve the program for future interns include developing a block schedule so that interns are able to spend more than one or two days a week in the field (plans for this are underway). Although the secondary interns grew more learner-centered as the semester progressed, a sharper focus could be placed on the importance of developing student-centered instructional tasks for secondary interns. In conjunction with this focus, a greater emphasis should be placed on the following:

- encourage equity for all learners by allowing interns opportunities to apply subject area content to their students' lives and the community,
- offer opportunities for interns to create authentic contexts for instruction,
- encourage interns to demonstrate teaching abilities that address various learning styles,
- include mentors in the co-planning with interns and further opportunities for the interns to develop activities for student-centered instruction,
- encourage an intern to maintain more of a Existentialistic or Progressive outlook and discourage the tendency of a Behavioristic outlook,
- offer preservice teachers options to traditional behavioral objectives such as, performance or process objectives which encourage students to focus on products and/or processes, related to the performance task.

The process of student-centered instruction should foster, as final student outcomes, increased achievement and lifelong learning behaviors. Teacher education programs would serve their students well by fostering student-centered teaching strategies in methods courses. The opportunities for action and reflection by both interns and their university professors are numerous in the PDS setting.

Implications for further study include an examination of the evolution of preservice teachers' philosophical perspectives as interns become faculty members of K-12 schools. The use of a control group for comparison is warranted to understand the degree of

philosophical changes that evolve during the semester, and to determine precisely what activities best encourage a student-centered outlook.

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Appendix

Sadker and Sadker: Instrument for Identifying Philosophical Perspective
******adapted version******

Each of us has a set of beliefs about the purpose and meaning of life. These beliefs constitute the basis of our persona philosophy and influence our daily decision making. In fact, your philosophy of life probably influenced your decision to become a teacher. But now that you have expressed an interest in teaching, how you think and feel about the world wi make a great deal of difference in how you run your classroom. What you teach, how you teach it, and the values you s will all be influenced by your philosophy. Your philosophical outlook will also influence the way you counsel your studen What is your philosophy of education? Do you agree or disagree with famous educators? To find out, read each of the following statements about the nature of teaching and learning. Then indicate in each section of five questions, the que: "most like me" with a five and continue rating until the remaining item is "least like me" and receives a one.

5 Most like me
4
3
2
1 Least like me

Last Name _____ Social Security Number _____-____-_____

---

1. _____ The curriculum of a school should be determined by information that is essential for all students to kno
2. _____ The school curriculum should be to cultivate the rational powers of students.
3. _____ The purpose of education is to prepare students for life.
4. _____ Students should be permitted to determine their own curriculum.
5. _____ The curriculum of the schools should focus on real world scientific observations and empirical laws of behavior.

---

6. _____ The curriculum of the schools should be subject-centered emphasizing reading, writing, history, mathematics, and science.
7. _____ Moral truths should be taught in school.
8. _____ The curriculum should focus on problem-solving skills where students should learn how to define, anal and solve problems.
9. _____ Reality is determined by each individual's perceptions. There is no objective and universal reality, therefore there is no "best" curriculum..
10. _____ Reality is the physical world, therefore the curriculum should focus on the physical world.

---

11. _____ The purpose of education is to teach students a central core of knowledge that is constant and unchan
12. _____ There exists a core of knowledge that everyone should know, and while that knowledge may change, it changes very slowly over many generations..
13. _____ The curriculum of the school should be determined jointly by students, faculty, and other involved participants.
14. _____ Students who do not want to study should be allowed to spend their time the way they desire.
15. _____ Education is to help people perform certain tasks, such as workplace skills, in order to be rewarded by success.

---

16. _____ The teacher is a master of various subjects.
17 _____ The teacher should be an authority figure in the classroom.
18. _____ The role of the teacher is to guide students in their mastery of the problem-solving process.
19. _____ Effective teaching and learning is unstructured and informal.
20. _____ Teachers teach best through reinforcement.

---

21. _____ Students must read and master key material.
22. _____ Student studies should focus on the great thinkers of the past.
23. _____ Students should be actively engaged in experimentation and discovery.
24. _____ Students should have a wide variety of curriculum options.
25. _____ Students learn effectively through mastery instruction.

Scale: 5 Most like me
4
3
2
1 Least like me

26. _____ The curriculum should be separated into individual subject areas rather than organized as integrated disciplines
27. _____ Any study should focus on the study of the major contributions of that field
28. _____ The curriculum of a school should be built around the personal experiences and needs of the students.
29. _____ The power of school is to help students find the meaning of their existence.
30. _____ The curriculum should emphasize that people learn from their reactions to prior stimuli.

---

31. _____ A key role of education is to preserve democracy.
32. _____ An effective education is enduring and does not deal with the immediate needs of the students.
33. _____ Effective schools focus on individual expression and creativity.
34. _____ Individuals are basically alone, therefore schools should help them create meaning in their lives
35. _____ Education is most effective when material is taught effectively when it is broken down into small parts.

---

36. _____ Academic rigor is an essential component of a good classroom.
37. _____ In an effective classroom, *all* students, regardless of ability, study the same curriculum.
38. _____ An effective classroom is democratic.
39. _____ In an effective classroom, each person has free will to develop as he or she sees fit.
40. _____ In a good classroom student are motivated by using external reinforcements

---

41. _____ Students are assigned a substantial amount of homework in successful schools.
42. _____ Students should focus on the discussion of timeless questions such as "What is beauty?" or "What is truth?"
43. _____ Students should be active participants in the learning process.
44. _____ Since there are no external standards for a good education; it is what each student decides it to be.
45. _____ Since students have noinnate sense of guilt or right and wrong, they must be taught by experiences..

---

46. _____ Successful teachers communicate knowledge to be learned to the student.
47. _____ Teacher-guided discovery is a key method of reaching students.
48. _____ The major way students learn is from each other.
49. _____ It is important for the teacher to help the student develop a positive self concept.
50. _____ Frequent objective testing is the best way to motivate students and encourage learning.

Sadker and Sadker: Instrument for Identifying Philosophical Perspective
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