



Using Torey Hayden's Teacher Stories to Teach Relationship Skills in Special Education Teacher Preparation

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Students with disabilities often struggle in one or more academic content areas and may also face social and emotional difficulties, resulting in low self-esteem and poor peer relationships (McDermott & McDermott, 2002). Many students with disabilities hold low academic expectations for themselves, find it difficult to focus on school tasks or to stay motivated, and may engage in various maladaptive behaviors as a consequence (Deshler, 2005).

Risk factors inherent in disability status frequently result in negative educational outcomes. For instance, students with disabilities drop out of school in large

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numbers; only half earn a high school diploma (Bear, Kortering, & Braziel, 2006). Paradoxically, students with mild disabilities and behavior disorders drop out at significantly higher rates than students with more severe disabilities (Chambers, Dunn, & Rabren, 2004; Reschley & Christenson, 2006; Scanlon & Mellard, 2002). Researchers have yet to identify the specific factors associated with the disproportionate dropout rate among disability groups, but students with mild disabilities, who make up the largest segment of students with disabilities, consistently demonstrate the highest dropout rates (Reschley & Christenson, 2006).

Students with mild disabilities who drop out often lack healthy interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers associated with school persistence (Seidel & Vaughn, 1991). Teachers perceived as caring, who are willing to help individual students, and who allow greater individual autonomy are likely to encourage students with disabilities to remain in school (Kortering & Braziel, 1999).

A close relationship with teachers or other adults outside the family has been shown to influence the trajectory of student outcomes, especially for students with disabilities (Murray & Greenberg, 2006). During adolescence in particular, close emotional relationships with parents and other family members often extend to include peers and nonparental adults such as teachers or other school personnel, providing social and emotional resources that enable students to navigate social environments (Pianta, 1999). In the context of school, the teacher–student relationship has been shown to contribute to cognitive and social development from early childhood through adolescence (Baker, 2006; Birch & Ladd, 1998; Hughes, 2007; Jordan & Stanovich, 2001).

Although opportunities for promoting social and academic resilience in children may be somewhat limited, research suggests that a close and supportive relationship with an adult provides resources that help students develop resilience throughout elementary, middle, and high school (Pianta & Walsh, 1998). Students who feel connected to someone, perhaps a teacher, are afforded a level of protection, making it critical for teachers to possess skills to connect with their students.

Narrative and Teacher Education

Prospective teachers' beliefs about teaching and teacher characteristics are typically well defined long before they begin teacher preparation programs (Pajares, 1992). Those who choose to become educators have had mostly positive experiences related to education, and their resulting belief system is based on their own experiences as students. Unlike knowledge associated with course content, beliefs are based on individual perceptions and assessments, and as such, they exert a strong influence over acquiring and processing new information. Normally, acquiring new knowledge leads to reaffirmation of the belief system; the belief system serves as a filter defining and altering the acquired knowledge to fit into it. It is possible, however, to alter a belief system if the beliefs are strongly challenged, but even

then change may occur only as a last resort (Pajares, 1992). Although it is difficult to change preservice teacher beliefs at any time, change is more likely to occur during teacher preparation than once preservice teachers have taken a permanent position in the classroom (Brown, Morehead, & Smith, 2008).

Voices in the field of teacher education have promoted teacher narrative as a medium for addressing preservice teachers' beliefs about the relational dimensions of teaching (Gibson, 2012; Schwarz & Alberts, 1998). Teacher narratives tap the affective domain by presenting opportunities for deepened relations with others and serve as springboards for ethical actions. In *The Call of Stories: Teaching and the Moral Imagination*, Robert Coles (1989) claimed that it is only through stories that one can fully enter another's life. In recounting the use of stories in his medical education, teaching, and psychiatric practice, he notes the power of story in its immediacy and the "wonderful mimetic power a novel or story can have—it's capacity to work its way into one's thinking life, yes, but also one's reveries or idle thoughts, even one's moods or dreams" (p. 204).

The use of narrative in teacher preparation allows preservice teachers to become virtual observers in a variety of classroom settings. Participation in shared experiences, made possible through narrative, encourages preservice teachers to make sense of teaching and learning, thereby allowing them to construct their own knowledge, as opposed to merely being recipients of knowledge handed down by others. Students are afforded opportunities to consider teaching in relation to student learning and to focus their attention on the broader goals of education (Lasher-Zwerling & Tellez, 2011; Schwarz & Alberts, 1998). Through purposeful distancing of learners from actual events, narratives can be viewed and analyzed from multiple perspectives, allowing learners to explore what it means to be a teacher and how teachers engage in teacher practice (Garbett & Tynan, 2007). Narratives also provide a venue for the varied emotions practicing teachers experience as they celebrate their successes and confront their failures in the classroom (Gordon, Benner, & Noddings, 1996).

It is important to address why one would choose to use narrative in teacher education to convey something as concrete and rational as methodology. Narrative is a way of thinking about and making sense of experience. It provides opportunities for preservice teachers to understand how and why events occur, and it allows them to assimilate experience into their professional identities (Cole & Knowles, 2000). Bruner (2002) suggested that humans are inherently motivated by stories and pay attention to them; when new material is presented in story form, they understand the material more easily, they retain information longer, and they more readily identify characters in stories as symbolic models. Narrative allows future teachers to examine the understandings of others, to confirm or question their own belief systems, and to potentially create new meaning from them. Providing opportunity for students to read selected texts and to engage in classroom discussions allows for the generation of new meaning without added complications of actually living experiences in the text (Gibson, 2012).

Torey Hayden's Narratives

Torey Hayden's teacher stories are first-person accounts of being a teacher in classrooms for students with emotional and behavioral disorders. Hayden's books offer readers a real-world look at the joys and challenges of teaching children whose lives are marked by emotional and behavioral disorders, child abuse and trauma, anger and defeat. Hayden's first book was *One Child* (Hayden, 1980), the story of Sheila, a silent, troubled girl who tied a three-year-old boy to a tree and critically burned him. *One Child* was followed by *Somebody Else's Kids* (Hayden, 1982); *Murphy's Boy* (Hayden, 1983); *Just Another Kid* (Hayden, 1986); *Ghost Girl* (Hayden, 1992); *The Tiger's Child* (Hayden, 1995); the sequel to *One Child*, titled *Beautiful Child* (Hayden, 2002); and *Twilight Children* (Hayden, 2006).

Hayden's nonfiction narratives are especially helpful for understanding relationships (Marlowe, 2012). Her stories emphasize relationship skills, intuition, and the social milieu in changing children's behavior and give voice to the synergistic power of relationships between a teacher and her students. In her prologue to *The Tiger's Child*, Hayden (1995) noted the powerful effect Sheila had: "This little girl had a profound effect on me. Her courage, her resilience, and her inadvertent ability to express that great gaping need to be loved that we all feel—in short, her humanness brought me into contact with my own" (p. 8).

A series of studies (Marlowe & Maycock, 2000, 2001; Marlowe, Maycock, Palmer, & Morrison, 1997) examined the short-term influence of Hayden's teacher stories on preservice teachers' attitudes. These studies documented that reading, discussing, and writing about Hayden resulted in positive attitude changes over the course of a 15-week semester. Participants evinced more positive expectations and acceptance toward students with disabilities (Marlowe & Maycock, 2001) and with emotional and behavioral disorders (Marlowe et al., 1997) and decreased punitive behavior toward students (Marlowe & Maycock, 2000). Phenomenological analysis of participant journal entries in the three studies revealed the structure of the experience of reading Hayden was one of identification with Hayden's character leading to ways of feeling (e.g., inspiration, hope) and ways of knowing (e.g., new understandings, gathering didactic information).

Marlowe and Disney (2007) conducted a 10-year follow-up survey examining practicing teachers' perceptions of the long-term influence of reading Hayden's teacher narratives in preservice teacher education. Participants ($N=132$), who had an average of 5 years of teaching experience, reported that Hayden's stories were a positive influence in preparing them to teach, in forming their teacher attitudes and identity, and in developing their own relationship skills. However, these data were returned anonymously, and individual responses could not be tracked to determine changes in participant beliefs. The purpose of this study is to replicate and extend Marlowe and Disney's research by conducting a 20-year follow-up survey.

Method

Participants

Participants included 1992-2012 graduates of a K-12 cross-categorical initial special education certification program who (a) had completed an introductory course in emotional and behavioral disorders in which Hayden's books were used as course texts and (b) were currently employed as special education teachers. A list of potential participants and current e-mail addresses ($N=186$) was obtained from the university alumni office. Ninety-eight participants returned completed surveys, a response rate of 53% for the accessible population. Respondents were not compensated for their participation. Participants had a mean age of 32.88 years ($SD=8.77$). Eighty-five were women, and 13 were men. Ninety-six were Caucasian, 1 was African American, and 1 was Hispanic. Participants had a mean of 8.44 years of special education teaching experience ($SD=6.35$).

Treatment

The introductory course in emotional and behavioral disorders is a three-credit-hour course and is required for all special education majors. Course texts included books by Hayden: *One Child*, *Somebody Else's Kids*, *Just Another Kid*, *Beautiful Child*, and *The Tiger's Child*. Texts served as primary sources for class lectures and discussions. Teacher-student encounters in the texts served as springboards for inquiry and critique of theory and practice in the education of students with emotional and behavioral problems. Additional course readings included journal articles and book chapters addressing topics in emotional and behavioral disorders. Information from these readings was discussed in relation to characters and events in Hayden's books, for example, (a) "Does Sheila meet the IDEA definition of emotional disturbance?" and (b) "Larry Brendtro and others discuss the circle of courage needs of troubled children. How does Torey address these needs in her classroom?"

Assignments included response papers on each of the Hayden texts. Students responded to questions such as the following:

1. Describe Torey Hayden's use of emotion in *Just Another Kid*. How does Torey build in opportunities for expression of feelings? Opportunities for stress reduction and relaxation? Opportunities for joy and enthusiasm? Opportunities for her students to communicate with her?
2. In *One Child*, Torey was absent for two days, and Sheila, who had been doing well, became very destructive. When Torey returned and discovered the damage Sheila had done, she became angry and felt very disappointed in Sheila. Torey denied her the privilege of going on a field trip. Was this an appropriate consequence?

Questions lead students from literal recall of information through interpretation, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Student responses are openly discussed in the university classroom.

The Survey

A questionnaire, the Torey Hayden Survey (THS; Marlowe & Disney, 2007), was created specifically to measure the long-term influence of reading Hayden in preservice teacher education. The THS consisted of three sections: demographic data, closed-ended questions, and open-ended questions. The THS mail-based survey was converted to an online survey in the present study.

Dillman, Smyth, and Christian (2009) maintained that a survey must be a valid measure of the factors of interest. The current THS is based on key relationship skills that Marlowe and Hayden (2013) delineated as fundamental to the success of developing positive relationships in the classroom. In the present study, the factor of interest was the long-term effects of having read the Hayden texts during undergraduate teacher preparation on special educators' relationship skills. It should be understood that a survey represents only a cross-sectional view of a given population at a particular time (Best & Kahn, 2003) and that the THS can only capture participant perceptions at the time of the administration of the survey. To that end, a version of the present survey was administered to participants after as many as 10 years of teaching, with the intent of capturing participant perceptions at that time (Marlowe & Disney, 2007). The present study is a follow-up version for participants with as many as 20 years of teaching experience, with the intent of understanding the extent of any lasting influence of the Hayden texts over the reader's teaching career.

Equivalence and stability over time were evaluated through use of alternate form reliability and repeated administrations of the survey. The questionnaire distributed for this study was similar to one discussed in an earlier report (Marlowe & Disney, 2007). Although basic questions of the THS were similar, wording and the order in which questions were presented were slightly different on each administration. Participants with 1-10 years of teaching experience were surveyed initially (Marlowe & Disney, 2007), and in the current administration of the THS, survey participants had completed 1-20 years of teaching experience. Invited participants in the 20-year follow-up survey included previously surveyed participants with 10 or fewer years of experience. Neither the previous administration of the survey nor the current administration collected identifiable demographic information establishing reliability of the instrument based on individual responses, as responses were not attributed to individual responders. However, because demographic data were collected in the initial and follow-up survey administrations, comparison of responses based on several criteria, including years of experience, age, gender, and so on, was possible. Results of demographic comparisons consistently demonstrated consensus among respondents regarding the long-term effects of having read the Hayden texts during their teacher preparation.

Participant responses for comparable questions were compared using a Pearson product moment correlation. Results indicate a relationship across time for a portion of the items in the questionnaire. For the nine paired questions, the mean response of respondents for the first administration ($m=4.17$) and the current administra-

tion ($m=4.34$) resulted in a Pearson's r of .988. The t -test indicates that this level of correlation is not significantly different, $t(8)=-2.08, p<.07$.

Data Collection

Participants began the THS by responding to demographic questions relating to age, gender, and years of experience. The purpose of these questions was to determine specific attributes of responding participants so that they and their responses could be compared to other respondents and their responses. An additional purpose of demographic questions was to establish a reciprocal relationship with respondents. When the initial e-mail invitation to participate in the study was sent, researchers focused on establishing a level of familiarity with potential respondents. The initial e-mail was signed by the researcher who taught each of the classes that included the Hayden texts.

The current Internet survey measured 25 relationship skills derived from *Teaching Children Who Are Hard to Reach: Relationship-Driven Classroom Practice* (Marlowe & Hayden, 2013). This book, based on Hayden's practice expertise, describes teacher skills needed to create strong and healthy bonds necessary for using relationships as a medium of behavioral change. Twenty-five competencies from the book were selected for inclusion in the survey.

On the basis of the lead statement "As a result of having read Torey Hayden's books in my undergraduate teacher education, I am better able to," participants rated Hayden's influence on each of the 25 competencies on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Instructions asked participants "to read each competency statement about teaching students with disabilities, choose your personal level of agreement or disagreement, and select the corresponding number" (from the Likert scale).

In addition to closed-ended questions, the survey included four open-ended questions:

1. How strong an influence was reading Hayden compared to other influences, practices, and texts in your undergraduate studies in preparing you to teach students with disabilities?
2. Did reading Hayden permanently change your attitudes and beliefs about students with disabilities? Why or why not?
3. Do you consider Hayden a good role model for special education teachers? Explain.
4. What adjectives would you use to describe the qualities you see in yourself that remind you of Hayden?

A final question asked whether participants would be willing to be contacted for a follow-up interview, and if so, participants were asked to provide contact information.

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Procedure

Participants received an e-mail with a survey link inviting them to participate in the study. The initial e-mail was followed by three reminder e-mails sent over an 8-week period. Participation was voluntary; however, all participants were informed that those who responded would be entered into a drawing for 1 of 10 copies of the book *Teaching Children Who Are Hard to Reach* (Marlowe & Hayden, 2013). Responses were confidential and remained in a locked file. Correspondence was sent through the university alumni office with the THS delivered via Select Survey.

To increase the reliability of survey data, participants were invited to participate in a follow-up interview. Eleven participants agreed to do so and included contact information with their survey responses. Once responses were collected and entered into the database, participants indicating a willingness to be interviewed were contacted to schedule phone interviews. Interviews were semistructured, including 3 generic questions about working with students with disabilities and 10 questions directly related to the interviewee's perceptions about Torey Hayden or his or her experience of having read the Hayden books during teacher preparation. The final two questions were related to the efficacy of the use of Hayden's teacher narratives as a teaching tool or as a method of learning (see the appendix).

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics, generated by using SAS, Version 9.3, were used to summarize quantitative data from survey responses. Participant level of agreement with each of the 25 selected competencies was analyzed. Demographic data on participant age, gender, and years of teaching experience were examined in relation to the average total score on each of the 25 competencies to determine whether differences between groups existed.

Responses to open-ended questions and follow-up interview questions were transcribed verbatim into a word processing program, coded for themes, and classified into corresponding categories. An adaptation of Colaizzi's (1978) phenomenological method was used to analyze responses. This method consists of six steps: (a) dwelling with data, including transcription of participant narratives; (b) extracting significant statements relating specifically to the phenomenon under investigation; (c) formulating meanings or creating general restatements of significant statements extracted from participant narratives; (d) organizing meanings into clusters or themes; (e) creating an exhaustive description of the phenomenon through a fusion of theme clusters and articulated meanings; and (f) reducing descriptions to fundamental statements of the essence of the phenomenon through rigorous analysis of detailed descriptions of the phenomenon (Colaizzi, 1978; Edward & Welch, 2011).

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), rigor in qualitative research should be expressed as trustworthiness and credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Conclusions are credible if they reflect the realities that participants expressed. In lieu of generalizability, the reader of qualitative research looks to

see if results are transferable to a similar context or if he or she can identify with findings. Dependability implies relative replicability, because a basic assumption of qualitative research is that a particular reality is true at one point in time, for one particular set of participants. Confirmability refers to whether another researcher would arrive at a similar understanding or conclusion from the data.

Brantlinger, Jimenez, Klingner, Pugach, and Richardson (2005) suggested that qualitative research is a means of understanding the essential nature of a particular phenomenon within a specific context. These authors described methods of ensuring credibility and trustworthiness and offered quality indicators for qualitative research relating to data collection and analysis, in addition to criteria for quality interviews. Techniques used to meet criteria quality indicators in the current study included (a) triangulation, including multiple sources of data (i.e., survey responses to both open-ended and closed-ended questions as well as interview data); (b) collaborative work in which multiple researchers were involved in designing the study and establishing agreement on analyses and interpretations; (c) searching for negative cases by examining data for information that did not fit emerging patterns; (d) peer debriefing, in which three professors of teacher education trained in qualitative methodology examined coding schemes; and (e) an external audit by another professor of teacher education to check for adherence to criteria for trustworthiness (Brantlinger et al., 2005).

Results

The response rate for the THS online survey was 53%, above the minimum rate of 50% suggested by Dillman et al. (2009).

Lindner, Murphy, and Briers (2001) suggested that procedures for handling nonresponse issues be implemented when less than an 85% response rate is achieved. Lindner et al. proposed that nonresponse errors can be handled by using days to respond as a regression variable. Days to respond is coded as a continuous variable and used as an independent variable in regression equations in which primary variables of interest are regressed on the variable days to respond. If the regression model does not yield statistically significant results, it can be assumed that nonrespondents do not differ from respondents.

In the existing data, the THS average total score was regressed on the days to respond variable. The regression showed that $\hat{a}=.004$, $F=1.59$, $P_{r>F}=.21$, indicating that there was no significant relationship between the days the surveys were received and the THS average total score. This finding suggests that nonrespondents would not have differed significantly from those who did respond.

Closed-Ended Questions

Means and standard deviations for the 98 participants' self-ratings on the 25 relationship skills are shown in Table 1. A mean of 3.0 was a neutral value. Levels

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of agreement between having read the Hayden texts and development of specific relationship skills ranged from 4.11 to 4.53, with the average total score for the 25 competencies being 4.33. On the basis of general agreement among participant responses, it is clear that having read the Hayden texts was an experience not only offering insight into what it means to be a teacher but also illuminating the kinds of skills needed to support and develop positive relationships with students.

Analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were computed examining effects of age (categorized as <30 years, >30 years but <40 years, and >40 years), gender, and years of teaching experience (categorized as <5 years, >5 years but <10 years, and >10 years) on the average total score for the 25 competencies. *P*-value is a measure of the likelihood of obtaining a result if no difference exists between groups. For the present study, statistical significance for ANOVAs was defined as $p < .05$. Age, $p = .39$; gender, $p = .68$; and years of teaching experience, $p = .94$ were not statistically significant. Therefore we assume these variables did not influence participants' responses.

Open-Ended Questions

All 98 participants answered the four open-ended questions. Responses to Question 1 ("How strong an influence was reading Hayden compared to other influences, practices, and texts in your undergraduate studies in preparing you to teach students with disabilities?") were coded into the categories strong, neutral, and not strong. Of the 98 responses, 93 were coded strong, 3 were coded neutral, and 2 were coded not strong. Responses were coded strong when participants used the word strong or words or phrases tantamount in meaning: *powerful*, *wonderful*, *extremely valuable*. Some responses were dramatic: "Torey Hayden's books were truly eye opening, a mile above other books I read during my undergraduate and graduate experiences"; "Reading Torey Hayden's books was the reason I switched majors to become a special education teacher"; "I read every page of every book we discussed in class. I did not do this in any other class. They were a VERY strong influence."

Three responses were coded neutral when participants indicated other teacher education experiences were of similar value: "Hayden's books were inspiring but not a stronger influence than any other learning experience." Two responses were coded not strong when participants indicated that reading Hayden had not translated into learning effective teaching practices: "The books were interesting to read, but I don't think they helped me become a better teacher." Overall, 95% of participants indicated that reading Hayden's teacher stories was a strong influence in preparing them to teach.

Regarding Question 2 ("Did reading Hayden permanently change your attitudes and beliefs about students with disabilities? Why or why not?"), participants' comments were coded as yes, no, or no with a qualifier. Of the 98 responses, 70 were coded as yes, 7 were coded as no, and 21 were coded as no with a qualifier. Participants who answered yes offered a variety of reasons why reading Hayden had changed their attitudes and beliefs: "She showed that being human with students

does not undermine your authority, it strengthens relationships”; “She influenced my belief that everyone can change”; “Her books helped me realize we shouldn’t prejudge a student.”

Twenty-one participants answered no with a qualifier. These respondents felt that they already had an outlook similar to Hayden’s and that reading about her

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics for Participants’ Self-Rating of Relationship Skills

Relationship skill: “As a result of having read Torey Hayden’s books in my undergraduate teacher education, I am better able to”	Mean (SD)
Set and communicate boundaries.	4.07 (0.79)
Be open to approximations when a child is learning new behaviors.	4.14 (0.74)
Articulate worries I perceive the student as having.	4.17 (0.75)
Show my human side to the child.	4.20 (0.73)
Listen to children when they talk to me.	4.24 (0.69)
Be fair and impartial.	4.25 (0.70)
Build in opportunities for joy and enthusiasm in the classroom.	4.29 (0.63)
Feel genuine affection for the child.	4.30 (0.66)
Indulge in laughter and humor with children.	4.32 (0.70)
Encourage and teach optimism.	4.32 (0.72)
Discipline with fairness, honesty, and compassion.	4.34 (0.68)
Recognize power struggles and disengage from them.	4.34 (0.68)
Have realistic expectations for the child.	4.35 (0.66)
Not prejudge the child.	4.37 (0.70)
Respond positively to students in a way that shows genuine regard.	4.38 (0.57)
See things from the child’s perspective.	4.40 (0.59)
Build in opportunities for teacher–student communication.	4.40 (0.71)
Accept the student.	4.42 (0.68)
Understand that everyone can change.	4.44 (0.60)
Understand the importance of modeling appropriate behavior.	4.44 (0.63)
Avoid vindictive consequences.	4.47 (0.70)
Understand the importance of commitment to the child.	4.48 (0.64)
Promote a classroom climate where failure is not a major source of humiliation, distress, or punishment.	4.51 (0.63)
Understand the importance of being consistent to encourage trust to develop.	4.53 (0.54)
Understand the importance of spending focused time with the child.	4.54 (0.56)
Average score.	4.33 (0.49)

Note. $n=98$.

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beliefs and attitudes reaffirmed or validated their own: "Hayden's books reaffirmed the belief system I already had regarding working with special needs populations." Seven participants answered no: "No, her stories did not change my attitudes and beliefs, but they did allow me to broaden my boundaries to experiment with strategies for individual students." Approximately 71% of participants acknowledged that reading Hayden's teacher stories had permanently changed their attitudes and beliefs about children with disabilities.

Regarding Question 3 ("Do you consider Hayden to be a good role model for special education teachers? Explain"), participants' comments were coded yes or no. Ninety-two of the 98 respondents responded yes and offered a variety of reasons why: "Yes, she provides a great example of how a real teacher survives in the world of special education. She makes mistakes, but she learns from them"; "Yes, I strive to be like her daily. She invested so much of her time and self into her students"; "Yes, her constant flexibility, trial and error determination, and nonjudgmental approaches still ring true!" A total of 94% of participants considered Hayden to be a good role model. Participants who did not regard Hayden as a good role model suggested that her stories did not reflect the realities of their own teaching experiences, and one indicated that Hayden should have been more responsive to the wishes of the administration in her school.

Regarding Question 4 ("What adjectives would you use to describe the qualities you see in yourself that remind you of Hayden?"), the most frequently used adjectives were *compassionate* ($n=42$), followed by *caring* ($n=35$) and *patient* ($n=35$). Additional adjectives included *funny*, *flexible*, *determined*, *loving*, *fair*, *honest*, *trustworthy*, and *hopeful*, among many others. A few of the responses included terms that could be interpreted in a negative way, such as *stubborn*, *tough*, and *frustrated*, but these terms were generally followed by a qualifier—"stubborn when she knew what was right" or "frustrated with school administration."

Overall, the structure of the experience of reading Hayden that emerged from a phenomenological analysis of the four open-ended questions was one of identification with Hayden's character, leading to ways of feeling about teaching and students and ways of knowing about teaching. Participants noted admiration for Hayden's character, referred to her as a role model, and aspired to be like her. They reported seeing the world of the classroom through the eyes of Hayden's character, putting themselves in Hayden's position, and calling on Hayden's character when dealing with their own real-world problems. They reported taking into themselves attributes of Hayden's character and felt them to be part of their teacher identities. Participants also reported rereading Hayden's teacher stories to renew positive feelings the stories engendered, to gain insight into their own lives as teachers, and to help with difficult teaching situations.

Regarding ways of feeling, participants reported gaining compassion ("I was able to get into the mind of the child and could feel their emotions. I feel I have more compassion"), hope ("She made me see that change can happen with all kids,

even those who seem untouchable”), inspiration (“She is a dedicated individual who inspires me every time I pick up her books”), and validation (“Her stories reaffirmed how committed and patient you have to be”). Other ways of feeling included shared experience (“She has been in the trenches and writes from experience”), comfort (“Yes, she provides hope and support for me as an educator when times get really tough or other teachers/administrators are discouraging”), and catharsis (“The books really touched me and made me want to be a teacher as caring as Torey Hayden”).

Regarding ways of knowing, participants reported gaining understanding from reading Hayden. This included gaining insight, bringing feelings and ideas to the surface, and clarifying and crystallizing ideas and feelings. Reading Hayden helped them understand themselves, their situations, and significant others in schools: “I became more self-aware about what I say or do and how I handle situations”; “I learned each child needs connections and a relationship with me to progress”; “Torey taught me to stop and really look at the individual for who they are, not their diagnosis.” Gathering didactic information was also a prominent theme: “Torey Hayden’s books gave me a toolbox full of techniques to use in my class.”

Interviews

Eleven semistructured interviews focused on participant perceptions regarding lasting effects of having read the Hayden texts during preservice teacher preparation. Each interviewee mentioned using specific traits and strategies that Hayden used in working with students in her classes: “I think it was to teach the whole child including the emotional, and you know in poverty, and you know a lot of her kids just didn’t have food, and so the first thing she would do is bring a snack or whatever.” They articulated their respect for her ability to foster positive relationships with her students: “She was the first person in my life, I kind of learned from her it’s all about the relationships with kids . . . if they love you or they like you, they’ll do anything for you, and you know, I think she understood that very well” and “Her books taught me a lot about patience and understanding, and that helped me become a better teacher.” Some suggested using Hayden’s responses and interactions with her students as a place to start with students in their own classes, and others attempted to emulate many, if not all, behaviors they read about in the books. A few interviewees mentioned that they reread Hayden books when they encounter difficult teaching situations, even after many years. Several interviewees also identified with administrative struggles that Hayden experienced, especially as they related to specific students in her classes. They empathized with Hayden’s lack of resources for her students and expressed admiration for her ingenuity in circumventing many of the roadblocks she encountered.

One of the more common themes from interview data was the idea that having read the Hayden texts served not only to prepare participants for the realities of the classroom but also to validate interviewees’ feelings toward students and the administrators in their schools:

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Well, I think back to *One Child* and she was involved in the fight [with administrators] to get Sheila to stay in her classroom instead of going to . . . a mental hospital or an asylum type place. I would hope that I had the guts to do that and to fight that hard. I just think she was extremely courageous.

Hayden described feeling frustrated at times with the behaviors of certain students and discouraged by the circumstances that some of them faced on a daily basis. On occasion, Hayden was challenged by general educators or administrators in her school, and some interviewees described similar situations:

I know of one thing that really stuck out in my mind. I had a girl at one of the schools I was at, very, very similar characteristics to the girl in *Ghost Girl* and so I think from reading and listening and hearing about her experiences kind of guided me in how to speak and how I handled situations.

Participants also suggested that they learned caring and compassion as well as commitment to their students from Hayden and indicated that Hayden's refusal to give up on the child was inspirational. Another key theme was recognizing that before a relationship can be built with a student, the teacher must accept the student and recognize exactly where he or she is: "I think that's a big thought I got from her books. You can't assume they're at a certain place, you have to figure out how to work with them, how to get in touch with them."

Participants also stated a preference for Hayden's narratives over more theoretically based textbooks in teacher education, describing her accounts of events in her classrooms as more motivating, more interesting, and more memorable: "If you can't already tell, I put Torey Hayden's books like on a huge pedestal. I would say they are more beneficial than about anything else I read in college." Her stories were described as more true to life, providing real-world examples from which to learn classroom techniques and introducing a template for day-to-day interactions with students who are difficult and resistant. Participants identified Hayden's character as a symbolic model, an ego ideal.

Discussion

Results of this study support and extend the findings of Marlowe and Disney (2007) regarding long-term benefits of reading Hayden's teacher stories in preservice teacher education. Positive outcomes attributed to reading Hayden in the previous study were confirmed as lasting. Special education teachers who had read Hayden over a 20-year period, beginning in 1992, viewed her narratives as highly influential in preparing them to teach, in forming their teacher attitudes and identities, and in developing teaching competencies needed for using relationships as a means of change.

The highest ranked competency was "understand the importance of spending focused time with the child." Hayden's stories, especially *One Child*, stress the

importance of spending one-on-one time with the child each day, even in a group setting. Relationships require one-on-one time when both parties do not have to vie for the attention the other. Spending focused time shows commitment and willingness by Hayden's character to forge nurturing and encouraging relationships.

The second highest ranked competency was "understand the importance of being consistent to encourage trust to develop." Because of repeated encounters with dysfunctional adults and a dysfunctional environment, many children in Hayden's stories have serious problems with trust. As a result, Hayden's character is extremely consistent in her behavior. Until her students trust Hayden to behave in a functional way, her effectiveness in using relationships as a means of change is compromised.

The third highest ranked competency was "promote a classroom climate where failure is not a major source of humiliation, distress, or punishment." Not all of Hayden's students' efforts at change are successful. This does not mean they are invalid, wrong, or useless. Quite often students learn far more from their failures than from their successes, but this typically only happens in classrooms like Hayden's, where failure is not met with a negative response.

The fourth highest ranked competency was "understand the importance of commitment to the child (sticking with him or her through thick and thin)." The cornerstone of Hayden's approach is commitment, and it is her unequivocal commitment to her students that evokes positive change. Hayden believes that students in her classes must have this type of relationship with her if they are to make not only academic but also social and emotional progress. Students need to develop the self-esteem that comes from knowing others care about them and that others value them sufficiently to commit to them. They need to know that although significant others in their lives may have been unable to provide this type of commitment, it does not mean they are unworthy of it.

Identification with Hayden's character was a basic element in the phenomenological structure of the experience of reading Hayden. The depth of identification seemed related to the depth of ways of feeling and ways of knowing. This finding reinforces Marlowe and Maycock's (2000) finding that preservice teachers' identification with Hayden's character was the crucial factor in her influence. Griffin (1994), in discussing the use of narrative in teacher education, explains that the blend of biography and professional practice of an admired teacher may have tremendous power for the teacher candidate who is searching for his or her teacher identity.

Marlowe, Hoffman, and Patton (2014) recently surveyed undergraduates' perceptions of the use of Hayden's teacher stories. Preservice teachers suggested that reading Hayden's narratives allowed them to be "like a fly on the wall" in her classroom, providing opportunities for the entire class to envision the same event at the same time. Students expressed their belief that this opportunity was unique in that they could use their collective observations as a foundation for discussion and learning. In a more isolated practicum setting or in student teaching experi-

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ences, preservice teachers typically experience students and their behaviors in a more individualized way. Although this type of setting certainly provides varied and in-depth learning opportunities, for students beginning special education preparation, using the Hayden texts allows them to share classroom experiences with the instructor and the class and, more important, to learn from each other. As a direct result of having read Hayden's narratives, most students reported feeling more confident and better prepared to begin their field experiences. Students also were not personally connected to the experiences and could explore various aspects without judging themselves, their own students, or cooperating teachers.

Limitations of the Study

Four limitations of the study are important to note. First, other variables inherent in an introductory course in emotional and behavioral disorders may have influenced participant responses. It is entirely possible that the course instructor's teaching methodology may have been a significant factor in the effects of having read Hayden. The instructor relied on student reflection when guiding their learning, necessitating a high level of student engagement in the class. Reading, writing about, and discussing the Hayden texts as a group may have facilitated the development of lasting impressions related to her teacher stories.

Second, it is also possible that the nature of a course in emotional and behavioral disorders lends itself more effectively to the use of narrative as a teaching tool. The content of the Hayden texts includes a focus on her relationships with her students as they relate to changing negative or inappropriate behaviors. Most of her students had been diagnosed with emotional or behavioral disorders, although some of her students were placed in her class as a result of some type of trauma in their lives. The emotional content of Hayden's narratives may create a more lasting impact on students than narratives about students with other types of disabilities.

Third, as discussed in the section on trustworthiness, every attempt was made to limit researcher bias, but this is always a danger in this type of study. The very fact of having taught the course in which the Hayden narratives were used as texts makes bias a potential problem for the second author. However, stringent adherence to the previously discussed methods for achieving trustworthiness minimizes researcher bias.

Fourth, in the present administration of the THS, names and addresses for potential participants ($N=186$) were supplied by the university alumni office. Researchers had no means of determining whether e-mail addresses used by the alumni office were accurate or currently in use, and although follow-up e-mails were sent on three separate occasions, there is no way of knowing if they were received by potential participants, thereby possibly limiting the participant pool. Of course, the possibility exists that some potential participants did receive the invitation e-mails but chose not to respond.

Conclusions and Future Prospects

Although empirical research on using teacher narrative in preservice teacher education is somewhat limited, previous studies by Marlowe and colleagues clearly suggest that the use of Hayden's stories as a teaching tool is beneficial for preservice teachers in the short term (Marlowe & Maycock, 2000, 2001; Marlowe et al., 1997), and the findings of this study replicate Marlowe and Disney's (2007) finding that the benefits derived from reading the stories are retained over time. Several participants in the present study reported that they not only retained their Hayden books after graduation but have continued to reread them for additional insight into relationships they shared with their own students.

Hayden's narratives are a medium for teaching relationship skills, an area of teacher education often overlooked but with rich potential for improving student learning and behavior (Powell & Kusuma-Powell, 2013). Hayden (1980) makes caring relationships the cornerstone of her approach to teaching:

I had always been a maverick among my colleagues. I belonged to the better-to-have-loved-and-lost school which was not a popular notion in education. The courses, the professionals, all preached against getting involved. Well, I could not do that, I could not teach effectively without getting involved, and in my heart, because I did belong to the love-and-lost school, when the end came, I could leave. It always hurt, and the more I loved a child, the more it hurt. But when the time came that we had to part or I had to honestly give up on the child because I could do no more, I could go. I could do it because I took with me, every time, the priceless memories of what we had, believing that there is no more one can give another than good memories. (p. 204)

The findings of this study reflect the growing interest in teacher education in building theories from successful practice rather than just trying to put theory into practice. There is increased recognition in teacher education of the authority deriving from careful examination of real-life classroom events and the complexities of what it means to teach (Cook, Tankersley, & Harjusola-Webb, 2008). There are also indications of a renewed respect for the importance of practice expertise in building a knowledge base of teaching (Cook & Cook, 2013). Without turning to the work of reflective practitioners like Hayden and their grounded knowledge, our understandings of what it means to teach remain somewhat disconnected from the real world.

Data from this study are another step in the validation process for the use of Hayden's teacher stories and other teacher narratives as evidence-based practice in teacher education. In the meantime, our study suggests the use of Hayden's stories as practice-based evidence. The collection of both empirical and qualitative data gathered from practicing teachers documenting positive and long-lasting effects of using Hayden's narratives in teacher education classrooms provides strong evidence of the merits of such practice. Furthermore, our results clearly demonstrate benefits for preservice teacher candidates during teacher preparation, and these

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benefits extend well into their teaching practice. Participant comments reflecting the importance of positive relationships between teachers and students should prompt discussion among researchers and policy makers regarding the place of relationship skills in teacher education.

Future research should examine the effects of Hayden's texts relative to other instructors, courses, and disciplines before the use of Hayden's teacher stories or other teacher narratives can be identified as evidence-based practice. Qualitative study of the course instructor's teaching practices and the specific nature of his use of narrative would shed additional light on the association between teaching methods and the benefits of having read the Hayden texts in the course.

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Appendix: **Interview Questions**

1. Tell me about your classroom [or job if the interviewee is working with children but not in a classroom].
2. What do you get the most satisfaction from when working with children with disabilities?
3. What do you find the least rewarding about working with children with disabilities?
4. Describe Torey Hayden from her books that you have read. What kind of teacher was she?
5. What were Torey's strengths as a teacher? Weaknesses?
6. Do you think that Torey's relationships with her students were realistic? Why or why not?
7. Did Torey do anything that you wouldn't have done? Please explain.
8. Could Torey have been a better teacher? How?
9. Has reading Torey Hayden influenced your ideas of what it is to be a teacher? How?
10. Do you think you are like Torey after becoming a teacher or other educational professional?
11. What do you think Torey's philosophy of teaching was? Do you agree with her philosophy?

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of teaching? Why or why not?

12. Did you feel differently about being a special educator [or working with children with disabilities] when you finished reading Torey's books than when you first started reading them? Please explain.

13. How has the experience of reading Torey Hayden been more or less beneficial than other teacher education reading experiences [such as reading textbooks]?

14. How important was it to you to hear teacher stories about their classroom experiences from faculty or to read about them in books like Torey Hayden's?

15. Would you be willing to participate in a classroom observation this fall if your school corporation will permit it?