Learning to Be Teachers

Preservice Teacher Descriptions of Practice-Based Teacher Education

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Abstract

Practice-based teacher education (PBTE), an approach to teacher education that privileges authentic experiences and is centered around the acquisition of a set of core practices, has seen an increase in popularity in recent years. The goal of PBTE is to cultivate preservice teachers (PSTs) who are 'advanced beginners' in a variety of pedagogical moves. Research in this area has centered around the identification of subject-specific and general core practices as well as the creation of PBTE frameworks. Little attention has been paid to core practices for second language (L2) writing instruction, and no research has sought to understand how PSTs perceive various PBTE approaches.

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The present study employs a qualitative case-study design to examine the experiences of six PSTs who participated in a practice-based extracurricular program targeted at L2 writing preparation, with the goal of understanding the PBTE approaches that PSTs perceive to be most effective for their development as teachers. Findings show that PSTs believe mentor modeling in authentic settings, mentor feedback on specific core practices, scaffolded practice, authentic teaching, repeated teaching, and co-teaching to be the most effective components of PBTE. Implications for teacher educators and future researchers are provided.

Keywords: Practice-based teacher education, core practices, High Leverage Practices, preservice teachers, writing, emergent bilinguals

Introduction

Recent years have evidenced a renewed interest in practice-based teacher education (PBTE), or the study of the activities and practices of teaching (Dutro & Cartun, 2016*;* Zeichner, 2012). This has resulted in the proposal of numerous PBTE frameworks by teacher educators and researchers covering a wide range of content areas and certification levels, with the ultimate goal of preparing preservice teachers (PSTs) to move from 'novice' to 'advanced beginner' (Brownell et al., 2019). Despite the increased attention, almost no research has been dedicated to investigating the impact of PBTE on PSTs, nor have PSTs been given the opportunity to lend their voice to PBTE framework design and efficacy (Grosser-Clarkson & Neel, 2020; Peercy et al., 2019). Likewise, little attention has been paid to PBTE approaches that target the instruction of emergent bilinguals or writing (Peercy & Troyan, 2017; Peercy et al., 2019; Von Esch & Kavanagh, 2018). The present study employs a qualitative case-study design to give voice to six PSTs who participated in a practice-based extracurricular program targeted at second language (L2) writing preparation. The intention of this study is to develop an understanding of the PBTE approaches that PSTs perceive to be the most effective for their development as teachers, and what this means for the field of teacher education.

What is Practice-Based Teacher Education?

PBTE is not a novel idea, but, instead, has roots that extend as far back as studies by prolific researchers like Charters and Waples (1929), who investigated the classroom activities of thousands of teachers, and Dewey's (1974) consideration of apprenticeship versus laboratory models of teaching. In its current iteration, PBTE is defined by Teaching Works (2021) as professional teacher training

centered around the basic fundamentals of teaching, with the goal of creating novice teachers prepared to tackle issues of equity in the classroom through powerful and equitable learning opportunities for all students. Central to PBTE is the integration of authentic experiences, where PSTs actually do practice instead of just talking about it (Peercy et al., 2019).

In most programs, PBTE is actualized as a cycle of instruction carefully crafted to address the longstanding gap between theory and practice in teacher education programs (Peercy et al., 2019). A typical cycle involves introducing and learning about a specific activity, preparing for and rehearsing the activity, enacting the activity with students, and analyzing the enactment and moving forward (McDonald et al., 2013). Most PBTE is centered around *core practices*, or specific teaching skills that are central to high-quality instruction across content areas (McDonald et al., 2013). For example, *leading a discussion* is considered a core practice as it is a skill that teachers regularly employ after reading literature, conducting a science experiment, watching a social studies documentary, and many other contexts and content-areas. Teaching Works (2021), a program on PBTE out of the University of Michigan, calls core practices *High Leverage Practices* (HLPs) and describes them as:

> ...the basic fundamentals of teaching. These practices are used constantly and are critical to helping students learn important content. The high-leverage practices are also central to supporting students' social and emotional development. These high-leverage practices are used across subject areas, grade levels, and contexts. They are "high-leverage" not only because they matter to student learning but because they are basic for advancing skill in teaching.

Research suggests that repeated and scaffolded opportunities to engage in core practices (or HLPs) within PBTE frameworks enables PSTs to make connections between theory and practice (Peercy et al., 2019), helps them understand the complexity of teaching (Grosser-Clarkson & Neel, 2020), and creates PSTs who enter the classroom as advanced beginners instead of frustrated novices (Brownell et al., 2019; Von Esch & Kavanagh, 2018). Central tenants of PBTE include authentic experiences, longevity (extended program duration, with professional development and experiences totaling at least 40 hours), modeling, performance analysis, feedback, scaffolded and cohesive practice, interleaving (combining two or more practices at once), repeated teaching, and reflection (Brownell et al., 2019; Ward et al., 2018).

PBTE, Writing, and Emergent Bilinguals

PBTE has been posited as a way to simultaneously build the pedagogical and content knowledge needed for the instruction of emergent bilinguals, so that PSTs are equipped to make informed decisions about strategy use within unpredictable classroom contexts (Von Esch & Kavanagh, 2018). Through PBTE, PSTs engage in scaffolded teaching opportunities where they are asked to make judgments on strategy use/implementation within specific content areas, which helps them begin to make connections between theory and practice (Von Esch & Kavanagh, 2018). While this sounds promising, PBTE has received some push-back from scholars who posit that it pushes rote teaching practices at the expense of deeper theoretical understandings, which, in turn, marginalizes issues of equity and justice (Philip et al., 2019).

The concerns by Philip et al. (2019) echo scholars of bilingual education who note that the field of teacher education has not identified a set of core practices for the instruction of emergent bilinguals, nor have specific frameworks been proposed (Peercy & Troyan, 2017; Peercy et al., 2019; Von Esch & Kavanagh, 2018). For example, while the HLP *leading a discussion* specifically intends to disrupt patterns of inequity in classroom conversations, specific strategies for working with emergent bilinguals are not presented (Teaching Works, 2021). Likewise, there has yet to be a consensus on the best approaches to use when preparing PSTs to work with emergent bilinguals (Faltis & Valdes, 2016). This combination has resulted in PSTs who have little understanding of how their language choices impact student learning or how to manage language demands alongside content requirements (Peercy et al., 2019). The impact of this on writing is even more dire as PSTs rarely receive preparation for its instruction and tend to graduate with low-self efficacy for this critical subject (Morgan & Pytash, 2014). There is a great need to understand how PBTE approaches dedicated to L2 writing instruction can ameliorate these needs, including how PBTE approaches are perceived by the PSTs who engage in them (Peercy et al., 2019).

Current research in the field has focused on the creation of PBTE, the development of core practices within a single teacher education program, general criticisms of PBTE, or specific PBTE instructional approaches (e.g., Brownell et al., 2019; Francis et al., 2018; Grosser-Clarkson & Neel, 2020; Janssen et al., 2015; Peercy & Troyan, 2017; Theelen et al., 2019; Vartuli et al., 2016; Ward et al., 2018). There is a lack of consensus about how practice-based approaches should

be organized and what approaches promote the acquisition of core practices (Brownell et al., 2019; Forzani et al., 2014). Likewise, despite the urging of researchers that PBTE must forfeit its one-sized-fits-all approach, little research has sought to investigate the impact of PBTE on PSTs' understanding of instruction for emergent bilinguals, none focuses specifically on writing, and none gives voice to PSTs within program design.

The Present Study and Theoretical Framing

The present study seeks to address the current needs of PBTE by investigating a uniquely designed program centered in PST preparation for second language (L2) writing instruction. Salient within this investigation is the use of PSTs' voices to actualize their personal experiences and perceptions of PBTE. Student voices (or in this case, PST voices) are rarely privileged in higher education despite the fact that *listening* is an essential tenet of anti-racist, equitable pedagogies (Bovill et al., 2011; Cook-Sather, 2006). Students have unique perspectives on their own learning that should be used to propel educational reforms (Cook-Sather, 2006), such as the implementation of PBTE. Likewise, when students are given a voice in their learning, they are more likely to become active agents of their own learning, with enhanced engagement and motivation (Bovill et al., 2011).

We situate our study within the understanding that teaching is an inherently a personal reality (Greene, 1978), as is learning to teach. With this understanding, the personal experiences of PSTs engaged in PBTE are critical for our knowledge of practice-based measures, particularly as they relate to those areas of equity that are hotly contested in the literature. So far, little research has sought to use the voices of PSTs to understand the impact of PBTE, instead investigating faculty perceptions or PST language use within classroom instruction (Hurlbut & Krutka, 2020; Von Esch & Kavanagh, 2018). In the present study, we rely on PSTs' personal voices (Batchelor, 2006) to examine their experiences and perceptions of how different PBTE strategies supported their understanding of L2 writing instruction. Through our case study examinations, we glean pivotal insight into how new teachers learn pedagogy, and how their learnings are influenced by interactions across complex teacher education contexts (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Specifically, we seek to answer the question: what do PSTs perceive to be the most effective practice-based approaches for the development of knowledge about L2 writing instruction?

Our discussion of the perceived effectiveness of PBTE approaches

is drawn from our analysis of qualitative artifacts collected as part of a larger study of PSTs' knowledge development and experiences participating in an extracurricular writing program (EWP), which includes spaces for learning to teach and spaces for enacting teaching. The present multiple case study uses PST voices to examine their perceptions and experiences (Nock et al., 2007). Within case studies, there is a focus on the uniqueness and complexity of each case which provides researchers with a comprehensive understanding of rare phenomena (Nock et al., 2007). Our analysis enabled us to gain a deeper understanding of the common practices, challenges, and opportunities individual PSTs experience when learning to teach, and how these were ameliorated through PBTE. All participants, including PSTs and the children they served, gave consent to participate in the study through the university's institutional review board. All names are pseudonyms.

Methods

The Extracurricular Writing Program

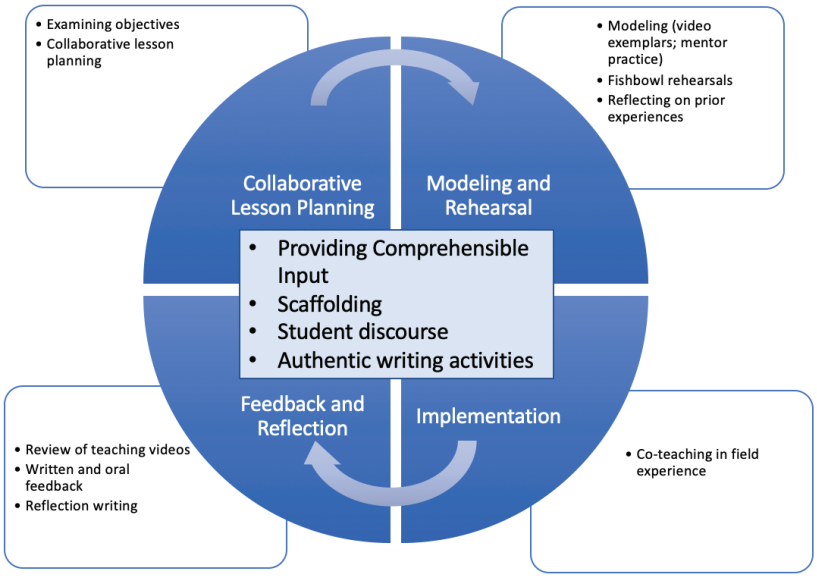
The EWP sits alongside an elementary teacher education program at a large public university in the southwestern United States. The EWP we describe occurred in Fall 2018 and Spring 2019 as an optional program for PSTs to supplement the paucity of writing instruction they received in their state-mandated teacher education coursework. The EWP involved a close partnership with an after-school research program, "Ready, Set, Write" (RSW), focused on supporting struggling second grade writers, including many emergent bilinguals. Professional development for the EWP occurred once a week at various sites (on or off the university campus) as determined by the needs of the participants. PSTs also worked in the after-school program (RSW) two days a week, 85 minutes a day, for a total of 20 weeks. All PSTs were provided with informed consent documents before beginning in the EWP. Only the data from those who consented to participate are used as findings. Both studies (the EWP and RSW) were approved by the university Institutional Review Board (IRB), and site approval was given by each involved elementary school. All names of participants and schools are pseudonyms.

The PBTE cycle illustrated in Figure 1 was designed to teach a selection of core practices for the writing instruction of emergent bilinguals, including: providing comprehensible input, scaffolding, student discourse, and authentic writing activities (Peercy et al., 2019). The cycle was enacted each week. First, the PSTs participated

in collaborative lesson planning, where they worked in teams and with their mentor, Stephanie (first author), to plan writing lessons that both addressed the target writing objectives and included planned opportunities to enact the focal core practice of the week. This was accompanied by modeling and rehearsal, where PSTs watched demonstrations of the core practices by Stephanie and other skilled teachers, engage in fishbowl simulations (or shared demonstrations of the skill) of the core practices, and were given the opportunity to reflect on their prior experiences enacting the core practices. PSTs taught the lessons they planned in the EWP each week within the after-school program; this will be described more in the following paragraph. The final stage of the cycle included feedback and reflection, where the PSTs received written and oral feedback from Stephanie, watched videos of their implementation of core practices, and engaged in personal reflection. Specifics about the PBTE approaches used by Stephanie within the EWP can be seen in Table 1.

In the after-school program, PSTs used the core practices they learned within the EWP to enact the writing workshop. This included

Figure 1
Practice-Based Cycle Used in the EWP



Note. Professional development for the EWP centered around a cycle of PBTE approaches (Dutro & Cartun, 2016; McDonald et al., 2013).

Table 1
PBTE Approaches Used in the EWP

	Stage in Cycle	*Evidenced as*
Duration	All	Two semesters of EWP Over 50 hours in the field
Peer/Mentor Modeling and Coaching	Modeling and Rehearsal Implementation	Video exemplars Mentor modeling Fishbowl rehearsals Peer enactment in the field
Feedback	Implementation Feedback and Reflection	Peer feedback on teaching during field experience Written and oral feedback from mentor
Performance Analysis	Collaborative Lesson Planning Feedback and Reflection	PSTs use videos of first lesson attempt to make modifications for upcoming attempts Watch videos and juxtapose their analysis with mentor feedback
Scaffolded Practice	All	Co-teaching Moving from Assistant Teacher to Lead Teacher
Cohesive Practice	All	Different school context from Fall to Spring Different students from Fall to Spring
Authentic Teaching	All	PSTs responsible for all aspects of lesson delivery, planning, and classroom management
Repeated Teaching	All	Taught each lesson four times (two times in spring, two times in fall) Multiple opportunities to practice core pedagogies
Reflection	Modeling and Rehearsal Feedback and Reflection	Oral reflection on former practices to integrate new theories and understandings Written reflection based on video analysis and feedback

direct instruction on different components of narrative writing using core practices, mentor texts, and interactive writing with think-alouds. Each day also included individual writing conferences as well as a daily rotation of three stations where the PSTs taught individual writing skills (spelling, vocabulary, grammar). Each day in the after-school program "served as the contexts for introducing, planning, rehearsing, enacting, and debriefing lessons that included particular teaching practices" (Dutro & Cartun, 2016, p. 123). Both semesters (Fall 2018 and Spring 2019), students completed two rounds of the writing process, meaning that the PSTs taught each lesson four times.

The present study uses the journal and exit ticket data collected from PST participants during the second year of the EWP in Fall 2018 and Spring 2019. During Fall 2018 the EWP had 10 PSTs enrolled, but only six continued through Spring 2019. The present study focuses on the voices of these six female PSTs, who were all between the ages of 19 and 21, all identified as White except one who identified as Hispanic, and were all elementary education majors. The after-school program (RSW) was located in three elementary schools in a mid-sized district, all of which received Title I funding. Approximately 20-30 second grade students, about 80% of whom were emergent bilinguals, were enrolled in RSW at each school. All students were identified as struggling writers. The first author, Stephanie, was the program coordinator, mentor, and on-site supervisor of the EWP. At the time, Stephanie was a doctoral student with a decade of teaching experience with emergent bilinguals and an expertise in literacy instruction.

Each of the six PSTs were placed in one school during Fall 2018 and one school during Spring 2019, serving as either 'lead teachers' or 'assistant teachers' (see Table 2). Lead teachers were in charge of preparing and delivering the main writing lesson each day to the whole class, whereas assistant teachers planned small group lessons focused on lower-level writing skills: spelling, conventions, and grammar. Both lead and assistant teachers were tasked with supervisory tasks such as classroom and materials management, student arrival and dismissal, and snack distribution. They also both engaged individual students in daily writing conferences. In some cases, the PSTs who were assistant teachers in the Fall were promoted to lead teachers in the Spring depending on their availability. The co-teaching practices in the after-school program meant that each PST served as a role model to their peers, sharing knowledge and ideas as well as decomposing practice. The lessons implemented in the after-school program were centered around the writing workshop model and focused primarily on narrative writing, as well as lower-

level skills. They were designed to emphasize the core practices for L2 writing that were mentioned above.

Our findings are derived from the weekly journal reflections, bi-weekly exit tickets, and focus group transcripts of the six PSTs in the EWP. These pieces of qualitative data give voice to the micro-experiences of the PSTs within each week of the EWP (weekly journals and exit tickets) as well as the macro-experiences and larger takeaways from the program (focus groups pre and post). Data analysis was conducted by multiple coders using procedures by Saldaña (2015) and NVivo data analysis software. In the first cycle of coding, thematic analysis was used to identify patterns in the data. Raters considered questions such as "What are their voices saying about effective PBTE approaches?" Each rater maintained an analytic memo to document and reflect theme development (Saldaña, 2015). This coding was done inductively, allowing a privileging of PST voices over preconceived notions of the raters and/or predetermined categories. After initial patterns emerged, focused coding was used for the second cycle. Raters read through the initial codes and analytical memos, then discussed and condensed the themes to define more specific sub-codes (Saldaña, 2015). Raters

Table 2
PST Roles in the EWP

	Fall 2018	*Spring 2019*
Dylan	Assistant Teacher Bowden Elementary	Co-Lead Teacher Hockley Elementary
Kathleen	Lead Teacher Bowden Elementary	Co-Lead Teacher Hockley Elementary
Laura	Lead Teacher (Tuesdays) Hockley Elementary	n/a
Maizie	Assistant Teacher Bowden Elementary	Assistant Teacher (Tuesdays) Co-Lead Teacher (Thursdays) Farley Elementary
Mandy	Assistant Teacher (Tuesdays) Lead Teacher (Thursdays) Hockley Elementary	Lead Teacher (Tuesdays) Farley Elementary
Sabrina	Assistant Teacher Hockley Elementary	Assistant Teacher (Tuesdays) Co-Lead Teacher (Thursdays) Farley Elementary

Note. Laura began her full-time student teaching placement in Spring 2019

coded separately, then met to discuss and resolve discrepancies. After analysis, overarching categories and representative excerpts of perceptions were determined.

Preservice Teachers' Perspectives

Data revealed that the PSTs gave voice to several PBTE approaches they perceived to be essential to their developing understandings, including: (a) mentor modeling in authentic settings; (b) mentor feedback on specific core practices; (c) scaffolded practice; (d) authentic teaching; (e) repeated teaching; and (f) co-teaching.

Mentor Modeling in Authentic Settings

During the "modeling and rehearsal" stage of the weekly cycle, all PSTs engaged in a video analysis of Stephanie's classroom instruction in year one of the EWP, when she served as a lead teacher at Farley Elementary. Also during "modeling and rehearsal", PSTs watched videos of other high-quality writing teachers and engaged in role-play demonstrations of core practices with their mentor, Stephanie. Interestingly, none of these modeling/rehearsal strategies were noted as helpful approaches by the PSTs. Only Kathleen and Laura mentioned the benefit of mentor modeling, but not the activities they engaged in during the Year Two weekly cycle. Instead, Kathleen and Laura mentioned their time as assistant teachers to Stephanie at Farley Elementary in Year One - an experience that was unique to these two PSTs only. During the first year, their role was primarily to provide assistance with materials management, teach small group lessons in stations, and conduct individual writing conferences with students. As they reflected on their learning, both Kathleen and Laura felt that the opportunity to witness a skilled teacher in an authentic environment was essential to their growth. In her journal, Kathleen wrote:

> I spent most of my time watching Stephanie teach and tried to be a sponge. I observed and took in as much information as I could—trying to take note of how often she made eye contact with the students, at what moments she would answer their questions, how/when she would bring their input into the lesson, the way in which she explained "complex" tasks to the students so that it sounded simple. (Kathleen, Journal)

To Kathleen and Laura, 'authentic' meant that the setting, content, and students were similar to what they themselves would have to experience. Thus, actually being present and watching Stephanie teach writing to second grade emergent bilinguals in real time, addressing

the same needs and objectives that they would later be expected to address, provided Kathleen and Laura with a strong model for their own practice that they could replicate. Both repeatedly noted this experience as one of the most impactful elements of the whole EWP.

Mentor Feedback on Specific Core Practices

PSTs voiced that receiving mentor feedback about specific core practices- e.g., teaching moves that they consistently enacted as opposed to isolated activities, was particularly beneficial. For example, written feedback from Stephanie to Mandy on her first attempt at scaffolding the revision stage of the writing process stated "in this revision lesson, students were asked to work together to share their thinking and the stories they wrote, then provide feedback. A mini-lesson with an accompanying fishbowl, where you demonstrated what these conversations should look and sound like would have improved the quality of feedback received," (October, Feedback). Receiving these highly specific and individualized notes from Stephanie after each lesson led PSTs to feel more confident in their practice as the program progressed. Mandy explained:

> ...so being able to go back and apply those changes and see the difference is super helpful and super rewarding, so I can start seeing those patterns and those trends to take specific feedback and apply it to the rest of the content...and see the changes just helped a lot for me. (Mandy, Focus Group)

Sabrina expanded on how feedback supported her ability to create authentic writing lessons, stating:

> Since our lessons were always discussed in detail before they were implemented it made the experience better. I could confidently plan a lesson and know that I was going to get the constructive criticism that would inevitably make the lessons more meaningful for students. (Sabrina, Journal)

Scaffolded Practice

In the EWP, scaffolded practice occurred as PSTs transitioned from assistant teacher to lead teacher, which they noted was "a great way to ease into teaching," (Kathleen, Journal) that ensured they had some experience implementing core practices before taking full responsibility of the writing lessons. In journals and focus groups, the PSTs reflected that they would not have been successful as lead teachers without first serving as assistant teachers. Maizie discussed how her ability to scaffold writing improved from when she was an

assistant in Fall to when she was a lead teacher in Spring, "Last semester I had more difficulty in helping students to write without feeding them ideas, but this semester I found it much easier to ask them questions and get ideas flowing without telling them exactly what to say," (Maizie, Journal). Other PSTs noted that being an assistant teacher was "really eye-opening" (Sabrina, Focus Group) in regards to the needs of emergent bilinguals, which prepared them for the role of lead teacher. Kathleen explained:

> It was such a great way to ease into teaching. It wasn't as daunting as teaching a whole group lesson, so it was an opportunity to practice without the pressure...I had a better understanding of what emergent bilinguals were facing and knew better how to help them. (Kathleen, Journal)

It is evident that purposefully scaffolding the PSTs' teaching responsibilities in the EWP was essential to the development of confidence and their ability to successfully enact core practices.

Authentic Teaching

Authentic teaching experiences are those that involve real students, are situated in real school contexts, and provide PSTs with the opportunity to engage as teachers. The field experience in the EWP encompassed all of these elements, including 20 weeks of teaching emergent bilinguals about one subject area (writing) while using and perfecting the set of four core practices. Perhaps most importantly (and uniquely), the PSTs were responsible for all aspects of the classroom, from lesson delivery to classroom management. In contrast to most field experiences, Stephanie would watch the PST's instruction via video recordings, but was not actually present in the classroom. It is no surprise that the PSTs found this responsibility to be particularly fruitful for their development; without the safety net of a mentor teacher's presence, they were forced to make sure their lessons were effective and the students were well-behaved. The PSTs even attributed their success in student teaching placements outside of the EWP to the authentic experience of the EWP. For example, Mandy was assigned to work in a bilingual classroom for her senior methods course (outside of the EWP), of which she said:

> terrified me at first...but I could take some strategies from the EWP like scaffolding, and stopping over certain words, and checking for understanding, and going back...and just different strategies that I'd already had to use. Because if I hadn't, I wouldn't have known what to do." (Mandy, Focus Group)

A similar sentiment was echoed by Dylan, Kathleen, and Laura, who explained that teaching in the EWP made them noticeably more prepared to teach than other interns, and that each had received multiple compliments from their respective student teaching mentors.

Maizie, among the youngest of the PSTs in the program, commented "By being in the EWP I am significantly more prepared than my peers because I have actually had hands on experience with children, which sadly is fairly uncommon at my grade level" (Maizie, Journal). Maizie felt that she was more knowledgeable and prepared than other education majors in her program who were forced to wait for university-assigned field placements, the bulk of which did not begin until junior year. As a sophomore, Maizie gained authentic experience that her peers did not receive.

Repeated Teaching

In the EWP, each PST received multiple opportunities to teach the same writing lessons, both within the same semester with the same group of students, and across semesters with different classes. The PSTs believed that repeated teaching enabled them to see what strategies really worked for emergent bilinguals after enacting the lessons in different ways. Laura reflected:

> My focus the last few days has become modeling. I feel like with the last few lessons I have finally become more confident in that area as well. The checklist lesson and the recording lesson were two I struggled with the first time around, but this time the students actually used their checklists and were much more efficient in recording their stories. I see that the more specific and direct with your modeling you are, the better. (Laura, Journal)

Repeated teaching allowed Laura, and the other PSTs, the chance to reflect on how to use core practices to successfully enact a lesson based on student needs, rather than assuming that the activities and/or lesson objectives were too difficult or poorly planned. In general, the PSTs commented on how repeatedly teaching particular writing lessons (e.g., 'small moments') led to improvements in both student achievement and engagement, which they attributed to the different teaching approaches they used from the first to second round. They found the ability to "see patterns and trends" (Mandy, Journal) in their instruction and apply the needed changes to be both rewarding and helpful. Dylan explained:

> …I felt more prepared the second time I taught a lesson because the first time, I was just…it was very stressful. I think just from doing it

> once and then just seeing what worked for me or what didn't work, and just like changing it, so the second time around I definitely felt more comfortable. (Dylan, Focus Group)

Co-Teaching

The PSTs also believed that their co-teaching placements were essential for their growth as teachers of emergent bilinguals. The ability to collaborate on lesson design and then reflect on their enactment was helpful because they had someone to "relate to" (Sabrina, Focus Group), or someone who could share in their struggles and successes. Mandy in explained how having co-teachers helped with organization:

> Tuesdays seem to be the most well-organized days. Having Laura, Sabrina, and myself is super helpful, not a lot of questions are asked and we are on top of it. The classroom management with everyone on Tuesdays is also great and very helpful. (Mandy, Journal)

For Mandy, having co-teachers helped ensure that the classroom ran smoothly and all lessons were accomplished successfully. In dealing with a particularly difficult group of students at Farley Elementary, Maizie and Sabrina explained how helpful it was to have co-teachers:

> SABRINA: I think it definitely helped too that we had each other to talk about it, like "*wow today was really bad*."
>
> MAIZIE: "*We suck…*" (laughing).
>
> SABRINA: Because I can't imagine being by myself and not having someone who could relate to that, like, "*yeah, I felt that too.*"
>
> MAIZIE: If I was alone and with them (the students) all day every year and that was my first-year teaching, I'd be like "*I'm out of here, I'm not cut out for this.*"

Maizie and Sabrina were thrown headfirst into teaching a group of students who required a lot of extra help. The support they received from one another allowed them to realize that their successes and failures were normal, and that together they could come up with a solution.

Finally, the PSTs felt that they could use each other as role models because they each excelled at, and struggled with, different areas. This was particularly true for the assistant teachers; Mandy explained "I was just so nervous to teach content that everything else just kind of, like, fell away...just watching Laura think on her feet and focus on different things was super nice to watch and learn from," (Mandy, Focus Group). For Mandy, having a co-teacher who was also at the

inception of their career as a role model served a different role than a more experienced teacher, because it allowed her to visualize herself enacting the same lessons and feel confident in her abilities.

Discussion

The present study is among the first to use PST voices to investigate which practice-based approaches they perceived to be helpful for facilitating knowledge of core writing practices for emergent bilinguals. In this study, the PSTs suggested that a) mentor modeling in authentic settings; b) mentor feedback on specific core practices; c) scaffolded practice; d) authentic teaching; e) repeated teaching; and f) co-teaching were the PBTE practices most impactful for them. While each of these approaches has been identified in the previous literature on PBTE (Brownell et al., 2019; Ward et al., 2018), it is important to note that the PSTs only highlighted aspects of these approaches that were unique to the design of the EWP- e.g., the fact that the entire program was facilitated and controlled by Stephanie, including the after-school field experience. The coherence between the core practices taught in the program and the opportunity to enact them in the field allowed for Stephanie to model skills the PSTs specifically needed practice with and to give salient and highly specific feedback. It also created a unique context in which the PSTs were able to collaborate with each other, take ultimate responsibility over the students and the curriculum, and refine their skills by repeatedly teaching a handful of core practices centered around one content area. It is quite clear that the unique context of the EWP enhanced typical PBTE approaches in a way that would be impossible within the traditional structure of teacher education where field experiences and coursework are, at best, loosely connected and largely ineffective at developing the requisite teaching knowledge (Brownell et al., 2019). These findings evidence the utility of centering teacher education coursework around specifically designed after-school programs focused on a particular content area. While this would involve significantly more coordination efforts on the part of colleges of education, establishing programs that resemble the EWP presented in this study would produce myriad benefits: a) the theory-to-practice connection would be enhanced and coursework would be balanced instead of entirely front-loaded (Forzani, 2014; Ward et al., 2018); b) specific skills would be clearly defined and practiced in a way that allows teacher educators to make direct reference to specific moves and/or student needs (Forzani, 2014); c) if designed as a service to the community, the extra time devoted to instruction could benefit

struggling students or underserved communities (Francis et al., 2018), and d) it would reduce the need to rely on in-service mentor teachers who may or may not perpetuate high-quality teaching practices (Vartuli et al., 2016). These after-school programs could be designed to complement junior and senior level methods courses and occur as infrequently as once a week, as long as they provide intentional opportunities for PSTs to practice specific teaching skills within a content area.

While we contend that a complete restructuring of how teacher education programs approach PST preparation may yield the most positive outcomes, we acknowledge that mimicking the structure of the EWP would be difficult and potentially impossible for many existing programs. Despite this, the present study still has plenty of implications for any teacher educator who seeks to employ a PBTE approach. First, the demonstration of core practices is best done live, with real students. This means that teacher educators need to engage in the real work of teaching young students, perhaps through university lab schools or daycare centers, or even an occasional 'field trip' into welcoming classrooms. Second, PSTs need to receive instruction on core practices *and* intentionally designed opportunities to enact them within field placements, preferably with students who are emergent bilinguals or from underrepresented backgrounds. It is also essential for supervising teacher educators to provide specific and targeted feedback on PST enactment of core practices, feedback which PSTs are asked to apply to upcoming lessons. Such intentionality has been identified as essential for teaching practice to improve (Ward et al., 2018). Likewise, a focus on core practices will be particularly beneficial for equipping PSTs to work with emergent bilinguals, struggling students, and students from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds (Von Esch & Kavanagh, 2018). The fifth implication is to start with small teaching experiences with emergent bilinguals, e.g. small group instruction, then transition to whole class instruction. Such scaffolding will provide PSTs with a low-pressure environment to learn about emergent bilinguals, including how to scaffold language learning alongside content (Peercy et al., 2019). PSTs may also benefit from co-teaching placements so they can learn from each other, take on different responsibilities within the classroom, and share in lesson planning duties.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that if we believe authentic practice to be something important for teacher education, we have to begin finding alternative ways to give PSTs exposure to it. While establishing an EWP may seem an unrealistic goal, after-school programs like it

offer insight into what authentic practice could look like without the complicated negotiation with field placements offices, working around highly structured curriculum, the needs and proclivities of cooperating teachers, and all the other logistical and administrative hurdles that make practicum experiences so challenging to carry out. The relative freedom of the EWP makes programs like this worth considering, despite potential initial hurdles.

While the reported implications would mean a large restructuring of many teacher education programs, it is important to remember that the implications resulted directly from the voices of the PSTs in this study. Levin (1994) contended that the most promising educational reforms have always built on the knowledge and interest of students; in higher education we often get bogged down by our own expertise and fail to consider the agency of our students in their learning. Thus, even if the implications for PBTE from the present study would not be feasible across contexts, teacher educators must remember the importance of using the voices of their PSTs to drive their instruction. This does not mean that instructors relinquish control of the curriculum or that student voices replace the expertise of the instructors, but instead that teacher educators must invite and seriously consider their PSTs' insights on the educational experience being provided, and be brave enough to make necessary changes (Bovill et al., 2011; Cook-Sather, 2006).

Moving Forward

As PBTE gains in popularity across the United States (Dutro & Cartun, 2016), there is a need for more specific prototypes that teacher educators can follow when designing their courses (Brownell et al., 2019). These prototypes, however, must be designed with input from the PSTs who will engage in them; as stated by Peercy and Troyan (2017), "the only way to develop an understanding of how to engage novice teachers in practice is by learning from the experiences of engaging them in practice," (p. 33). The present study focuses only on an extracurricular program with the specific goal of preparing PSTs for L2 writing instruction, however it is among the first to investigate what aspects of PBTE PSTs find to be most effective (Peercy et al., 2019). While the results of this study may not provide a comprehensive prototype, they lay the groundwork for what is needed in PBTE as determined by those who will benefit from that practice. The next steps require faculty to elicit input from their PSTs, then work together to analyze how PBTE opportunities are created and perceived in their classrooms, and how these opportunities could be enhanced by the

implications of the present study (Brownell et al., 2019).

The present study is limited in that it only followed the experiences of six PST participants, within the context of one program. Future research could attempt to replicate the present study with larger groups of PSTs, or simply examine how different practice-based approaches are perceived by PSTs across the country. Likewise, considering that teacher education programs are often criticized for their lack of classroom legitimacy (Francis et al., 2018), research that follows PSTs into their first year of teaching (and beyond) and gives voices to the effective approaches in their preparation program would be helpful to understand how PBTE prepares PSTs for the real task of teaching (Hurlbut & Krutka, 2020).

PBTE has the potential to create a generation of teachers who graduate not as 'novices' but instead as 'advanced beginners' (Brownell et al., 2019). No longer would PSTs leave teacher education programs as simply skilled classroom observers and analyzers, but as skilled teachers (Forzani, 2014). The implications derived from the present study have powerful potential to change the landscape of teacher education, if only we let it.

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