Bifurcated versus unified placements: Exploring the role of field experience in readying pre-service teachers

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Abstract

Building teacher self-efficacy (TSE) is seen as an important piece of the puzzle in preparing pre-service teachers. One of the ways to develop TSE is through firsthand experiences in K-12 classrooms. In most traditional teacher preparation programs, firsthand experience culminates in a semester of full-time student teaching. In this paper, we compare bifurcated student teaching placements to unified student teaching placements. In a unified placement, the pre-service teacher transitions from a part-time field experience into student teaching with the same host teacher, spending an entire year in the same classroom. Bifurcated placements involve two separate classrooms. Our findings were unable to say if one type of placement was more beneficial than the other in building TSE.

Keywords: teacher self-efficacy, pre-service teacher preparation, student teaching
Introduction

Preparing future educators is an undertaking that requires many hours inside and outside of the classroom. Pre-service teacher education programs must implement curricula that include content knowledge, strategies for inclusive and culturally relevant teaching, classroom management, and technology-based pedagogies. Each of these capacities must be cultivated so that pre-service teachers are confident in their ability to teach effectively, a quality called Teacher Self-Efficacy (TSE). Setting realistic goals, organizing pathways to achieve them, and overcoming inevitable failures while maintaining confidence have been described as self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997a). While the foundational knowledge learned in university classrooms is a great starting point, pre-service teachers must also “possess the intellectual and emotional resources to overcome the wide range of unforeseen challenges they will face during their careers” (Authors, 2017, p. 27). The ability to meet these challenges is an important part of pre-service teacher education and occurs while pre-service teachers gain experience in K-12 classrooms.

There are two main types of practice that occur during teacher education: field experiences and student teaching. Field experiences can be defined as the part-time practice of implementing content learned in the college setting in a supervised classroom setting. Students may only spend a few hours a week in a K-12 classroom, observing or teaching in a practicum, or field experience. Pre-service teachers complete field experiences throughout the duration of their teacher education program, changing classrooms each semester, in some cases to work with students of different age groups. In contrast, student teaching is the full-time practice of planning, delivering, and assessing learning in a supervised classroom setting. Traditional teacher education programs typically culminate in a semester of student teaching. During student teaching, pre-service teachers take on many of the responsibilities of a fully licensed teacher. In teacher education, field experiences and student teaching may serve as ways to bridge on-campus learning with classroom realities and to develop TSE. TSE has thus become an important indicator of the success of teacher-education programs (Bandura, 1997b). Finding the optimal balance of on-campus learning and time in the field for teaching practice has become an imperative for institutions of higher education, and for student teachers.

This study examined the effects of two types of pre-service experiences on the TSE of pre-service teachers at a small professional college in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States. One type of placement, which we call unified, positioned pre-service teachers to complete their capstone field experience and student teaching in the same classroom with the same cooperating teacher in the same academic year. We are calling the second type of experience included in this study bifurcated. The bifurcated positioned students to complete their capstone field experience and student teaching in two separate classrooms and with two different cooperating teachers in the same academic year. The present study compared the effects of each type of field experience on pre-service teachers’ TSE. This study asks:
Research Questions

1. Do pre-service teachers who complete unified student teaching placements report higher teacher self-efficacy entering their student teaching semester than pre-service teachers who complete bifurcated student teaching placements?

2. What differences exist in the evaluations of pre-service teachers who complete bifurcated student teaching placements and teachers who complete unified student teaching placements?

3. What role does field experience placement type (unified or bifurcated) have on pre-service teachers’ perceptions of their student teaching success?

Our literature review will discuss teacher self-efficacy and different types of field experience/student teaching placements to provide context for our methodology and results.

Literature Review

A robust and meaningful student teaching experience that contributes to teacher self-efficacy (TSE) has become an important goal in teacher education. Darling-Hammond (2000) argued that decades of research has linked teacher effectiveness to “extent and quality of teacher education” (p. 166) -- in particular, purposefully structured “clinical experiences that are woven together with coursework” (p. 169). Such experiences prepare teachers to inquire, to develop multiple perspectives, and to adapt, necessary qualities for teachers’ sense of self-efficacy in diverse classrooms. Research has confirmed that novice teachers with higher levels of TSE tend to remain longer in the teaching profession (Knobloch & Whittington, 2001; Darling-Hammond, Chung, & Frelow, 2002), an important finding given the high rates of U.S. teacher turnover (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). Additionally, research has linked K-12 students’ high academic achievement to teachers with high TSE (Caprara, Barbaranelli, Steca, & Malone, 2006; Mojavezi & Tamiz, 2012). Producing teachers with high levels of TSE could serve to reduce teacher turnover and increase student achievement in K-12 classrooms. In this paper, we elaborate on TSE as both an outcome and assessment of teacher education programs.

Teacher Self-Efficacy (TSE)

Bandura (1997b) contributed to educators’ understanding and implementation of the major tenets of self-efficacy in teacher education. According to Bandura (1997b), self-efficacy is the confidence that an individual will have control over a positive outcome of a task he/she is undertaking. Bandura found that people’s belief in their control over their efficacy is mediated through four influences: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and physiological and emotional states. Mastery experiences foster self-efficacy when individuals engage in activities that provide them positive outcomes; people feel better about their abilities when they have had a chance for successful practice. Vicarious experiences afford individuals models to emulate for successful results; observers can build a belief of success if they observe effective models. Social persuasion utilizes both positive encouragement from a role model and a scaffolded approach to task accomplishment. Self-improvement is the ultimate outcome because more is learned by building on one’s own capabilities than competing with others. The fourth influence,
physiological and emotional states, is how a person’s perception of his or her mental state affects the person’s ability to achieve the desired task (Bandura, 1997b). For example, if the task was completed while the participant was relaxed and comfortable, the person would likely rate their self-efficacy higher than if the task was completed under more stressful conditions. Ultimately, self-efficacy is a self-concept that relies primarily on experiential sources of information. Each of these four (mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and physiological and emotional states) affect one’s self-efficacy for a given task.

Building on Bandura’s model, Tschannen-Moran, Hoy, and Hoy (1998) defined TSE as a teacher’s confidence in his or her ability to plan and effectively implement a particular teaching task within a given context. Pendergast, Garvis and Keogh (2011) framed TSE in terms of beliefs, “self-efficacy relates to the beliefs teachers hold about their perceived capability in undertaking certain teaching tasks” (p. 47). Pfitzner-Eden (2016) subsequently determined Bandura’s mastery experience played the greatest role in TSE development. When pre-service teachers experience a sustained effort of teaching tasks, they can perceive a sense of future accomplishments.

Research has defined some of these tasks as managing a classroom (Henson, 2001; Klassen & Chiu, 2010), utilizing various educational technology (Abitt, 2011; Brinkeroff, 2006), delivering subject area information (Bates, Latham, & Kim, 2013; Egel, 2009; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007; Young & Kellogg, 1993), improving children’s literacy skills (Guo, Piasta, Justice, & Kaderavek, 2010), instructing students learning English as a second language (Alford, 2013), and supporting the needs of diverse (with respect to culture, race, learning exceptionalities, and socioeconomic status) learners (Banks, Cochran-Smith, Moll, Richert, Zeichner, LePage, Darling-Hammond, Duffy, & McDonald, 2005). Pendergast et al. (2011) found pre-service teachers began their student teaching experience with higher self-efficacy compared to the end where their perceptions of self-efficacy were lower. Since TSE often serves as a measure of pre-service teacher’s readiness to student teach and subsequently manage their own classroom, ideally teacher preparation programs would expect their graduates to leave with higher levels of TSE. The authors posited that student teaching in real classrooms gave participants in their study a greater appreciation for the intricacies of teaching and caused the lower self-efficacy scores. This paper explores the question of whether the design of student teaching has an impact on TSE.

**Field Experience and Student Teaching**

The pressing question centers on the impact that student teaching design on the TSE of student teachers as they assess their own readiness to enter the field of education. Zeichner (1984) stated that studying field experiences and student teaching experiences would help teacher education programs better align their overall goals for pre-service teacher preparation. Analyzing the differences in student teaching experiences leads to a better understanding of how student teachers perceive their involvement in the student teaching process.

Research has identified a variety of programs including traditional, year-long, and alternative approaches. Each of these approaches incorporates student teaching in some
form. Traditional programs have changed little since the beginning of teacher preparation. According to Greenburg, Pomerance, and Walsh (2011), in traditional programs housed in colleges and universities, field experiences typically precede a semester of student teaching during which student teachers must synthesize everything they have learned. Alternative approaches to teacher preparation, generally geared for mid-career recruits, have been shown to vary greatly in their duration and requirements, yet generally also include student teaching (Greenberg et al., 2011). The programs whose graduates report higher feelings of self-efficacy ensure coherent teaching and learning, continuity between courses, authentic assessments, and extended field experiences integrated into the coursework (Darling-Hammond, Hammerness, Grossman, Rust, & Shulman, 2005). Regardless of program type, Linda Darling-Hammond believes preservice teachers should “get a full year of clinical training under the wing of expert teachers” while tying college coursework to the “sophisticated pedagogy” often required in real-life classrooms. She believes this would make significant improvements to the field of teacher preparation (Martin & Mulvihill, 2017, p. 82).

Year-long student teaching and hybrid approaches, combining a semester of field experience with a semester of student teaching with the same mentor, have gained popularity in recent years (Griffiths, 2010; Iowa State Board of Education Executive Summary, 2015). Our unified placement is a hybrid approach. Griffiths (2010) concluded that extended student teaching placements would provide pre-service teachers (PSTs) more time to work with all stakeholders in a school community, including parents and administrators. Studies have found that positive and supportive relationships between pre-service teachers and their cooperating teachers is linked to a higher sense of TSE in the pre-service teachers (Hamman, Olivarez, Lesley, Button, Chan, Griffith, & Elliot, 2006; Woolfolk Hoy, 2005). Since self-efficacy among pre-service teachers is considered a reliable measure of success, it has continued to be studied by educational researchers. However, there has been little research on the impact of unified field experience and the perceptions student teachers gain about their own confidence preparing for a teaching position. The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of year-long unified student teaching placements on pre-service teachers’ self-efficacy and perceptions of their student teaching success when compared to traditional bifurcated student teaching placements.

Methods

All participants were pre-service education students at a mid-sized liberal arts college in south central Pennsylvania. Our Education department includes an elementary program, a middle level program, and a secondary program. In the elementary program, students must be well-versed in all content areas for elementary school. They complete separate content-specific methods courses in each of four content areas (English, mathematics, science, and social studies). These courses do not need to be completed in any specific order. Each of the four courses includes a 20-hour field experience component that must be successfully completed prior to student teaching. In the middle and secondary programs, students choose one content area for certification (English, mathematics, science, and social studies). The secondary or middle level education participants (n = 28) were enrolled in one of the four content-specific methods courses during the Fall semester of
2016. This course includes a 60-hour field experience component that must be successfully completed prior to student teaching.

Traditionally, the content-specific methods courses are taken in the semester immediately preceding student teaching. PSTs have one placement for the field experience associated with their methods course and a different placement for student teaching. Their field experience for the methods course is completely separate from their student teaching placement. This program design is being referred to as our bifurcated placement (BP). Several recent studies have found that consistent, yearlong student teaching placements offer many advantages; therefore, our college decided to pilot a year-long student teaching placement option for our students. Students could choose to complete their field experience for their methods course with one cooperating teacher and remain with that teacher for the duration of their student teaching semester. Essentially, this became a year-long placement with the same cooperating teacher. Their field experience for the methods course became their student teaching placement in the spring semester of 2017. We call this design a unified placement (UP).

Secondary and middle level education students completed the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Survey (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001) twice in fall 2016, once at the beginning of the semester and once at the end. The elementary education students did not take this survey for two reasons. First, unified placements were only being piloted with a small number of elementary education students. Second, the study initially focused on middle level and secondary education students; the decision to include elementary education participants was not made until the Spring semester. Students were already student teaching at this point, so trying to assess their self-efficacy pre and post their methods course would not have been possible.

All researchers were connected to the college where the participants were enrolled. Two researchers currently work at this college as professors, one researcher previously worked at this college in the field services division, and our student researcher had recently graduated from this college.

Data from the Professional Knowledge and Practice Assessment was collected on all participants (elementary, middle level, and secondary) who completed student teaching in Spring 2017 (n = 16). At the end of Spring 2017, students who completed student teaching were invited to participate in focus group interviews. Invited students were chosen by a random number generator. Eight students total participated in two focus groups: four students in the bifurcated placement focus group and four students in the unified placement focus group.

Table 1 breaks down the n for each instrument used to collect data. Students had the option to provide consent for some parts and not others. Thus, some numbers do not match in that students may have consented to our analysis of the PKPA but did not consent to the TSES. Furthermore, the TSES was given to secondary and middle level students during the Fall 2016 methods class. Some secondary participants took the methods class in Fall 2015, and so are not included in the TSES data.
Quantitative data was collected from two instruments during this study. The first instrument employed was the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Survey (TSES) survey. The TSES, originally developed by Tschannen-Moran, M., & Woolfolk Hoy, A. (2001), was used to assess differences in the self-efficacy each participant in the study. The TSES includes twenty-four Likert scaled items arranged in three subscales; engagement, instruction, and classroom management. All items from the TSES are presented in Appendix A. The Cronbach’s $\alpha$ values for the instrument, originally reported by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001), are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Cronbach’s $\alpha$ for subscales of the TSES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscale</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Cronbach’s $\alpha$</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TSES Total</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>1.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruction</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>1.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>1.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second instrument employed was the Professional Knowledge and Practice Assessment (PKPA). The PKPA (Appendix B) was used to assess participants’ performances during their student teaching semester. This assessment was created by the field services division at the host study site to assess all student teachers during their student teaching semesters. The PKPA includes fifty-eight items organized into four subscales; planning and preparation, classroom management, instructional delivery, and professionalism. These subscales are aligned with the four professional domains assessed on the formal student teaching assessment required for all student teachers in Pennsylvania. The validity of the PKPA was further affirmed by an expert panel of three field services professionals at the study site. The panel included one education professional with a doctorate in education and advanced administrative certification, one professional with a
Exploring the role of field experience in readying pre-service teachers

The researchers sought to answer, Do pre-service teachers who complete unified student teaching placements report higher teacher self-efficacy entering their student teaching semester than pre-service teachers who complete bifurcated student teaching placements? This question was addressed by comparing the unified placement populations’ (UP) and bifurcated placement populations’ (BP) pre- and post-field experience TSES survey results. Descriptive data summarizing these results are displayed in Table 4.

Table 4
*Unified and Bifurcated TSES scores.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unified Placement TSES Scores</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bifurcated Placement TSES Scores</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>103.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An independent samples *t-test* was employed to determine the existence of a statistically significant difference between the UP and BP TSES scores. The null hypothesis for this independent samples *t-test* was that there was no difference in the mean TSES scores of the Unified and Bifurcated populations. The independent samples *t-test* indicated a *p* value of 0.80. This value is above the *p* = 0.05 threshold indicating the null hypothesis was accepted. The results of the independent-sample *t-test* indicated that the
mean scores for UP and BP populations were not significantly different, with the UP reporting higher teacher self-efficacy than the BP. Table 5 presents the results of this independent samples \( t \)-test.

Table 5
Independent-Sample \( t \)-test Comparing UP and BP TSES Scores.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MD</th>
<th>( t )</th>
<th>( p )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TSES Scores</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The researchers sought to answer, \textit{What differences exist in the evaluations of pre-service teachers who complete bifurcated student teaching placements and teachers who complete unified student teaching placements?} with research question two. This question was addressed by comparing the unified placement populations’ (UP) and bifurcated placement populations’ (BP) pre- and post-field experience PKPA survey results. Descriptive data summarizing these results are displayed in Table 6.

Table 6
Unified and Bifurcated PKPA scores.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>( n )</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unified Placement PKPA Scores</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>205.92</td>
<td>20.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bifurcated Placement PKPA Scores</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>206.75</td>
<td>13.16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An independent \( t \)-test was employed to determine the existence of a statistically significant difference between the UP and BP PKPA scores. The null hypothesis for this independent samples \( t \)-test was that there was no difference in the mean PKPA scores of the Unified and Bifurcated populations. The independent samples \( t \)-test indicated a \( p \) value of 0.95. This value is above the \( p = 0.05 \) threshold indicating the null hypothesis was rejected. The results of the independent-sample \( t \)-test indicated that the mean scores for UP and BP populations were not significantly different, with the BP reporting higher teacher self-efficacy than the UP. Table 7 presents the results of this independent samples \( t \)-test.

Table 7
Independent-Sample \( t \)-test Comparing UP and BP PKPA Scores.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MD</th>
<th>( t )</th>
<th>( p )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PKPA Scores</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The researchers sought to answer, \textit{What role does field experience placement type (unified or bifurcated) have on pre-service teachers’ perceptions of their student teaching
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success? With research question three. This question was answered qualitatively with focus group interviews. Similar questions were posed to each group of students as seen in Appendix C. These questions were decided upon by the researchers, using questions similar to those employed by previous researchers (e.g., Hilary Conklin, YEAR) who had studied the perceptions of novice and pre-service teachers (Lichtman, 2010). The interviews were recorded and later transcribed. Our student researcher first utilized open coding to find patterns in the data (Lichtman, 2010). A faculty researcher reviewed the transcripts and found similar patterns as the student researcher (Lichtman, 2010). These patterns are described below.

There were several similarities between the two groups. With few exceptions, all participants reported that they were prepared in both content knowledge and teaching pedagogies. In the focus groups, there were one or two mentions of feeling underprepared, but overwhelmingly, participants spoke positively of the program. This was true regardless of student teaching placement and/or certification level. Participants from both the BP and UP populations spoke about difficulties with classroom management. However, the UP participants seemed to be more open to failure or receptive to criticism from their cooperating teachers due to a higher level of rapport. One UP said of her cooperating teacher:

She knew me just like the back of her hand, and I think that that definitely benefited me as a teacher, because she was able to give me feedback and know exactly what type of feedback I needed to hear, whether it would be positive or she would give me critiques, but give it to me in a way where she knew that I could accept the feedback and learn from it. (RC, personal communication, April 24, 2017)

Participants in BP generally spoke positively of their cooperating teachers, but it was evident that those in the UP had built a stronger rapport, which we attribute to their yearlong placement.

The biggest difference between the two groups was their perspectives on relationship-building in their student teaching placement beyond just their cooperating teacher. This difference builds on the idea that participants from UPs were better able to build rapport during their student teaching semester. Participants from UPs spoke often on the ability to build personal connections with both cooperating teachers and students because they spent so much time in the classroom. The UP participants commented on how they were better positioned to begin student teaching because they were comfortable in their classroom placements. They discussed being familiar with the students, their colleagues, their cooperating teachers, the school procedures, and specific programs used at the school (e.g., *Everyday Math*). A high level of familiarity allowed them to take on more responsibility sooner than their BP counterparts. These findings are supported by previous data (Griffiths, 2010; Hamman et al., 2006). Those in BPs noted that it took more time to transition into responsibility because they were less familiar with their students and cooperating teacher. As one BP participant stated “I wish I was in a year-long with my kids. It’s a lot harder to gain the trust of these kids with the constant revolving door of adults in their lives.” She believed that students in her placement had preservice teachers and other adults in and out of their classroom and so some students were reluctant to develop a
relationship with her. She thought a year-long placement would have counteracted that and helped her cultivate a stronger rapport with her students. Some participants from BPs lamented not having enough time in one specific classroom or school setting. They reasoned that they had felt more successful in field experiences prior to student teaching because they had only been in a classroom for just enough time to teach one or two lessons. Participants from BPs commented that they never truly got to see a whole school day prior to student teaching and that learning how to transition on the spot was difficult for them. However, two BP participants agreed that they enjoyed the “opportunity to have an extra semester to be in a different school, to get different ideas, to see different grading scales, different ways of teaching.” In their opinion, a bifurcated placement helped them gather more strategies for their own classroom. Overall, students were supportive of the student teaching placement they had personally completed (unified or bifurcated).

Discussion

This exploratory study compared the impact of UP and BP experiences on pre-service teachers’ self-efficacy (TSE), using quantitative and qualitative methods. The study findings do not support broad claims about the benefits of one placement over another. The study is limited by the small sample size, even relative to the size of our education program. In addition, the unified placement (UP) program is fairly new. It was piloted with the secondary and middle level pre-service teachers in the fall semester of 2015 and piloted with the elementary group a year later. Currently, pre-service teachers have the option to choose a bifurcated or unified placement when they apply for student teaching.

Quantitatively, there was no statistically significant difference between those students who completed a UP and those who completed a BP. Neither group of pre-service teachers reported higher levels of self-efficacy, nor did either group perform better when evaluated by others. From a quantitative standpoint, the pre-service teachers in this study reported feeling equally prepared to enter student teaching, regardless of placement design. They also performed equally well when scored on their professional knowledge and practice. One caveat to the PKPA ratings was the lack of tested inter-rater reliability. All raters receive a training prior to beginning supervision of their student teacher. However, the PKPA scores by supervisors are very subjective.

From a qualitative standpoint, a striking difference in the findings was the level of comfort, described in terms of rapport and relationship-building, reported by the UP pre-service teachers in comparison to the BP pre-service teachers. Pre-service teachers may have discussed their placements prior to the focus groups during their practicum classes, but we do not believe these prior discussions affected the PST responses from the subsequent focus groups. Elementary and middle/secondary PSTs take different practicum classes and discussions in the practicum class tend to be more general. These findings conform with previous research by Griffiths (2010), who found that more time in the classroom led to constructive interactions with school stakeholders. Several UP participants commented that there may be a benefit to UP for the cooperating teachers. They suggested that their cooperating teachers felt more comfortable “handing off classes to a college student” because they had built a positive relationship over the course of the year. The UP participants in this study also reported more about social persuasion than any other tenet posited by Bandura, suggesting that relationship-building may be linked to
social persuasion as a source of TSE. One of Bandura’s (1997b) four tenets of self-efficacy was social persuasion that utilized both positive encouragement and scaffolded assistance from a role model. With respect to positive relationships, one UP participant stated “you're familiar with the building, you're familiar with all the staff, you know all the kids, you have positive relationships hopefully by then.” Another UP participant agreed, saying “you know the students already, but you also know the classroom routine, so it's easier for you to continue that routine.” In their opinions, being in the same classroom for a full year made their transitions to student teaching easier because they had more time to adjust in a smoother scaffolded manner. Although Pfitzner-Eden (2016) found that mastery experiences were the biggest component of TSE development, these exploratory findings suggest that social persuasion may play a greater role in TSE development than is currently known.

In sum, graduates reported that the teacher education program had adequately prepared them to enter the teaching profession, regardless of their placement type. Both UP and BP demonstrated similar levels of self-efficacy and participants in both placements spoke highly of their respective placement types. It appears that our program is ensuring our students leave with a strong sense of self-efficacy; nonetheless, as the program’s UP partnerships expand, it would be worthwhile to revisit the performance and perceptions of pre-service teachers and their cooperating teachers in these different student teaching placements.

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