

Strengthening Your Teaching Philosophy through Reflection on Your Beliefs about Teaching and Learning

Ashlynn Kogut
LOEX 2021 – May 14, 2021



OUTLINE

1. BACKGROUND


A bit about me and the impetus for this research study

2. RESEARCH STUDY

Study methodology and findings

3. IMPLICATIONS

What these findings might mean for instruction in our contexts



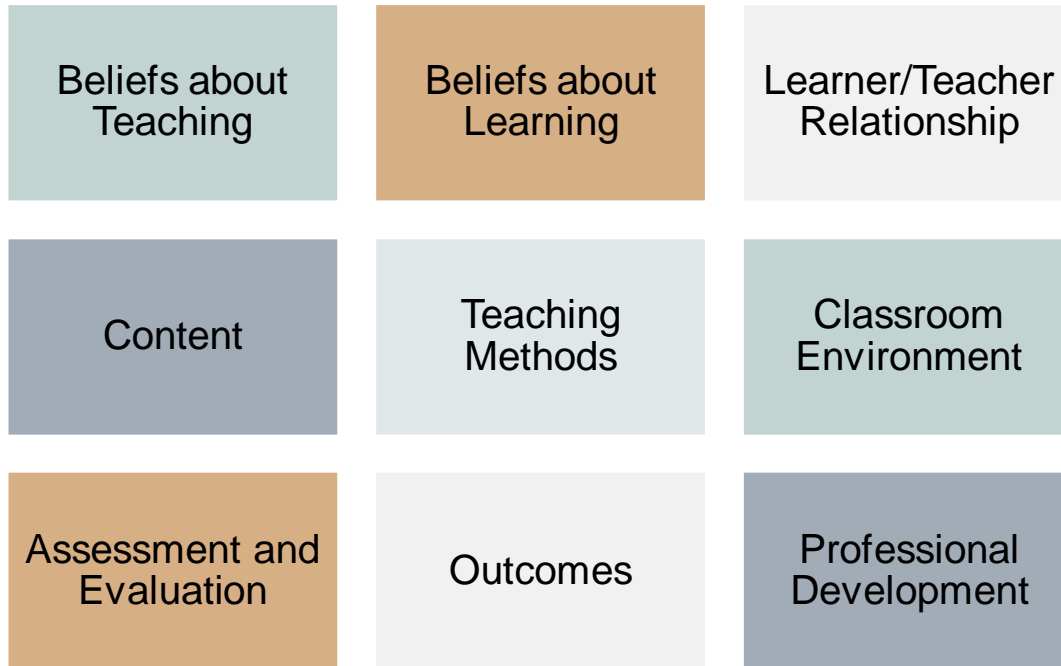


1. BACKGROUND

A bit about me and the impetus for this research study


Teaching Philosophy

"A teaching philosophy statement is a systematic and critical rationale that focuses on the important components defining effective teaching and learning in a particular discipline and/or institutional context" (Schönwetter, Sokal, Friesen, & Taylor, 2002, p. 84).





A Bit About Me

- Education & Social Sciences Librarian at Texas A&M University
 - My teaching philosophy
 - Student-centered
 - Develop students' confidence
 - Active learning
 - Connecting to the immediate need of an assignment
 - Assessment through reflection
- 



Impetus for this Study

- Literature review on how librarians teach
 - Teaching philosophy level not “nitty gritty of instructional strategies”
- Lack of explicit discussion on how we conceptualize teaching and learning
- Why?



What was in the Literature?

On the Job Instruction Training

Research on Librarian Teaching Roles and Teaching Identities

- Four conceptualizations of teaching role – *teacher-librarian*, *learning support*, *librarian who teaches*, and *trainer* (Wheeler & McKinney, 2015)
- Teaching identity studies found external factors influence librarians' self-perceptions (Davis et al., 2011; Julien & Genuis, 2011; Mattson et al., 2017)

ACRL Roles and Strengths of Teaching Librarians – Teacher Role

- “The teacher employs best practices of teaching and learning for integrating information literacy into higher education...The teacher employs a learner-centered approach, encouraging learners to be agents in their own learning” (<http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/teachinglibrarians>)

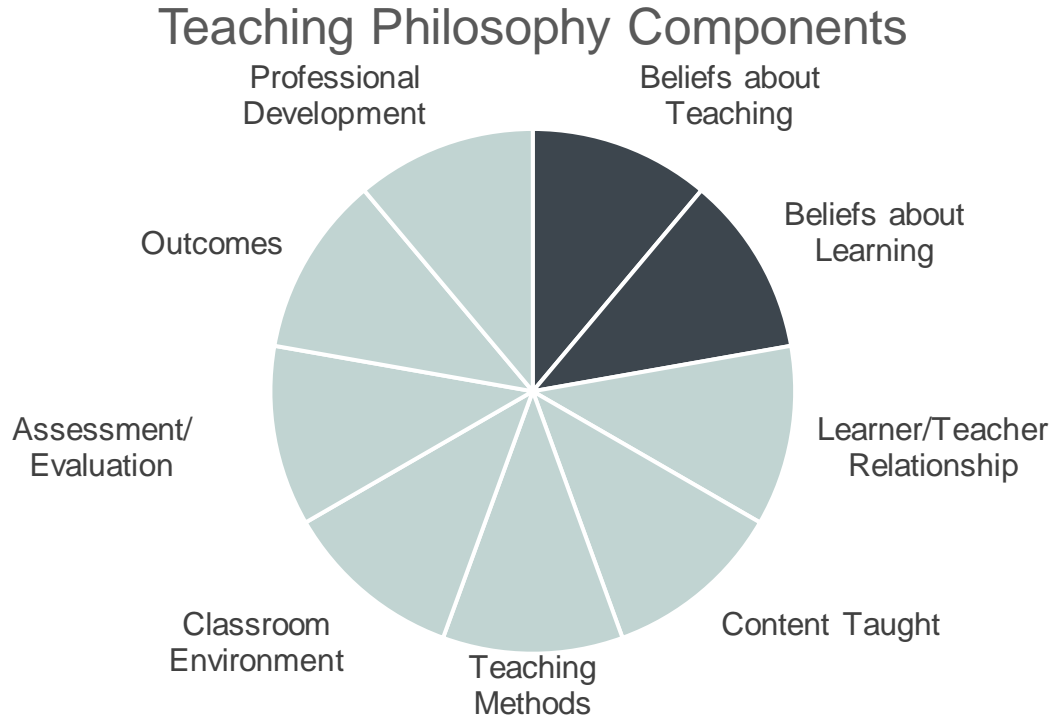


2. RESEARCH STUDY

Study methodology and findings

Research Question

How do teaching librarians at Texas doctoral universities describe their beliefs about undergraduate teaching and learning?



Beliefs

Teaching Beliefs


- “ideas on how teachers can facilitate the learning process” (Chism, 1998, p. 2)
- personal assumptions about teaching, “the meaning of teaching in my context,” and one’s “personal view of post-secondary teaching” (Schönwetter et al., 2002, p. 89)

Learning Beliefs

- personal assumptions about learning, “understandings of how students learn,” and “discussion of learning parameters (styles, diversity, difficulties)” (Schönwetter et al., 2002, p. 89)
- Some conceptions of student learning “are intuitive and based on experiential learning, rather than on a consciously articulated theory” (Chism, 1998, p. 1)




Methodology

- Qualitative case study research design
 - Three doctoral universities in Texas
 - Participants recruited via email in Fall 2020
 - Interviews with 13 teaching librarians via Zoom
 - 4 at Regional Research University
 - 4 at Northern Research University
 - 5 at Metropolitan Research University
 - Testing the interview protocol
- 



Reflection Activity 1

Describe a typical instruction session, including topics covered, teaching methods, activities, format, etc.
(See Reflection Worksheet)





Beliefs about Teaching

★ **Understanding
students' unique
learning needs**

“I feel like sometimes we had taught where you're going to meet the professor where they're at. And I'm really trying to make my classroom and my teaching practices meeting the student where they're at.”

Sarah

★ **Understanding
students'
affective
dimensions**

“When I'm in a classroom or when I'm working with them in a one-on-one consultation, I try to be mindful and compassionate about where they're coming from.”

Elizabeth



Beliefs about Teaching

★ Respecting the
knowledge and
experiences of
students

“Respecting that students
might know more than I do
on a topic and allowing
them the space to bring in
their knowledge and share
it with others.”

Elle



Beliefs about Teaching



**Creating a
supportive
atmosphere**



“I spend a lot of time thinking about and reading and learning about what makes for an inclusive classroom. And what do I need to be doing to create a space in which every learner can learn equitably.”

Elle



**Being
available to
help students**




“I always encourage the students to come back”

Elizabeth



Reflection Activity 2

- What is your initial reaction to the teaching belief findings?
 - Do any align with your beliefs?
 - What could you change (i.e. add/delete) to make these better fit your conceptualization of teaching?
(see Reflection Worksheet)
- 



Takeaways from Beliefs about Teaching

- These beliefs represented beliefs of teaching librarians with a range of teaching identities
- Librarians use student-centered teaching





Beliefs about Learning

★ **Undergraduates
learn in a variety
of ways**

“*There's no one best way I
think is the thing to
remember*”

Olivia

★ **Undergraduates
learn
throughout
their college
experience**

“*It's not something that
like any of us can
manage to do all at once,
or with a single class
...it's really something
that has to be thought of
over the long term*”

Edgar



Beliefs about Learning

Learning process entails:

★ Interacting
with others



“If you're doing group work or group activities and they can start learning with each other”
Elizabeth

★ Learn by doing



“Actively working on something rather than just sitting and listening to me lecture, I do think that they learn better”
Valerie

★ Reflection



“We also try not to burn students out like activity after activity after activity with no real like sit and think time”
Kate



Beliefs about Learning

Conditions for Learning:

★ Seeing the
applicability of
the content

“Not only what the assignment is expecting them to do, but why they are doing the assignment. So, I explain a lot of why”

Rene


★ Having
emotional
needs met

“Everybody learns better when they feel empowered in their learning, when they feel like they're actively participating in their learning”

Nicole




Reflection Activity 3

- What is your initial reaction to the learning belief findings?
 - Do any align with your beliefs?
 - What could you change (i.e. add/delete) to make these better fit your conceptualization of learning?
(see Reflection Worksheet)
- 



Takeaways for Beliefs about Learning

- Feeling of not knowing enough about learning theories to describe beliefs about learning
 - Can see alignment between experiential beliefs and articulated theories
 - Theory of threshold concepts not mentioned in regard to learning process
- 



3. IMPLICATIONS

What these findings might mean for
instruction in our contexts

Implications for Practice

- Conflicts between beliefs and instruction context
- Consideration of beliefs in regard to research consultations
- Role of library's instruction culture





Reflection Activity 4

What connections can you make between your teaching and learning beliefs and the instruction session you described in the first reflection?

(see Reflection Worksheet)





THANKS!

This research would not have been possible without the willingness of my participants, the help of my colleagues at Texas A&M University Libraries, and the guidance of my dissertation committee, particularly Dr. Luis Ponjuan.


CREDITS: This presentation template was created by **Slidesgo**, including icons by **Flaticon**, and infographics & images by **Freepik**

References

- Chism, N. (1998). Developing a philosophy of teaching statement. In K. H. Gillespie (Ed.), *Essays on teaching excellence: Toward the best in the academy*. POD Network: A Publication of the Professional and Organizational Development Network in Higher Education.
- Davis, E. L., Lundstrom, K., & Martin, P. N. (2011). Librarian perceptions and information literacy instruction models. *Reference Services Review*, 39(4), 686-702. <https://doi.org/10.1108/00907321111186695>
- Julien, H., & Genuis, S. K. (2011). Librarians' experiences of the teaching role: A national survey of librarians. *Library & Information Science Research*, 33(2), 103-111. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lisr.2010.09.005>
- Mattson, J., Kirker, M. J., Oberlies, M. K., & Byrd, J. (2017). Carving out a space: Ambiguity and librarian teacher identity in the academy. In A. Deitering, R. Schroeder and R. Stoddart (Eds.), *The self as subject: Autoethnographic research into identity, culture, and academic librarianship* (pp. 143-169). Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries.
- Schönwetter, D. J., Sokal, L., Friesen, M., & Taylor, K. L. (2002). Teaching philosophies reconsidered: A conceptual model for the development and evaluation of teaching philosophy statements. *International Journal for Academic Development*, 7(1), 83-97. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13601440210156501>
- Wheeler, E., & McKinney, P. (2015). Are librarians teachers? Investigating academic librarians' perceptions of their own teaching roles. *Journal of Information Literacy*, 9(2), 111-128. <https://doi.org/10.11645/9.2.1985>



References for Teacher Beliefs

- Lavigne, A., & Dalal, Y. (2014). Teacher knowledge, beliefs, attitudes. In W. Scarlett (Ed.), *The SAGE encyclopedia of classroom management* (Vol. 2, pp. 806-808). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications
- Vartuli, S. (2016). Teacher beliefs. In D. Couchenour & J. Chrisman (Eds.), *The SAGE encyclopedia of contemporary early childhood education* (pp. 1317-1320). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781483340333.n397>
- 



Questions?

Ashlynn Kogut
awkogut@library.tamu.edu