

Q1 - To what extent do you feel the Teacher Education Program has prepared you for the teaching profession? Was there room for improvement? Please elaborate on your answer.

The program prepared me to a great extent for the teaching profession. The general education courses provided me with a great deal of information about educational theories and some of the newest updates in the educational field. The Methods courses were well structured to supplement the theoretical knowledge studied in the core courses with the practical application of strategies in the classroom. In addition, the semester of student teaching helped me experience how teaching would look like when I will have my own class. As for improvement, I believe that the number of credit hours for the semester of student teaching can be reduced to half. (We already combined 2 courses and we skipped several classes of the new combined course.)

While I did find many of the classes to prepare me well for teaching, I think there is room for classes to be a little more specific. Some of the required courses were not particularly applicable to my teaching field (of theatre). Teachers did a nice job of trying to accommodate for that, however the courses themselves often felt specific to core academic classes. It also feels like Belmont prepares students specifically to teach in Metro Nashville schools, rather than preparing students for any number of the other jobs in the education field.

I feel very prepared. The classes, Practicums, and my student teaching placements have all been great. I don't really know that there is anything that could have been added to improve my experience.

Belmont's program stresses the importance of content knowledge and strong teacher-student relationships. Every Education course provides candidates with rigorous academic content with a focus on Social Emotional Learning. The pairing of the two has helped me to prepared for a career as a professional educator, who is able to encourage student learning through knowledge and meaningful relationships. The program could improve be putting even more emphasis on Social Emotional Learning.

I feel that I was very well prepared for all of my student teaching placements, but that is where I learned most (when actually teaching!) Because I was brought into the program as an Art Ed major, It was nice to have already had lesson plans, standards, and other experience to work with, but I wish that I had previous knowledge of the TEAM evaluations a bit more before my final student teaching.

Q2 - Did your practicums and clinical placements provide you with experiences in diverse environments? Please elaborate about your experiences.

Yes. I had the opportunity to observe, tutor or teach in both public and private schools at different grade levels ranging PreK through high school. Prek and Elementary: Glendale, Rosa Park, Carter Lawrence, Murrell (Special Education), Fall Hamilton, Franklin Road Academy (private), Montessori Centre (Prek), Julia Green, Eakin, Waverly Belmont, Clyde Riggs Elementary School in Portland High School: Pearl Cohn, Portland High School

Yes, the environments were diverse.

Yes. I have been to many, many different placements (public and private) with a variety of ages, class sizes, races, diversity in incomes, etc. not only in the Nashville/Metro area, but also Williamson county and a field trip to Portland, TN.

All of my practicum and clinical experiences provided me with meaning interactions in diverse environments. My practicum experiences at Salama and Title I schools throughout MNPS allowed me to work with students of different backgrounds and religions.

Yes, from my 4 years at Belmont I believe I received a very good experience working with a variety of diverse learners at a number of different schools and community programs.

Q3 - To what extent do you feel your courses and clinical experiences have prepared you for teaching a variety of learners? Please elaborate.

Each course i have taken had clinical experiences attached. During the general education classes, we had our classes in different schools around Nashville. In addition to observing class activities ranging PreK through high school, we also had the opportunity to work one-on one or small groups with students (tutoring ELA and Math in Rosa Park 4th grade, tutoring in Glendale Kindergarten, enhancement in Pearl Cohn High School, tutoring in Murrell Special School). I planned, organized and worked with students with Down syndrome during 2 camp activities in Meet the Needs of Diverse Learners course. As a volunteer in Reading Clinic, I tutored a second grade student. Also, during student teaching, I taught in two elementary classrooms with a diverse student population. In addition, I worked one-on-one or in small groups with students with different learning needs (autism, Tier 3 students)

I feel that classes so a good job of preparing us to teach students who may be struggling or who are low performing. However, I would have loved to have more preparation on how to reach gifted learners. Also, as I said in the first response, I feel that we were being taught how to reach students specifically in reading, writing, and math classes, without much time spent on anything else.

My courses prepared me with what to expect when teaching a variety of learners, but student teaching is where I really got to put that knowledge into play. Since all my students learn in different ways, I got a lot of experience during the past semester. I feel that my courses did prepare me for this.

My practicum assignments through the course Diverse Learners offered me rich experiences with students who have physical and/or intellectual disabilities. Additionally, both of my clinical placements were with EL Certified Teachers, which provided me the opportunity to plan and teach English Language Learners.

I think i am well prepared from clinical experiences in my diver learners class, working in special education schools, and having the chance to work in schools that have full inclusion classes and a diverse student population.

Q4 - Please list course assignments that you feel were most applicable to your clinical experience and why.

The opportunities to teach, either to our own classmates, or to real students (whole group, small group or one-on-one instruction) were the most applicable assignments because I was able to feel how real teaching will look like in my own classroom. After sessions of teaching, I had to reflect on my classroom experience and say what went well, what didn't work, what I will do differently if i were to teach the lesson again and this helped me continuously improve. The feedback received from instructors, mentor teachers, supervisor, or peers contributed to helping me become a better professional.

Getting feedback from observing faculty on lessons/lesson plans was always very helpful. Since that is work that will actually be done on a daily basis in the classroom, I think more of that would be great. I also think it's important for someone from the Belmont faculty (beyond the outside supervisor) to watch each teacher candidate in a classroom. No one every did that for me, and I think that is a missed opportunity.

Lesson planning. I felt very prepared during my student teaching experience about how to plan a lesson and what was expected of me. I also feel that the observations (and having someone watch my lesson put into practice) was extremely beneficial.

Social Studies Unit Plan - it helped me to build my content knowledge in history and geography
Math and Science Integrated Unit Plan - it helped me to focus on ways to integrate science and math into every lesson
Literacy - Literature Across the Curriculum - it helped me to find multiple teaching opportunities every book

Having to create and teaching lesson plans helped a lot before the actual student teaching because I could begin to learn what could go wrong in a planned lesson, and how to write stronger ones depending on the audience.

Q5 - Please list course assignments that you feel were least applicable to your clinical experience and why.

I don't feel like there were assignments that are useless for my future career as a teacher. there was always something to learn from each assignment and, as teachers, we need all the information we can get to strive for excellence in education.

Many of the reflection writings felt very redundant. To write a reflection every time you watch a class is a lot to ask. I felt that I ended up simply getting the assignment done, rather than really getting any meaning out of it.

Scripted lesson planning. While lesson planning was the most applicable part of my clinical experience, scripting the entire lesson is unrealistic for day-to-day teaching. Not only is it extremely time consuming, but a lot can change during the course of a lesson and I learned that I usually veered away from what I had originally scripted.

Literacy II - The end of chapter True and False questions. They were very confusing and ambiguous.

In the Art Ed program we were required to write weekly case studies on articles that were given to us. This was helpful in that we were always kept up to date on what is happening in the art education world but a lot of the times the articles were a bit dated or something that did not apply to us so it was taking away a lot of valuable time that we could have been using to do something else.

Q6 - Are there any areas in which you feel unprepared as a teacher? Please elaborate.

Testing the students might be something I need to work on as a teacher. I worked on some forms of testing during my student teaching, and I heard about a lot of them in all the classes I have taken so far or during my practicum observation, but I still feel this is something that only experience and practice would help me become more skilled and proficient.

No.

Perhaps just knowing now that I will be doing it on my own without help (mentor teachers, supervisor, classmates, BU teachers)--haha!

TLAs - I think I needed more time to practice on real students, in order to improve my ability to listen and take accurate notes.

Grading and assessment has been the most difficult for me.

Q7 - Based on your experience in the Teacher Education program, have you been able to recognize unconscious biases within yourself? Please elaborate.

During Contemporary Issues Education course, I took some IAT tests on unconscious bias and the results proved that I am a person free from any constraints, be them racial, ethnical, religious, socioeconomic, or of any kind, and capable to work with persons from different backgrounds. Within the MAT program, I had plenty of opportunities to interact with such a diverse population and I never felt any biases that could interfere with my work.

I know how to identify unconscious bias, yes. I feel that I have been doing a strong job of avoiding this in my teaching thus far.

Maybe a little bit. We did an exercise about unconscious biases in one of the methods courses that was helpful in recognizing these biases, but past that I'm not really sure that I've been able to recognize them within myself.

Possibly? As an older student, I have had some significant life experiences that have taught me that I need people in my life of differing races, religions and sexual orientations.

Yes, but only within the level of achievement and effort. I have had some students that have never completed assignments, never participated in class, and never wanted to be there, so I began to naturally stop giving as much attention and help to them but when they finally came forward and asked questions or stated that they needed a bit more understanding on the assignment, then I realized they had so much more potential than I realized at first. I think that I had some sort of underlying bias that because the first few weeks they didn't seem to care or want to do any of the assignments that they just didn't want anything to do with the class and didn't want to learn, so I stopped giving as much attention when really that is what they needed the whole time.

Q8 - How has the program prepared you to be an exemplary educator who advocates for children, families and communities? Provide examples.

Some examples include: creating a multimedia advocacy kit to simulate addressing one issue in education, participating in a school board meeting field experience, or guest speakers coming to class to share their experiences as advocates.

I feel that my innate passion for caring for children will be the reason I advocate for students and families. I do not feel equipped to advocate change for communities or schools, though I would like to.

I feel that I've been prepared a lot! I've learned how important all three of these are for education to be successful. We talked about this in a lot of my methods courses and I did projects in a couple classes. I also feel that I know several resources about this now, too.

This program has taught me to be observant of the "whole" child. I must make sure that every child's basic needs are met in order to foster a positive learning environment. Additionally, I have learned the importance of building relationships with parents and initiating open lines of communication.

I think that I have been already pointed out to have a great deal of autonomy for my educational field advocacy since the arts are such a shadowed subject anyway. Through my teaching experiences though, I have learned to advocate for children and the community in ways that I didn't think I needed to before, such as some kids in my class excelling but their teachers struggling with them in others, I was able to help and let them know that they maybe just needed extra assurance or help in certain areas.

Q9 - Do you feel prepared to be a culturally responsive teacher in that you embrace cultural, ethnic and religious differences? Please elaborate.

Yes, I feel prepared. When in my classroom, I will try to know the students the best I can, use open communication to uncover students learning needs and preferences, as well as students' values and habits, relate content to their interests and deliver lessons that appeal to shared strengths, deliver varied forms of content through learning centers and offer different ways to demonstrate skills and understanding, encourage students to share their personal perspective, or use multiple media that positively address the range of cultures in the classroom.

Yes, I feel fully prepared in this. Theatre lends itself well to exploring different cultures, ethnicities, and religions. Creating a respectful and safe environment in which to do this has always been one of my first priorities as an educator.

Yes. We talked a lot about this in my methods courses and I also got to put it into practice during my Practicums and student teaching placements, as they were all very diverse.

I understand that I must build a culturally responsive classroom in which all children and their families are celebrated. I will welcome student input in creating an environment where all children feel safe, protected and supported.

Yes, through my field experience I have had the opportunity to teach students with many different cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds, so I was given the opportunity to learn more about them and their lives as well as the way that they grew up and how it is different than others, and how they may respond differently in a classroom because of it.

Q10 - Are you planning to teach right away or take some time off? If you are planning to take time off, please tell why.

Yes, I am planning to teach right away.

Would like to teach right away if I can find work.

Take some time off to pursue Reading Specialty certification at Belmont

I plan to teach right away!!!

I am looking to still work in education, but more of a community programs/museum setting. If I do not find a job in that area I will begin to look for in school teaching.

Q11 - At this point, have you been offered a teaching position? If so, where (district, school, grade level)?

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No.

Not yet.

Not yet! But I am not seeking placement right now.

I have been asked by two schools, A.Z. Kelley - MNPS and Cedar Grove - RCS to teach in interim positions.

No

Q12 - Please elaborate on ways the Teacher Education program can improve.

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A more elaborate curriculum for the courses that are provided during student teaching semester.

I think, particularly in the final semester, there need to be a wider variety of paths for candidates based on their prior experiences. As someone who came to this program with a lot of teaching experience already, I feel that, had my student teaching semester been "normal", I would not have gotten much out of it. Luckily, I ended up in a situation where I was able to take on a regular teaching load as a long-term sub. This was fantastic, but was a job verses a student teaching experience. I got lucky. However, I think in most circumstances, it would be beneficial to offer some sort of modified student teaching experience, if the candidate is coming to the semester with copious amounts of prior experience.

Really my only suggestion would be to combine the two courses during student teaching into one (which we ended up doing this semester). What would be really nice is if it met during the day too (maybe on Fridays) around 12, so then a weeknight isn't taken up every week. It was hard to get excited for class from 5:30-8 on Thursday nights after you've already had a full week at your placement (and knowing you have to get up early the next day!) But ultimately, I've been extremely satisfied with the Belmont/Teacher Education program!

I believe the practicum assignments / opportunities could be improved. I was fortunate to know of schools and teachers that I could visit and observe stellar teaching instruction. However, I heard of other students seeing and learning very little from their visits.

Be sure to really check the background and history of the placement schools. Make sure that they are programs that the student teachers can really learn from and be encouraged by their mentor teachers!