

DEVELOPING A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN PETE AND PUBLIC-SCHOOL PE PROGRAM: ONE ATTEMPT TESTED

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ABSTRACT

Public school physical education (PSPE) and physical education teacher education (PETE) programs must constantly rethink their roles and responsibilities. One area worth considering is the coordination of a partnership between such programs. Although many have deemed this as a critical component for systemic success, very few have accomplished this undertaking offering a dearth of practical knowledge. Framed by Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), this study examined the first stage of developing a mutually benefitting partnership. One PETE program and one PSPE program containing six schools and 21 physical education teachers participated in this study. Curriculum and multiple professional development sessions occurred over the course of nine months. Field notes were taken independently to conclude pre- and post-teacher practices and procedures. Semi-structured interviews of district staff (n=8), and student questionnaires (n= 345) were completed to determine perceptions of newly implemented and proposed instruction. All qualitative data were analyzed using constant comparison methods (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). Pre-Observations: Most teachers were found co-teaching long sport units, teaching large-sided games, and offering extended bouts of sitting in the beginning and throughout the lesson. Post-Observations: Students were seen immediately moving upon entry into the teaching space, fitness component being utilized, and other practices that matched the PETE program instruction. Based on staff interviews, three common themes emerged: (a) Finally Some Professional Development, (b) Too Much, Too Soon, and (c) The Jury is Still Out. Student responses to the partnership were mostly positive overall, with 49% indicating, "the activities, games, and sports we play are fun", and 11% feeling the "units offered should be changed." Conclusion: Researchers found the partnership ascended from trust, which researchers suggest should form gradually. Although empirical evidence indicates accountability to be critical for partnerships, researchers found a limit on how much can be mandated from the 'top-down'. To facilitate the partnership, it is suggested to (a) embrace the role as PETE professors, (b) conduct routine observations to aid staff during the transition, (c) offer informal (peer-led) training, and (d) consider student interests when developing curriculum. Subsequent phases will analyze effects from placement of PETE teacher candidates.

Keywords: Field experience, socialization, professional development, preparation.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the field of physical education two organizations must co-exist: physical education teacher education (PETE) programs and public school physical education (PSPE) programs. While PSPE programs are expected to provide students with quality and standards-based curriculum and instruction, PETE programs have the responsibility of preparing teacher candidates (TCs) with the necessary content, pedagogical knowledge, and pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1987). Fundamentally, PETE programs are reliant on PSPE programs to offer quality practical experiences in conducive environments. According to Ayers and Housner (2008), 98% of all

PETE programs (N=113) offer a field experience component, with most programs (77%) offering field experience as early as freshman and sophomore year. Some believe the effect of field experiences are so great that they far outweigh the learning outcomes from formal university course work (Lortie, 1975). In fact, Graber (1996) feels TCs should be sent out early and often throughout their academic career.

According to Paese (1989) four major outcomes can be realized for TCs when placed into PSPE programs for field experiences: (a) effectively make better career choices, (b) courses within the curriculum become more meaningful, (c) gain a better understanding of children and teacher responsibilities, and (d) realize there is more to teaching than telling children what to do. However, a recent study by the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCATE, 2011) found student-teaching programs nationwide, to be weak in field experiences, ultimately marginalizing the PETE programs' effectiveness. According to their findings, only 7% of all participating programs were identified as 'model' programs, with deficiencies found among: (a) duration of teacher placement, (b) the role of the teacher preparation program in teacher placement, and (c) teaching experience of those serving as mentors.

Siedentop and Locke (1997) identified a model PETE program to contain ten specific conditions (a revision of Howey and Zimpher's [1989] 14 attributes). The most related explains, "TCs to be placed in sound experiences with good physical education programs that match the PETE program" (Siedentop & Locke, p.31). Research on physical education teacher socialization (Richards, Templin, & Graber, 2014) fully supports the significance of this connection, iterating that field experiences are more meaningful if TCs are placed in schools that support the PETE programs' vision and message (Stran & Curtner-Smith, 2009). A study conducted by Curtner-Smith, Hastie, and Kinchin (2008) examined TCs' socialization in their newly acquired jobs and discovered TCs who were 'teaching oriented recruits' and received low quality field experiences, were unlikely to attempt the new approach upon graduation, even if they landed jobs in schools with innovative cultures (Curtner-Smith *et al.*, 2008).

In a partnership, both the PSPE program and PETE program benefit (Petray & Hill, 2009). For the PETE program, TCs receive healthier supervision, experience consistent socialization messages, and TCs will be able to more effectively navigate school culture (Richards *et al.*, 2014). Other benefits may include TCs to experience a more conducive environment (i.e., workable class sizes, well managed classes, and utilization of current best practices and procedures). For PSPE programs, participating staff may improve instruction, revive enthusiasm, and receive relevant professional development (PD) (Johnson, Wetherill, & Greenebaum, 2002). However, when a TC is placed in a school that is not in a partnership, they may receive mixed-messages on how physical education is taught and possibly use this discrepancy to reaffirm rather than challenge their preexisting beliefs on physical education instruction.

Developing a partnership is vital for the success of our profession. Siedentop and Locke (1997) explain three specific elements needed for systemic success: (a) quality physical education in the schools, (b) effective PETE programs, and (c) a working relationship between the two. Researchers highlighted the last element to be most critical, stating "neither school programs nor teacher education programs are likely to be adequate if they are created in isolation from each other" (p.27). Prusak, Pennington, Graser, Beighle, and Morgan (2010) have identified one strong partnership of more than 30 years that had been forged in Southwestern United States. Based on their massive qualitative study, they revealed four essential components to obtain such partnership: (a) a trusting partnership, (b) district coordination, (c) accountability, and (d) continual PD. Others have attempted to explain a 'hedgehog approach' to be effective, which states that both entities must face the truth of one's situation, and believe that no matter the obstacle, success will be achieved (Pennington, Prusak, & Wilkinson, 2014).

For many PSPE programs, quality and ongoing PD is a lost phenomenon. Possibly due to the current nature of public schools in the U.S., physical education specific PD is rarely offered, and if offered, trained approaches are difficult to transfer into their own context (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Sherman, Tran, & Alves, 2010). Additionally, one-time workshops are found to be most prevalent, yet an ‘abysmal pathway’ for changing teacher practice (Knight & Cornett, 2009; Yoon, 2007). Therefore, researchers suggest PD should be ongoing and carefully constructed in order to alter teacher practices (Armour & Yelling, 2010; Guskey, 1986; Martin, McCaughtry, Kulinna, & Cothran 2008; Sherman *et al.*, 2010). Things like informal learning and peer-led professional development may be benefitting (Armour & Yelling, 2007), as feelings may change when hearing of new practices from colleagues rather than ‘outsiders’. This notion resembles Ajzen’s (2001) Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), which postulates attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control to influence intention, resulting in behavior change. Therefore, if perceptions towards the newly trained curricula are favorable classroom practices have a better chance in changing. Keep in mind, when the teacher does attempt the new curricula, student responses have found to significantly influence teacher perceptions (Guskey, 1986). According to Guskey’s (1986) third principle to teacher change, if positive outcomes from students is observed the change process will continue and the teacher will likely continue to implement the trained curriculum.

Past and current literature highlights the need for PETE and PSPE programs to work together. Unfortunately, very few have achieved such partnerships, offering a dearth of practical approaches. Framed by TPB (Ajzen, 2001) and PD literature, this study examined one PETE program’s attempt at creating a working partnership with a local PSPE program and analyze the approach. Stakeholders’ (i.e., teachers, students, administration, and PETE professor) perceptions along with pre/post observations were evaluated in order to identify best practices in hopes to assist those championing a partnership.

2. METHODS AND MATERIALS

2.1 Settings

Based on convenience, one K-12 public school district was selected to participate with the initiation of a partnership with the partnering PETE program. The PSPE district administration consisted of one superintendent, one assistant superintendent, and one supervisor of physical education (SOPE). There are six different campuses in the school district, organized by the following grade levels: K-1, 2-4, 5-6 and 7-8, and 9-12 grades (two schools for 2-4 grades). District data indicated student enrollment was 3505 with 17% on free/reduced lunch and a 94% graduation rate. The ethnicity of students is identified as 95% Caucasian, 1.4% African American and 3.6% minority (majority Hispanic). At the high school (9-12th grades), students are placed in four marking periods lasting nine weeks each. Students are required to take physical education for three marking periods and one in health. Periods last 42 minutes with physical education and health offered four days per week. Students in grades 5-8 meet on a rotating A/B schedule, with Week A in physical education and Week B in health. Schools K-2 and 3-4 meet two or three times per week with periods lasting 32 minutes each. No adopted curriculum or model was found at any level.

The facilities and teaching spaces for the district vary greatly. The high school offers four teaching spaces in one gym, that can be separated by moveable curtains. A weight room, aerobics room, two large grass fields, one turf football field, and six tennis courts are also available. The 7-8 school has its own dedicated gym approximately the size of a regulation basketball court, with

a softball and a grass playing field. The remaining schools (K-1, 2-4, 5-6) have a multipurpose gym/lunch room that is shared each day, with a blacktop and a grass playing field.

2.2 Participants

The assistant superintendent (male, Caucasian) oversees curriculum and instruction for the entire school district. This was his third year as assistant superintendent. The SOPE (male, Caucasian) oversees the K-12 physical education and health department for the past 34 years and is expected to seek PD opportunities for the physical education department and evaluates the physical education staff along with supervision of athletic duties. The participating PETE professor (male, Caucasian) is the participating PETE program director and has been working for the university for four years (co-researcher).

There is a total of 21 (11 males and 10 females) physical education teachers teaching both physical education and health education. In this district, most teachers are veterans with teaching experience ranging from 10-34 years with an average of $M= 25(2.1)$ years teaching physical education. Five participating teachers (4 females, and 1 male; Caucasian) volunteered to be interviewed to share their experience and perceptions on the partnership.

University Institutional Review Board approval and the school district personnel approval were obtained before commencement of this study. Teacher informed consents and parental consent forms for all participating students ($N=345$) were collected before data collection.

2.3 Procedures

The first-year effort started with the PETE professor expressing his struggles and failed attempts in developing partnerships to a hired supervisor in the program. After multiple attempts, she connected her previous school district SOPE with the PETE professor. They met during a university class session. The SOPE explained, "I was unhappy with the direction my physical education department was headed and thought it was time that I step in to make a change." The SOPE was impressed with the teaching practices and set up a meeting with the PETE professor and Assistant Superintendent.

During the first group meeting, the PETE professor conveyed his vision, possible benefits, PD ideas, resources, need for removal of barriers, and accountability measures. Potential benefits for the partnering PETE program were explained as: (a) research opportunities, (b) quality placement sites for TC, and (c) continual update on current trends. For the PSPE program, benefits were expressed as: (a) improved instruction, (b) successful implementation of state and national standards, (c) increased student enjoyment and participation, and (d) increased teacher enthusiasm. The PSPE program administrators requested consistent methods of instruction throughout the district and the PETE professor requested the adoption of a similar model and approaches used in the PETE program. The considerations were joint and agreed upon. All initiatives and PD approaches were based on national and state physical education standards, and evidence-based best practices. See Table 1 for the complete breakdown of steps taken.

Table 1: Initial Approach and Anticipated Future Steps in Developing a Partnership

Phases	Description
<u>Phase I:</u>	Uncover a need to partner with the neighboring program Create trust and develop a plan collaboratively Match curriculum and teacher practices to PETE program and student interests Provide frequent professional development sessions and teacher-led activities Dedicate an appropriate level of accountability and support
<u>*Phase II:</u>	Train teachers to be effective mentors and reaffirm practices Place TCs in classrooms that effectively mimic PETE classroom trainings Provide school principals and administration training sessions on novel practices Organize a remediation loop for administration to follow PSPE being hiring TCs from PETE program
<u>*Phase III:</u>	Provide continual support and professional development sessions Advocate and aid the supervisor in removal of barriers Begin grant writing and seek additional funding opportunities Initiate and begin conducting well-designed research Evaluate the partnership and adjust to increase effectiveness

**Indicates anticipated phases and subject to change*

2.3.1 Professional Development: Before the first professional development session (March), researchers visited all school sites observing 10-20 minutes of each teacher's class. Based on observations, a PD plan was developed. The entire PD process lasted approximately one year (March to February), with a total of eight in-person PD sessions. The Dynamic Physical Education for Elementary School Students (Pangrazi & Beigle, 2015) curricular model was adopted by the elementary schools (grades K-6) and the Tactical Games Approach to Teaching Sports Concepts and Skills (Mitchell *et al.*, 2013) in the secondary schools (grades 7-12). These curricular models corresponded with the PETE program and the methods class training.

The first PD session involved ways in which to start class through instant activities and/or fitness activities. Research, rationale, and best practices was provided as teachers engaged in the activities through modeling techniques. The following session, before the end of the academic year (June), focused on management strategies and further emphasis on introductory and fitness activities. Over the summer, a three-day curriculum revision session occurred with 12 teachers and the PETE professor. The PSPE curriculum committee used the adopted models and identified equipment needs for the upcoming school year. Before the start of the new school year (September), teachers were again provided with a PD session on how to teach sport skills effectively, and other requisite methodologies to implement the adopted models successfully. As previously mentioned, the SOPE and assistant superintendent expressed they wanted consistent methods of instruction throughout the district, therefore teachers were asked to only select activities from the adopted curriculum.

Instructional signs and materials were provided during the fourth session to aid instruction and eliminate additional responsibilities. This session focused on assessment, developing assessment tools, and creating state required teacher evaluation outcomes. The fifth session again focused on the Tactical Games Approach (Mitchell *et al.*, 2013) to teaching sport skills, which was offered only to the 7-8 and 9-12 grade teachers. During this session, multiple sport activities and modifications of sports were demonstrated and provided.

The most critical request from the PETE professor was for the SOPE to hold the participating teachers accountable to the newly trained practices and procedures. This was found to be a key component in obtaining a partnership (Prusak *et al.*, 2010). The SOPE agreed and attended each PD session learning content and pedagogical knowledge. Accountability occurred immediately after the first session in March. Emails were sent by the SOPE expecting

implementation of the trained practices. The SOPE also verbalized to staff that he would be expecting these methods during scheduled and drop-in observations.

2.4 Data Collection

2.4.1 Interviews: Participating teachers were recruited via email. Researchers examined, perceptions of the partnership, approaches taken for PD, and effectiveness of the trained pedagogy. Five teachers (one from each school) were requested to be interviewed in order to offer a full representation of the district.

Participants were interviewed during the last 3 months (Dec-February) of the partnering year. A semi-structured interview format was used to allow researchers to gain clarity of newly introduced concepts. Interviews lasted approximately 30-45 minutes and were audio-recorded. Based on TPB (Ajzen), positive attitudes towards a newly introduced practice is critical to behavior change. Therefore, interview questions emphasized beliefs towards curriculum change and the newly adopted models and practices. Further inquiry related to training and impact on students. Responses aided researchers in formulating a sense of the effectiveness and suitable steps on ways to initiate a partnership.

For confidentiality purposes, pseudonyms were used and teachers were referred to as Teachers A, B, C, D, and E. Sample questions from the interview guide were: “Are the steps the administration have taken to improve the PE program warranted? Why or Why not?”, “How do you feel about the coordination with the [University] and the changes to the PE curriculum and instruction?”, and “What has your experience been like so far with the PD sessions?”

After seven months, the PETE professor, SOPE, and district administrator were interviewed by the co-researcher following a similar interview format. This was to examine their perceptions and better evaluate the approach. Sample questions from this guide read, “After a year of working together how do you feel things are going?” Another question asked, “What are some trials and tribulations that you feel teachers have experienced, the students have experienced, and you as a contributing person have you experienced?”, and “Would you have done anything differently if you were to do this all over again?”

2.4.2 Student Questionnaires: Researchers created a four- item questionnaire to obtain student perceptions and highlighted their experiences in physical education. This information was critical as empirical evidence has documented teachers’ perceptions towards change to be dependent on student interests (Guskey, 2002). For example, if student perceptions were positive, the teacher would be more likely to associate a positive attitude toward the proposed change. This would then positively affect their intention and with other positive factors, behavior change could be realized (Ajzen, 2010). Consequently, this would facilitate the partnership and allow for a more seamless process.

One or two classes for each grade level (7-12th) were selected at random and asked to complete the student questionnaire. Students ($N=345$) were asked to complete the questionnaire honestly, guaranteeing anonymity. The co-researcher administered and collected questionnaires, which asked the following questions: (a) “What do you like most about your physical education class?”, (b) “what is one thing you would like to change about your physical education class?”, (c) “what are some noticeable differences in your physical education class?”, and lastly, (d) “what is one word that describes your feelings while in your physical education class?” Students in grades K-6 were not included in the interview process due to parental policy of students submitting to surveys in this district.

2.4.3 Observations & Field Notes: Observations were conducted throughout the partnership and started before the commencement of any PD sessions. This was completed to triangulate findings from teachers and students, and to compare pre/post teaching practices. Each co-researcher (participating PETE professor and retired teacher) engaged in a 20-30 minute walk-through visit, at each school site, twice a month. Researchers took field notes during each visit, examining participants' teaching practices and procedures, level of student engagement, and teacher instruction. This method was selected over more validated methods of teacher evaluation due to the nature of proposed requests. Many suggested approaches were not specific to classroom teaching and situated around class procedures and curriculum (i.e., co-teaching, shorter unit length, etc.).

2.5 Data Analysis

Qualitative data (interviews and field notes) were analyzed using constant comparative method (CCM) (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). Interviews were first transcribed and then uploaded into Dedoose (2012), an online software that organizes and assists with coding excerpts. The analysis process then proceeded with two researchers initially coding the data independently for common themes. Data analysis began with a particular incident and compared it with another incident from the same corpus. In the first cycle, two researchers established their individual personal coding scheme and initial themes separately. Researchers then compared their initial codes and themes and negotiated findings (collapsed and reduced themes).

Teacher procedures and practices (initial and observed) were confirmed through field notes and anecdotal records. These were analyzed using similar CCM methods as researchers independently documented teachers' practices, then established their views on practices and compared results. After negotiation and negative case searches, agreement on initial and observed practices were concluded.

2.5.1 Data Trustworthiness & Researcher Bias: To ensure data trustworthiness, the researchers used multiple member checking, peer examination, and negative case searches. The first member check consisted of returning all transcripts and field notes to teachers requesting if any changes were needed. No changes were made. A second member check was conducted and followed the process of sending the participants a draft of the themes of this study and asking for their comments and approval regarding the interpretations. A search for disconfirming evidence was then conducted by two team members who independently searched for negative cases that could provide an alternative viewpoint or disprove the themes. No negative or disconfirming cases were identified in this process.

In all naturalistic inquiries, it is needed to acknowledge researcher bias: as bias is part of all inquiries (Patton, 2002). However, acknowledgement on the part of the co-researcher serves as a filter analysis of this investigation. The co-researchers are also the PETE professor and retiree. This may have created an inherent bias that the researcher may value the perceptions of staff and administrators as an avenue for improved partnership or effective steps taken. On the other hand, the researcher also believes that a well-constructed partnership will attract positive views on the PETE program and merely provides a method of recognition of the process.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Initial Teacher Procedures and Practices: At the high school, researchers observed teachers using traditional models of instruction (Hastie, 2003). Teachers would demonstrate a new skill, offer time to practice in a related drill, and conclude by situating students in a game.

Administration agreed, “Based on anecdotal observations, and what little I know about current research in best practices for PE, I observed traditional models of PE instruction. Kids did not seem overwhelmingly excited or engaged.” Co-teaching was a common practice among most of the high school teachers ($n=9$) during traditional sport units. This was observed as two teachers teaching a large section of the gym with approximately 80 or more students. It appeared standard practice for students to enter the gymnasium and sit into squads waiting for attendance to be taken. Afterwards, most teachers were conducting a static warm-up routine that followed with one large-sided gameplay activity. Some teachers were observed having a team of students sitting in bleachers awaiting their turn to play, usually rotating after a few minutes of gameplay. Student assessment was not observed, however confirmed by the SOPE was solely based on participation (i.e., attendance, effort, dressing out). After further discussion with the SOPE, units were long and typically the same for all grade levels, each year (e.g., Basketball, Volleyball, Square Dancing). Dedicated running days were also occurring twice a week which included a full period of students expected to run. In addition, two fitness-oriented classes were offered, which were titled, fitness/nutrition and weight training. These classes were taught by specialized staff members.

Instruction differed at all the other school sites (K-1st, 2-4th, 5-6th, and 7-8th). This was confirmed with the district administrator who stated, “In pockets, some really solid and innovative PE instruction is going on that matched some of the same designs of instruction in classrooms (such as small group learning, stations, etc.) but the innovation was not wide-spread.” Some were infusing more up-to-date practices, getting students active from the beginning of class with immediate activity, and aligning activities nicely to the lesson objectives, while others were not.

At the elementary and middle school, grades 5-6th and 7-8th co-teaching was a common practice, possibly due to lack of facilities. It was observed that some teachers expected students to enter the teaching space and immediately move either with a jog or a planned fitness activity, while others would request students to come in and sit quietly and listen to roll call and instruction of the days’ lesson. All teachers were using direct instruction or the technical (traditional) approach to teaching skills, followed with an application into gameplay.

At the lower grades (K-1 & 2-4), instruction differed as well. Some had students come and sit in squads, while other teachers were asking students to walk around the perimeter upon entering only to sit and listen to instruction for the day. After review of the school district’s curriculum, unit selection was loosely selected and based on teacher competence (what teachers felt was important to cover or most comfortable teaching).

Post Teacher Procedures and Practices: Researchers reviewed procedures and teaching practices and noticed much change. Most teachers at the high school had altered some or all their original teaching procedures and practices. Class procedures and format changes were observed to have changed the most. Based on field notes researchers documented “teachers were no longer co-teaching” (field note, Sept.). Curtains were drawn in the gym and four different units were being taught. Students were no longer entering the gym and sitting in squad spots. Rather, upon entering the gym, “students were observed walking or jogging around the designated instructional area” (field note, Oct.). Attendance was seen taken during student movement around the gym.

In addition to the stated procedural changes, researchers witnessed a few teachers altering their teaching practices. Many of the high school staff were attempting and incorporating an instant activity, a similar practice taught in the PETE program. Field notes documented these activities to be selected from the adopted curriculum, “either dynamic warm-ups, tag games, and cooperative activities are being utilized” (field note, May). This was consistent during all observations from both researchers. Researchers also noticed a few teachers (two at 5-6th, two at 7-8th school, and one at the high school) attempting the Tactical Games Approach to teaching sport skills. The researchers documented small-sided games with modified rules, and critical

thinking periods. These are key components Metzler (2005) described of the Tactical Games Approach curricular model. Students seemed more engaged and seemed to enjoy physical education as the SOPE stated, “I see students having more fun and wanting to participate more than ever before.”

On the other hand, researchers observed minimal efforts from other teachers. No teacher was observed at the high school incorporating the trained fitness segment. Additionally, some high school teachers were still utilizing large-sided games, and having students sit in bleachers waiting their turn to play in the game.

Instruction differed at the other school sites (K-1st, both 2-4th schools, 5-6th, 7-8th). At the 7-8th grade school, researchers observed two 7th and 8th grade teachers co-teaching, yet with a concerted effort to incorporate the trained pedagogy and procedures. “These teachers have it, students were immediately moving right out of the locker room with an instant activity, and engaged in a fitness routine that utilized approaches for developing a positive fitness experience” (field note, Oct). Utilization of the Tactical Games Approach was also witnessed during observed sessions, satisfying all Metzler’s (2005) benchmarks for the curricular. Other staff members were using direct instruction, as observers witnessed students sitting and listening for long periods of time. “Students are playing in one large game of basketball ‘knock-out’, with others sitting on the stage, and 5 other basketball hoops left unused” (field note, Nov.).

Based on an observation of two teachers in the 5-6th grade school, researchers noted, “Time on task was very minimal. The other researcher noted “students are standing in lines and sitting majority of the time” (field note, Nov.).

At the 2nd-4th grade schools, the researchers observed all physical education staff members attempting some of the trained pedagogy (instant activities, positive fitness instruction, and DPE curricular model activities). Students were seen entering the multi-purpose room or teaching space to music and moving directly to a spot on the floor and engaging in a pre-planned dynamic warm-up or instant activity. A fitness segment was offered, as field notes indicated, “High level of enthusiasm and engagement both from the teacher and the students” (field note, Dec). Similar attempts were occurring at the K-1 school. Researchers documented, “The teacher had preplanned activities which students were engaged in right from the very beginning of class” (field note, Dec.). A fitness segment was not seen; however, students were actively engaged with individualized instruction offered throughout the lesson. In summary, teaching practices were developing with some staff members utilizing or not attempting trained methods at all.

Stakeholders Perceptions on Partnership: Common Themes: Perceptions from semi-structured interviews with teachers, district administration, SOPE, and PETE professor on the progress and attempted partnership yielded three common themes. They are labeled, (a) “Finally some professional development”, (b) “Too much, too soon”, and (c) “The jury is still out”.

Finally, Some Professional Development: The first emerging theme, “Finally some professional development” identifies PD offered to the staff was not only effective but long overdue. The district administrator concurred, “Of course I believe in the importance of PE in schools, but I don’t think teachers have been given high quality and meaningful PD in quite a long time in this area...”. Teachers felt PD was appropriate for the proposed changes to teaching practices. Teacher C (female, Grade level 7 and 8) explained, “The professional development sessions length and amount allowed for discussion...with the PETE professor. New teaching strategies were provided in a hands-on manner, which seemed to be helpful”. Similarly, Teacher A (female, grade level 9-12) felt the PD was aligned with the changes (i.e., instant activities, positive fitness instruction, modification of games, curricular model adoption), “The professional development that we were involved in covered what we needed for the implementation of the changes”.

Researchers also discovered the curriculum session and how it was organized was very influential. Teacher A (female, grade level 9-12) explained, "For the first time I felt as though it was more of a tiered curriculum because the committee was made up of K-12 teachers." Teacher B (male, grade level 9-12) reported, "I am glad I had the chance to be a part of the process of writing the curriculum because it gives firsthand what will be expected to be taught and how it should be taught." He continued to explain, "The feeling of ownership is a big word; working together allowed us to have room to add units we thought would be student friendly and age appropriate." In addition to the teachers' feelings about the curriculum development process, the district administrator shared, "People resist change, always. I think giving teachers a time, place, and space to collaborate and take ownership efforts over the change process is really important." This approach seemed to be favorable and conducive for changing past practices.

Too Much, Too Soon: The second theme, "Too much, too soon" refers to the researchers' discovery that the approach and expected implementation of the new model was not popular. Teachers felt that the SOPE shouldn't have mandated the intro and fitness routines to be immediately implemented after one PD session. Teacher A (female, grade 9-12) emphatically stated, "I think the implementation process was initially difficult because there was a huge turnaround and there was no time for people to talk through this to see if it would work." Teacher A also shared, "it was like a switch was turned on; we were going from A to Z without a chance to breathe." Teacher B (male, grade level 9-12) even explained a better approach, when he described a process to implement the changes, "Start with the instant activities on a daily basis during the months of March and April, then add the fitness segment during May and June, this would have been more practical". Displeasure with the amount of new pedagogy they were expected to implement in a very short amount of time was obvious among the group. Teacher D (female, grade level 2-4) explained,

"The way the changes were expected to be put into place was kind of hard. They just hit us with it and all of a sudden it was decided this was the way it was going to be. It was forced upon more than it needed to be."

The PETE professor agreed,

"It was not fair to throw so much change at them at the end of a school year and expect teachers to welcome it with open arms. There are many veteran teachers on this staff and I would say that one main tribulation was asking them [the teachers] to change their style in a very short period of time."

The SOPE shared, "Change would have been much smoother if it came from the bottom up and not the top down. This change came solely from top-down." He elaborated,

It would have been more meaningful to the teachers if they came to me and suggested we try to change the pedagogy, but conversely, it came directly from the administration. The buy in was not at a high level and this caused some animosity.

The Jury is Still Out: The last theme that emerged, "The jury is still out" explains that the teaching practices expected of the teachers were not fully accepted and adopted yet, and leaving lingering concerns and uncertainty. Teacher A (female, teaches grades 9-12) described her frustrations with the time frame when she stated, "I feel very robotic because the four- part lesson model is all timed out from the instant activity to the closure. I feel like my head is on a swivel, and I am constantly checking my watch to stay on time." Teacher B (male, teaches grades 9-12) agreed with teacher A when he confirmed, "The skill and game play portions of the class period have been significantly decreased in order to fit the instant activity and fitness segment in." Teacher A (female, teaches grades 9-12) explained that even the students were feeling a bit overwhelmed,

“The students also feel that class is a bit chaotic because we go from one activity to another. The students share on a regular basis explaining that they want more time to actually play the games and less time with the meaningless intro activities in the beginning of class.”

On the other hand, some teachers felt their students’ fitness levels were being sacrificed for more skill and game time. Teacher C (female teaches grades 7 and 8) shared, “I do not think my students are getting enough fitness into their daily physical education class due to me having to fit all of the segments of the four- part lesson into every class period.” Speaking to all of the feelings shared in this theme, the administrator recognized, “I realize not all new ideas will work, but, there is worth in trying them and then re-thinking them to make necessary accommodations to meet teacher, student, and program needs.” Teacher A (female teaches grades 9-12) finally shared, “I think it is going to be a year or two before we can say it is successfully working or not.”

Table 2: Students Responses to change in physical education instruction and curriculum

Students	Q1: What do you like most about PE?	%	Q2: What would like to change	%	Q3: Noticeable differences in PE?	%	Q4: One word to describe PE.	%
Senior (n=20)	Playing sports	30%	Unit (i.e., dancing, basketball, pick)	30%	No running days	25%	Positive (happy, fun, excited)	65%
	The teacher	25%	Nothing	15%	Warm-ups (i.e., cooperative games)	20%	Negative (boring, annoyed)	10%
			Beginning activities in class	15%	More fun	20%	Other (active, physical)	25%
Junior (n=22)	With friends and fun games	45%	Pointless games	32%	More fun in beginning of class	32%	Positive (happy, fun, excited)	45%
	Basketball and volleyball units	16%	Stop the dancing units	23%	No more running days	28%	Negative (bored)	18%
					More games	18%	Other (energetic, tired)	32%
Sophomore (n=36)	Variety of activities and sports	64%	Walking around beginning of class	22%	No more running days	47%	Positive (excited, pumped, happy)	39%
	Friends	22%	Improve sport units	14%	Warm-ups/no stretching, games)	25%	Negative (annoyed, bored)	31%
			Warm up too long	11%			Other (active, athletics)	28%
Freshman (n=55)	Activities and sports are fun	40%	More variety of sports & competition	42%	Walking in the beginning	18%	Positive (happy, energetic, good)	60%
	Socializing with friends	20%	No boring activities at beginning	9%	Warm ups	9%	Negative (miserable, annoyed)	15%
	Teacher	11%	Nothing	9%			Other (active, tired, energetic)	25%
8th Grade (n=110)	Games/activities and being active	48%	Less explaining and more play	21%	Timing (change, long instruction)	14%	Positive (excited, happy, fun)	43%
	Sport Units	23%	Nothing	12%	Nothing	10%	Negative (bored, annoyed)	26%
			More time to change	9%	Teacher (different)	8%	Other (tired, energetic, sweaty)	20%
7th Grade (n=102)	Activities and going outside	23%	Nothing	17%	Running and warm ups	22%	Positive (good, happy, energized)	53%
	Games (i.e., tag, capture the flag)	13%	Less running (i.e., pacer test)	17%	No change noticed	14%	Negative (bored, annoyed)	15%
	Friends	10%	More time to change	11%	Less play - more time changing	8%	Other (active, tired, sweaty)	26%
Total (N=345)	Activities, games, and sports	49%	Units offered	11%	Warm ups and beginning activities	17%	Positive (fun, happy, excited)	50%
	Friends	15%	Nothing	10%	No more running days	9%	Negative (annoyed, bored)	20%
	Teacher	3%	Beginning activities	8%	Nothing	7%	Other (active, tired, energetic)	25%

Student Responses: Student (N=345) perceptions were examined and organized based on grade levels. Single responses were removed and only the most common two responses were identified per category (see Table 2). The most common response (48.9%) among students came from “what do you like most about your physical education class”, and revealed “the activities, games, and sports we play are fun”. From the noticeable differences in physical education items, students expressed “warmups and beginning activities” to be most different. The most common response to question 2, “what is one thing you would like to change”, found to be “displeasure of certain units”, with many responses indicating “dance”. Out of all responses 74.2% of students had a positive or content word to describe their physical education experience. There were found to be identified as, “fun”, “excited”, and “happy”. 24.6% of responses were negative, documenting “annoyed”, and “bored” as the most common responses.

At the high school, running days were identified as the biggest change. Warm ups or how the beginning of the class is conducted was another change identified by the students.

4. DISCUSSION

Majority of PETE programs send TCs early and often into PSPE programs for practical field experiences. Those PETE program that do not dedicate efforts in coordinating quality experiences will always struggle to fully develop their TCs. Per Siedentop and Locke (1997), the longevity and success of the profession is dependent upon partnerships between these two programs. Unfortunately, only one successful partnership has been identified to reach systemic success limiting practical understanding in developing a mutually benefitting partnership. Subsequently, in this study, researchers took calculated steps based on previous findings to create a partnership. In the following section, researchers evaluate each step taken and offer suggestions for future attempts as they reflect teacher perceptions and student questionnaire results.

Where is the Trust?

According to Siedentop and Locke (1997), trust is an important first step to any successful partnership. In this study, the PETE professor failed multiple attempts in solidifying a partnering PSPE program possibly due to a lack of trust. We believe without the retiree's assistance coordination would not have been possible. This step paralleled findings by Prusak and colleagues (2010) which has been proven to hold true.

PETE faculty should try to gradually and patiently create trust with the PSPE program and administration. This could start with a casual conversation listening to the PSPE program issues and concerns. If warranted, offer resources or assistance with PD hoping the PSPE will notice a benefit in developing a relationship. Every situation is different and may take weeks, years, or never. Thus, we suggest be patient and continually offer support, serving as an assistant and liaison to current research and best practices.

Holding Teachers Accountable & Teacher Buy-in: Researchers believe the SOPE's accountability both contributed and prevented the progress of the partnership. The SOPE attended all sessions dedicating time and effort in fully understanding the newly trained practices. We believe this assisted in improving his supervising ability and effectiveness. As a result, we found class procedures (i.e., taking attendance, adopted model use, minimal co-teaching, unit length) and field settings significantly improved over the course of the study. This aligned with Pusak and colleagues (2010) findings, that accountability is one key component to a successful partnership. Additionally, Pennington and colleagues (2013), expressed a district coordinator position, was necessary for change. In their findings, researchers describe this person as the 'Gatekeeper', controlling the hiring decisions and ways in which classes are conducted. However, in this study, researchers realized there is a limit to the level of accountability. Asking staff to immediately implement the trained practices which drop-in observations were going to occur, was proven in our emerged theme "Too Much, Too Soon" to be damaging to the partnership evolution. According to TPB (Ajzen, 2010), negative attitudes directly influence teacher intention, and in this study resulted in many staff members not changing their past behavior.

It may be more effective to set a timed-based goal for staff to just try the new practice. Then, later reflecting on the attempt and how to better the implementation or not implement based on student outcomes. We feel mandating the trained practices without sufficient opportunities for the staff to internalize and evaluate can place the staff in an uncomfortable environment, possibly undermining teacher change. Eventually after a trial-and-error period these approaches could possibly be expected.

For teachers to really "buy-in", we found including staff in the development of the new curriculum to be advantageous. Reverberated in our first theme, "Finally some professional development", teachers favored the collaboration with the PETE professor. We also believe future

PD sessions should be more frequent and informal allowing staff to lead conversations or demonstrating of the new activities. Empirical evidence has confirmed this phenomenon documenting peer-led collaboration between teachers or researchers can support development (Armour & Yelling, 2000; Maughan, Teeman, & Wilson, 2012). It is important to note, to be aware of negative talk during these sessions, and shift conversations into how to make things work rather than find every reason why it won't.

Changing Teacher's Practices

As previously explained, some teachers were found not fully implementing the model or teaching procedures. Fortunately, this is not uncommonly found when attempting to change teachers' practices. According to Dowda, Sallis, McKenzie, Rosengard, and Kohl (2005), explain the sustainability of adopted models can be difficult to achieve. Similarly, Kulinna, McCaughtry, Cothran, and Martin (2006) examined the change phenomenon in their study and discovered teachers incorporating the district's curriculum less than half of the time, documenting teacher reluctance to buy into a program and thoughts on the curricula not meeting the needs of the students. After one year of initiating a partnership and changing teacher practices, we found teachers remained unsure on how they feel about the partnership and newly trained practices. This was seen in the third theme, "The Jury is Still Out" as teachers documented struggles with implementing curricula and feelings that students were not receiving enough time to practice skills and play games.

Based on results from student responses, it was apparent teachers at the high school level changed their curriculum. No running days and how the class started were the most common responses to the noticeable changes question. However, some students indicated that they did not like the way the class started, as well as the need to change the type of units being offered. This is critical information, as Guskey (1986) expressed, students play a significant role in changing teacher practices and perceptions. If teachers are witnessing positive student outcomes they are more likely to have favorable views.

Positive perceptions from both the teachers and students is central to a seamless partnership. It is suggested to take carefully constructed steps when attempting to change practices solely towards the PETE's mission. There is a possibility not all approaches and models selected will be fully accepted by all stakeholders. Therefore, it is important to allocate time to evaluate the implementation and curriculum as it evolves. Observe instruction in the school and take note on student actions and feedback. If teachers truly implement the model with a positive approach and students are genuinely displeased, adjustments should be made. For example, if a high school physical education program is entrenched in traditional approaches, one may benefit from offering a more selected curriculum. Offering students with options to select the type of physical education classes they are to engage in, such as choosing between Dance or a Weight Training class taught by a competent instructor. This may increase teacher buy-in and minimize uncertainty. They may even appreciate you for putting them into their most liked area of instruction.

It is important to note for those changing the culture of a PSPE program to be patient and cognizant that any sudden or formidable change will likely elicit some form of resistance (Fullan, 2001). Thus, enjoy the small triumphs and positive steps forward as the partnership will surely not come overnight.

Upcoming Next Steps

The PETE program has yet to receive any benefits from the initial development of this partnership. According to Siedentop and Locke (1997), PETE programs can only fulfill their responsibility in collaboration with good PSPE programs. A good PETE program needs a good PSPE program. Thus, once teachers are properly implementing and matching the PETE model,

only then can TCs be confidently placed resulting in the PETE program profiting. This takes time and may not be accomplished during the first year of the partnership. However, researchers believe the next step of the partnership is to place students, which has been found to increase TCs development (Curtner-Smith, 1996; Stran & Curtner-Smith, 2009), and possibly even aid the development of the partnership.

The PETE program plans to continue to educate and empower all administrators to hold teachers accountable to the newly trained pedagogy, however in a more peer-driven manner. After teachers have had multiple attempts and had opportunities to digest the practices, a remediation loop should be designed and enforced. This could offer more frequent open positions for newly graduated TCs to secure an open position.

The current study was not without limitations. First, there were limited observations during the first-year partnership. Day-to-day teaching practices and continuity of the trained practices cannot be confirmed. However, student data and SOPE interviews reduced ambiguity and contributed to triangulation of the data. Another limitation found in this study is the absence of student baseline data. It is not clear how students felt about the program before the partnership, limiting comparison and generalizing positive effects from students to be directly related to the initiation of the partnership.

5. CONCLUSION

Partnerships between the physical education teacher education program (PETE) and public school physical education (PSPE) programs can no longer be disregarded. As teacher candidates (TC)s continue to serve in PSPE programs during their academic career, PETE professors need to consider creating partnerships to improve placement sites. Based on the current study, practical methods are offered and discussed, reducing uncertainty on how to initiate a partnership. By following similar steps, we may finally put an end to the “systemic gridlock” (Siedentop & Locke, 1997, p.27-28) and increase our current and future teachers’ success.

Further research, should be conducted to confirm documented steps and examine the next stages of the partnership. Researchers plan to evaluate current teacher practices and student physical activity levels. Further emphasis will be on TCs development and the effects the partnership has on TC’s when placed for field experiences compared to TCs who were placed outside of the forged partnership.

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