

*Physical Education Teachers' Perceptions of the Adequacy of University Coursework in Preparation for Teaching.*, By: Hill, Grant, Brodin, Kristie L., Physical Educator, 00318981, Spring2004, Vol. 61, Issue 2

Teaching physical education in K-12 schools is a very challenging profession. Consequently, colleges and universities must provide instruction and experiences that will adequately prepare teachers to make a successful transition into full time teaching. In this study, a sample of K-12 physical educators within the state of Washington were surveyed to determine their undergraduate coursework in physical education, the value of each course in preparing them to teach, and specific areas in which they experienced difficulty during their first year of teaching. Results indicated that most physical education teacher education (PETE) programs consist of similar course requirements. In addition, the respondents' perceptions of the value of the components that were included in these classes generally validate current college and university PETE curriculums. The findings also indicate that dealing with inadequate facilities and equipment, classroom management and discipline, meeting the needs of students in special populations, schedule interruptions, personal fatigue, parental contact, and student assessment are the most significant challenges experienced by first year teachers.

The goal of all physical education teacher education (PETE) programs should be to graduate highly competent students who will become effective teachers. In order to accomplish this task, departments of Physical Education, in accordance with the requirements of State Offices of Public Instruction, have traditionally identified components that should be included in every student's coursework. Specifically, most PETE programs include the following: ( 1 ) required liberal arts courses, ( 2 ) completion of a major in Physical Education which consists of skills and knowledge in sports and fitness activities, scientific foundations, sociocultural and philosophical constructs, and health-related fitness concepts; ( 3 ) pedagogical knowledge including methods of teaching, curriculum, management, discipline, and assessment; ( 4 ) early field experience and observation and opportunity for practice teaching with peers; and ( 5 ) a teaching internship under the supervision of a master teacher who serves in a mentoring role. The goal of all of these requirements is that graduates will be well qualified to teach physical education at the K-12 level (O'Sullivan, 1990).

Unfortunately, it appears as though not all graduates of PETE programs are well prepared to teach when they graduate. Specifically, some are not adept at classroom management, assessment of student performance, and adapting curriculum to limited facilities and equipment or differing student needs. Others simply are unprepared for the physical demands of teaching all day (i.e. fatigue) or able to deal diplomatically with parents. As a result, many who have completed a PETE program have not had a smooth transition from the university to student teaching and have either not entered the teaching profession or have experienced significant difficulties during their early years of teaching (McGaha & Lynn, 2000; Williams & Williamson, 1998). The frequency of this occurrence has led to a search for ways to improve the process of preparing teachers (Carter & Anders, 1996).

#### Challenges for Physical Education Teacher Education Programs

Some have argued that PETE programs have been recently weakened because the development of the disciplinary movement and an expanding exercise, sport, and health-enhancement industry have broadened the required curriculum in order to prepare students for careers other than teaching (Lawson, 1990; O'Sullivan, 1990). Specifically, with the increase of other fields within physical education, including sport management, athletic training, and exercise science and fitness, departmental resources for PETE have been reduced. For example, a study of the physical education programs in 240

universities documented a 50% decrease in courses that addressed performance skills and teaching methods and a corresponding 500% increase in scientific courses over the 29-year period from 1960 to 1989 (Lawson, 1990). In addition, some states, such as Washington, have merged health and physical education in an attempt to elevate fitness and wellness as essential outcomes for K-12 students. The result is that physical education programs are becoming more likely to require such courses as wellness, first aid and safety, and health issues within the major, leaving less curricular time to focus on how to teach traditional physical education.

As the knowledge base for teacher education grows, essential content expands, and more requirements are imposed by certification agencies, accreditation agencies, and administrative units, the portion of time available for professional studies is shrinking. There is simply not enough time (i.e., credit hours) in professional studies to allow students to learn all they need to enter practice (Metzler & Tieerdsma, 1998, p. 478).

There has also been confusion regarding how to best help students in PETE programs develop appropriate pedagogical skills. Specifically, should the primary focus in physical education courses be: ( [1](#) ) to acquire information and skills that are related to the activity or ( [2](#) ) how to best teach the activity (Bain, 1990)? Some teacher preparation programs have attempted to incorporate both approaches by requiring prospective teachers to complete fundamentals of skill/activity courses early in their programs with teaching and curricular strategies occurring during their final year (Strand, 1992). Siedentop (1990), a leading proponent of undergraduate teacher preparation with a stronger emphasis on pedagogy, contends that evidence suggests that failures in teaching derive primarily from a lack of pedagogical skill rather than inadequate subject matter knowledge. In contrast, Hastie and Vlasisavljevic, (1999) and Ball and McDiarmid (1990) state that teachers who enhance their understanding of subject matter develop more elaborate strategies to teach their subject area. In addition, the results of Schempp et al. (1998) support the position that deepening teachers' subject matter knowledge is a documented way to improve teaching since teachers who have demonstrable expertise in a subject matter are more comfortable and enthusiastic in their work. Subject area specialists, according to Schempp et. al. (1998), are also better able to plan lessons that are richer in activities, develop contingency plans that accommodate classroom variations, assess student learning difficulties, and devise remedies to those difficulties. Schempp et al. (1998) conclude by saying that teacher education programs that stress the acquisition of subject matter expertise may enable teachers to become both more effective and enthusiastic. However, it is important to remember that, eventually, prospective teachers will need to assimilate new knowledge into existing instructional skills so that they are equipped not only with the knowledge about movement, sport, and exercise, but with the procedural methods necessary to communicate that knowledge (Amade-Escot, 2000; Walkwitz & Lee, 1992).

### The Importance of Field Experiences

PETE programs have sought to increase the amount of time that students spend in K-12 schools through early field and student teaching experiences (O'Sullivan, 1990). Despite some of the weaknesses relative to the assignments and processes, teachers most often view their student teaching experiences as the most beneficial component in their preparation to teach (Guyton and McIntyre, 1990). The development of a positive and productive working relationship between cooperating teachers and student teachers is the most significant factor in determining successful field experiences (Knowles and Cole, 1996). Other important factors in a successful student teaching experience include relating to, understanding, and developing positive relationships with students. Knowles and Cole (1996) indicate that there is a general consensus among university supervisors that most student teachers who fail are unable to determine and respond to students'

needs and relate to students well enough to engage their interest and participation. Often this is a result of such a high level of preoccupation with their own abilities and planning that the students' needs are neglected.

Based on their research, Rikard and Knight (1997) make the following suggestions for pre-student teaching field experiences: ( 1 ) planned interactions with skilled clinical teachers, ( 2 ) multiple opportunities for school-based field experiences, ( 3 ) multiple opportunities to teach students from various grade levels and in groups of increasing size. Some have argued that physical education in schools and as a teaching discipline is in the midst of a deep crisis and that the lack of appropriate preparation of teachers is a significant contributor to this crisis (Fernandez-Balboa 1997; Livingston, 1996). Although physical educators believe that physical education holds value for our society in general and is vital to our educational system, there remains a lack of public appreciation for the value of physical education (Steinhardt, 1992). If physical education teachers are to establish better professional credibility, colleges and universities must be more effective in providing the educational experiences that will adequately prepare individuals to be successful teachers.

### Need for Study

After consideration of the above discussion of the components of PETE, and in light of the rapid growth in knowledge and the "crisis" that is facing K-12 physical education, a survey of current physical education teachers was deemed necessary. Furthermore, since university teacher education programs in physical education are required by state boards of education to offer comprehensive and relevant curriculum, it was determined that the results from this study would provide a potentially valuable set of reference points for directors of PETE programs. Consequently, a questionnaire was designed to determine the frequency that specific components were included in the undergraduate PETE programs of current physical education teachers, to determine respondent's perceptions of the perceived value of these components in preparing them to teach, and to determine the level of difficulty specific teaching responsibilities presented during the first year of teaching.

### Methods

The questionnaire used in this study included four sections: demographic information, components included in PETE program, perceived value of those components in preparing one to teach, and perceived areas of difficulty during the first year of teaching. A panel of six experts, including a university professor in physical education pedagogy, a graduate student in physical education, and four physical education teachers generated the items on the questionnaire. The questionnaire was field tested with a group of 30 elementary and secondary physical education teachers and then modified for clarity, organization, and content based on feedback from those individuals.

Under the section titled "Undergraduate course work," respondents were asked to identify which components were addressed in their PETE program coursework. In addition, the respondents used the following scale to rate the perceived value of each component in regards to how important it was in preparing them to teach physical education:

1. = no value
2. = little value
3. = undecided
4. = somewhat valuable
5. = very valuable

Respondents were also asked to rate the level of difficulty of various teaching responsibilities during the first year of teaching according to the following scale:

1. = no difficulty
2. = little difficulty
3. = undecided
4. = moderately difficult
5. = extremely difficult

A sample of 350 public and private schools within the state of Washington with enrollments greater than 200 were identified from the Washington Education Directory. Every 6th school in the directory that met the criteria for enrollment was included in the survey. Teachers from the state of Washington were selected for two reasons: 1) The authors were both directors of PETE programs in that state and anticipated that the results would help them to better assess and modify their own programs, 2) Recently the state of Washington adopted curriculum reform which resulted in the creation of a new set of health and fitness knowledges and competencies for K-12 students. The results of this study should be helpful in determining whether current physical education teachers in the State of Washington are adequately prepared to address those competencies in their programs.

Copies of the surveys along with stamped and addressed return envelopes were sent to physical education department heads at each of the identified schools. After two weeks, follow-up letters and another copy of the questionnaire was sent out to each respondent. A total of 132 questionnaires were received for a return rate of 37.7%.

## **Results**

### Demographic information

The average respondent was 41.1 years of age, had 15.1 years of teaching experience, and taught at a school with 510 students. Of the 124 respondents who indicated their gender, 68 (54.8%) were female and 56 (45.2%) were male. Sixty-two (50.8%) of the respondents held a B.A. or B.S. as their highest academic degree while 62 (49.2%) reported that their highest degree was a Masters. The grade levels taught were as follows: 35.2% taught in elementary schools, 22.8% in middle schools, 42.3% in high school, and 54.9% indicated that they were currently teaching at more than one level. 86.3% were currently teaching at public schools and 13.1% at private schools. 97.7% of the respondents indicated that they were currently teaching physical education, 24.2% were also teaching health classes, and 21.1% were also teaching other subjects. Sixty-six and seven tenths percent of the respondents received their initial teaching certificate in the state of Washington while 33.3% received their initial teaching certificate in another state.

### Undergraduate Coursework

The percentages of respondents who reported that specific components were included in their undergraduate courses (from highest to lowest): ( 1 ) student teaching (95.4%), ( 2 ) lesson planning, (94.6%), ( 3 ) knowledge of physiology (94.6%), ( 4 ) teaching methods (93.8%), ( 5 ) knowledge of anatomy 93.1%), ( 6 ) sports skills/knowledge (93.1%), ( 7 ) fitness concepts (93.1%), ( 8 ) motor development (91.5%), ( 9 ) PE curriculum (90.0%), ( 10 ) health concepts (90.0%), ( 11 ) First Aid/CPR (87.7%), ( 12 ) adaptive physical education (88.3%), ( 13 ) classroom/gym management (85.4%), ( 14 ) classroom (gym) organization (83.8%), ( 15 ) historical perspective on PE (80.0%), ( 16 ) fitness testing (78.5%), ( 17 ) assessment of learning (78.1%), ( 18 ) grading practices (74.6%), ( 19 ) communication skills (70.5%), ( 20 ) discipline techniques (66.9%), ( 21 )

sports law (66.2%), ( [22](#)) integration of movement with other subjects (59.2%) (See Table 1).

A T-test indicated that a significantly greater number of respondents who taught at the high school level received instruction in how to conduct fitness testing in their PETE programs ( $x = 4.31$ ) than those who taught at either the waddle or elementary levels ( $x = 3.81$ ) ( $p < .01$ ).

#### Perceived Value of Specific Concepts

The scores on perceived value of components that were addressed in undergraduate physical education coursework in regards to preparing one to teach were ranked (from highest to lowest) using a five-point Likert scale from which responses were compressed into three categories: somewhat or very valuable, little or no value, and undecided. The percentages of respondents who perceived that particular experiences and knowledge were either "somewhat valuable" or "very valuable" were as follows: sports skills/knowledge (93.4%), student teaching (92.7%), First Aid/CPR (92.1%), classroom (gym) organization (89.4%), classroom (gym) management (87.9%), lesson planning (87.6%), physical education curriculum (86.1%), fitness concepts (86.0%), teaching methods (85.2%), motor development (84.2%), knowledge of physiology (83.7%), knowledge of anatomy (83.5%), communication skills (82.3%), discipline techniques (80.9%), health concepts (79.8%), fitness testing (73.3%), assessment of learning (71.6%), adaptive physical education (70.4%), grading practices (66.0%), sports law (51.1%), and historical perspective of physical education (30.5%) (See Table 2).

A T-test revealed that female respondents rated the value of their student teaching experience (mean = 4.83) higher than male respondents (mean = 4.55) ( $p < .01$ ).

#### Difficulties during first year teaching

The scores on the areas of perceived difficulty during first year teaching physical education were ranked (from highest to lowest) using a five-point Likert scale from which responses were compressed into three categories: extremely or moderately difficult, little or no difficulty, and undecided. The percentages of respondents identifying the area as either "extremely difficult" or "moderately difficult" were as follows: facilities/equipment (53.5%), discipline (49.6%), special needs populations (46.0%), schedule interruptions (45.7%), personal fatigue (44.1%), assessment/ grading (41.7%), classroom management (40.5%), parental contact (40.2%), differences in skill level (39.8%), liability concerns (32.3%), motivating students (31.5%), lack of administrative support (26.0%), curriculum selection (21.3%), colleague relationships (16.8%), locker room supervision (16.5%), lesson planning (15.6%), teacher/student relationships (10.9%), and teaching sports skills (7.8%).

A T-test that compared the means of the responses revealed that the teachers from public schools reported greater difficulty with special populations (mean = 3.10) than teachers from private schools (mean = 1.94) ( $p < .01$ ). In comparing the responses of respondents who received their initial certification in the state of Washington and other states, the following significant differences were found ( $p < .01$ ). Out-of-state teachers were more likely to have taken courses that included historical concepts and physical education curriculum, and less likely to have completed courses which addressed how to integrate movement with other subjects. In addition, out-of-state teachers were more likely to experience fatigue (4.38 vs. 3.88) and classroom management difficulties (3.45 vs. 2.69) during their first year of teaching.

#### [Discussion](#)

## Frequency of Specific Components in Undergraduate Courses in Physical Education

In general, the results of this study support the position that PETE programs generally consist of similar components. For example, even integration of movement with other subjects, the least frequently included concept, was addressed in a majority of the respondents' programs. The similarity of content in PETE programs seems to reflect state requirements which college and university teacher education programs must follow for endorsements and teacher certification.

Almost all respondents reported that lesson planning was addressed in their undergraduate coursework. This is not surprising since planning is an integral part of implementing an effective lesson and, consequently, should be addressed to varying degrees in several courses within undergraduate PETE programs. Given the fact that only 15% of the respondents reported moderate or extreme difficulty in lesson planning during the first year of teaching, it appears that PETE programs are generally doing an adequate job of preparing students in this vital area.

Given the current interest in health-related fitness, it is encouraging that fitness concepts were included in the undergraduate courses in physical education for almost all respondents. This result seems to reinforce the importance of fitness as the most important objective in physical education (Hill, Leslie, & Snider; 1991) and is consistent with the health and fitness standards of the Washington State Essential Academic Learning Requirements (Washington State Commission on Student Learning, 1998).

It is very interesting that some of the respondents did not student teach in physical education. A possible explanation may be that some of the respondents received an undergraduate degree in elementary education with an additional endorsement in physical education or later completed an endorsement and were not required to complete a student teaching experience in physical education.

Results of this study indicate that PETE programs may need to assess the level of attention given to management and discipline given the difficulty in these areas that were reported by respondents. Specifically, skill in establishing patterns of desirable behavior and decreasing undesirable behavior are prerequisite to effective instruction. As the results of research by both Bahneman (1996) and Graber (1995) suggest, the instruction in management techniques may be communicated during PETE coursework, but adequate opportunities to practice and develop skills in management and discipline are typically not provided. If these skills are not developed in the PETE educational process, the teacher is placed at a disadvantage when facing a class full of students. PETE programs must give adequate attention to the development of these skills in order to properly equip students to become effective and successful teachers.

Assessment of learning was addressed in 78.1% of the respondents' coursework; however, this means that over one fifth of the teachers surveyed did not receive assessment of learning concepts in their undergraduate program. Content standards and the assessment of learning are currently a major influence in educational reform and of concern especially relative to governing bodies and accrediting agencies (Bennett and Peel, 1994). Teachers and administrators have received a mandate to provide evidence that assessment of learning is occurring. In addition, the results reported in Table 3 indicate that 41.7% of the respondents experienced either moderate or extreme difficulty in the area of assessment responsibilities during their first year of teaching.

Since effective communication is essential for successful teaching, it is of concern that almost 30% of the respondents reported that communication skills were not addressed in their undergraduate PETE programs. These results seem to reinforce the findings of other

researchers (Bahneman, 1996, and Fernandez-Balboa, 1997) who identified a need for more emphasis on the development of communication skills within teacher preparation. This deserves consideration by those establishing curricular requirements within teacher education programs.

Consequently it appears that university programs will need to provide more assessment tools and experiences to better prepare PETE students.

It is interesting that over a third of the respondents received no instruction in sports law. Given the litigious nature of our society, the nature of the teaching and learning activities in physical education, and the percentage of school injuries that take place during physical education classes, sports law should be addressed in all undergraduate physical education programs. It is extremely important to adequately inform PETE students about sports law issues in order to better ensure the safety of their students and reduce the possibility that they will be the targets of lawsuits in the school system in which they are employed. Unfortunately, however, the newly implemented health and fitness teaching endorsements in the state of Washington do not include specific requirements for sport law.

It is unfortunate that over 40% of the respondents received no instruction regarding how to integrate movement into other academic subject areas. Subject integration provides alternate ways to introduce and reinforce concepts. In addition, movement activities that are linked to other subject areas, challenge students to think, are motivating, and promote wholistic learning, particularly for kinesthetic learners (Pangrazi, 2001).

#### Perceived Value of Components in Preparing One to Teach

The high percentage of respondents who rated student teaching as valuable in their preparation to teach is consistent with Knowles and Cole (1996) and Guyton and McIntyre (1990) who have argued that teachers generally acknowledge their student teaching experience as the most beneficial component in their preparation to teach.

Management, sports skills/knowledge, teaching methods, organization, and lesson planning were rated highly in regards to preparation for teaching by over 85% of the respondents. These results concur with Graber (1995), Rink (1993), and Shulman (1987) who have contended that the development of pedagogical skills during the teaching certification program, is central to fostering effective teaching.

Given the litigious nature of our current society, the low rating for the perceived value of sports law concepts is both surprising and a cause for concern. The low rating may be partially related to the quality of instruction that was received rather than the importance of the concepts. If that were to be the case, then PETE programs should consider alternative approaches to presenting sport law concepts, including field based assignments and direct instruction from members of the legal profession.

Historical perspective on physical education ranked the lowest in perceived value by a large margin. This finding is congruent with research by Norback and Wattay (1994) whose results indicated that historical foundations were ranked low among the knowledge domain concepts considered to be important for physical education teachers to perform their jobs competently. PETE professionals should consider the fact that so few respondents perceive historical perspective on physical education as valuable. It appears that either the material needs to be presented in a way that is more relevant to the students and application made to their future teaching, or it should be dropped from the required coursework.

## Areas of difficulty

It is not surprising that teaching sports skills was the least perceived area of difficulty since most PETE programs require teaching majors to complete a comprehensive set of activity courses, as well as methods courses, which provide them instruction regarding how to effectively teach a variety of movement skills. It is also not surprising that most of the respondents reported little or no difficulty in writing lesson plans since most PETE programs provide much practice in lesson plan design and require daily written plans during student teaching.

The results suggest that most respondents were successful in establishing positive relationships with both their students and colleagues during their first year of teaching. This appears to be essential because teaching is primarily a human relations enterprise. These results seem to indicate that the teacher selection process has been successful in identifying those individuals who have the interpersonal skills that enable schools to build a positive building climate. However, it is notable that over 40% of the respondents indicated that they experienced difficulty in dealing with parents during their first year of teaching. This finding may be at least partially related to difficulties with discipline and assessment.

Personal fatigue ranked as a high area of difficulty during the first year of teaching by almost half of the respondents. This is not surprising since the combination of first time preparation for classes, learning the school procedures, developing relationships with colleagues and students, learning all of the new names, being on one's feet all day, and having vigor and enthusiasm for each class session is demanding physically, mentally and emotionally (McGaha and Lynn, 2000). In addition, once a contract is signed a new teacher is often expected to coach one or more sports. This can involve travel and late hours that impinge upon sleep and/or personal time.

Two other categories that were perceived as areas of difficulty by at least 40% of the respondents were discipline and management. Both of these categories could present challenges that are specific to a particular teaching location such as the demographics of the student population, administrative support, budget, and class scheduling. Despite the fact that these two areas are given significant emphasis within most PETE programs, both in the classroom and in field experiences, it is impossible to anticipate every possible situation that may arise on the job as a physical education teacher. Indeed, management and discipline have been identified as common difficulties for first year teachers (Wendt and Bain, 1989; Truog, 1998).

Facilities and equipment was rated as an area of difficulty by over half of the respondents. This is not surprising since curricular offerings can be significantly affected by the lack of both space and unit specific materials, thus limiting both the creativity of the teacher and the skill development of the students. In addition, the new teaching situation may be vastly different from the experience in the college/university methods classes or in the fieldwork or student teaching settings that were part of the undergraduate preparation. Facing these new challenges and making the necessary adjustments can pose a significant difficulty, especially during the first year. A related problem is that, periodically, schedules are interrupted by assemblies and other school programs, so that physical education programs have to modify plans and conduct classes in different locations.

It is interesting that almost half of the respondents (46%) reported that they had initial difficulty working with special needs populations. This finding is not surprising even though almost all of the respondents reported that they have completed related coursework. Specifically, new teachers who are trying to instruct and control an entire

class may struggle to also find time and energy to assist those who need individual attention. A related problem is meeting the needs of students of different skill levels. Specifically, for teachers to provide a successful environment for all students, skill level based groupings should be provided for both advanced and lower skilled students. Splitting students into different level games and activities, however, requires additional work for teachers in regards to assessment, task modification, and supervision.

It is notable that most respondents indicated that they did not experience difficulty in motivating students. In contrast, the literature often presents this as a significant area of challenge (Rikard and Knight, 1997; Graber, 1995). This discrepancy may be partially explained by noting that those teachers who do have significant difficulties motivating students tend to leave the teaching profession within a few years (i.e. the average teaching experience of the respondents in this study was over 15 years).

#### Response rate

A higher response rate than 37.7% was hoped for. There are several possible reasons why the response rate was not higher: ( 1 ) The questionnaires, which included a university logo, may have been perceived as advertising materials and been thrown out without being read, ( 2 ) The surveys, which were addressed to Physical Education Coordinators, may have been misdirected to someone else in the building (e.g. athletic director), ( 3 ) Some of the directors of physical education may not have been certified in physical education and, consequently, felt unqualified to respond, and ( 4 ) non-respondents may simply have been less committed or less interested in professional issues.

#### Limitations

Since the respondents in this survey averaged over 15 years of teaching experience the information may not be reflective of current practices related to PETE. Surveying a representative sample of the physical education teachers within the state of Washington who had graduated within the last five years would probably provide more accurate information about current practices.

It might have also been helpful to have respondents indicate the perceived value of the concepts based on the way in which it was taught or the teaching ability of the professor rather than strictly the value of the concept (i.e. include two separate questions with one being the importance of the material or experience and the other being the effectiveness of presentation or delivery).

#### Conclusions and Recommendations

There is no one prototype that can or should be identified as the ideal model for PETE. The diversity from one institution to another in mission, size, institutional constraints, faculty competence, and the emphasis placed on teacher education requires differences in curriculum structure. However, there are common aspects necessary to develop high quality physical education teachers and these need to be given sufficient attention.

The results of this study suggest the need for continued reform of methods courses within PETE to reflect instruction in best practices in teaching and application to real-world settings (e.g. management, discipline, and assessment). Possible avenues for providing additional learning experiences for PETE students are the use of current K-12 teachers as guest speakers, class field trips, and extensive early field experiences and observation opportunities.

With the increasing societal concern and involvement in fitness, the communication of fitness concepts as well as fitness testing require sufficient emphasis within PETE. In addition, as some states shift from a physical education to a health/fitness emphasis, a more thorough and comprehensive preparation in health issues will be necessary (Washington State Learning Commission, 1998).

Given the importance of the student teaching experience, as supported by this study, and in agreement with Guyton and McIntyre (1990), the matching of student teachers with experienced teachers, who have developed exemplary programs, is critical. Ideally, student teaching should provide an extended opportunity for interaction with a teacher who has strong instructional skills, who can provide accurate feedback to student teachers, and who can model how to establish positive relationships with K-12 students.

In regards to the first year of teaching, school districts should strongly consider implementing a formal mentoring system. Such a system should identify, train, and compensate experienced teachers who have been successful in the classroom and match them with first year teachers in an effort to make the entrance into the teaching profession smoother and less stressful (Wright & Smith, 2000).

Program assessment by students of PETE programs on a regular basis is essential to quality education. Specifically, both graduating seniors and former graduates, who are completing their first year of teaching, should be regularly surveyed in order to provide essential information that may result in PETE program improvements. These assessments should focus on such issues as quality of placement, performance of cooperating teacher and supervisor, relevance of particular courses in preparing one to teach, and the value of specific assignments within the PETE program.

In summary, it is the duty of all PETE professionals to provide appropriate education and support to prospective teachers so that they will have the necessary tools to make a successful transition into full time teaching. Given the unique and essential contributions that high quality physical education programs can make in the lives of K-12 students, the PETE enterprise must be carried out with passion, dedication, and understanding.

**Table 1 Frequency of Components included in Respondents' Undergraduate Coursework in Physical Education**

Legend for Chart:

- A - Concept
- B - n
- C - %

	A	B	C
Student Teaching		124	95.4
Lesson planning		123	94.6
Knowledge of physiology		123	94.6
Teaching methods		122	93.8
Knowledge of anatomy		121	93.1
Sports skills/knowledge		121	93.1
Fitness concepts		121	93.1
Motor development		119	91.5
PE curriculum		117	90.0
Health concepts		117	90.0
Adaptive physical education		113	88.3
First Aid/CPR		114	87.7
Classroom (gym) management		109	85.4

Classroom (gym) organization	109	83.8
Historical perspective on PE	104	80.0
Fitness testing	102	78.5
Assessment of learning	106	78.1
Grading practices	97	74.6
Communication skills	91	70.5
Discipline techniques	87	66.9
Sports law	86	66.9
Integration of movement-(other subjects)	77	59.2

**Table 2 Perceived value of components included in respondents' undergraduate coursework in physical education.**

Legend for Chart:

- A - Concept (n)
- B - Somewhat or very valuable n
- C - Somewhat or very valuable %
- D - undecided n
- E - undecided %
- F - Little or no value n
- G - Little or no value %

	A	B	C	D
		E	F	G
Sports skills/knowledge	113	93.4	6	
	5.0	2	1.7	
Student teaching	115	92.7	8	
	6.5	1	0.8	
First Aid/CPR	105	92.1	3	
	2.6	6	5.3	
Classroom (gym) organization	101	89.4	6	
	5.3	6	5.3	
Classroom (gym) management	102	87.9	7	
	6.0	7	6.0	
Lesson planning	106	87.6	7	
	5.8	8	6.6	
PE curriculum	99	86.1	7	
	6.1	9	7.8	
Fitness concepts	104	86.0	10	
	8.3	7	5.8	
Teaching methods	104	85.2	9	
	7.4	9	7.4	
Motor development	101	84.2	9	
	7.5	10	8.3	
Knowledge of physiology	103	83.7	9	
	7.3	11	8.9	

Knowledge of anatomy	101 6.6	83.5 12	8 9.9
Communication skills	96 7.3	82.3 10	7 10.4
Discipline techniques	72 10.1	80.9 8	9 9.0
Health concepts	95 9.2	79.8 13	11 10.9
Fitness testing	77 16.2	73.3 11	17 10.5
Assessment of learning	78 10.1	71.6 20	11 18.3
Adaptive physical education	81 10.4	70.4 22	12 19.1
Grading practices	68 15.5	66.0 19	16 18.4
Integration of movement/sub.	55 18.6	64.0 15	16 17.4
Sports law	46 22.2	51.1 24	20 26.7
Historical perspective on PE	33 20.0	30.5 52	21 49.5

**Table 3 Respondents' perceived area of difficulty during first year of teaching physical education.**

Legend for Chart:

- A - Area of Difficulty (n)
- B - Yes n
- C - Yes %
- D - Undecided n
- E - Undecided %
- F - No n
- G - No %

	A	B	C	D
		E	F	G
Facilities/equipment (127)		68 7.9	53.5 49	10 38.6
Discipline (127)		63 6.3	49.6 56	8 44.1
Special needs populations		52 11.0	46.0 61	14 48.0
Schedule interruptions (127)		58	45.7	15

	11.8	54	42.5
Personal fatigue	56	44.1	12
	9.5	59	46.5
Assessment/grading (127)	53	41.7	12
	9.5	62	48.9
Classroom management (126)	56	40.5	8
	6.3	67	53.2
Parental contact (127)	51	40.2	20
	15.7	56	44.1
Differences in skill level (128)	61	39.8	14
	10.9	63	49.2
Liability concerns (127)	41	32.3	27
	21.3	59	46.5
Motivating students (127)	40	31.5	4
	3.1	83	65.4
Lack admin. support (127)	33	26.0	11
	8.7	95	65.4
Curriculum selection (127)	27	21.3	15
	11.8	85	66.9
Colleague relationships (125)	21	16.8	12
	9.6	92	73.6
Locker room supervision (97)	16	16.5	16
	16.5	65	67.0
Lesson planning	20	15.6	13
	10.2	95	74.2
Teacher/student relations (128)	14	10.8	6
	4.7	108	84.4
Teaching sport skills (128)	10	7.8	4
	3.1	114	89.1

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