Cooperating Teachers' Beliefs and Teaching Practices

Steven Wright (corresponding author)
Professor, UNH, 124 Main St., Durham, NH 03824
Ph: 603-862-4408 F: 603-862-0154

Michelle Grenier
MichelleGreenier@unh.edu
University of New Hampshire, USA

Abstract

This study examined cooperating teachers (CTs) who work with student teachers engaged in their culminating 20-week teaching placements in local schools. Specifically, the research question pertained to whether the practices and teaching behaviors of CTs were similar to the effective teaching literature that is taught to students in their physical education teacher education (PETE) program. A total of 12 CTs teaching their own (on average three) physical education classes, were observed. Field notes were taken and a stopwatch was used to determine percentages of instruction, management and activity time for each lesson. A face-to-face audio-recorded, semi-structured interview then took place, on-site, after the final lesson observation. Field notes were categorized into themes of instruction, management, discipline, interaction with students, assessment and activity time. The interviews were transcribed within two weeks of completion and the transcripts and field notes were analyzed inductively. Emergent themes were then identified for each field note category (beyond the pre-selected ones) and interview questions asked. On average, the 36 lessons observed resulted in 72% activity time, 23% instruction time and 5% management (organizing groups, transitions, discipline etc.). The results of the data analysis determined that there was synergy between effective teaching literature covered and CTs' teaching behaviors, related to instruction, management, discipline, interaction with students and activity time. Issues related to assessment showed some divergence however.

Keywords: student teachers, effective teaching

Research suggests that effective physical education teacher education (PETE) programs provide frequent opportunities for preservice teachers to teach in local schools, supervised by university personnel, and an experienced, cooperating teacher (O'Sullivan, 2003, Wright & Grenier, 2017). Early field experiences (Behets & Vergauwen, 2006) provide the initial, developmental experiences that lay the groundwork for the culminating, capstone experience. This experience, known as student teaching, teaching practice (practicum), or student internship, has been acknowledged as the most important aspect of undergraduate teacher preparation (for a review, see O'Sullivan, 2003). Teacher socialization research has demonstrated that physical education teachers reported the most meaningful PETE course and/or experience that helped prepare them to teach was the culminating experience (Wright, 2001). There is also a long held belief that preservice teachers' most meaningful learning experiences take place when they are placed in real world, school settings on a day-to-day basis with an experienced teacher (Belton, Woods, Dunning & Meegan, 2010; Wright, 2016).

These culminating experiences typically have a triad of participants that include a student teacher (ST), cooperating teacher (CT), and a university supervisor. Given that the latter is rarely seen out in the placement setting, the vast majority of the supervision of the ST is entrusted to the CT (Belton, et al., 2010). A great deal of research suggests that the role of the CT is therefore critical in the culminating experience (Lund, Gurvitch & Metzler, 2008; O'Sullivan, 2003; Teerdsma, 1998; Wright et al. 2006; Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1981). There are examples in the literature stating that a lack of training of CTs for this critical role is less than ideal. Tannehill and Zakrajek (1988) found that STs' experiences were negatively affected by CTs who were not actively engaged in observing teaching and giving feedback to STs. Rikard and Veal (1996) found that less than 10% of the CTs they studied had any formal preparation for the role. This led to half of the CTs allowing STs to "do it your way" (p. 279) when it came to their teaching and often the STs were not observed when they taught. An overriding theme in this research was that CTs did not know what was expected of them and they felt they lacked the skills to be effective in their role.

Conversely, when CTs were trained to work with adult learners (as opposed to school-aged children) they reported positive feelings about their interactions with their STs (Belton, et al. 2010; Teerdsma, 1998, Wright et al. 2006). As CTs are often referred to as teacher educators, just as PETE faculty are, it is in the best interest of PETE programs and their preservice teachers to have the theory and practice of the classroom be modeled by the CTs in local schools. As Lund, et al. (2008) stated: "In an ideal situation, cooperating teachers reinforce lessons taught in the university" (p. 551). There is evidence, however, that university instruction can be "washed out" by the reality of CT practices (Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1981). A main issue discussed in this paper was the tension between "progressive" teaching at the university and more "traditional" teaching in schools.

While studies have looked at CTs perceptions related to working with STs, only one that we are aware of formally observed CTs teaching on their own. Teerdsma (1998) observed CTs to "check the consistency of teacher statements about teaching in physical education with their actions" (p. 218). The current study, therefore, looks to extend the body of research of CTs by formally observing them teaching to determine how well their teaching practices align with the teachings within our PETE program. CTs were also interviewed for this study following lesson observations to determine their perceptions of their own teaching, as well as being a CT.

Effective teaching

There appears to be agreement in the literature that effective teaching results in student learning. However, all the teaching variables that are required to achieve that result may be necessary, but not sufficient for learning. The concept of effective teaching

in physical education is an elusive one, with no silver bullet yet to be found. However, "the work done in the paradigm of process-product studies has become part of the effective teaching literature in physical education and is used extensively to train teachers and observe training" (Rink, 2013, p. 409). To briefly summarize some effective teaching studies, the more Academic Learning Time - Physical Education (ALT-PE), also known as student motor engaged time at an appropriate level of difficulty (Metzler, 1979), the better. Early studies in the 1970s often showed ALT-PE time of less than 20%. More recently, PETE professionals have been advocating for more than 50%, and often as much as 70% (Mohnsen, 2008). To achieve such high levels of activity, there should be roughly 20% of time be spent in instruction and 10% or less in management (non-instructional activities).

To achieve high levels of activity time, the literature is clear that teachers need to be very efficient with their management time (suggested to be 10% of engaged time, or less). See Metzler (2011), for more detailed descriptions of the strategies mentioned below, which he categorized as preventative and interactive management strategies. One such strategy is to reduce management time is known as "overlapping", which involves a teacher doing more than one thing at a time, such as taking attendance while students are actively engaged in an instant activity. "With-it-ness" (back-to-the-wall strategy) to increase student accountability and decrease having to discipline students is another strategy. A third example is to put protocols and expectations in place that result in short transition times when students move from one activity to another. The stare, proximity and ignoring minor issues are examples of quickly and effectively dealing with a disciplinary issue that does not waste class time.

If ALT-PE is 70% of engaged class time and management is 10%, the third part to this equation is the goal of 20% for instruction time (Mohnsen, 2008). If the instruction percentage is significantly less than this, then the teacher is in danger of having a class look more like recess than physical education. However, there are teaching strategies that can be used that enable instruction to be efficient and effective. It is suggested that each individual episode of instruction should be two minutes or less - the concept being to keep it short and simple (KISS). This belief holds true for demonstrations as well. Checking for student understanding, both after giving instructions and as a closure activity to hold students accountable is recommended. Himberg, Hutchinson and Rousell (2003) suggest the importance of teachers giving a few performance cues to students when asking them to do a task, and to provide feedback - with specific being more effective than general. Building teacher/student relationships via learning names and getting to know students outside of class helps to create a positive learning environment. For more detailed descriptions of these strategies see Himberg and colleagues (2003), and Graham, Holt/Hale and Parker (2013).

The above summary of effective teaching is the context of the content learned within the PETE program studied. This research seeks to examine the teaching practices of the CTs to determine the extent to which there is alignment between the PETE effective teaching literature studied and the modeling of CTs working with STs.

Method

Participants

The participants were experienced physical education teachers who had previously worked as a CT with STs. The research took place during the first author's sabbatical, and none of the participants were engaged with STs at the time of the observations. The sample included eight women and four men, who were all Caucasians. The sample included four elementary, four middle, and four high school teachers. Overall, they were an experienced group, with the average participant teaching for 23 years (with a range from seven to 36 years). They also had, on average, taught and worked with 13 student teachers.

University Support

As a CT working with STs, they were all given a student teaching handbook, which among many other things explained expectations of all three triad members (ST, CT and university supervisor). It also recommended a weekly schedule for how the ST should progress from observing to assisting to autonomous teaching for the eight weeks of elementary and eight weeks of middle or secondary placements. Additionally, it also contained formative assessment instruments to be used while observing a ST lesson, as well as mid and end of placement assessments that were based on state and national beginning teacher standards. Also contained in the handbook were sample systematic observer forms that CTs used while observing STs to help focus their feedback on concepts such as classroom climate, questioning, classroom management, and the amount of activity time versus instruction and management time. There was an expectation that CTs would observe STs on a regular basis and find time to conference with them. CTs were encouraged to engage in a developmental supervision process (Glickman, Gordon & Ross-Gordon, 2009), using a collaborative approach that stresses the importance of ST refection on their own teaching practice. This process was explained in the handbook and all CTs that work with our students were encouraged to enroll in a graduate level supervision course that the first author taught on occasion in the summer. This course addressed how to be an effective CT through a better understanding of developmental supervision (via a collaborative approach) that stresses ST guided reflection (Husu, Toom & Patrikainen, 2008). Discussion and practice on adult learning, "active listening" and the use of case studies that describe a ST teaching episode that participants then practice post-observation conferencing about, are examples of the theory and practice of this course. Time was also spent explaining important topics related to effective teaching (Mohnsen, 2008) that we discuss in our PETE program. The importance of synergy between what STs are learning and practicing in our program, and what they are hearing and observing from CTs in local schools was stressed.

Procedures

During the first phase of this study, 42 CTs who had worked with STs were contacted and invited to complete an online survey to get their perceptions of being a CT, and their perceptions of STs. In total, 22 CTs completed the online survey. All CTs contacted were then invited to allow the first author to come in and observe them teach and be interviewed about being a CT, as well as answering

questions related to their own teaching. Twelve volunteered to be part of the second phase of this study, and all were accepted as participants. This second part is what is being reported in this study. University IRB approval was sought and obtained for this study, which included informed consent from all the participants. Each participant provided the first author with schedules that would work best for them to have him come in for a visit. In each case he observed lessons, had informal conversations before and after classes, and then sat down for an audio-recorded interview.

Data Collection

Two types of data were collected for this study - field notes during lesson observations and semi-structured interviews with each participant. These will be described separately.

Observations. The primary investigator observed from 2-4 lessons (average of 3), for each participant. Classes ranged from 30 minutes for an elementary lesson to 100 minutes for a high school block lesson. All lessons were taught inside in a gymnasium. A single instructor, taught all the lessons, except for two lessons, that were team taught by two individuals. Extensive, descriptive field notes (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006) were taken that included pre-determined categories, as well as general notes that fell outside of the categories, for each lesson. The specific categories included: instruction, management, activity time, discipline, and assessment. These categories were chosen, as they are topics covered in our PETE program as they relate to effective teaching. While taking notes, a stopwatch was used to determine the percent of class time that was spent in instruction, management and activity time. As per ALT-PE coding (Metzler, 1979) activity time was given precedence over the other two if more than one category occurred simultaneously during observations.

Table 1 *Interview Questions*

How many years have you been teaching? All at this school? Roughly how many STs have you had?
Did anything in particular help you prepare to be a CT?
What are your main reasons for working with STs?
What do you see as your main responsibilities as a CT?
How would you describe successful teaching for yourself personally?
STs in an earlier study responded that successful teaching to them had to do with developing quality relationships with students. What do you think about that response?
STs in the earlier study responded that their biggest challenge in teaching was disciplining students. How do you help STs with this issue?
What are your thoughts on assessment?
How do you assess?
Should STs assess when working with you? If so, how?
Any other general comments about being a CT or STs in general?

Interviews. Semi-structured interviews (Patton, 2002) were conducted at each participant's school after observations of their teaching. The interview questions were initially piloted with a CT who was not part of this study. It was determined that the questions were unambiguous and the content was appropriate to ask of a CT. Each participant was given the list of questions at least two weeks before the actual interview, and they were given the opportunity to ask clarifying questions before the interview started. For a list of interview questions, see Table 1.

In each instance a quiet venue was chosen, that was free of distractions or outside influence. The first three questions pertained to demographic information and the rest of the questions were open-ended. When appropriate, additional probing questions were asked, based on the answers given. The questions pertained to perceptions of their preparedness to be a CT, their reasons for working with STs, their perceived responsibilities, and their thoughts on successes and challenges of theirs and their STs' teaching, as well as assessment practices. Interview lengths ranged from 25 to 40 minutes.

Data Analysis

A research assistant transcribed the recorded interviews verbatim, within three weeks of their occurrence. The general category field notes and interview data were analyzed via inductive content analysis, and the pre-determined categories in the field notes by deductive content analysis (Patton, 2002). The processes for both allowed for the "coding" of notes and interview answers through the examination of phrases (i.e. notes that described with-it-ness or overlapping and answers that spoke of the use of rubrics for assessment). Phrases that applied to more than three of the participants were combined into categories (such as the use of authentic assessments). Through the inductive analysis of the general category of field notes, an additional category of "building relationships with students" was created to add to the pre-determined categories.

Trustworthiness of the data was established through the use of member checking and triangulation. As described by Shenton (2004), member checking can be considered "the most important provision that can be made to bolster a [qualitative] study's credibility" (p. 68). In this study member checks took place at two separate times. At first, all participants were given the transcript of their interview and asked if it fairly represented what they said and meant to say. Two participants returned slightly edited transcripts that more accurately reflected how they felt about certain answers they had given. Secondly, the participants were given a draft of this paper to comment on the themes that emerged from the data analysis of the field notes and interview data. There were no suggestions to change any of the content.

Collecting field note data, as well as interview data enabled the strategy of triangulation (Patton, 2002), to be applied to this study. This allowed for cross checking of each participant, to see, for example, if comments made on assessment in the interview had any correlation with what was observed in the lessons. Triangulation also occurs when a wide range of participants are studied. In this study participants from elementary, middle and secondary schools were used. This allowed for "individual viewpoints and experiences to be verified against others" (Shenton, 2004, p. 66)

Credibility was further enhanced because of the experience of the investigators, "which is especially important in qualitative research as it is the person who is the major instrument of data collection and analysis" (Shenton, 2004, p. 68). The authors have over 40 years of combined PETE experience, and vast experience in qualitative research. They have also collaborated on multiple studies that required "frequent debriefing sessions" as well as "peer scrutiny of the research project" (p. 67) to check for biases and help clarify analysis of data, such as interpretation of interview answers that led to categories. In the current study, inter-rater reliability between the two authors was achieved (over 90%) via separate coding and comparison of themes that emerged from samples of field notes and interview transcripts. There was also agreement on the inductive analysis that resulted in the additional theme of "building relationships with students."

Positionality of Researchers

The type of research conducted for the study is known as outsiders in collaboration with insiders (Herr & Anderson, 2015). Although the two authors were outsiders to the schools they entered, they did have extensive knowledge of physical education teachers and CTs, as they had experienced those roles earlier in their careers. Furthermore, the authors knew the 12 subjects of the study and the settings in which they worked were familiar. The first author had visited the eight schools that the middle and high school CTs taught in, on multiple occasions to observe STs. The second author similarly had visited the four schools that the elementary CTs taught in.

Results and Discussion

This section will not only report on results, but will also discuss the results in relationship to effective teaching practices. Reporting on observational field notes will be followed by interview data.

Observations

Content taught. There was a great deal of variety in the content of CT lessons observed. At the elementary level this included: tag, movement, fitness activities, the "muscle" song, scooping skills, Frisbee throwing and catching, cup stacking and students designing their own obstacle course. At the middle school, lessons observed included: line dancing, fitness activities, pickle ball, Quidditch, climbing wall, as well as short and long jump roping. At the high school level, lessons observed included: cooperative games, initiative tasks, climbing wall, fitness activities, drums alive and game of Thrones. STs are exposed to and encouraged to teach using multiple models, including movement education, developmental education, activity-based, fitness, and adventure models (Kelly & Melograno, 2004). All of these models were used in the 36 lessons observed. An interesting note is that not one of the traditional team sports (such as basketball or volleyball) was taught in any lesson observed.

Use of engaged time. As mentioned earlier, a rough estimate or goal regarding total engaged time in a PE lesson is 70% ALT-PE (activity time), 20% instruction and 10% management (or even less would be better). Overall, in the 36 lessons observed, the averages came out to 72% activity time, 23% instruction and 5% management time. The fact that activity time and instruction were even a little higher than recommended and management was lower was very interesting to see. CTs are clearly modeling effective use of the engaged class time as per the literature STs are exposed to in their program. Each area of engaged time will be examined in this section via the theory of effective teaching discussed earlier, and the results of the field notes taken during observation of the CTs' own teaching. As efficient management allows for more instruction and activity time, it will be discussed first in this section.

Management. To achieve a very low level of management time (5%), a teacher would have to do a number of things well to be so efficient. As mentioned earlier, the participants in this study were very experienced, with an average of 23 years of teaching. All CTs engaged in the practice of preparing their facility space before class started. A majority of them engaged in overlapping (Metzler, 2011) as well, such as taking attendance while students were actively engaged in an instant activity and/or setting up cones for a new activity while monitoring student activity. The incidences that required the (negative) disciplining of students were very minimal, in part as all the CTs practiced with-it-ness and the students were very clear of the teachers' expectations. Discipline scenarios, for the most part were handled very quickly and rather seamlessly by teachers using the stare, proximity (moving close to a student), or simply calling out the offending student's name. On two separate occasions, however, an elementary CT had to use the time out technique on a special education student that lasted four minutes. Finally, one high school scenario was handled quickly when a CT had to remove a student from the class, due to the use of inappropriate language. Effective protocols and student responses to quick transitions were evidenced in every class observed (Himberg et al., 2003). At the elementary and middle school, the countdown method was often used to get students to transition in 10 seconds or less. Teachers also exhibited very quick organization when picking teams or partners for activities, usually via pre-selection, invitation or random selections. Overall, the participants did a good job modeling management strategies that resulted in a low level of management time per class.

Instruction. The average lesson observed had 23% instruction time. This suggests that the CTs valued instruction, but did not engage much more than the suggested 20% alluded to earlier. This can be explained in several ways. On average, the first instructional episode for a given class took three minutes (a little longer than we would like to see), but almost all the other instructional episodes took two minutes or less, as did the majority of the demonstrations. Teachers were often effective using students to do demonstrations while they reinforced the teaching cues for the activity. All CTs were observed checking for student understanding before sending them out to do activities. The use of feedback varied depending on the content of the lesson. If it was throwing and catching a Frisbee for example, then a lot of specific feedback was observed. When it was a game such as Quidditch, there was more positive feedback (encouragement) than specific feedback given. All but four of the lessons observed ended with a closure activity that typically reinforced what was learned in the class via teacher questions and student answers, as well as a primer for what the students could expect the next class. As with management, the CTs did a good job of modeling effective instructional strategies that resulted in students knowing what to do while being physically active.

ALT-PE - Activity Time. Students were active for a majority of their class time (72%), but also were observed being on-task. Some things that led to this percentage were the CTs holding their students accountable and the students understanding what they were supposed to be doing. Student wait time was almost non-existent, due to the absence of lines to perform activities. All classes observed included some type of warm-up activity, however cool down activities were rarely observed. As with management and instruction, the CTs' activity time episodes reinforced the messages STs received in their PETE program. As stated earlier, the education of preservice teachers is most effective when CTs model the theory and practice of instruction given at the university level (Lund et al. 2008). The results of the observations suggest that CTs' teaching practices align strongly with the practices discussed within their program.

While there were two more categories (building relationships and assessment) that were in the field notes from the CT observations, reporting and discussion of these will be held off until the interview data are reported.

CT Beliefs

Preparation. When asked in their interviews what helped prepare them for the role as a CT, seven of the 12 mentioned information provided by the PETE program (and many gave more than one reason so the reporting will add up to more than 12). Specifically, six mentioned attending a supervision course they took from the first author in the summer, and two mentioned the student teaching handbook provided for CTs and STs. In fact, one respondent mentioned both. "I think initially what helped me out was reading the handbook. Later I took a course [at the university on PE supervision] and that was very helpful in the summer" (HSCT - high school CT). Four commented that they had quality experiences when they student taught, and therefore try to emulate their former CT now that they are in that role. This concept has been referred to as an "apprenticeship of observation" (Lortie, 1975), and it was found to be the most significant form of preparation of 23 CTs in a study done by Rikard and Veal (1996). Four CTs mentioned that they had gone through the PETE program and therefore it had made it easier for them to work with the STs.

> I think one thing that helped, because I went through the program, is knowing that whoever would come [to student teach] was somewhat on the same page regarding what we both knew, what the philosophy of teaching was . . . I felt comfortable knowing all of that. (MSCT)

Lastly, the two most experienced CTs commented that they just learned how to be a CT as they went along. As one stated: "With age comes experience and hopefully wisdom" (MSCT).

Why work with STs? When asked what their main reasons for working with STs were, 10 of the 12 CTs stated specifically that they learned something new from their STs. Five of the ten commented that it was a win-win situation, as they also felt like they helped their STs as well. An example of this was a MSCT who commented that:

> It keeps me on my toes too. I'm not saying that I am a slacker, but when you have an intern, you have to be on your game all the time. . . And it's cool too because over the last couple of years my interns have come with new ideas. So I feel like it keeps me up-to-date with current practices in P.E. So selfishly it helps me but also I like the idea of being able to help someone become a teacher. I get so excited when I hear that they got a job somewhere, and I know that I was part of that.

Clearly the CTs in the study had open minds to their teaching practices that enabled them to embrace new ideas and practices brought by their STs. Other studies have shown that not only do STs learn from CTs, but CTs also learn from STs (Lund, et al. 2008; Tjeerdsma, 1998; Wang & Ha, 2012, Wright et al. 2006). Two CTs also commented that working with STs energizes them and is an opportunity for them to give back to the profession.

Main responsibilities of a CT. When answering the question pertaining to the CTs' perceptions of what their main responsibilities as a CT were - half stated that it was to mentor or guide their STs.

> A mentor, helping with content and age appropriate developmental skills. [Also, to] be a guide and resource for them when they are struggling, and also being able to pull back and let them struggle and figure it out for themselves sometimes. Because I think that is important, you learn more from that. (MSCT)

Three CTs commented that it was important for STs to be exposed to the greater school community during their student teaching.

> [My main responsibility is] to give the students the opportunity to treat student teaching like their first year [of teaching]. The first year is rough. There are a lot of things going on that you do not learn in a book, that you don't learn in the classroom. The actual teaching is easy. The kids [STs], most of them already can do that. It's a lot of the other things that come into play that they have to learn, like going out into the school and talking to other teachers. We do a lot of integrated teaching and learning in this school, so you have to talk with the other teachers. You have to go to the Special Education Department and plan things out. You have to get the Life Skills teacher involved and mix Health into your content. And I don't think they [STs] are used to doing things like that. (MSCT)

Three other CTs stated that their main responsibility was to be a good role model for their STs. As a middle school CT commented:

> I paint a picture of what quality teaching looks like. I then give the intern an opportunity to teach after they have seen that picture, that model. Hopefully they have a good experience with me and down the road they feel as though this was a good place for them.

Successful teaching. When CTs were asked how they viewed successful (effective) teaching of their own, eight of the 12 participants commented on students "learning" or "having success." Six of the eight related this to the psychomotor domain, and the other two were related to the psychomotor and affective (social) domain. As an ECT put it:

> Success to me overall is that on a day-to-day basis the kids come into the gym ready to learn. . . When I look at the younger kids - I've been doing assessments on motor skills . . . I'm like wow, because when you really look at things over time, you see what they can do and how much they have

achieved.

Two CTs stated that success to them was when students wanted to continue doing an activity outside of class and perhaps in the future. Finally, two other participants found success to be when students were actively participating and enjoying what they were doing. Physical education teachers have at times been criticized for wanting students to be busy, happy and good, but not necessarily concerned about student learning as well (Placek, 1983). It is interesting to note that CTs believe in this concept as well.

Building relationships. A recent study that we conducted examined STs' perceptions of their capstone experiences. When they were asked what successful teaching was for them when they student taught, the most prevalent answer was developing quality relationships with students (Wright & Grenier, 2017). While CTs in this study did not have a ST when they were observed and interviewed, they have had them before and will have them in the future, so this information is relevant. CTs were therefore asked how they felt about these STs' responses. All 12 CTs agreed that building relationships with students was very important - using words such as "huge" and "the number one thing." As a HSCT commented:

> That's great, and it's funny because I assume that you teach them that. That's because they come to us and they want to develop those relationships. You might be the only person during the day that might acknowledge a student. . . You might be the person that helps them get through something that's not going well. On a lesser level, I think students respect you more, and listen to you better. If you're taking time for them, they're likely going to do that for you.

While analyzing field notes taken during CT lesson observations, this category of building relationships was developed. All of the CTs used names of their students extensively in class. They all also spoke to students before and after class, whether in the hallway or walking in or out of the gymnasium. The respect level was evident whenever CTs had to discipline students because the episodes were infrequent and were usually handled with a few seconds. It was clear that the CTs practiced what they preached when it came to the importance of building relationships with students.

Discipline. Although discipline was discussed previously with respect to how CTs handled it within their classes, it was also addressed in the interviews. When STs in the earlier study (mentioned above) were asked what their biggest challenge was when student teaching, the most frequent response was disciplining students (Wright & Grenier, 2017). CTs were told of that response in the interviews and were asked how they helped STs with this issue. The most prevalent answers were modeling how to discipline (five responses) and discussing/reflecting after the teaching observation (five responses). For the former, an ESCT stated that:

> I try to model a lot for them. Whenever I would discipline a kid, they [ST] would come right along with me and listen to everything I said to the student. Instead of just seeing me off talking to a kid, they would come over and actually listen in, and they really learned how to process with a kid.

Regarding the CTs waiting to reflect on disciplinary issues, these participants were referring to STs teaching instead of teaching themselves. A MSCT commented that:

> So I try at first not to step in because I don't want the students to think that I'm the teacher and he's not. I try not to overstep my boundaries. So, unless something unsafe in happening, I just let it happen. What happens a lot of times is they will reflect on it with me after the lesson . . . That's when we talk strategy - what to do for the next time. I feel like that works.

Assessment. CTs were initially asked what they thought about assessing their own students. The majority of participants (10 out of 12) thought doing assessments was important. As one MSCT reflected:

> My thoughts on assessment have changed drastically. When I first started teaching, my whole philosophy was to get the kids to learn as many different things as possible. So, don't spend the time to do assessments . . . But I found that if there was no assessment, most of them had no motivation, they just didn't care, and there was nothing to drive them. So they ended up being wallflowers, off to the side. So then I started doing assessments and I held them accountable . . . Now they are enjoying it because they are actually learning how to do the skills. So now I am a firm believer in doing assessments.

An example of an opposing view to this shows the reality of a lack of curriculum time that impacts this ESCT's view of assessment.

> You know this is something we've talked about in our department and I'm not a huge fan of a lot of assessments. I only get to see my students for 45 minutes a week. So I'd say that most of the assessments that I'd like to do are teacher observations. There are other things that I will do. I don't mind self-assessments related to skill development, for example.

During the interviews, CTs spoke about using many types of assessments: including using rubrics, checklists, grade level outcomes, fitness testing, fitness goals and peer assessment. They also mentioned technology such as videotaping and using iPads, written assessments, checking for understanding, exit slips, observation followed by feedback and self-assessment. The reality during the 36 lessons observed, however, is that all of the CTs used observation (eyeballing) and checking for understanding almost exclusively. One CT was observed using a holistic rubric and one utilized a pre- and post-fitness scoring guide. There is certainly not an expectation that teachers would use an assessment instruments in every lesson they teach, but the collective observation was interesting to note. It is the practice of some of the CTs to use a numerical grading system for each day that is based on a 10-point scale (for at least part of the students' overall grade). Students have points deducted if they are not dressed out properly, are late, and are not actively involved in the class. Teachers who use this system would make notes of grades after each class. The use of authentic assessments, such as analytic rubrics and holistic rubrics at the end of a unit is a focus in the PETE program. For example, PETE students are required to design and implement authentic assessments in their early field experiences as well as their capstone experience. Assessment might be the one area where modeling of CTs may differ (depending on the CT), from what is taught in the program. It is interesting to note, however, that the state in which we reside and teach is going to a competency-based

learning approach for all school districts. This will require teachers in all subject areas to identify and assess learning via standards and outcomes.

CTs were also asked if they felt that STs should be required to assess while they taught their students. Eleven of the 12 felt strongly that yes, STs should be involved in assessing students. An example of this is an ESCT who commented that:

> I feel that it's very important for them to have a positive experience with assessment . . . I had a student teacher implement this wonderful self-reflection at the end of a gymnastics unit for students to reflect on how they felt they did throughout the unit. It was wonderful feedback and the special ed. coordinator of the elementary school, of both schools, asked for a copy of it. She felt it was so effective. So, just having experiences and advocating that we are doing these things in PE classes is really important. Student teachers can go to their future school and bring the same ideas and use them and not have to figure out what they are going to do.

A somewhat dissenting view regarding STs assessing students was this comment by an ESCT.

> I feel it is my job. I'll show them my assessments and we'll do some together. They'll see how I do it, and they'll see how I do my progress reports. They see how I go into 'power school' and look at my kids. For me, when I do 'power school' - I have my assessments and then I do a narrative for each student . . . But I feel that is my job.

As PETE faculty members, the authors are pleased that CTs believe that STs should be doing their own assessments. Two CTs did mention that they want the STs to have the experience designing and implementing assessments, but they do not use them as part of the grade for students, but rather they will use just their assessments.

Conclusion

A major part of this study was to determine if the CTs' modeling was in line with the theory and practical experiences STs received while at the university. Results revealed that the modeling was very similar in areas related to instruction, management, activity time, discipline, and establishing relationships. As an example, on average the CTs spent most of their overall engage time in activity time (72%), followed by instruction (23%) and management (5%). The one area that may not be so related was the CTs' modeling of authentic assessments, although most CTs stated that they do use these types of assessments. The CTs also stated that they believed that their STs should be involved in the assessment process. This is important, as STs are required by their PETE program to develop and implement authentic assessments during their student teaching experiences.

Interview data revealed that a majority of the CTs in this study benefited from information given by the university - whether that was the student teaching handbook or a summer supervision course, as preparation for their role as a CT. Several CTs were also graduates of the PETE program examined and they suggested this helped them in their interactions with their STs, given that they had a strong understanding of the program.

CTs saw their role as being a guide or a mentor, a good role model and someone who could expose their STs to the greater school community. The vast majority of CTs commented that they enjoyed learning new things from their STs, and half commented that they saw their relationship with their ST as a win-win for both parties.

Limitations to the study

This study utilized a rather small sample size of 12 participants, from a compact geographic area of the Northeastern U.S. Therefore, results are not generalizable to other CTs working in different programs across the U.S. and beyond. For all qualitative research studies, there is an inherent concern for researcher biases (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006). This was mitigated by triangulation of data and using multiple, lengthy quotations from participants, so as to allow them to tell large parts of this "story." Peer scrutiny of the research data also helped to check the influence of bias.

Recommendations

This study was an initial attempt to determine CTs actual teaching practices and how well they aligned with effective teaching literature taught in a PETE program. If other PETE faculty are interested in this alignment, it would be helpful to provide CTs with supervisory training that also includes the effective teaching literature delivered and discussed in your program, so they are aware of it. It would also be helpful to recruit CTs who went through your program, as they will have a good understanding of this as well. Finally, it would be helpful to give your STs an opportunity to evaluate their CTs, so that you have an understanding from their perspective of how effective the CTs are. Regarding further research, it would be interesting and valuable to replicate this study by observing and interviewing CTs in other parts of the U.S. and countries around the world. Finally interviewing STs after their capstone experiences to ask specifically what CT practices reinforced what was learned in their PETE programs and what was not - and how they felt about this would be enlightening.

Acknowledgment

As a final note from the primary investigator, it was a pleasure to take some of the time available during my sabbatical to do this research. I have been going into public schools for more than 25 years, observing PETE students in early field experiences and student teaching. In all those years I never had the time to spend with CTs, observing and discussing their own teaching. I highly recommend taking time to do this for those PETE professionals who work with CTs on a regular basis. We are very grateful to CTs. Teacher education programs are not possible without the willingness of CTs to work with STs.

References

Behets, D., & Vergauwen, L. (2006). Learning to teach in the field. In D. Kirk, D. Macdonald, and M. O'Sullivan (Eds.). *The handbook of physical education* (*pp.*407-424). London: Sage Publications.

Belton, S., Woods, C., Dunning, C., & Meegan, S. (2010). The evaluation of a cooperating physical education teachers' programme (COPET). *European Physical Education Review, 16*, 141-154.

Bogdan, R., & Biklen, S. K. (2006). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theories and methods* (5th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Glickman, C. D., Gordon, S. P., & Ross-Gordon, J. M. (2009). *Supervision and instructional leadership: A developmental approach* (8th ed.). Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Graham, G., Holt/Hale, S., & Parker, M. (2013). *Children moving: A reflective approach to teaching physical education* (9th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw Hill.

Herr, K. G. & Anderson, G. L. (2015). The action research dissertation: A guide for students and faculty (2nd ed.). London: Sage.

Himberg, C., Hutchinson, G. E., & Roussell, J. M. (2003). *Teaching secondary physical education: Preparing adolescents to be active for life*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Husu, J., Toom, A., & Patrikainen, S. (2008). Guided reflection as a means to demonstrate and develop student teachers: Reflective competencies. *Reflective Practice, 9*, 37-51.

Kelly, L. E., & Melograno, V. J. (2004). *Developing the physical education curriculum: An achievement-based approach*. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, Inc.

Lortie, D. (1975). Schoo1teacher: *A sociological study*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Lund, J. L., Gurvitch, R., & Metzler, M. W. (2008). Influences on cooperating teachers' adoption of model-based instruction. *Journal of Teaching Physical Education, 27*, 549-570.

Metzler, M. (1979). The measurement of academic learning time in physical education. *Dissertation Abstracts International, 40*. 5365A. (University Microfilms No. 8009314)

Metzler, M. (2011). *Instructional models for physical education* (3rd ed.). Scottsdale, AZ: Holocomb Hathaway Publishers.

Mohnsen, B. S. (2008). *Teaching middle school physical education: A standards-based approach for grades 5-8*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

O'Sullivan, M. (2003). Learning to teach in physical education. In: S. Silverman and C. Ennis (Eds.), *Student learning in physical education* (*pp*. 275-294). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*, (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Placek, J. H. (1983). Conceptions of success in teaching: Busy, happy and good? In: T. Templin and J. Olsen (Eds.), *Teaching in physical education* (pp. 46-56). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Rikard, G. L., & Veal, M. L. (1996). Cooperating teachers: Insights into their preparation, beliefs and practices. *Journal of Teaching Physical Education, 15*, 279-296.

Rink, J. (2013). Measuring teacher effectiveness in physical education. *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport, 84*, 407-418.

Shenton, A. K. (2004). Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects. *Education for Information, 22*, 63-75.

Tannehill, D. L., & Zakrajek, D. (1988). What's happening in supervision of student teachers in secondary physical education. *Journal of Teaching Physical Education, 8*, 1-12.

Tjeerdsma, B. L. (1998). Cooperating teacher perceptions of and experiences in the student teaching practicum. *Journal of Teaching Physical Education, 17*, 214-230.

Wang, L., & Ha, A. (2012). Mentoring in TGfU teaching: Mutual engagement of pre-service teachers, cooperating teachers and university supervisors. *European Physical Education Review, 18*, 47-61.

Wright, S. (2001). The socialization of physical educators in Singapore. *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education, 20*, 207-226.

Wright, S. (2016). Professional socialization issues pertaining to physical education majors. *Journal of Physical Education and Sport, 16*, 57-69.

Wright, S., & Grenier, M. (2017). Physical education majors' perceptions of capstone experiences. *Journal of Physical Education Research, 4*(2), 01-14.

Wright, S., McNeill, M., Tan, S., Tan, C., Fry, J., & Schempp, P. (2006). Participant evaluation of a mentor-training workshop: Implications for faculty development. *The International Council for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, Sport and Dance Journal of Research, 1*(2), 27-34.

Zeichner, K. E., & Tabachnick, N. R. (1981). Are the effects of university teacher education "washed out" by school practice? *Journal of Teacher Education, 32*(3), 7-11. ■