

Physical Education Teacher Candidates' Perceptions of Early Field Experiences

Adolfo Ramos¹ & Seidu Sofo²

^{1&2}Department of Kinesiology, Nutrition & Recreation, Southeast Missouri State University, Cape Girardeau, Missouri, USA

Correspondence: Seidu Sofo, Southeast Missouri State University, Missouri, USA.

Email: ssofo@semo.edu

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Abstract: The study examined the impact of a secondary physical education teaching techniques course on teacher candidates' (PETC) perceptions about their early field experiences. Participants included 33 PETCs (78.79% males and 21.21% females) enrolled in the techniques course. A 5-item open-ended questionnaire served as the main data source. The questionnaire assessed PECTs' perceptions on three components of their teacher education program: PE methods/techniques courses and professional education courses (Block I, Block II, and Block III). In addition, it sought PECTs' suggestions for future Block III teacher candidates. The questionnaire was administered to the PETCs at the beginning and at the end of the semester. Data were analyzed utilizing qualitative content analysis – inductive category development and a deductive category application. The inductive analysis identified eight categories: content knowledge, instructional strategies, planning, self-efficacy, technology, classroom management, assessment, and professionalism. The deductive analysis indicated highest percentage of comments for both pretest (31.61%) and posttest (30.89%) were related to physical education methods/techniques and early experiences, followed by suggestions for future students, 28.73% and 24.39% respectively.

Keywords: Early Field Experiences, Physical Education, Teacher Candidates

1. Introduction

The intended purpose of a physical education teacher education (PETE) program is to prepare prospective teachers to effectively teach in schools (Barney & Pleban, 2006). To achieve this, most teacher education programs provide a wide variety of representations of practice through both coursework, implicitly tied to practice, and field experiences (FE) (Grossman et al., 2009). According to Grossman (2011), “representation of practice” refers to the ways practice (teaching) is made visible to teacher candidates (TCs). For instance, observing, viewing lesson plan, or providing TCs the opportunity to witness the preparation process for teaching. In fact, field experiences are undisputed components of teacher education programs (Guyton & Byrd, 2000). Ayers and Housner (2006), for example, found that field-based teaching experiences were provided by 77% of PETE programs studied.

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Well-supervised FEs can help TCs develop knowledge and teaching skills in content, pedagogy, context, and students (Jenkins, 2014). Thus, FEs are intended to provide authentic opportunities for teacher candidates to develop content and pedagogical knowledge (Darling-Hammond, 2012).

Field experiences consist of courses taken prior to student teaching and provide preservice teachers the opportunity to observe teachers, apply what was learned in the classroom, and practice their teaching skills (Curtner-Smith, 1996). Practice should take place under conditions where teacher candidates can receive feedback about their performance and of their students and should involve different age groups (Siedentop, 1991). Teacher socialization literatures shows that TCs' most meaningful learning experiences occur in the school setting when they are placed on a day-to-day basis with experienced teachers (Wright, 2016). Jaquith (1995) describes two types of field experiences: early and mid-tier. Early field experiences allow PETCs to explore their career opportunities while the mid-tier or middle-level experiences provide opportunities for the development of teaching skills. Thus, by student teaching, TCs should have developed basic skills to become reflective educators (Retallick & Miller, 2010). Often, FEs involve interactions between learners, learner and educator, and learner and environment. It challenges the learner to explore issues of values, relationship, diversity, inclusion, and community (Itin, 1999). Additionally, FEs are focused on providing examples of best practices and pairing students with teachers who are not only excellent teachers, but also excellent role models willing to engage in reflective practice with teacher teachers (Frieberg, 1995; Posner, 2005).

FEs provide teacher candidates the opportunity to interact with their future students, develop appropriate teaching strategies (Knowles & Cole, 1996), and increase in cognition to better prepare them (Cruickshank, 1990). According to Chepyator-Thomson and Liu (2003), well-supervised and teaching-centered experiences could provide preservice teachers with an environment in which they could concentrate on developing actual skills of teaching and other practices in school physical education. However, when teacher candidates are not cognitively prepared to learn from experiences in the field, they sometimes view the field experience as an off-campus activity as opposed to on-the-job training (Aiken & Day, 1999). One reason for lack of preparedness to learn from teacher education is that TCs enter PETE programs with well-established beliefs about teaching and learning (Doolittle et al., 1993; Lortie, 1975, 2012), and some of these beliefs are difficult to change. According to teacher socialization literature, TCs' early school experiences in physical education and school sport shape their perspectives about teaching physical education (Curtner-Smith, 1999; Dodds et al, 1992).

The school context in which TCs do their FE can enhance or inhibit their effectiveness (Stroot & Whipple, 2003), as TCs tend to model the teaching style and practices of the cooperating teacher, even when they contradict the theory and practices of their teacher education program (Moore, 2003). Certain school contexts, such as the marginalization of physical education, can compel beginning teachers to limit their content to what Rovegno (1994) referred to as a "curricular zone of safety" which would allow them to survive professionally. Research shows that FEs are necessary for the construction of teacher knowledge as they provide TCs the opportunity to put theory into practice (Rovegno, 2003).

There is scarcity of research on PETCs' perceptions of how well components of PETE programs prepare them for early field experiences. In one such study (Wright, 2016), physical education majors rated all their undergraduate courses from worthless to worthwhile. The results indicated that courses found most

worthwhile were physical education practicum, team and lifetime sports, and method or techniques courses. Conversely, the TCs found the general education courses to be the least worthwhile. The PETE program that served as the site for the present study is required to meet teacher standards set by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education ([DESE], 2013) and the Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation ([CAEP], 2019), the state and national accreditation agencies respectively. Therefore, a study on how components of PETE programs influence PETCs preparedness for early field experiences is warranted.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine the impact of a physical education teaching techniques course on physical education teacher candidates' (PETC) perceptions about their early field experiences. Field experiences continue to be the foundation in preservice teacher education programs (Hixon & So, 2009) and understanding PETCs' perceptions of their field experience could prove insightful for PETE programs (Bryant, Stillwell, & Nichols, 2013) as they express how they feel about certain situations (Barney & Pleban, 2006). Furthermore, PETCs' perceptions of the components of their teacher education program could serve as feedback for continuous improvement of the program.

1.3 Research Questions

The study attempted to answer the following questions:

1. In what ways would PETCs' perceptions of the components of their teacher education program differ before and after taking a physical education teaching techniques course?
2. What suggestions would PETCs give to future physical education Block III teacher candidates?

2. Method

2.1 Participants and Context

Participants included a purposive criterion sample of 33 PETCs (78.79% males and 21.21% females) enrolled at different times in a physical education teaching techniques course at a regional university in Missouri in the United States. The criterion for inclusion in the study is enrollment in the secondary teaching techniques course. That is, only PETCs who were enrolled in the physical education teaching techniques course were included in the study.

The PE Methods sequence included four courses covering physical education contents: elementary PE methods, middle school PE methods, a rhythms and dance course, and an adapted PE course. Each of these courses had a field experience component, where PETCs were placed in local PK-12 contexts. Block I served as the first set of education courses PETCs enrolled in after admittance to the teacher education program. PETCs go to the field to do observations of teachers in local schools. Block II also focused on general education courses that covered content focusing on the regular classroom. Teacher candidates also learned how to teach literacy in their content areas. PETCs took a course in their content area, techniques of teaching secondary physical education in Block III. Even though the course had a general education code, it covered content in physical education, and was taught by physical education faculty. The block

culminated in a 100 clock-hour field experience. PETCs were required to teach a physical education unit of instruction to students in Grades 7-12 settings.

2.2 Instrument

A 5-item open-ended questionnaire served as the main data source. The questionnaire assessed PETCs' perspectives on four components of their teacher education program: PE methods/techniques courses and professional (general) education courses (Block I, Block II, & Block III). In addition, it sought PETCs' suggestions for future physical education Block III teacher candidates. The questionnaire items included: 1. "How well did your PE methods/technique courses prepare you for the Block III field experience?" 2. How well did your Block I courses prepare you for the Block III field experience? 3. "How well did your Block II courses prepare you for the Block III program field experience?" 4. "How well would [pretest] (or did [posttest]) the Block III coursework (Techniques of Teaching Physical Education) prepare you for the Block III field experience?" 5. "What advice would you give to future physical education Block III teacher candidates?"

2.3 Intervention

A 3-credit hour semester long physical education teaching techniques course served as the intervention. PETCs were concurrently enrolled in a general education course as part of the teacher education program requirement. The coursework component of the PE techniques course consisted of steps in developing a curriculum and approaches; unit and lesson planning; instructional strategies; designing and presenting movement tasks; improving instructional effectiveness; observation techniques and delivery of feedback; reflective teaching; management and discipline; motivation and improving instruction systematically. Each teacher candidate taught five peer teaching sessions. PETCs were assigned to local area schools where they completed 100 clock hours with cooperating teachers at the secondary level.

2.4 Data Collection and Analysis

The Human Subjects Committee of the authors' institution granted approval for the study. The researchers informed the PETCs that their participation in the study was voluntary and that they may refuse participation or withdraw at any time without penalty or prejudice. Additionally, PETCs were informed that their participation or lack thereof would not affect their grade in the techniques course or any other course they were enrolled in at the time of the study. After providing written consent, PETCs completed the questionnaire in the classroom twice, at the beginning (pretest) and at the end (posttest) of the semester. Data were analyzed utilizing qualitative content analysis. The qualitative and quantitative data were analyzed using inductive category development and deductive category application, respectively.

2.4.1 Inductive Category Development

We analyzed the open-ended questions using "emergent" coding, rather than "a priori" coding. As Stemler (2000) noted, emergent coding allowed the authors establish categories after preliminary examination of the qualitative data. Using PETCs as the unit of analysis, we analyzed their (PETCs) responses to one question at a time. First, we analyzed all 33 responses to the first question— "How well did your PE

methods/technique courses prepare you for the Block III program assessments and field experience?”. Then the second question— their perspectives on Block I, then the third question followed by the fourth.

Following Haney et al. (1998), each of the authors independently read and re-read the completed questionnaires to develop preliminary categories. Next, the authors compared notes and reconciled differences in the tentative categories.

2.4.2 Deductive Category Application

Using the definitions for each of the categories that emerged from the Inductive Analysis, the authors independently coded 10 randomly selected completed questionnaires using frequency counts. On attaining an inter-rater agreement of 96.88%, the first author coded 40 (21 pretest and 19 posttest) using frequency counts and percentages. The second author coded the remaining 26 (12 pretest and 14 posttest) questionnaires. The coding was completed over a period of 12 days.

The quantitative data were analyzed by program components and categories using frequencies and percentages. First, the authors determined the total (overall) number and frequency of comments for each program component for both pretest and posttest data. Second, conditional percentages were computed (pre- and posttest) for each of the program components and the seven categories identified by the inductive analysis.

3. Results

3.1 Qualitative data

The purpose of the present study was to examine the impact of a physical education teaching techniques course on teacher candidates' (PETC) perceptions about their early field experiences. The inductive analysis of the pretest data identified eight categories: content knowledge (CK), instructional strategies (INS), planning (PL), self-efficacy (SE), technology (TL), classroom management (CM), Assessment (AS), and professionalism (PL). The posttest analysis identified all the categories in the pretest data except Technology. That is, the posttest analysis identified only seven categories. In this section, we present PETCs' perceptions of four components of their teacher education program and suggestions for future teacher candidates. Teacher candidate identification numbers follow each quote. For example, TC1 will be used to reference a quote by teacher candidate with identification number TC1. Sample supporting quotes for each of the eight categories are presented in Appendix A.

PE Methods. PETCs suggested the PE methods courses were the most helpful in preparing them for the Block III field experience. As one participant noted, “I would say these classes have prepared me very well. As far as lesson & unit planning as well as simulating actual teaching of a variety of activities” [TC27, Pretest]. Another participant stated, “I think they prepared me well but could have been better. Learned a lot of information but never was tested well on if we knew it. I realized this after taking the Praxis” [TC34, Posttest]. Even though PETCs perceived the PE methods prepared them well for the Block III field experience, some suggested that they enrolled in Block III several semesters after they had taken the PE Method courses. For example, TC22 (Posttest) explained, “All these classes [PE methods]

prepared me for Block III. It would have been effective in my opinion if these classes were given right before Block III.”

Block I. The qualitative data showed mixed results regarding the extent to which Block I prepared PETCs for the Block III field experience. Some PETCs felt it “... prepared [them] because Block I eased us into the education program” [TC22, Posttest]. To others, Block I was useful in that it helped them familiarize themselves with the K-12 school environment. TC42 expressed this view in these words, “My Block I helped to simply get me into schools and become comfortable ...” (Posttest). In contrast, some of the PETCs did not perceive Block I to be helpful because it focused on general education rather than PE content, “Not very well. I did not learn much and it had nothing to do with PE” (TC17, Posttest). TC25 expressed a similar view by stating that, “I feel like I could teach a PE class after my PE courses alone. The education courses seem to be more related to classroom teachers” (TC25 Pretest).

Block II. The qualitative data for Block II also revealed mixed results regarding the extent to which it prepared PETCs for the Block III field experience. Some of the PETCs stated it was more helpful than Block I, and that, “Block II helped me a little more than Block I because each day the class was structured and focused on a unit plan” (TC15, Pretest). Some asserted that the block was also helpful in preparing them with technology and literacy. TC6 believed Block II, “... helped a lot with lesson planning and integrating technology and reading into the classroom” (Pretest). TC31 added that, “Block II was not specific [to PE] but helped with classroom management” (Posttest). Other participants, however commented that the block overemphasized writing the TWS and literacy skills. For example, TC24 lamented that, “Block II was all about TWS and literacy” (Pretest). Finally, as physical education specialists, some of the PETCs lamented that Block II courses were not relevant to their content area. This view was illustrated in TC24’s comment, “I did not really feel like my Block 2 courses were relevant for me as a Physical Educator. The field experience was helpful, but my classes [coursework] honestly were not” (Posttest).

Block III. PETCs reported that the Block III coursework prepared them well for the Block III field experience. They felt Block III was “... great and has me feeling prepared for student teaching” (TC31, Posttest). TC24 recounted, “It was a huge help. We were able to gain an understanding of where we stood with the MOPTA and what was going to be expected of us” (Posttest). TC13 added, “... we learned how to provide feedback and help students in learning skills [motor]” (Pretest). TC20’s comment illustrated the frustration many PETCs expressed with the switch from TWS to MOPTA, “When I took Block II courses, we were learning the TWS. If we were still doing the TWS, I would feel fully prepared” (Pretest).

Suggestions for Future TCs. PETCs’ suggestions for future Block III teacher candidates overwhelmingly focused on professionalism. The first suggestion pertained to study skills and strategies.

An excerpt from TC28 read, “To take plenty of notes in ... classes [PE classes], they will help a lot in later years. Also, to keep all of the lesson plans they [PE] do” (Pretest). The second suggestion was for future teacher candidates to have an open mind that would allow them to look at things from many perspectives, “Just be ready to teach in front of people and have an open mind to learning about teaching and student needs” (TC22, Posttest). The third major advice for future TCs was to spread their PE courses so as to take the last set of course with or close to Block III. In TC11’s words, “... advise them to spread their physical

education classes out over the semesters to keep the info fresh in their head. I took most of my classes early and sometimes struggle to remember points from my classes” (TC40, Pretest). PETCs typically enroll in Block III in their last semester prior to student teaching. Furthermore, they are required to pass the Licensure Exam to be eligible for student teaching.

3.1.2 Summary Qualitative Results

The pretest qualitative data identified eight categories, while the posttest data revealed only seven categories. PETCs did not make any comments pertaining to technology post-intervention. PETCs perceived the PE methods and the techniques of teaching physical education as the components that prepared them the most for the Block III field experience. Additionally, all comments on Assessment pertained to a program assessment (MOPTA), PETCs did not address their use of assessment to verify learning among K-12 students.

3.2 Quantitative Data

Table 1 presents data on the total number of PETCs’ comments for each component of their program pre- and posttest. The data show that PETCs made a total of 174 and 123 comments during the pretest and posttest phases of the study respectively. Most of the pretest comments (31.61%) were about PE methods courses, followed by 28.73% about suggestions for future Block III TCs. The pretest data also indicated that the lowest percentage of comments was about Block I (9.76%), followed by Block II (13.79%). Similarly, the highest percentage of posttest comments was in PE Methods courses (30.89%), followed by Suggestion for Future Block III PETCs (24.39%). The lowest percentage of comments post-intervention was in Block I (9.76%), followed by Block II (16.26%).

Table 1: Frequencies and percentages of PETCs’ overall comments about early field experiences

Category	Pretest f/%	Posttest f/%
PE Methods courses	55(31.61)	38(30.89)
Block I	16(9.20)	12(9.76)
Block II	24(13.79)	20(16.26)
Block III	29(16.67)	23(18.70)
Suggestions	50(28.73)	35(24.39)
Total	174(100.00)	123(100.00)

3.2.1 Pretest data

Table 2 presents data on the frequencies and percentages of PETCs’ pretest comments by category and program components. Overall, the highest percentage of comments before the intervention was in the Self-Efficacy (28.16%) category, followed by Content Knowledge (22.41%). Alternatively, the lowest percentage of comments was in Assessment (1.15%), followed by Technology (1.72%).

Data by program components pre-intervention indicated that Suggestions for Future TCs had the highest percentage of comments, followed by Block III (Self-Efficacy— 44.83%). Each of these program components/categories had .00% comments: PE Methods (Assessment), Block I (Assessment), Block II

(Technology; Assessment; Professionalism), Block III (Technology), and Block III (Classroom Management).

Pretest data for Suggestions for Future TCs indicated the highest percentage of the comments focused on Professionalism (46.00%). PETCs did not provide suggestions in Classroom Management and Assessment before the intervention.

Table 2: Frequency and percentages of TCs' pretest comments by category and program components

Category	PE Methods	Block I	Block II	Block III	Suggestions	Total
	f/%	f/%	f/%	f/%	f/%	f/%
Content knowledge	7(12.73)	5(31.25)	8(33.33)	9(31.04)	10(20.00)	39(22.41)
Instructional strategies	12(21.82)	3(18.75)	2(8.33)	3(10.34)	6(12.00)	26(14.94)
Planning	8(14.55)	1(6.25)	1(4.17)	1(3.45)	3(6.00)	14(8.05)
Self-efficacy	19(34.55)	3(18.75)	7(29.17)	13(44.83)	7(14.00)	49(28.16)
Technology	1(1.82)	1(6.25)	0(0.00)	0(0.00)	1(2.00)	3(1.72)
Classroom management	5(9.09)	2(12.50)	4(16.67)	0(0.00)	0(0.00)	11(6.32)
Assessment	0(0.00)	0(0.00)	2(8.33)	0(0.00)	0(0.00)	2(1.15)
Professionalism	3(5.44)	1(6.25)	0(0.00)	3(10.34)	23(46.00)	30(17.25)
Total	55(100.00)	16(100.00)	24(100.00)	29(100.00)	50(100.00)	174(100.00)

3.2.2 Posttest data

Table 3 shows data on the frequencies and percentages of posttest comments by category and program components. Overall, the highest percentage of comments was in the Content Knowledge (24.39%) category, followed by Self-Efficacy (21.95%). Alternatively, the lowest percentage of comments was in Technology (.00%), followed by Planning (6.50%).

Data by program components indicated that Block III had the highest percentage of comments of 38.10% in Self-Efficacy. Each of the following program components/categories had .00% comments: PE Methods (Technology; Assessment), Block I (Instructional Strategies; Assessment; Professionalism), Block II (Technology), and Block III (Planning, Technology, and Classroom Management).

Suggestions for Future PETCs post-intervention had the highest percentage of comments on Professionalism (59.37%), followed by Instructional Strategies (18.75%). In contrast, no suggestions were made pertaining to Planning, Self-Efficacy, Technology, and Classroom Management.

Table 3: Frequency and percentages of TCs' posttest comments by category and program components

Category	PE Methods	Block I	Block II	Block III	Suggestions	Total
	f/%	f/%	f/%	f/%	f/%	f/%
Content knowledge	11(28.95)	3(25.00)	6(30.00)	6(28.56)	4(12.5)	30(24.39)
Instructional strategies	7(18.42)	0(.00)	3(15.00)	1(4.76)	6(18.75)	17(13.82)
Planning	5(13.16)	1(8.34)	2(10.00)	0(.00)	0(.00)	8(6.50)
Self-efficacy	12(31.58)	4(33.33)	3(15.00)	8(38.10)	0(.00)	27(21.95)
Technology	0(.00)	0(.00)	0(.00)	0(.00)	0(.00)	0(.00)
Classroom management	2(5.26)	4(33.33)	3(15.00)	0(.00)	0(.00)	9(7.32)
Assessment	0(.00)	0(.00)	1(5.00)	3(14.29)	3(9.38)	7(5.69)
Professionalism	1(2.63)	0(.00)	2(10.00)	3(14.29)	19(59.37)	25(20.33)
Total	38(100.00)	12(100.00)	20(100.00)	21(100.00)	32(100.00)	123(100.00)

3.2.3 Summary of Quantitative Results

This study examined the impact of a physical education teaching techniques course on teacher candidates' perceptions about their early field experiences. The quantitative data revealed five main findings. First, PETCs made most comments in the PE Methods component, 31.61% and 30.89% of comments for pretest and posttest respectively. Additionally, the data indicated that the PE Methods component was the most helpful in preparing PETCs for the Block III field experience. Second, the highest percentage of comments overall was in Self-Efficacy for pretest and Content Knowledge for posttest. Third, PETCs in this study focused (both pre- and posttest) on self-efficacy, content knowledge, and professionalism. PETCs did not make any comments pertaining to technology after the intervention (posttest). Finally, suggestions for future teacher candidates, both before and after the the intervention, overwhelmingly focused professionalism.

4. Discussion and Conclusions

The present study investigated the impact of a physical education teaching techniques course on teacher candidates' perceptions about their early field experience. We present and discuss the main findings of the study in this section. First, PETCs perceived the PE Methods component to be the most helpful in preparing them for the Block III field experience. This finding is consistent with Wright (2016) who reported that PETCs in his study identified PE courses to be the most worthwhile and general education courses as the least worthwhile. PETCs in the current study were being trained to be specialists in their content (PE) area, it was therefore not surprising that they felt content-specific courses were those that better prepared them for their field experience.

Second, PETCs indicated they developed the appropriate levels of self-efficacy before and after the field experience. Bandura (1997) defines self-efficacy as the belief that an individual can perform a desired behavior resulting in anticipated outcomes. This finding is consistent with that of Gurvitch and Metzler (2009), who reported that a group of physical education preservice teachers demonstrated increased self-

efficacy levels after participating in a field-based practicum experience. Teacher self-efficacy is essential in shaping teacher effectiveness, teacher confidence, and the teacher's ability to impact student learning (Pendergast, Garvis, & Keogh, 2011). Therefore, PETE program faculty should provide mastery experiences such as hands-on teaching experiences known to be the most powerful source contributing to preservice teacher self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986).

Third, PETC perceived themselves to have developed the appropriate levels of content knowledge. Research shows a direct relationship between content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) (Ingersoll et al., 2014; Rovegno, 1992; Tsangaridou, 2002). That is, teachers with strong content knowledge would more likely have strong pedagogical content knowledge. Research, for example, shows that physical education student teachers with low PCK had difficulty designing developmentally appropriate progression and tasks that match learner's needs (Graber, 1995; Rovegno, 1993, 1994, 1998). Shulman (1987) defined PCK as how content is "organized, represented, and adapted to the diverse interests and abilities of learners and presented for instruction" (p. 8). The data suggest that the four components of their PETE program had different effects in helping them develop content knowledge. This finding is consistent with the assertion that teacher knowledge does not develop in a linear fashion, nor do all components develop evenly (Ingersoll et al. (2014).

Fourth, PETCs in the current study perceived professionalism as a very important disposition for teacher candidates. This finding is aligned with the teacher standard of developing effective working relationships with students, parents, school colleagues, and community members (DESE, 2013). Much attention is focused on professionalism as most educators who fail to be successful do so because they do not possess appropriate dispositions (Wasicsko, 2004). Furthermore, having cooperating teachers reinforce professionalism addressed in PETE programs could potentially minimize any negative socialization PETCs may have had within their own K-12 experience (Richards & Templin, 2011).

Finally, PETCs did not mention the use of assessment for tracking K-12 student learning pre- or post-intervention. All the comments they made about assessment pertained to the MOPTA, a program assessment. This finding is consistent with extant literature on assessment in physical education. PETCs' early school experiences influence what they choose to accept or reject during teacher training (Doolittle et al., 1993). Matanin and Collier (2003), for instance, showed how PETCs rejected their teacher education program philosophy on assessment of student learning. Rather, they emphasized participation and effort instead of holding students accountable for learning. Even though assessment can help teachers improve the teaching-learning process by aligning it with state and national content standards for physical education (Lambert, 1999), it is lacking in many physical education classes (Lund, 1993). In addition, some teachers set instructional goals but do not assess them or often assess students based solely on student behavior and participation (Matanin & Tannehill, 1994). Furthermore, Black, Harrison, Lee, Marshall, & William (2004) noted that assessment could serve as a form of feedback to challenge students to think critically.

We draw four main conclusions based on the findings of the current study. First, PETCs in this study perceived the PE Methods courses and the Block III coursework as the most worthwhile in preparing them for their Block III field experience. They indicated they were well prepared in relation to content knowledge, self-efficacy, and professionalism. Second, PETCs did not address their use of assessment to

verify learning among K-12 students. All their comments, both pre- and post-intervention pertained to a program assessment (TWS/MOFTA). Third, PETCs' suggestions for future Block III teacher candidates overwhelmingly revealed professionalism as the most important disposition. Finally, PETCs did not make any comments relating to technology post-intervention.

5. Implications for Physical Education Teacher Education

Findings from the current study have implications for physical education teacher education.

First, PETCs reported that they were well prepared in PE content knowledge. PETEs should do well to help PETCs to transform content knowledge to PCK during field experiences (Rovegno, 1992), and understand that the developmental level of students must match learning tasks (McCaughy & Rovegno, 2003). Second, for PETCs to increase their self-efficacy, PETEs need to provide mastery experiences such as teaching physical education lessons in real K-12 settings, and hands-on and peer teaching experiences. Such experiences are crucial for the development of self-efficacy as they are the most influential source of efficacy (Bandura (1986). According to Tsangaridou (2006), PETCs are challenged by contextual issues during lesson delivery. To attain optimum outcomes, field experiences should occur in multiple settings to allow teacher candidates diverse experiences.

6. Future Research

The current study used open-ended questionnaire as the data source. Future research could use mixed methods- interviews would allow researchers to probe PETCs' responses to understand why they perceive some aspects of their teacher education program to be more worthwhile than others. Also, closed-ended questionnaire items could provide researchers the opportunity to examine specific aspects of PETE program components and categories. Additionally, future research should examine the relationship between PETCs' perceptions of program components and their performance on program assessments. Finally, it would be worthwhile for future researchers to conduct a longitudinal study on PETCs' perceptions of their field experiences. For examples, their perceptions could be examined at the end of each component of their teacher education program.

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APPENDIX A: Categories and Supporting Quotes

Category	Sample Quotes
Content Knowledge	“These classes helped me gain content [PE] knowledge” (TC37, Posttest). “Knowing about the different GLEs [Grade Level Expectations] & standards helps a lot” (TC8, Pretest). “They provided a good base of knowledge for Block III” (TC19, Posttest).
Instructional Strategies	“... big tools in opening up my experiences to new [ways] of teaching” (TC6, Pretest). “Become very familiar with all the teaching styles/strategies that were covered in previous classes” (TC8, Pretest). “Discussed teaching and learning strategies” (TC18, Pretest). “It prepared me with teaching strategies ...” (TC34, Pretest).
Planning	“... having to write lesson plans” (TC12, Pretest). “... know how to write lesson plan” (TC12, Pretest).
Self-Efficacy	“I feel well prepared ...” (TC4, Pretest). “I am well prepared and capable of teaching PE” (TC31, Pretest).
Technology	“The technology classes familiarized me with how to introduce technology into the classroom” (TC 40, Pretest).
Classroom Management	“Focus on classroom management” (TC15, Posttest). “Also, how to work or control students” (TC21, Pretest).
Assessment	“It gave me practice for Block IV MOPTA” (TC21, Posttest). “I am learning a lot of different things to help complete the MOPTA correctly” (TC8, Pretest).
Professionalism	“Listen to your instructors when they tell you something you’ll need in the future” (TC51, Posttest). “Do not wait until the last minute to start on your MOPTA or assignments” (TC35, Posttest). “Don’t skip classes” (TC56, Posttest). “Go to the field every day, participate & listen when you’re evaluated” (TC60, Posttest). “Take advice from your cooperating teachers with a grain of salt if they are not emulating the behaviors and passion you want to have as a teacher” (TC19, Posttest).