Exploring Collegiate Physical Activity Course Instructors' Professional Development and Changes

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Abstract

The effectiveness of teacher professional development focuses on the relationship of teachers' efforts to change and students' responses to the impact of teachers' professional development. The purpose of this study was to examine the process of professional development and Collegiate Physical Activity (PA) Course Instructors' professional development and changes in relation to curricular and instructional reform through the introduction of Siedentop's Sport Education (SE) Model.

A total of six university PA course middle career instructors participated in this study. The qualitative data analysis applied. The open-ended items (e.g. class observations, interviews, and journals) and formal interview data are analyzed using the constant comparative method.

Findings indicated that the SE curriculum model accompanied increased students' class participation, leadership, and excitement. The other finding was the negative aspect of the SE model. Most instructor complained that the lack of students' initial understanding of the SE model concept increased the implementation time at the beginning of the season.

Providing Continuing Professional Development (CPD) opportunities through workshops, outside experts, reading materials, and group discussions are all helpful to varying degrees (Guskey, 1995, 2009). But ultimately, instructors will shape CPD in the forms they wish to pursue, not those that others expect them to follow. We began seeing a bimodal tendency, between enthusiasm on the part of the university physical activity course instructors and concern and strategic compliance.

Key Words: Physical Activity, Sport Education Model, Occupational Socialization, Continuing Professional Development.

1. Introduction

Over the past three decades, scholars have studied socialization processes connected to the development of teachers generally (Lacey, 1985; Zeichner and Gore, 1990) and more specifically, in relation to physical education teachers (Lawson, 1983a, 1986; Schempp & Graber, 1992; Templin & Schempp, 1989). For example, Lawson (1983a, 1983b) defined occupational socialization as "socialization that initially influences persons to enter the field of PE and that later are responsible for their perceptions and actions as teacher educators and teachers" (p.107).

According to change theory, occupational socialization adopts a dialectical perspective. The term, dialectic, was first introduced by the ancient Greek philosopher, Plato, and is "a process involving the confrontation of contending propositions that ultimately resolve into a synthesis of perspectives and actions of a new and unique design" (Schempp & Graber, 1992, p. 330). 'As the dialectical perspective relates to socialization, when the teacher assumes the lead role in determining which social practices will be adopted and which will be rejected – "a contest of social thesis against individual antithesis" - the process is dialectical (Schempp & Graber, 1992, p. 331). A teacher may select from three possible social strategies in responding to a situation or to socializing agents. Lacey (1977) described these three strategies, which have been reinforced in previous research (Zeichner & Gore, 1990): Strategic Compliance, Internalized Adjustment, and Situational Redefinition.

1.1. Occupational Socialization Theory

Occupational socialization theory is one of the primary theoretical frameworks that helps researchers in understanding teachers' professional development. Templin and Schempp's (1989) book, Socialization into Physical Education: Learning to Teach, has been instrumental in advancing the understanding of how beginning physical educators are socialized into the profession. In this book, Templin and Schempp categorized three phases of socialization: recruitment into teaching, formal professional preparation, and on-the-job socialization. Templin and Schempp (1989) advocated occupational socialization theory (Lawson, 1983a, 1983b), which fits well with their model for understanding the socialization process. Generally, occupational socialization as defined by Lawson (1986) means "All kinds of socialization that initially influence persons to enter the field of physical education and later are responsible for their perceptions and actions as teacher educators and teachers" (p. 107). Within occupational socialization theory, Lawson (1986) also identified five subcategories of socialization: societal, sport, professional, organizational, and bureaucratic. More recently, Stroot and Ko (2006) pointed out that organizational socialization is the subcategory that has been most utilized in socialization research, not only by beginning teachers but also by late career teachers in physical education.

1.2. Impact of professional development on physical education teachers

Research on in-service teacher education including qualities of teacher educators has provided meaningful suggestions on innovating physical education teacher education programs. Bechtel and O'Sullivan (2006) reported outcomes from the professional development project. The physical education for progress grant allows researchers to develop in-service teacher education programs to provide a cohort of teachers with opportunities for professional development, including improvement of their knowledge, skills, and dispositions. The main purpose of teachers' professional development is to help them increase students' physical activity levels. To accomplish this goal, teachers are trained to design curricular programs and apply them to their lessons in order to encourage active student learning in physical education classes. Also, teachers can purchase fitness equipment and professional resources including books, journals, and applicable technologies for their teaching.

O'Sullivan and Deglau (2006) identified three trends in research on professional development in physical education. The first trend focuses on the situational components of the teachers' culture, politics of the schools, instructional support, and workplace conditions. The second trend focuses on teacher beliefs and perspectives on curricular change in physical education. And the third trend focuses on the effectiveness of teachers' professional development. The categorization of previous research indicates how researchers have investigated the process of physical education teachers' professional development. Based on these three research trends, researchers' views have focused on both physical education teachers' efforts and external supports for teacher professional development.

According to the findings of previous research studies, physical education teachers have low levels of expectation regarding the opportunity for professional development since their teaching conditions have not been subject to change and there has been little opportunity for professional development (Armour & Yelling, 2007; Deglau, et al., 2006; Ward & O'Sullivan, 2006). However, teacher learning experiences should also include teachers' attempts to collaborate and learn together informally and in communities of practice (Armour & Yelling, 2007). O'Sullivan and Deglau (2006) found communities of practice to be one of the most influential factors in promoting and sustaining the effects of professional development through a PEP Grant. The authors explained, "The innovative curricular programs introduced to the community required teacher participation, input, products, and implementation. It was through these activities that most of the teachers began to align their practice and discourses with the goals of the PEP program" (O'Sullivan & Deglau, 2006, p. 394).

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The effectiveness of teacher professional development focuses on the relationship of teachers' efforts to change and students' responses to the impact of teachers' professional development. Through assessing visible changes in student's reactions to new experiences as a result of teachers' professional development in physical education settings, researchers can measure both positive and negative effects. Finally, professional development should not exist in a vacuum. Rather, it should be structured to build on teachers' prior experiences as well as direct them toward desirable outcomes. In writing, The Principle of Continuing of Experience, Dewey (1958) hypothesized: "Every experience both takes up something from those which have gone before and modifies in some way the quality of those which come after" (p.7). Therefore, professional learning experiences should be structured in such a way that they progressively lead toward a desired outcome, each subsequent piece building upon those which came before it.

The purpose of this study was to examine the process of professional development and Collegiate Physical Activity Course Instructors' professional development and changes in relation to curricular and instructional reform through the introduction of Siedentop's Sport Education (SE) Model.

2. Methodology

A total of six university Physical Activity (PA) course middle career instructors, four female instructors and two male instructors in the United State eastern region University participated in this study. Four of the instructors were in the middle career (over 10 years) and two others had under 10 years of experience of teaching in collegiate PA course.

2.1. Participants

The sample for this study was four female and two male PA instructors who taught in collegiate activity course from fall 2017 through spring 2018.

Female instructor A has been a Health and PA instructor at collegiate level for 6 years. She also had 5 years of high school teaching experience. She had a bachelor's and a master's degree and got her first teaching job in 2003 at the University. She was a basketball coaching experience and swimming coach the university swimming team now.

Female instructor B has been a PA and Health instructor at collegiate level for over 13 years. She had master's degree. She taught only PA courses at the beginning because the University did not offer Health classes, but now she is teaching Health courses as well.

Female instructor C has been a PA instructor at collegiate level of her 15 years of total teaching experience. She also earned a bachelor's and Master's. Now she is teaching Basketball and volleyball courses.

Female instructor D has been a PA instructor at university for only three years and this was her first teaching job. She also earned a bachelor's and Master's. She had a degree in PE as well as a minor in Aquatics and Adapted PE, but she does not use either of these minors in her current teaching.

Male instructor A has been a PA instructor at university level for 7 years of his 17 years of total teaching experience. He graduated in 1998, then earned a school administrative degree in 2000. He was at high school for 10 years experiences teaching, administrator, and coaching. Now he is teaching soccer and basketball, and he is coaching basketball.

Male instructor B has been a PA instructor at collegiate level for 9 years. He earned his bachelor's and master's degrees. Now he is teaching badminton and tennis, and he is coaching tennis.

2.2. Sport Education model

Siedentop (1982) introduced the Sport Education (SE) model, which could be viewed as a subject matter of physical education only if this situation were remedied and only if students' experience of sport in the context of physical education were both educationally rich and contextualized within their understanding of contemporary sport culture. To achieve this aim, Siedentop (1982, 1994) proposed a curriculum and instructional model that simulated key contextual features of authentic sport and adopted an instructional structure where students gradually assume greater responsibility for learning within a range of student-centered learning strategies. In other words, beyond the role of player, students take on various roles within this model such as coach, captain, official, scorekeeper, etc.

Basically, the model emulates an interscholastic athletic context via a season versus unit approach within physical education and offers students a different avenue to grow physically, cognitively, and emotionally. SE model (Siedentop, 1994; Siedentop, Hastie, & van der Mars, 2004, 2011) is a curriculum and instructional model for physical education that aims to develop pupils as "competent, literate, and enthusiastic sportpeople" (Siedentop, 1994, p4). SE is an instructional model that seeks to provide a more authentic sport experience by including 6 major features: (1) seasons, (2) team affiliation, (3) formal competition, (4) record keeping, (5) a culminating event, and (6) festivity. Within a season of Sport Education, students are grouped in a single team for the entire teaching unit (in this case for the entire duration of the course/ semester), compete in a formalized championship that includes all stages (team practice, preseason, season and postseason) and the festivity of sportive events (flags, uniforms, mascots), having their game performance tracked in statistics, and terminating their experience in a culminating event that includes awards that celebrates their performance and learning progression (Siedentop, Hastie, & der Mars, 2011).

Generally, the previous SE studies are designed and conducted on secondary level students, PETE program, and pre-service and in-service teachers in Physical Education major. Many Physical Education educators and scholars have come to realize the benefits of the SE model and a number of studies on the SE model have been conducted in different settings and countries, such as Australia (Alexander, Taggart, & Luckman, 1998; Alexander, Taggart, & Thorpe, 1996), New Zealand (Grant, 1992), the United States (Hastie, 1998, 2000), the United Kingdom (Kinchin, Quill, & Clarke, 2002; Wallhead & Ntoumanis, 2004), South Korea (Kim, Penney, Cho, & Choi, 2006) and Russia (Sinelnikov & Hastie, 2008).

2.3. Sport Education Model Workshop

The purpose of the SE model workshop was to provide PA instructors who were unfamiliar with SE model with training in use of the model and implementation of the model. At the beginning of each semester, researchers were provided with a bound set of printed materials about the benefits and the main features of the model, as well as detailed explanations about the SE model and application of this model. The SE model was introduced to the students on the workshop, clarifying how each of the six components (season, team affiliation, competition, record keeping, culminating event, and festivity) related to the learning expectations and how it affected their participation in class and worksheets and assignments.

During the workshop period, the researcher also introduced the four officiating roles (coach, referee, record keepers, and manager) that instructors would have to perform while they were not playing the game. The printed materials were taken from the latest revision of the *Complete Guide to Sport Education* (Siedentop et al., 2004) and consisted of several articles and book chapters that describe the SE model in detail (Bennet, & Hastie, 1997; Grant, Sharp, & Siedentop, 1992; Hastie, 1998; Siedentop, 1994, 2004, 2011).

2.4. Date Collection

The open-ended items (e.g. class observations and informal interviews) and formal interview data are analyzed using the constant comparative method. The challenge is to reduce the data, identify emerging themes, and extract the essence of what the data reveal (Patton, 2002).

All formal interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim, typed into MS-Word, labeled by course and instructors' name and date, and categorized by theme. The other qualitative data (informal interviews and observation notes) were typed into MS Word. Themes are defined as units derived from patterns such as "conversation topics, vocabulary, recurring activities, meanings, feelings, or folk sayings and proverbs" (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984, p.131). The data analysis was ongoing during the investigation and then continued after the SE seasons were over.

2.5. Class Observation

The researcher conducted classroom observations of the all six instructors' classes. After the instructors were introduced to the new curricular models being focused upon (Sport Education), they were observed in the each instructors courses as they implemented the models through instructional units. Four formal and two to three informal class observations were conducted while the instructors were implementing their roles. The observation guide lists elements specific to each model that the researcher should look for and take notes on concerning the instructors' behavior, class procedure, and instruction.

2.6. Trustworthiness

Researcher used inductive analysis, and trustworthiness (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) was supported through member checks and triangulation of various data sources. Peer debriefing is another useful technique for establishing credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Periodic peer debriefing ensures that the interview transcripts and observation notes describe the responses accurately.

3. Results

The instructors thought that the PA program at University was of high quality. However, the facility limitations prevented the teachers from offering a variety of activities. The instructors were also concerned about the limited gym space and relatively large class sizes. However, the university did have two gyms for physical education in addition to indoor facilities

All PA instructors stated that they know well about the national and state standards. The instructors thought they received adequate support from the program coordinator and department chair and were confident that the PA program would continue to receive support in the future. Although the all instructor attended full day workshop and received a complete SE curriculum package, two mid-career male instructors were still unable to demonstrate a clear understanding of the model. Furthermore, they insisted that they had previously implemented SE in their PA classes. At the beginning of the SE season, the teachers were confident that the curriculum change would be successful.

<u>Female instructor A</u>: She was receptive to curriculum change. She stated that the modified curriculum and new fitness room could make students feel comfortable and she could help them with the new curriculum and the new fitness room. She wanted to provided new experiences to help them feel fit, and perhaps learn about what was going on in their lives. She was also looking forward to the next year to find some different options because the school had changed and the department had changed a lot over the years.

"We will tell you the same thing, we try all different kinds of things. And right now we kind of like this every third day doing it, whereas before it was two week units, so then it was three week units and then it was just all fitness within your -- so we are open to change."

The SE model was much different than the curriculum being used at University PA course to the workshop. She, as the most experienced instructor, took a leading role in implementing the new version of SE. She thought that different roles and responsibilities (e.g. team-leader, coach, trainer, or manager.) were good for students. She said that SE helps students work on many skills and become involved in cooperative learning.

"I think it really gets the kids excited, and just how they would cooperatively sit down and talk and try to figure out who can do what and who should we get at this position and just listening to them reason."

She said that the only thing that really troubled her was that some of the students that even she had difficulty dealing with expected their coach and players to keep them in line. She thought that this was a problem just with the troubled students, who were always difficult to handle, and it was hard to find a way to treat them respectfully. *Female Instructor B:* She did not have much knowledge of the SE model. She had just read a few pages of SE model materials which the researcher had provided. She said she was not familiar with the model; she was just curious as to how the model might tie into her curriculum: "I may already do some of that stuff. It's just I don't know a particular name. Like what I'm seeing with that Sport Education. I see that and I really agree with it, and I see a lot of things that I already do. And again I'm pretty adaptable with things, so." But she did believe that the SE model would enhance her PA courses.

She said that the priority factor for the SE curriculum was having the students learn leadership through this curriculum model. As she explained, "For the students, I think that they can work at their own level. I think they get a lot more touches. So there is a lot more activity. I think that once it's organized, it's easy to run. So I think that for instance, I was sick two days and a sub could come in and the kids just went ahead and did their own thing." She stated that the students made their own choices through this curriculum model. As she said, "Students did what was expected of them which I think really lends itself to really helping to build kids' self-esteem and to help build their character which is what sport should be all about, and what school should be all about is building their character and helping them to become responsible citizens. And to take responsibility for their group."

As to disadvantages with the SE model, she stated, "I think that for some people, it's hard to let go of some of the control. For me, it's not a problem. Yes. I had to do some learning and some readjusting too but I really like the model."

<u>Female instructor C:</u> She said that the school could improve. She said "my course has been rotating – we always used to do two or three week blocks, and then when I saw what we were doing facility-wise I came up with this brainstorm." Because the university PA program had a fitness room now, she expected the PA program to apply a new model, then the PA program could change for the better. She also expected students to apply the new model:

"The students like soccer course, to play two or three straight weeks of soccer games, that kid just drives you crazy by the end of the time. "Play soccer again?" Now it's just every third time they're with us."

But, she worried about the students' hesitation about the new curriculum model being applied in courses because the students were used to a certain PA class procedure; when they faced a new curriculum model, they would become uneasy. However, she expected it all to work well and that the students would adapt to the new curriculum model soon.

She said that the main benefit of the SE curriculum model was students taking over the leadership role and students' actual involvement. As she stated, "The kids taking over the refereeing and when I would ref, they would constantly, okay, be whiners about, you know."

But she criticized the SE curriculum model because it was very time-consuming as to the organization needed to implement it. As she stated, "The kids doing duty team. To me you are getting zero exercise. They are getting knowledge of the game but they are getting zero exercise during that 15 minute block but you know, you know I don't know if that's awful. But it is less exercise there. But also the kids playing three on three are getting more. I don't think PA classes is going to credibly increase our fitness levels."

<u>Female instructor D</u>: Our research team provided a SE curriculum model packet and materials to enhance the PA instructors' professional development however, she stated, "The Sport Ed, I did – I touched on a little bit at state level. It wasn't like it was an entire class. It was just like I think a week and a half of trying different models out." She supposed that she would only be involved in a small portion of this project because she was just a beginning career teacher. She also worried about the tight schedule and the students' hesitation to experience a new curriculum model. She said that the first benefit of the SE curriculum model was the students' involvement in class, and the second benefit was that it really helped teachers in their work.

<u>Male instructor A:</u> He explained that the university PA had a limited curriculum such as in team sports (e.g. football, soccer, and football), but not individual sports. He also was concerned about the lack of facilities, as was *Female instructor D*. He stated, "Now we don't have indoor tennis court and indoor track. So our curriculum was flag football, soccer, softball, tennis till we build a new gym." He showed a lot of confidence in the reform procedure. He was not worried about the new curriculum project, and he promised us that he would have active participation and would support this project. He mentioned that one advantage of the SE model was students' ownership through the class. He also suggested using another name for the team name than a country name. However, this was a very basic suggestion and the research team felt that he was not involved with the SE curriculum model and did not understand it well.

He stated that the SE curriculum model was a student ownership curriculum model, and that instructor teaching would interrupt student learning. He insisted that students have to dominate their classroom and program. However, this was his misconception of the SE curriculum model, which he did not seem to fully understand

<u>Male Instructor B:</u> When researcher asked about the new SE model, he answered, "I'm going to ask you a question with - how is that different, sports education? I'm not for sure what that is." Paul indicated in his response that he and his colleagues already did the SE curriculum.

"We've done that with our volleyball session where we get everybody on a team. We've got 12 teams, and know their names and all the big 10 things. That gives us 12 teams. And the stats are taken and stuff like that. So, what do I think about that? It's good. I don't know if 80 percent are about it, maybe 20 percent do. I don't think it's a big deal to them like it used to be. School spirit, ownership at a school this size is not what it used to be...."

He stated he would like to use this model in his class and he did not see any specific negative aspects to the SE curriculum model. "I don't see really too many cons as of yet. I mean we're just new and experience, new with this stuff. I haven't seen a whole lot of different problems." He also stated that the new SE curriculum model was not much different from what he and his colleagues had done in the past. "I said it really hasn't changed a whole lot from what we've been used to; I don't know if it changed it, I think it's in -- I think the word I'm looking for is it has an enhanced it a little bit." However, this was not true.

All of the instructors concurred that the SE model workshop provided new ideas and improved their pedagogical knowledge. All of the instructor recognized the benefit of the SE curriculum model (i.e. students' responsibility, leadership, and actual involvement), but they agreed that implementing the new model took too much time at the beginning of the season.

4. Discussion

Siedentop (1982) posited the belief that sport could be viewed as a subject matter of physical education. His belief was, however, tempered by his concerns regarding many contemporary pedagogical approaches to the teaching of sport in physical education and their presentation of content that he believed was often deemed by students to be "dull and uninspiring" (Siedentop, 1987, p.80). He suggested that the reason for the lack of appeal of many of these games-based lessons was due to the skills of the game being taught in isolation from the context within which the sport was defined. In other words, the students were experiencing sport-based activities within physical education that were decontextualized from the associated sport culture the students understood.

While many of the instructor claimed that they already "did" sport education, it certainly was not the model designed by Siedentop. A full-day workshop on SE model was then conducted one of the developers of the model. Subsequently, instructor at each physical activity courses conducted a ten week season of physical activity courses using the SE. model. Researcher assisted in the development of materials and instructional approaches to varying degrees at each instructor and observe the implementation of the model. As preparation and initial implementation unfolded in the ten week season of PA classes, the instructor began to understand that their version of sport education was very different from the new SE model.

The researcher was satisfied to a point that the instructor implemented the SE model in some hybrid form. The female instructors enthusiastically developed materials and implemented the model in its pure form, while the male instructor opted to implement certain elements most suited to their students and importantly, to their own comfort levels. While this model was clearly different from what they had implemented in the past, these male instructor still were not initially convinced. As one male instructor stated: "Well, it's not actually that much different from what we did in volleyball before. We had fitness and scorekeepers, and the participants - only fair play points [are different]."

The results indicated that there were two significant findings about the new SE curriculum model. The first finding was that every instructor recognized the positive aspects of the SE model: the pressure the students applied to each other to attend class, the increased levels of student participation, the students' improved social behavior and leadership, and the students' enjoyment of the unit. This finding was supported by Carlson and Hastie (1997), who stated that the Sport Education model changed the way students socialized in class. This finding indicated that the SE curriculum model accompanied increased students' class participation, leadership, and excitement. The other finding was the negative aspect of the SE model. Most instructor complained that the lack of students' initial understanding of the SE model concept increased the implementation time at the beginning of the season.

Entering the new environment is quite challenging for neophyte instructors, and it is difficult for them to maintain their passion and the excitement instilled through their professional socialization in the face of a program climate that often requires conforming to the status quo. In reaction to this, Curtner-Smith (2001) wrote, "Pedagogical practices and perspectives learned during PETE which are incompatible with a school's culture are often 'washed out" (p. 82).

Since university PETE programs emphasize some of the core values that the mid career instructors already knew about for their physical education programs, they felt they had learned this physical education concept years before, so it was not surprising that they accepted it (Curtner-Smith, 1999; Schempp, 1989). However, what might

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be of more interest is that the mid-career instructors showed strong or even excessively strong confidence in their professional development.

In addition, they rarely felt negative feelings about the change and professional development. However, this was not really true. Their core thinking showed that they were very worried about the change and professional socialization. At the end of the interviews, most late career teachers said something like: "We did not change much." Thus, mid-career PA instructor may be less open to the ideas stressed during the professional socialization process. While the professional development literature (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Guskey & Yoon, 2009) suggests that it is important for teachers at any career stage to learn the skills, knowledge, and dispositions that allows them to be effective teachers, it is clear that this CPD effort was might with mixed results.

Instructors will define their own pathway to curriculum reform. Providing CPD opportunities through workshops, outside experts, reading materials, and group discussions are all helpful to varying degrees (Guskey, 1995, 2009). But ultimately, instructors will shape CPD in the forms they wish to pursue, not those that others expect them to follow. We began seeing a bimodal tendency, between enthusiasm on the part of the university PA course instructors and concern and strategic compliance (for example, "we will do this because it's expected of us by school administrators and our university partners"). This reveals the dialectical nature of the socialization process and the agency of the instructors. That is, while one group of instructors appeared to reflect and redefine their situation, the other group attempted to accommodate the innovation only slightly while holding tightly onto their existing beliefs and behaviors, for the most part. This is reminiscent of the research by Doolittle, Dodds, and Placek (1993) with pre-service teachers who held onto established beliefs throughout their teacher education. Finally, this also suggests, as Griffin and Patton (2008) found in their study, that change involves risk – some teachers are more willing than others to "risk" a change in routine. We found that some instructors are more comfortable with the uncertainty that goes along with learning new approaches to teaching while others prefer more certainty by holding onto routine over innovation.

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