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Occupational Socialisation of Physical Education Teacher Candidates Teaching Students with Disabilities

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the occupational socialisation of physical education teacher candidates specific to their experiences with students with disabilities (SWD) prior to and during their Physical Education Teacher Education (PETE) programme, and how these experiences influenced their early teaching practices. Participants were teacher candidates (N = 12) from a PETE programme in the northeastern United States. This study was situated in descriptive-qualitative methodology using a multisite interview approach. Data were collected via personal data sheets, field notes, artefacts, and semi-structured interviews. Four themes emerged from the thematic line-by-line analysis: (1) professional attractors and facilitators; (2) unpreparedness, self-doubt, and frustration; (3) conflicting expectations; and (4) fears of challenging status quo. The teacher candidates experienced challenges unique to teaching SWD in the PK-12 setting during their occupational socialisation. Participants shared the experiences they most valued in their process of learning to teach SWD, including authentic teaching experiences.

KEYWORDS

Adapted physical education; disability; occupational socialisation; teacher preparation

Introduction

Inclusion in physical education settings, in the United States and abroad, is often defined as a social and educational practice that supports the placement of students with disabilities alongside their peers without disabilities (Block & Obrušnikova, 2007; Connor & Ferri, 2007; Morley, Bailey, Tan, & Cooke, 2005; Qi & Ha, 2012). Legislation and policies exist in the United States (Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, 2004), United Kingdom (Department for Education and Employment, 1997; Department for Education and Skills, 2004; Morley et al., 2005), and Latin American Countries (Columna et al., 2016) and all over the world (UN General Assembly, 2007) that promote equal access to education, including physical education. Because of the legislation and education policies, schools must provide school-aged children with disabilities access to education; though the task of managing and facilitating the inclusion of children with disabilities relies primarily on the teachers (Morley et al., 2005).

With the global movement towards inclusive education, researchers around the world have studied the impact of teaching students with disabilities in general education settings, including general physical education classrooms. Multiple benefits have been reported when children with disabilities are educated alongside their peers without disabilities (Block & Obrusnikova, 2007; Spencer-Cavaliere & Watkinson, 2010). Unfortunately, the benefits of inclusion are often dependent on the physical education teachers' preparation for teaching in inclusive settings, which is typically limited to only one course pertaining to the education of children with disabilities in inclusive environments (Columna, et al; 2016; Morley et al., 2005; Qi & Ha, 2012). For example, Columna et al. found that physical educators in Latin America believed that the number of courses they completed, and their years of experiences were critical to their ability to provide effective instruction. However, the Latin American countries participating in their study only required one introductory-level adapted physical education (APE) course for physical education teacher certification. These requirements are similar to requirements in the United States (SHAPE America, 2016), and Ireland (Meegan & McPhail, 2006); while some countries, like Australia, still have no course requirements regarding APE (Pedersen, Cooley, & Hernandez, 2014).

Given this limited preparation, it is not surprising that researchers have expressed concerns about physical educators' readiness for teaching students with disabilities in inclusive settings (US Government Accountability Office [GAO], 2010; Hersman & Hodge, 2010; Meegan & McPhail, 2006; Morley et al., 2005; Rizzo & Kirkendall, 1995; Tripp & Rizzo, 2006). That notwithstanding, it is the Physical Education Teacher Education (PETE) programmes that are responsible for developing physical education teacher candidates' teaching skills and ensuring that they are prepared to address all of their learners' needs. PETE programmes must prepare teacher candidates to be effective physical educators ready to teach all students, including those with disabilities (Lytle, Lavay, & Rizzo, 2010; Rust & Sinelnikov, 2010).

As a result, researchers have called on PETE programmes to provide teacher candidates with hands-on experiences teaching students with disabilities especially those that closely resemble the 'real world' teaching context and coincide with future teaching demands (Hodge, Davis, Woodard, & Sherrill, 2002; Rust & Sinelnikov, 2010). Additionally, in-service teachers, and teacher candidates themselves, have identified that pedagogical content knowledge (i.e. the combination of content knowledge with teaching skills) and advocacy skills relevant to teaching students with disabilities are fundamental to their success teaching in physical education (Dillon, 2005; Rust & Sinelnikov, 2010).

To date, most studies have examined in-service teachers' and teacher candidates' attitudes and intentions towards teaching students with disabilities (Hodge, Ammah, Casebolt, Lamaster, & O'Sullivan, 2004; Hodge et al., 2002, 2009, Morley et al., 2005). To that end, it is known that practicum experiences (Hodge et al., 2002) and contact with students with disabilities (McKay, 2018; Tripp & Sherrill, 1991) are beneficial towards improving teachers' intentions to teach students with disabilities once they are engaged in preparation and teaching. However, what is not known is: 1) What role, if any, does the expectation of teaching students with disabilities play in prospective physical educators' decisions to pursue a career in physical education? and 2) What role, if any, does teacher preparation play in the professional behaviours of physical educators as they begin their careers teaching students with disabilities? Thus, the purpose of this study was to

examine the occupational socialisation of physical education teacher candidates specific to their experiences with students with disabilities (SWD) prior to and during their PETE programme, and how these experiences influenced their early professional practices.

Theoretical Framework

Occupational socialisation, the study of how individuals learn about and become 'a participating member of the society of teachers' (Zeichner & Gore, 1990, p. 329), served as the theoretical framework for this study. Specific to physical educators, Lawson (1983a) defined occupational socialisation as, 'all the kinds of socialisation that initially influence persons to enter the field of physical education and that later are responsible for their perceptions and actions as teacher educators and teachers' (p. 107). For the purpose of this study, the occupational socialisation process was viewed using a time-oriented continuum of three phases: 1) acculturation or pre-professional socialisation, 2) professional socialisation, and 3) organisational socialisation or induction (Lawson, 1983a, 1983b; Lortie, 1975; Richards, Templin, & Graber, 2014).

Acculturation or pre-professional socialisation, refers to the period of time and life experiences that occur in an individual's life prior to their entry into a formal PETE programme, and includes experiences where individuals learn about the physical education teaching profession from physical educators, classroom teachers, coaches, and significant others. Included in acculturation are the notions of subjective warrant and the apprenticeship of observation. 'Subjective warrant' is conceptualised as an individual's perception of the requirements of a profession along with their self-evaluation of their ability to meet those requirements (Lortie, 1975). As such, the values, beliefs, and assumptions that make up the subjective warrant help an individual determine if he/she is well suited to become a physical educator.

Another influential component of a teacher candidate's acculturation is their time and experiences as a K-12 student in physical education; also referred to as the apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975). During this time as K-12 students, teacher candidates 'interact with the social structure of the school and begin to determine how they wish to act as future teachers' (Schempp & Graber, 1992, p. 333). It is also a time when future physical educators may develop beliefs about teaching, including teaching SWDs, that contradict the goals of professional and organisational socialisation.

Professional socialisation refers to the period of time and experiences that occur as individuals are enrolled within their formal PETE programme. During this phase, teacher candidates are taught the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of the profession by their respective PETE programmes (Lawson, 1983b). At the same time, PETE programmes must also contend with the powerful influence of the teacher candidates' apprenticeship of observation and subjective warrant (Schempp & Graber, 1992). During the professional socialisation process, teacher candidates do not simply accept the practices and orientations as presented by PETE faculty; rather, they are negotiated through a dialectic process wherein teacher candidates 'negotiate beliefs and knowledge with teacher educators and with others responsible for their professional education' (Schempp & Graber, 1992, p. 331).

In examining the professional socialisation process, researchers have found that many physical education teacher candidates engage in a practice called 'studentship,' rather than developing their own teaching identities during professional socialisation. Through studentship, teacher candidates navigate their PETE programme 'with the greatest ease

and most success' by engaging in a host of behaviours including taking short cuts or 'projecting contrived images of themselves according to the perceived demands of a particular situation' (Graber, 1991, p. 461). As such, teacher candidates may say or do whatever it takes to successfully complete their PETE programmes requirements while not actually agreeing with or buying into the values and expectations of the PETE programme.

Organisational socialisation, or induction, refers to the process that occurs as the physical education teacher candidate's transition to their role as physical educators. The organisational socialisation process, wherein new teachers develop their set of values, beliefs, and skills needed to teach within an education setting, begins *during student teaching*, but is not completed until teachers fully enter the workforce and are further inducted within their school setting (Lawson, 1989; Richards et al., 2014). Two factors critical to organisational socialisation are reality shock and the washout effect. Reality shock is defined as the incongruence between one's teacher training phase and what one encounters in schools. Commonly occurring at the beginning of teachers' careers, Veenman (1984) claimed that reality shock is 'the collapse of the missionary ideals formed during teacher training by the harsh and rude reality of classroom life' (p. 143), which is often attributed to teachers being under-trained for their teaching context and provided with general training rather than being taught to deal with specific issues (Richards, 2015; Stroot & Whipple, 2003; Veenman, 1984).

Washout effect, another factor that influences new physical educators, occurs as knowledge and skills teacher candidates learned in their PETE programme are progressively eroded by common school practices and the effect of reality shock (Stroot & Whipple, 2003; Veenman, 1984). In many cases, newer physical educators may adopt a custodial perspective and engage in what they believe are appropriate practices, even though the practices contradict what they learned in their PETE programmes.

Through this occupational socialisation framework, we examined how teacher candidates perceive the experiences that help them learn to teach PK-12 SWD as this has yet to be fully examined. This information is critical as PETE programmes need these insights to purposefully plan professional and student teaching experiences. Additionally, we need to more fully understand the interface between teacher education and induction into the teaching profession so that teacher candidates are adequately prepared to navigate the micropolitics of their school context and advocate for quality physical education services for SWD once hired as a physical educator. In order to examine these issues, this study examined the occupational socialisation of physical education teacher candidates specific to their experiences with SWD prior to and during their PETE programme, and how these experiences influenced their early practices within the teaching profession.

The following research questions guided this study:

- What were the experiences of physical education teacher candidates with individuals with disabilities prior to entering their PETE programme that influenced their decisions to pursue a career in physical education?
- What were the experiences within the PETE programme designed to prepare the teacher candidates for the reality of teaching children with disabilities in physical education settings?
- What were the experiences of teacher candidates as they completed student teaching and prepared to transition from a teacher candidate to a K-12 physical educator responsible for teaching SWD?

Method

Participants

A convenience sample was used to identify possible participants for this study (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The criteria used for participant selection included being a physical education teacher candidate who had completed at least one required course in APE, and was nearing the end of his/her student-teaching experience. All eligible teacher candidates ($n = 43$) enrolled in student teaching at the time of the study were given an opportunity to participate. Out of the 43 potential participants, 12 agreed to participate in this study. Interested teacher candidates were asked to arrange individual meeting times, wherein the researchers obtained informed consent from each participant, as well as conducted the interviews at the participant's preferred time and location. Participants were 12 physical education teacher candidates (5 male, 7 female; all Caucasian) enrolled in a PETE programme in a northeastern state of the United States. All teacher candidates came from the same cohort and completed their student teaching experience the same semester, though they did not all complete the one required APE course during the same semester. The PETE programme from which these participants were selected offered a 12-credit APE minor with courses taught by four different instructors. These instructors met on a regular basis to discuss course content and practicum experiences. Of the 12 participants, five teacher candidates completed the 12-credit APE minor prior to their student teaching experience. All participants acknowledged teaching SWD in their inclusive physical education (PE) classes during student teaching, although the amount of exposure varied. In addition, half of the participants reported teaching SWD in segregated APE settings. Additional information describing the background of the participants can be found in Table 1.

Research Method

The current study was situated in descriptive-qualitative methodology using a multisite interview approach (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Gay, 1996) at locations of the participants'

Table 1. Demographic information.

Participant#	Gender	# of APE courses	APE concentration	Plan to complete Masters in APE	Taught SWDs during Student Teaching	Inclusive GPE/ APE/ Both	Approximate # of SWDs taught	Frequency of contact/teaching time with SWDs
Dillon	M	1	No	No	Yes	Inclusive	7	15 Times
Juliet	F	>3	Yes	No	Yes	Inclusive	2	2 Times/Week
Bryan	M	1	No	Yes	Yes	Inclusive	9	Everyday
Bridgette	F	2	No	No	Yes	Both	5	Everyday
Aidan	M	1	No	No	Yes	Both	3	Everyday
Molly	F	>3	Yes	Yes	Yes	Both	20	Everyday
Ricky	M	>3	Yes	Yes	Yes	Both	7	3–4 Times/Week
Vince	M	>3	Yes	Yes	Yes	Inclusive	15–20	3–4 Times/Week
Jaclynn	F	1	No	No	Yes	Both	4	>10
Mary kate	F	>3	Yes	No	Yes	Both	20	2 Times/Week
Annie	F	1	No	No	Yes	Inclusive	10–15	1–2 classes/day
Charlotte	F	>3	No	No	Yes	Inclusive	5	20

APE = Adapted Physical Education, GPE = General Physical Education, SWDS = Students with Disabilities.

choosing. A descriptive-qualitative research design was selected because it provides the basis for understanding a phenomenon with completeness (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Furthermore, multi-site research often uses semi-structured interviews (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992) which provide data that cannot be attainable in any other way (Gay, 1996, p. 223). This includes, but is not limited to, things which cannot be observed, such as past events (e.g. a teacher candidate's previous experience in physical education settings), events occurring outside of the researcher's sphere of observation (e.g. teaching students with disabilities), and mental processes (e.g. a teacher candidate's beliefs on teaching their child with disabilities). We used semi-structured interviews that involved face-to-face verbal interchanges with the participants, which provided a medium for the participants to reflect on and speak about specific situations related to teaching students with disabilities during their student teaching experience and their views regarding physical education for children with disabilities.

Data Collection

Given the descriptive-qualitative research design, multiple data sources were used including a personal data sheet from each participant, artefacts (i.e. course syllabus and PETE curriculum scope and sequence) and semi-structured interviews. The data sources were gathered to better understand the essence of the experiences encountered (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Creswell & Creswell, 2017). A personal data sheet collected demographic information about the participants such as gender, number of APE courses completed, and documentation of teacher candidate's APE concentration, plans to complete a Masters in APE, teaching of SWD during student teaching, and frequency of contact/teaching time with SWD (Table 1). Participants' identities were not revealed on the personal data sheets, and pseudonyms were used in place of participants' names. In addition, researchers examined the student teaching course syllabus and identified student teaching course expectations, objectives, and assignments related to the instruction of children with disabilities. Then, researchers reviewed the PETE Curriculum to identify where the APE course was taken within the PETE scope and sequence with consideration for how that might prepare them for teaching SWD, especially within student teaching.

The interviews were developed using a protocol of questions situated within the theoretical framework of occupational socialisation and developed from an extensive review of the literature (Hodge et al., 2002, 2009; Rizzo & Kirkendall, 1995; Rizzo & Vispoel, 1992). To ensure the content validity of the interview questions, they were reviewed by a panel of experts ($N = 4$) comprised of general and adapted physical education faculty from institutions of higher education. Based upon the experts' recommendations, interview questions were revised (i.e. ordering of the questions and time references within questions) and re-submitted to the panel for final approval.

Participants were interviewed once for a period of 60 to 90 minutes, with breaks as necessary. One-on-one semi-structured interviews were conducted with each teacher candidate following the conclusion of his/her student teaching experience. Every effort was made to help the participants feel comfortable, such as asking introductory questions to engage the participants in the topics. Sample questions from the interview protocol are included within Figure 1. Additional probing questions were administered based on participants' responses to questions.

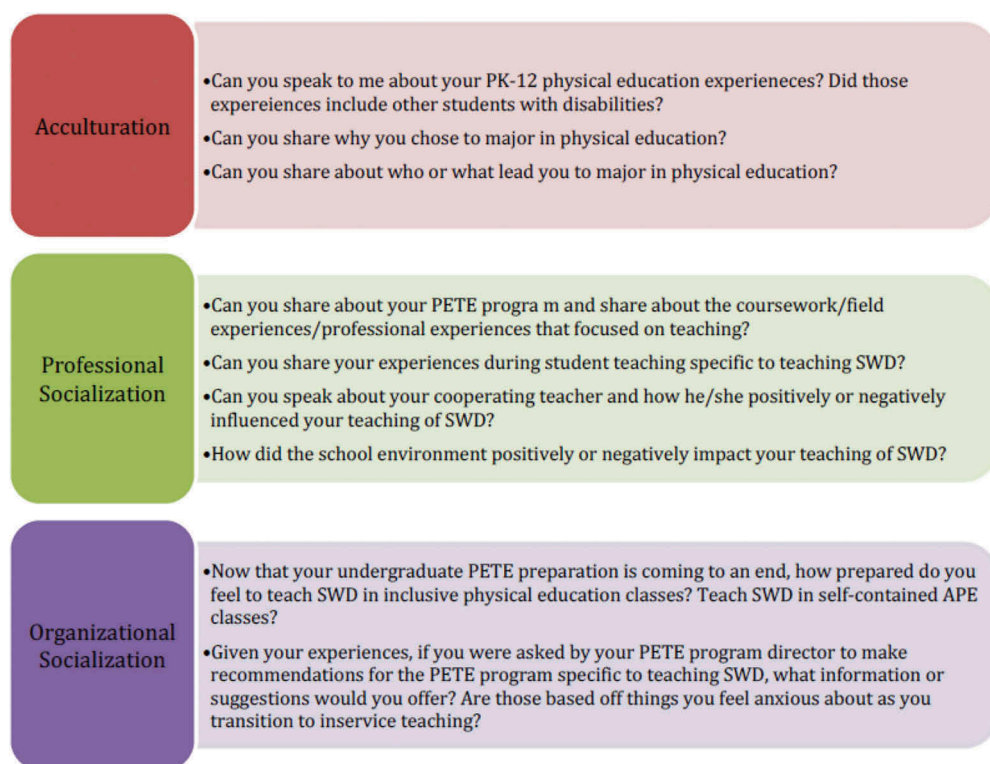


Figure 1. Sample interview questions specific to the three phases of occupational socialisation.

Data Analysis

Thematic line-by-line analysis was used to analyse the interview transcripts and field notes (Merriam, 1998). First, the interview data were prepared for analysis by transcribing the audio-taped interviews. Then, the authors independently read the transcripts and field notes numerous times. The researchers analysed the data independently of one another, and subsequently together, to reach consensus. The authors extracted and categorised themes from the data. In reducing the text, when researchers found revealing data points, they were highlighted and coded with meaningful labels. Such data were compared to all other pieces of data that were either similar or different (Merriam, 1998). This process led to the connection of patterns within categories resulting in the emergence of recurring themes. Codes that were conceptually similar were gathered together into thematic statements, giving fundamental meaning to the experiences (Patton, 2002).

Additionally, we compared the data from the personal data sheet, course syllabus, and the physical education curriculum with the findings from transcripts. From the course syllabus and the physical education curriculum, we collected and compared the data specific to course requirements and expectations regarding the instruction of teaching SWD. In essence, researchers first independently examined the transcripts, field notes, and other documents, and then compared those results from each source collectively.

To ensure dependability of the findings and accuracy of the data, member checking allowed for all participants to read the transcripts of their interview to clarify or better

explain their views and beliefs (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Seven out of the twelve participants gave feedback to the researchers helping to accurately represent their responses. The transcript data were analysed individually, at differing sites, by three researchers enabling triangulation of the data. We also conducted a 'search for negative cases' by looking for responses that were counter to or did not align well with the established major themes and categories. Last, the researchers provided the preliminary themes along with supporting quotes retrieved from the transcripts to an external reviewer who reviewed the themes to assure they reflected the purpose of the study and corresponded with the research questions. For this study, a PETE scholar with expertise in qualitative research and adapted physical education served as an external evaluator.

Results

Three salient, recurrent, interrelated, and complex themes emerged from the data analyses. The experiences of the teacher candidates were captured in these themes: (1) professional attractors and facilitators; (2) unpreparedness, self-doubt, and frustration; and (3) conflicting expectations. These themes are described in narrative with the 'voices' of the teacher candidates reflected through quotes.

Theme 1: Professional Attractors and Facilitators

With regard to recruitment into the teaching profession, the teacher candidates clearly identified attractors and facilitators that were critical to their decision to pursue a career in physical education. Attractors were factors that the teacher candidates perceived as allowing them to fulfil individual goals or work in a manner that was authentic to themselves; while facilitators were those factors or individuals that the teacher candidates perceived as inspiring or supporting their interest in physical education. As attractors, the teacher candidates chose to major in physical education because of their own love of physical activity ($n = 9$) and their desire to work with children ($n = 11$). The teacher candidates perceived that pursuing a career in physical education would allow them to meet their interpersonal goals of working with children and continuing to be involved in sport and physical activity as a physical educator (Lortie, 1975). Echoing the teacher candidates' sentiments, Charlotte stated, 'I always played sports in high school and then growing up I just figured since I love that why not continue to teach others.'

The teacher candidates shared how former coaches and teachers had been facilitators in their choice to pursue a career in physical education ($n = 11$). Similar to others, Molly reflected, 'I always had teachers and coaches as mentors,' while Bridgette shared, 'I came to major in physical education through my mom, she is a phys. ed. [sic] teacher.' The teacher candidates' comments reinforce the important role that significant others (e.g. former teachers, former coaches, family members, etc.) have in recruiting individuals into an occupation (Lortie, 1975). It is also worth noting that, while the participants reported that their pre-professional experiences were positive, they were generally devoid of experiences with persons with disabilities.

When asked, none of the teacher candidates indicated that their lack of PK-12 experiences with individuals with disabilities had a negative or positive impact their decision to

pursue physical education as a career. Additionally, none of the teacher candidates shared playing on sports teams that included individuals with disabilities. Only one of the teacher candidates reported experiences with individuals with disabilities in sports programming; though this occurred outside his K-12 experiences. Specifically, Ricky reported postsecondary experiences with individuals with disabilities through Special Olympics while taking courses at a community college (prior to transferring into the PETE programme). Ricky commented, 'My mom always told me that I was going to be a PE teacher, but I didn't always believe her. But I worked a lot with Special Olympics at my community college, and I just really enjoyed [it] ...' These pre-professional experiences appear to serve as a facilitator for Ricky in his pursuit of a career in physical education.

Theme 2: Unpreparedness, Self-Doubt, and Frustration

This theme reflects the feelings voiced by the teacher candidates associated with their experiences with SWD during student teaching. In general, teacher candidates expressed frustration with the perceived mismatch between the amount and type of preparation they received in their PETE programme and the reality of the real-world teaching context; and they expressed feelings of self-doubt regarding their ability to overcome being unprepared for the challenge of teaching SWD, especially in an inclusive setting.

As they matriculated through the PETE programme and were exposed to the 'shared technical culture' of physical educators [i.e. knowledge, skills and dispositions required to effectively teach (Lortie, 1975)], several teacher candidates shared being initially uncomfortable and nervous about teaching with SWD during their introductory APE course (taken during junior year). However, as the semester went on, their perceptions shifted as they became comfortable with their SWD. The teacher candidates perceived these APE experiences as both eye opening and rewarding; and felt these experiences contributed to their initial feelings of preparedness as they headed into student teaching. Mary Kate reflected that, 'everyone participates, regardless of ability.' However, these perspectives shifted again once they started their student teaching experience. Most of the participants expressed feeling unprepared to handle the real-world challenges of teaching SWD, especially in the inclusive classroom.

Experiencing reality shock and feeling unprepared to teach SWD led to feelings of frustration during the student teaching experience. These feelings of unpreparedness and frustration also led to shifts in how all of the teacher candidates, including those who had completed the 12-credit APE minor, perceived their ability to teach SWD in their classes. For example, Mary Kate articulated her frustration and concern about this lack of knowledge stating,

I had no idea what the students knew or was wrong with them, nor did I know the best way to devise lesson ideas or modifications to allow them to be successful in a gymnasium or in the PE class.

Bryan, like several of the other teacher candidates who completed only one APE course, perceived that limited training specific to teaching SWD contributed significantly to his feelings of frustration during student teaching. This is reflected in his comment specific to including SWD in inclusive PE classes, 'it's as frustrating as can be but as long as

you take a smile away from it, I guess you did okay. But it's frustrating.' Bridgette voiced a similar comment when she affirmed that it concerned her to know that, of the 128 credits of coursework she was required to complete to obtain her degree in physical education, only one course dealt directly with teaching SWD. She commented:

It scares me to know that I am the one responsible for the safety and progress of all my students ... one course with a focus on instructing small groups of students with disabilities in PE ... what am I supposed to do with a class of 30 students and five might have autism?

Bridgette explained that, as a result of her student teaching experiences and daily realities of teaching, she felt it was unrealistic for universities and school districts to believe that *all* physical education teacher candidates are prepared to teach all SWD, PK-12, with just one class in APE or with limited experiences teaching children with disabilities. She, like other teacher candidates, felt there was also a mismatch between the amount of preparation and the type of preparation and the reality of their teaching context and that led to feelings of frustration and self-doubt. Annie illustrated this point when she said,

They don't teach you the life experience, like what could really happen, like the extreme situations with the disabilities. Especially kids with emotional and [intellectual] disabilities ... I wish they would just [teach] the realistic aspect of, you know, how to adjust and work with them, not just teach them.

In addition to expressing apprehensions about their professional learning experiences in one-on-one or small group situation rather than in inclusive or larger group situations, the teacher candidates communicated concerns about the content that was taught in those one-on-one or small group activities with SWD within the APE course. Specifically, several students commented that their experiences teaching SWD prior to student teaching appeared to be a collection of activities rather than planned instructional units as would be expected in the PK-12 setting; they felt this also contributed to their feelings of unpreparedness, self-doubt, and frustration. Reflecting on their three-credit APE course, many of the teacher candidates shared concerns similar to Molly who stated,

I think one of the problems with it was that there were no units to follow ... teaching adapted PE isn't just random games all the time ... it's teaching units and skills ... and teaching the actual skills in a form where it's a unit ... not just a theme based on random games and fitness activities.

Molly, and her teacher candidate peers, clearly perceived that the content taught to SWD in the introductory APE course was a collection of activities rather than individualised programming delivered through instructional units like they experienced when teaching within the PK-12 setting. Molly's frustration of this mismatch between her training and the teaching reality waiting for her in the physical education classroom is reflected in her comments,

Often, I felt lost in how I was supposed to be playing games or following themes rather than evaluating skills and improving skills. It sometimes seemed like I was being guided to keep the students happy rather than really focusing on skill improvement because it was such a short period of time I would be working with the students.

Molly's feelings of unpreparedness for the reality of her future teaching position contributed to her feelings of frustration.

When questioned about their teaching effectiveness with SWD, most of the teacher candidates indicated that they would likely struggle to meet learner needs. Bryan replied, 'I feel like it diminishes my teaching ability. I'm getting frustrated.' These feelings of being ill equipped to effectively teach SWD were well articulated by Bridgette when she stated, 'I don't think I would do a good job right off the bat.'

Theme 3: Conflicting Expectations

The recurring theme of conflicting expectations captures the teacher candidates' experiences as they negotiated the reality of the student teaching context. That is, the teacher candidates often perceived a conflict between the expectations of the cooperating teacher, other school district personnel, and their PETE programme and faculty. When pressured to conform to the socially-constructed and contextually-bound occupational role of a physical educator within the cooperating school district (Richards, 2015), the teacher candidates often succumbed and contradicted the best practices and expectations espoused within their PETE programme. The teacher candidates shared experiencing teaching challenges during their student teaching, and repeatedly chose solutions that aligned with the perspective of the school administration rather than that of their PETE programme and/or PETE faculty. For example, participants recalled that PETE faculty members clearly communicated that teacher candidates should be inclusive in their teaching practices (e.g. individualising instruction and modifying equipment) but this was regularly contradicted by the realities and expectations of student teaching.

For these teacher candidates, fears were typified as putting themselves in professionally threatening or uncomfortable situations if they contradicted current professional practices. During student teaching, the teacher candidates shared how they assumed many of the roles of a teacher but also perceived themselves as having little to no social capital, or security in their position within the public school setting. This combined with the teacher candidates' beliefs about their limited ability to successfully include the SWD may have contributed to their fears of challenging status quo and their adoption of a custodial orientation to the teaching of SWD. All of the teacher candidates shared similar fears, which are reflected in Bridgette's comment,

Since I'm just basically at the bottom of the totem-pole, you have to do what everyone else wants you to do, you have to protect yourself. So not until I am tenured, will I do what I believe is completely best [advocating for the student]. I think once you have that safety net [tenure], I would definitely go way above and beyond to do whatever I could.

Similarly, all physical education teacher candidates made reference throughout the study about job security and the realisation that they would have to 'choose their battles wisely' or 'roll with the punches.'

Conflicts in expectations were also identified as the teacher candidates reflected on their PETE programme's purported/perceived expectations compared to the assigned/evaluated expectations. The teacher candidates understood the PETE programme's global expectation that they would include SWD within physical education programming while also addressing learner needs. Mary Kate's comment reflects that perceived expectation, 'Definitely we learned about including everyone in a classroom.' However, while the

teacher candidates recalled being expected to 'plan and adapt instruction' that addresses the *diverse* needs of students, a review of the PETE programme's student teaching syllabus revealed no assignments specifically *requiring* this teaching behaviour or evaluating the teacher candidates' ability to address the needs of SWD during student teaching (e.g. providing differentiated instruction within lesson plans). In fact, within the course syllabus, there was only specific mention of SWD in the narrative on field experiences; and there it appears to be possible, but not required, that teacher candidates teach SWD. The statement below is an excerpt from the syllabus:

This student teaching experience provides candidates with experiences in a variety of communities and across the range of student developmental levels of the certificate, experiences practicing skills for interacting with parents or caregivers, experiences in high need schools, and experiences with each of the following student populations: socio-economically disadvantaged students, students who are English language learners (possible), and students with disabilities (possible).

In addition to contradictions specific to PETE programme expectations, the teacher candidates felt there contradictions between the inclusive teaching behaviours expected from the cooperating teachers and those observed. The teacher candidates voiced concerns that some of the host teachers were not providing individualised programming to SWD in a manner consistent with the intent of the Individuals with Education Improvement Act (2004), which is what the teacher candidates and the PETE programme expected. These host teacher behaviours (e.g. not reviewing or implementing the IEP) were perceived as having a negative effect on the student teaching experience and created mixed messages regarding what it meant to be a physical educator (subjective warrant). Specific to teaching SWD, Dillon, Bryan, Aidan, Ricky, and Annie did not value their student teaching experience because of the limited support their host teachers provided as they attempted to engage in inclusive teaching practices. Ricky commented, '... there's a lot of teachers out there that don't really know adapted, especially those older teachers don't really know adapted techniques; and administrators sometimes have a background, but don't really [know APE]. So I'd welcome any suggestions but I don't know how knowledgeable some of those individuals would be.'

These participants struggled with how to find information regarding their students' records and the special education services that should be provided to those students. Because they were uninformed about the students' IEPs and services, they questioned whether their instruction and management of behaviours was consistent with the expectations set forth in the IEP. In addition to challenges accessing IEP information, Ricky, who completed the APE concentration, reported struggling considerably with knowing what questions were professional and appropriate to ask other professionals regarding a particular student. Bryan shared a similar situation with his host teacher. He recollected,

I had a kid [with intellectual disabilities] who runs off in the middle of a lesson, and *after* he ran, my host teacher told me he was a runner ... Well ... that's great because I saw him take off and right away fear strikes in me ... I don't know who to call ... thankfully there was an aide in there, and she went after him.

Bryan admitted on his behalf that he probably should have asked ahead of time about the specifics of any of his students' abilities or disabilities, but continued to remark that as a new teacher asking if any of the students 'tend to run off' during class periods was not

one of the first questions he thought of to ask his host teacher. Bryan was also puzzled as to why his host teacher would withhold information about a student's safety, when it clearly was not the first time the particular student had run out during a lesson. Bryan, and some of the other teacher candidates with similar situations, felt that challenging this restrictive information-sharing process would create too much conflict within the student teaching context, so they avoided the conflict and maintained status quo.

The teacher candidates also shared how the PETE programme clearly communicated the importance of the IEP and need to implement the IEP with fidelity, though 11 of the 12 participants stated that they were not provided the opportunity to review, or required to review, any of their student's IEPs; nor were they expected attend the IEP meetings of their students who had disabilities by their PETE programme or the host teacher. Bryan stated,

I didn't see any IEPs, I had no idea what the students knew or was wrong with them, nor did I know the best way to devise lesson ideas or modifications to allow them to be successful in a gymnasium or in the PE class ... I did not get a chance to see anybody's IEPs, or sit in a meeting ... that obviously that would've been to my benefit, and helpful.

It appears that, even though the teacher candidates acknowledged the importance of being involved in the educational programming process, they chose to adopt the perspectives and behaviours being modelled by their cooperating teacher, rather than speak out and advocate for themselves or the students as the PETE programme would have expected.

Discussion

While research has examined the occupational socialisation of teacher candidates in PETE programmes and revealed the struggles and concerns these students face within their academic programmes, the vast majority of that research has not addressed preparing teacher candidates to work with children with disabilities (Curtner-Smith, 2009; Richards et al., 2014). This study examined the occupational socialisation of physical education teacher candidates specific to their experiences with SWD prior to and during their PETE programme, and how these experiences influenced their early practices within the teaching profession. These findings magnify the need for faculty and PETE programmes to heighten their awareness and to implement strategies to improve the occupational socialisation of PETE students when learning to teach children with disabilities. The discussion section is organised using the research questions that guided this study as points of departure.

Research Question #1: What Were the Experiences of Physical Education Teacher Candidates with Individuals with Disabilities Prior to Entering Their PETE Programme that Influenced Their Decisions to Pursue a Career in Physical Education?

The findings of this study reinforce previous research on teacher candidates' recruitment, including the influence of interpersonal desires and special facilitators on individuals' decisions to pursue a career in physical education (Curtner-Smith, Hastie, & Kinchin, 2008; Richards et al., 2014). Additionally, our findings support previous studies purporting that teacher candidates who develop high subjective warrants (i.e. an individual's perception of the requirements of a profession along with their self-evaluation of their ability to meet those requirements) for physical education tend to: (a) have strong backgrounds in

physical activity and sport, and (b) enjoyed such experiences as children (Curtner-Smith & Sofo, 2004; Dodds et al., 1991; Richards et al., 2014). Unique to this study is the finding that our teacher candidates appear to have developed their early understanding of the roles of a physical educator (subjective warrant), through experiences that were generally devoid of individuals with disabilities or the expectations that physical educators would include individuals with disabilities in the general physical education setting. Instead, in most cases, the first interaction with or teaching of children with disabilities in physical education or physical activity settings occurred when the teacher candidates took their introductory APE course late in their PETE programme (i.e. during their junior year).

Development of this flawed or incomplete subjective warrant without SWD directly influences teacher candidates' interpretation of PETE programme messages and pre-professional teaching experiences (Richards et al., 2014). This was demonstrated by the teacher candidates' shifts in perceptions at the end of student teaching wherein they felt they lacked the knowledge and skills to teach children with disabilities, particularly those educated in inclusive PE settings or with severe disabilities. As such, it is critical that PETE programmes provide positive experiences teaching individuals with disabilities across the PETE programme, as early as the first semester, so that teacher candidates conceptualise physical education as subject/content area for all students, including SWD (Templin & Schempp, 1989).

Research Question #2: What Were the Experiences within the PETE Programme Designed to Prepare the Teacher Candidates for the Reality of Teaching Children with Disabilities in Physical Education Settings?

As with most PETE programmes in the United States (SHAPE America, 2017; US GAO, 2010) and other parts of the world (Columa et al., 2016; Qi & Ha, 2012; Meegan & McPhail, 2006; Morley et al., 2005), our teacher candidates were required to complete coursework that prepared them for teaching children with disabilities in physical education in order to complete their teacher certification programme. While the teacher candidates valued and felt positively about their teaching experiences within this required APE course, they also felt those teaching experiences were limited and inconsistent with the real world teaching demands of including SWD in PK-12 they experienced during student teaching. This finding was true for the teacher candidates who completed the required introductory course only as well as those who completed the APE concentration. Consistent with previous research findings (Hodge et al., 2002, 2009), the reality shock experienced by the teacher candidates during student teaching caused them to challenge their professional preparation and question their readiness to teach SWD. Also consistent with earlier research, the teacher candidates preferred and valued pre-service teaching experiences that resembled 'real world' teaching contexts and felt those experiences were critical to successful teaching in physical education (Hardin, 2005; Rust & Sinelnikov, 2010). Furthermore, professional experiences engaged with SWD may increase the likelihood that teacher candidates implement the best practices taught within their PETE programme rather than adopt and perpetuate inappropriate practices.

Based on these results, it is imperative that PETE programmes infuse adapted physical education-related content (e.g. disability information, IEP development, health conditions secondary to disability, disability sports, etc.) across the curriculum (Goyakla-Apache & Rizzo, 2005; Kowalski, 1995) so that teacher candidates are exposed to multiple pre-

professional experiences and/or courses related to working with individuals with disabilities. Additionally, PETE programmes need to develop a progressive series of experiences transitioning from one-on-one or small group to large group or inclusive settings that closely resemble today's physical education programmes. While these ideas are not new (Hardin, 2005), this approach has yet to be adopted by most PETE programmes.

Research Question #3: What Were the Experiences of Teacher Candidates as They Completed Student Teaching and Prepared to Transition from Teacher Candidate to K-12 Physical Educator Responsible for Teaching Students with Disabilities?

As the teacher candidates completed student teaching and prepared to transition to a K-12 physical educator, they struggled to negotiate the discrepancy between their PETE programme's professional expectations and the reality of their student teaching educational context and cooperating teacher's behaviours. The experiences of the teacher candidate in this liminal position, where s/he is straddling the two roles of student and physical educator, often resulted in teacher candidates adopting the perspective of the cooperating teachers (i.e. group of teachers into which they are being inducted; Richards et al., 2014). Our teacher candidates' adoption of custodial perspectives demonstrates sociocultural reproduction as the day-to-day practices of the cooperating teachers appears to have been passed down from the cooperating teachers to the teacher candidates (Haegele, Lee, Chang & Kim, 2016). Unfortunately, this sociocultural reproduction resulted in the perpetuation inappropriate teaching practices (e.g. failing to advocate for students), as well as, the protection of status quo and the adoption of custodial approaches to teaching (Curtner-Smith et al., 2008). For example, our teacher candidates valued the support provided by their host teachers, but they also felt their host teachers did not always provide individualised programming to SWD in a manner consistent with Federal mandates (IDEA, 2004). Consistent with the literature, the teacher candidates' host teachers also did not actively engage in the IEP process and/or attend IEP meetings (Bingham, Dillon, & McCaughtry, 2008; Silliman-French & Conner-Kuntz, 2003). Instead, the teacher candidates felt their student teaching experiences did not provide opportunities to fully engage in their inclusive teaching practices or develop and implement an IEP. The lack of requirements found within the student teaching syllabus support these perceptions. In securing student teaching placements, PETE programmes need to examine the prospective placements and assignments to mitigate the social reproduction of oppressive practices. PETE programmes should also consider requiring teacher candidates to: (a) engage in multiple opportunities to teach SWD in alignment with IEPs, (b) engage in the IEP process, and (c) learn and practice the advocacy skills needed to support themselves and their SWD (Bingham et al., 2008). These required experiences and skills, which are central to the success of physical educators teaching SWD, should be clearly communicated to cooperating teachers and school districts.

The aforementioned professional socialisation experiences may also help teacher candidates overcome the develop of subjective warrant devoid of SWD, minimise the reality shock experienced when teaching multiple SWD within inclusive physical education classes, prevent the adoption of negative custodial pedagogical practices and perspectives about teaching SWD, and minimise the feelings of frustration and conflict our teacher candidates experienced as they navigated student teaching and prepared to enter the workforce. These findings, supported by the literature (Lawson, 1989; Lortie, 1975; Richards et al., 2014; Stroot

& Ko, 2006; Veenman, 1984), suggest our teacher candidates experienced challenges specific to teaching SWD in the PK-12 setting during their occupational socialisation process. As such, it is critical that PETE programmes understand this occupational socialisation process (i.e. how physical educators are recruited, trained and socialised into schools) so that physical educators with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to teach ALL children, including those with disabilities, are inducted into the profession.

Limitations of the Study

This study has some limitations. First, this study was limited to the views of teacher candidates from only the northeastern part of the United States. Including the voices of more participants such as those from other parts of the US would have added to the perspectives and overall completeness of the findings. In the future, researchers should address these issues. Second, because of logistical reasons (e.g. students moving away after graduation), we were unable to engage in a more prolonged process of interaction with all participants and unable to conduct multiple interviews over a longer period of time. This may limit the amount of information gathered from the participants. Finally, the fact that the students took introductory APE classes with three different instructors may influence the results. However, this reflects the reality of PETE programmes across the United States.

Conclusion and Implications

The findings from this study provide important insights on how physical educators are recruited, trained, and socialised into teaching SWD in the schools. As such, the findings could inform PETE faculty on strategies for designing PETE programmes to better meet the needs of teacher candidates and the SWD they ultimately teach. Consistent with the recommendations of Richards (2015) and the findings of this study, PETE programmes need to further develop teacher candidates' subjective warrant so that it includes realistic expectations for teaching and collaborating with others on physical education programmes for SWD (e.g. teaching multiple SWD in a large PE class, attending IEP meetings, advocating for the needs of individual students, etc.). PETE programmes should also provide ample and appropriate opportunities for teacher candidates to gain and refine competence in teaching SWD across realistic teaching contexts. For example, practical teaching experiences with SWD must progress from one-on-one to small group to large group teaching. Students must also have practice advocating for the needs of SWDs, communicating with other professionals about IEPs, and attending IEP meetings, especially during student teaching. These types of experiences are critical if new physical educators are to feel competent and confident to effectively teach and advocate for SWD.

It is also recommended that we continue to examine the occupational socialisation process of physical educators specific to teaching SWD by studying teachers longitudinally and tracking their development through their PETE programme and induction phase. Finally, qualitative examinations of the occupational socialisation process for physical education teachers who complete the typical one introductory APE course versus those who complete multiple APE courses as a part of a minor or concentration may shed light on the role additional coursework has on the development of effective teaching and advocacy skills for physical educators teaching SWD.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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