Influence of Occupational Socialization on Two Preservice Teachers’
Interpretation and Delivery of the Sport Education Model

by

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to (a) examine how two preservice teachers (PTs) interpreted and delivered Sport Education (SE) during their student teaching and (b) discover factors which led to the PTs interpreting and delivering the model in the ways they did. The theoretical framework used to guide data collection and analysis was occupational socialization. Data were collected using a variety of qualitative techniques and analyzed using standard interpretive methods. Results revealed that high quality SE-Physical Education Teacher Education (PETE) facilitated both a commitment to the model and the ability to teach the full version of it for a teaching oriented and moderately-coaching oriented PT. Key elements of SE-PETE responsible for this commitment and competence appeared to be the teaching of prescribed mini-seasons prior to student teaching, the conditions encountered by PTs during teaching practice, and a host of PETE faculty characteristics congruent with the general PETE occupational socialization literature.

Key Words: Physical education, teacher preparation, curriculum model
According to Wallhead and O’Sullivan (2005) and Kinchin (2006), Sport Education (SE) is a very effective curriculum model that is being used around the globe to positively impact student learning in physical education. Teacher use and response to SE has also been overwhelmingly positive (Kinchin; Wallhead & O’Sullivan). Currently, it is apparent that learning to teach SE is best done by first being exposed to the model as a student, seeing the model in practice, and then teaching it (Kinchin).

Research on how both inservice and preservice teachers (PTs) learn, interpret, and deliver SE has been limited. Two studies have indicated that even experienced and expert inservice teachers take some time to adjust to and come to grips with SE, particularly if it is integrated with other curriculum models, if the teachers have an excessive workload, and if the model is new to pupils and school (Hastie & Curtner-Smith, 2006; Pope & O’Sullivan, 1998). (Because socialization is going to vary from culture to culture, the literature reviewed in this introduction is overwhelmingly American.)

Some research has indicated that a significant proportion of PTs are attracted by the SE model because it appears to be compatible with their occupational socialization and their beliefs about how the subject should be taught and because they recognize its structural and cultural advantages over more conventional models (Curtner-Smith & Sofo, 2004; Hastie, Curtner-Smith, & Kinchin, 2005; Sofo, 2003). In addition, other work has indicated that infusing SE throughout a physical education teacher education (PETE) program and having PTs teach prescribed mini units of SE during early field experiences (EFEs) appear to increase PTs’ chances of comprehending and using the model properly (Curtner-Smith & Sofo; Hastie et al.; Jenkins, 2004).

On the downside, research has also indicated that some PTs have difficulty teaching skills and tactics within game play sessions, providing respectable levels of moderate to vigorous physical activity (MVPA), or designing developmentally appropriate game forms for competitive phases of a SE season. Moreover, they can badly misunderstand the model and misinterpret it altogether as justification for “ball rolling” or be selective about which elements they utilize (usually the idea of increased competitive game play) and which elements they ignore (usually non-playing roles, the posting of information, the principle of gradually surrendering decision making to students, and the idea of using authentic evaluation methods) (Curtner-Smith
& Sofo, 2004; McCaughtry, Sofo, Rovegno, & Curtner-Smith, 2004; Parker & Curtner-Smith, 2005; Sofo, 2003) or have a difficult time implementing and getting the students to appreciate these aspects (McMahon & MacPhail, 2007). Finally, PTs may struggle with tactical teaching within a traditional school culture that emphasizes skill based instruction (McMahon & MacPhail).

Importantly, a relatively recent study completed by Curtner-Smith, Hastie, and Kinchin (2008) indicated that newly qualified inservice teachers who had been trained to teach SE in their university PETE programs interpreted and delivered it in one of three ways. Some employed the “full version” of the model and taught units in congruence with the text written by Siedentop, Hastie and van der Mars (2004). Some “watered down” the model and merely organized their units around formal game play because it enhanced their ability to manage pupils. Others took a “cafeteria approach” to the model and selected components of SE which they employed within more traditional instructional units. Variations in these teachers’ occupational socialization appeared to account for their different interpretations and delivery of SE.

Purpose and Theoretical Framework

While we seem to have an understanding of the best practices for teaching the model to PTs and having them teach it as well as factors that impact their implementation of SE as inservice teachers, what remains to be understood is what SE looks like during PTs student internship. Thus, the purpose of the current study was to examine how two PTs interpreted and delivered SE during their student teaching practice and discover factors which led to the PTs interpreting and delivering the model in the ways that they did.

Since three previous studies (Curtner-Smith et al., 2008; Curtner-Smith & Sofo, 2004; Sofo, 2003) indicated that occupational socialization heavily influenced how, in Gore’s (1990) terms, PTs’ “read” SE, the same theoretical framework was used to guide data collection and analysis in the present study. Research questions focused on PTs acculturation (i.e., sporting experience, reasons for becoming a PE teacher, mentors/role models) and professional socialization (i.e., learning and teaching the SE model).

Occupational Socialization
Occupational socialization (see Curtner-Smith, 2001; Curtner-Smith et al., 2008; Lawson, 1983a, 1983b, Schempp & Graber, 1992; Templin & Schempp, 1989) is a theoretical framework that aids researchers in understanding why teachers think about and teach physical education as they do. Lawson (1986) defined occupational socialization as “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). Three types of socialization—acculturation, professional socialization, and organizational socialization—impact teachers’ conceptions of physical education and the way they teach it. Since organizational socialization refers to the influence of the workplace on inservice teachers, it was not a factor in the present study. The decision not to include organizational socialization was a reflection of the authors’ perception of the PTs’ role in the school rather than the school not being a real workplace.

Prior to entering PETE, prospective physical education teachers’ beliefs and values about the subject are influenced and shaped by key persons, contexts, and cultures. This influence and shaping process has been termed acculturation. An early love of all things sporting is often cited by PTs as their reason for entering PETE (Evans & Williams, 1989; Macdonald, Kirk, & Braiuka, 1999) and this love is often fostered by active parents (McGuire & Collins, 1998; Woolger & Power, 1993). In addition, the type and level of sport or activity and physical education in which prospective teachers participate during their formative years and the coaches and physical education teachers which they encounter have a lasting impact on their conceptions of the subject (Curtner-Smith, 1999; Green, 1998) and their understandings of gender and gendered practices (Brown & Evans, 2004). In short, watching, participating in, and learning about sport and physical activity is part of an “apprenticeship of observation” (Lortie, 1975) that teaches recruits what it means to be a physical education teacher (Schempp & Graber, 1992) and what that teacher should look like (Brown & Evans; Brown & Rich, 2002). Specifically, those who participate in high level and mainstream sport and encounter coaches and teachers who prioritize extracurricular sport over fairly weak physical education programs are more likely to enter PETE with a “coaching orientation” themselves and view teaching as a “career contingency.” Conversely, prospective teachers who participate in lower level or so-called minor sport or non-competitive physical activity and are taught by teachers and coaches who prioritize
high quality physical education over extracurricular sport are more likely to view coaching as a career contingency and enter PETE with a “teaching orientation” (Lawson, 1983a, 1983b).

Professional socialization refers to the influence of PETE on recruits (Lawson, 1983a). Unfortunately, it appears that PETE often has little or no impact on PTs, particularly those with strong coaching orientations. These recruits may well leave programs untouched (Curtner-Smith, 1999; Evans, 1992; Evans, Davies, & Penney, 1996; Placek et al., 1995). Rather than changing conceptions, EFEs and coursework are used by PTs to confirm beliefs (Doolittle, Dodds, & Placek, 1993). Fortunately, when PETE faculty are seen as credible by PTs, have undergone specialist training in sport pedagogy, confront faulty beliefs and values, provide close supervision of EFEs and student teaching, and agree on a “shared technical culture” (i.e., the knowledge and skills needed for effective teaching) (Lortie, 1975), they appear to have a much improved chance of influencing their charges for the better (Curtner-Smith, 1997, 2001).

Curtner-Smith et al. (2008) hypothesized that recruits with different orientations will employ the SE model differently. Those who are completely focused on coaching will not be influenced to teach SE by the PETE program and therefore will not use the model after graduating. Recruits who received high quality SE-PETE and who had a “moderate coaching orientation” would utilize the model upon graduating. It was hypothesized that the school culture where these recruits taught would impact the type of SE they delivered. Hence, an innovative school culture would likely facilitate the teachers’ implementing the full version of SE while a custodial culture was more apt to encourage the watered down or cafeteria approach to the model (Curtner-Smith et al.).

The last hypothesis presented by Curtner-Smith et al. (2008) suggested that recruits with a teaching orientation who received excellent training in SE in their PETE program would teach some form of SE. Once again, school culture would impact the type of season implemented. An innovative culture would see teachers implementing the full version of SE while those in a custodial culture would either fight to change the status quo and employ the full version of SE or, when faced with particularly fierce opposition, be forced to employ the watered down version of the model. Given that recruits’ teaching or coaching orientation is a key indicator to their using the SE model, this study focused on the PTs acculturation and professional socialization to discover what factors led the PTs to interpret and deliver the model the way they did.
Using Schempp and Graber’s (1992) teacher socialization from a dialectical perspective allows for a greater understanding of socialization and the aforementioned hypothesis. The dialectic is the “measure of change between and within an agency and an individual” (p. 330). In this study, the way the PTs interpret and deliver SE may be a reflection of the fact that they have participated in the dialectical process and are “in some measure the architects of what they believe and how they behave” (Schempp & Graber, p. 331). One aspect of this process is the reproduction of gender and masculine practices in physical education which reflects deeply rooted social norms of which the PTs may not be aware (Brown, 2005; Brown & Evans, 2004).

Method

Participants

The two participants in this study, Kendrick and Stuart1, were in the last semester of their PETE program within a public research university situated in the southeastern United States. Both PTs were engaged solely in their culminating student teaching practice during this semester. They came from small towns near the university and were 23 years of age. Kendrick was African-American and Stuart was European-American. They were selected for the study because their earlier coursework had suggested that they were potentially excellent physical education teachers. During their previous work both PTs were successful teaching students of all ages and showed a strong desire to improve as teachers. Moreover, their classroom work was of high quality. Finally, as noted in the literature review, PTs with a moderate coaching orientation or a teaching orientation are more likely to teach. Thus, these PTs were selected because they did not have a strong coaching orientation. Both signed consent forms in congruence with the university’s institutional review board policy on human subjects.

PTs’ Core PETE Program

Prior to the commencement of the study the PTs had completed three semesters in their PETE program. During each semester they completed a methods course and extensive EFEs. The PTs had also taken five content courses, all of which involved significant EFEs. The PTs were primarily trained to employ

1 The names of all individuals in this paper are fictitious.
five different curriculum models. These were conventional multi-activity teaching, SE, games for understanding, the skill theme approach, and health-related exercise. Most time and effort was spent on the SE model. Other pedagogical elements which featured, to a lesser extent, in the methods and content courses of the two PTs were effective teaching and managerial behaviors, Mosston’s spectrum of teaching styles, classroom ecology, and planning.

Setting

Kendrick and Stuart student taught at the same middle school for eight weeks. The sixth, seventh, and eighth grade pupils taught by the two PTs were mostly Caucasian and middle class. Class sizes ranged from 20 to 40 pupils. The school’s regular curriculum comprised various multi-activity units and health-related fitness and included university PT-taught SE seasons every year. Facilities and equipment were adequate and included a gymnasium and fairly expansive playing fields.

The PTs were supervised by two cooperating teachers (CTs) and one university supervisor (US). Molly was arguably the best middle school teacher and student teacher mentor in the school district in the eyes of the university PETE faculty. She was firmly oriented toward teaching and was very supportive of the university PETE program. Brad was a competent teacher, supportive of the PETE program, and PT-friendly but more oriented toward coaching. Jessica, the university supervisor, considered ST supervision the best part of her job. She was very familiar with SE having taught and supervised its implementation in EFEs. Jessica was well liked by all the STs and had a comfortable but authoritative relationship with them.

Stuart designed and taught two SE seasons (basketball and ultimate frisbee) while Kendrick was responsible for planning and delivering three SE seasons (one tennis season and two flag football seasons). Both PTs also taught one health-related fitness unit and Stuart also taught a multi-activity unit. For the purposes of the study only the SE seasons were observed.

At the time of data collection, the second researcher was teaching in the PETE program and had taught both PTs. The first researcher was a graduate student who had worked with both PTs in an undergraduate class. Neither researcher was involved in grading or supervising the student internship. Due to their prior involvement with the PTs, the researchers attempted to limit bias in the data analysis by checking for negative cases and requiring a minimum of two data sources for a finding. The researchers were
interested in finding out how the PTs learned, regardless of how it reflected on the program; positive findings could be used to reinforce current practices while negative results could foster change.

Data Collection

A variety of qualitative techniques were used to gather data which indicated how the PTs interpreted and delivered SE and how their acculturation and professional socialization influenced their interpretation and delivery of the model. Non-participant observation was utilized once per week for each PT and involved observing lessons and extensive note-taking.

Hour-long semi-structured formal interviews (Patton, 1990) took place at the beginning, middle, and completion of the teaching practice. These interviews were audiotaped and transcribed verbatim. Informal interviews were carried out whenever there was an opportunity to speak with the PTs. Detailed notes were recorded as soon as possible after each informal interview. Informal interviews were an opportunity for the researcher to ask questions and get to know the PTs on an informal level. For example, questions were related to where they saw themselves teaching, how the job search was going, what happened with certain students, the differences between early field experiences and student internship, successes and frustrations, and the like. Two audiotaped 50-minute stimulated recall interviews were also completed with each PT. During these interviews, lessons videotaped at the beginning and end of the teaching practice were replayed and periodically paused so that PTs could describe their thought processes behind specific courses of action.

Document analysis was carried out on copies of the PT’s teaching portfolios which they supplied to Jessica (their US) at the end of the teaching practice. These portfolios contained their season and lesson plans, evaluations of their pupils, and various materials they had developed during the teaching practice.

Finally, reflective electronic journal entries and critical incident reports were submitted by the PTs at the end of each week. The former involved writing about anything concerning the teaching of SE that seemed pertinent. Following O’Sullivan and Tsangaridou (1992), the latter consisted of describing events that occurred in SE seasons that the PTs thought were particularly significant.

Data Analysis

All data were put into the computer program QSR (2002) where the researcher then read, analyzed, and coded the data. This involved identifying data indicating how the PTs interpreted and delivered SE and
how their occupational socialization had influenced this interpretation and delivery. For example, formal interviews revealed that their acculturation into sport meant both PTs valued skill development while lesson plans showed that professional socialization prepared the PTs to develop progressions whereby the students would learn skills and strategy. Both these data types were then divided into themes, categories, and subcategories by using a combination of the analytic induction and constant comparison techniques (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984) and the computer program QSR. Credibility and trustworthiness were established by a search for negative cases throughout the analysis process and by cross-checking the accuracy of findings from the various data collection techniques (Goetz & LeCompte).

Results and Discussion

PTs’ Interpretation and Delivery of SE

The implementation of SE was verified according to Metzler’s (2000) teacher benchmarks. Thus, the PT provided the overall season structure, determined rules and game modifications, assigned and trained students for duty jobs, promoted cooperative learning, arbitrated disputes, planned player assessments, and promoted enthusiastic participation. The CT assigned teams for competitive balance. These aspects were verified using the PTs’ end of semester portfolios as well as observations (because IRB approval did not include interviews with students, student interviews were not used to verify the SE model).

Both PTs appeared to employ what Curtner-Smith et al. (2008) had termed the full version of the SE model during their teaching practice. There was no suggestion that either PT watered down the model or took a cafeteria approach to it. For example, the PTs lesson plans show they designed seasons which were at least 14 lessons long in similar form to the illustration given in one of their secondary methods textbooks (Hastie, 2003). (The average SE season was 24 lessons; university students out for an EFE taught SE to the first period two days a week.) This meant that during the first lesson they explained the model to their pupils and had their teams “elect” peers to various “roles” including “coach,” “captain,” “equity officer,” and “board member.” Early on in their seasons and in an effort to promote team cohesiveness, both PTs also constructed “bulletin boards” on which they posted information about the coming competitive season including the “schedule” and “player profiles.” Following a period of more conventional “basic skill” teaching, Kendrick and Stuart included a series of lessons in which pupils engaged in “pre-season” game play and a block of time
devoted to teaching pupils to “scorekeep,” “officiate,” and “keep stats.” The latter half of their units were
devoted to “regular season” competitive game play in “league” form, “post-season tournament” play, and the
culminating event. Further, game forms and playing dimensions were modified. For example, in Kendrick’s
tennis unit, pupils participated on modified courts and used table tennis scoring and underarm serves while in
Stuart’s ultimate frisbee season pupils played on smaller fields with fewer rules. Both PTs also included an
“awards ceremony” at the conclusion of their seasons and posted “results,” “league tables,” and “brackets” on
bulletin boards throughout competitive game play periods. Moreover, both evaluated pupils’ “competency,”
“literacy,” and “enthusiasm” by employing “process evaluation” charts. As illustrated by the following
quotations, both PTs were committed to gradually shifting from a more directive role to one in which they
facilitated their pupils’ learning:

> At the end, I didn’t give them too much feedback. I wanted to give them more
> responsibility . . . at the beginning give them and show them how to do it giving lots of
> feedback and stuff. Then, towards the end kind a kind a let them take over so they can
> have more responsibility. (Kendrick)

Stuart indicated that “in a sport ed unit it’s supposed to be more theirs.” Thus,

> when . . . the season starts, I’ll be more of a facilitator. I’ll just try to keep things running
> smoothly and help when I’m needed. Hopefully I can stay back and let them do it
> themselves; that’s the plan.

Finally, both PTs were enthusiastic about and committed to the SE model. When asked what
curriculum he would teach given a choice, Kendrick indicated “sport ed . . . I’d do sport ed with seventh
grade. That’s that level they can play and be different roles and stuff, learning strategy.” Stuart liked the SE
model because “the students have all their different roles, they’re a lot more involved than with multi-activity
or other curriculum models.”

Factors Influencing PTs’ Interpretation and Delivery of the SE Model

*Acculturation*
Early exposure to and interest in sport and physical activity. As the literature predicted, both PTs were drawn to a career in physical education by their early exposure to and interest in sport. Kendrick’s basketball playing uncles, for example, and the fact that he spent a lot of his childhood playing informal games of “football, basketball, [and] baseball” or “fishing,” “bike riding,” and “tree climbing” “outside” seemed to have given him an early nudge in this direction. Similarly, Stuart’s family’s major involvement in organized sport, particularly that of his father who “played baseball throughout high school” and whom Stuart referred to as “an athlete,” as well as his introduction to competitive sport at a very “young age” that included “playing T-Ball at five, . . . baseball at nine, . . . [and] basketball in the second grade,” obviously played a major role in attracting him to the profession early in life.

In their teens, both PTs continued participation and their growing love for all things active and sporting appeared to strengthen their attraction to a physical education career. Kendrick, for instance, enjoyed some success on his middle and high school basketball and football teams while Stuart played for his basketball and baseball school teams and then “walked on at a small college, for basketball” before transferring to the institution in which he completed his PETE.

Experiences of physical education. Also in congruence with the literature, both PTs’ experiences of physical education played a major role in shaping their orientations toward the subject once they entered PETE. Like many other American PTs (see Curtner-Smith, 1997, 1998, 2001; Curtner-Smith et al., 2008), however, Kendrick and Stuart’s experiences of school physical education were far from positive. At the elementary level, for example, Kendrick noted that he “didn’t really have a PE education” because his school “didn’t have a PE teacher so our [classroom] teachers would take us outside” to do any activity that the children “wanted to.” Similarly, Stuart noted that his elementary physical education “wasn’t real . . . wasn’t the type curriculum that we’re taught here [i.e., in PETE] . . . so, it was everything you’re taught not to do basically.” He went on to characterize it as being “more like recess really” because the ones [i.e., children] that wanted to go and play on the monkey bars on the playground, they could do that. There would be a basketball out there. I was always out there playing basketball. My PE teacher was the basketball coach for the junior high team. So I mean he had no problem with us playing basketball everyday. So that’s pretty much . . . what I did.
Moreover, Stuart relayed that

> When I got into the seventh grade they had it set up so that the... seventh, eighth and ninth grade boys had PE the last period so that... we could practice basketball... And so from seventh, eighth grade it was pretty much an athletics class. Then, when I got in high school... it was the same thing... So, PE kinda, really ended at sixth grade cause after that I was in, I guess what you would call, athletics class.

In addition, Kendrick recalled that “in high school [physical education] was a little better. We played softball and basketball, football that’s about it... We were on teams, but we didn’t keep up with the scores or... post the results... we just played.”

> Why then, with this kind of background and apprenticeship of observation, did these two PTs aspire to become physical education teachers? For both, the answer was that their enjoyment of and interest in “sports and health” and the “opportunity” to “remain involved in sports” overcame any negative experiences that they had had during school physical education, plus there was the familiar refrain that they would be able to give children “an education better than [they had] had.” In addition, while recognizing that their programs had been weak, both hinted that they had still “looked forward” to their physical education. Further, one of Kendrick’s “best coaches” appeared to have had a major impact on him. As Kendrick explained,

> I liked him the most. He used to do PE, too. He got the job at the elementary school when I was a senior. I used to go to the elementary school with him and help him with his classes. I guess that might have of influenced me to be a PE teacher, cause he was doing a lot of stuff and I was like—I didn’t do this when I was in elementary PE. . . . He was doing multi-activity stuff. . . . He’d do skill themes and we didn’t do that so I was like, “what you doing?”

Orientations. Although both PTs had similar patterns of acculturation, subtle differences in the process for each led to them entering PETE with differing orientations toward the subject. Kendrick’s greater exposure to informal sport and physical activity and to a positive role model led to him entering with a teaching orientation. Conversely, Stuart’s greater exposure to organized competitive sport led him to entering
PETE with a moderate coaching orientation. These differing orientations are captured in the following extracts from the two PTs: Kendrick stated, “I didn’t have the best education in PE. I guess I want to give the kids; well the kids I teach I know I’m gonna give them an education better than I had.” Stuart revealed, “I wanted to be a PE teacher because, like I said, sports and things like that are real important to me and that was a great way I saw to be involved, just remain involved in that.” In this instance, the PTs acculturation seemed to encourage them to implement the full version of SE because it provided their students with a valuable physical education experience—unlike what they had growing up.

**Professional Socialization**

*SE-PETE prior to teaching practice.* A key reason for the two PTs delivering the full version of the SE model and being relatively competent and enthusiastic about doing so was the type and amount of SE-PETE they had received prior to their student teaching practice. Indeed, both PTs were complimentary about their preparation to teach the model:

> He [our methods instructor] did a real good job of teaching us making sure we get all the roles down and responsibilities make sure we explain our responsibilities and when you first start off make sure you’re in control of everything and get everything down. So, at the end you can kinda back off and let them take care of their roles. Make sure they’re doing what they are supposed to be doing.

(Kendrick)

Moreover, all of the experience teaching SE in the EFEs gave Stuart confidence “as much experience as we’ve had through all that I feel pretty comfortable with my teaching. I know how the curriculum works and I feel like I have a pretty good base set of the knowledge.”

Curtner-Smith et al. (2008) had emphasized that a “package” of pedagogical techniques, methods, and strategies had been responsible for producing decent teachers of SE in their study. These packages had ranged from those which emphasized watching good examples of SE and listening to good practitioners of the model to those which emphasized practicing and “doing” the model. The package which Kendrick, Stuart, and their classmates received erred more toward the latter in type. Initially, there was some discussion of the model and the PTs were provided with an example of a season plan during class time within their secondary methods course. In addition, PTs were required to read Siedentop et al. (2004) and were tested over this text.
The main mode by which they learned the model, however, was by teaching 10-lesson prescribed mini-units of soccer, volleyball, tennis, and track and field during EFEs at two middle schools. These units were closely supervised by faculty members with qualifications in sport pedagogy who took every opportunity to contrast effective and non-effective teaching. In addition, the faculty had taken care to develop a somewhat unique technical language by which they and PTs could discuss teaching, which was drawn from the various pedagogical elements and paradigms included in methods and content courses. In other words, based on the literature, the faculty had tried to give themselves every chance of having a positive impact on their charges. Based on the comments of Kendrick and Stuart, in general, they seem to have succeeded:

You have to know about it [SE] to be able to teach it . . . before going through the program if you told me about sport ed I wouldn’t have a clue what you were talking about. I think it’s important that you have to know about the model.

Kendrick was very comfortable teaching SE “just because we did it a lot, practice and stuff, so it’s pretty easy now.” Moreover, Kendrick and Stuart clearly thought that learning about and then teaching the model in their EFEs was particularly crucial to their understanding and implementation of SE.

Teaching practice. Kendrick and Stuart’s interpretation and delivery of SE during teaching practice was also, not surprisingly, greatly influenced by a number of factors at work during this culminating internship. Specifically, these were the impact of their CTs and US, the extent to which they were held accountable for teaching the model, and the nature of the pupils they encountered. These factors, then, were very similar to those organizational socialization agents Curtner-Smith et al. (2008) had noted shaped the beginning teachers they had studied once they had graduated and begun their careers.

The most important role played by the two CTs and the US responsible for mentoring Kendrick and Stuart appeared to be providing conditions in which the two PTs had a chance to succeed in the first place. For example, between them, Molly, Brad, and Jessica were very clear about which classes Kendrick and Stuart would teach using the SE model, indicated from an early stage that the two PTs would be responsible for planning and teaching these seasons by themselves, and made every effort to avoid any interruptions of these seasons. In addition and importantly, the two CTs indicated from the outset that they were receptive to
SE. Kendrick and Stuart also noted that their CTs and US were helpful in terms of “forming teams,” identifying types of students, “school routines,” “discipline sheets,” and general support and feedback.

The fact that Kendrick and Stuart were held accountable for teaching SE also clearly made a difference to their teaching. While the evaluation of their performance was partially based on their ability to use 13 behaviors derived mostly from the teacher effectiveness research (e.g., “establishment of rules, routines, and expectations;” “establishment of a business-like but warm environment focused on pupil learning”), it also involved an assessment of their ability to include the various components and elements of the SE model. For example, they were assessed on their ability to “produce a humane and worthy sporting culture,” teach within seasons,” “create an atmosphere of festivity,” develop “affiliation within teams,” and include “formal competition” and a “culminating event.” In other words, and as Stuart acknowledged, the PTs were given very little room to maneuver because they had “to get through and get everything done, for [a] grade on everything.”

The most significant teaching practice factor influencing the two PTs teaching of SE, however, was the nature of the pupils they taught. Again, like some of the beginning teachers studied by Curtner-Smith et al. (2008), the fact that the PTs felt “plagued” by behavioral and managerial problems, generally in the form of “cutting up” and not “listening,” meant that implementing the full version of the model was not easy. Indeed considerable dissonance was caused by the pressure to use indirect teaching styles with the pupils and make pupils “familiar with RREs [i.e., rules, routines, and expectations]” and “stay on top of them.” As Stuart wrote in his journal, “I had to spend a lot of time getting them familiar with the RRE’s again, but I plan to stay on top of those so maybe everything will start to flow a little better.” Moreover, the behavior problems encountered meant that he and Kendrick were “restricted” in what they could do. Finally, the reason Stuart taught one multi-activity unit was because he (and his CT and US) did not believe it was possible to teach SE to such an ill-disciplined class.

A second restrictive pupil factor influencing the two PTs’ teaching of SE was their lack of skill and experience in sport. Kendrick, for example, noted that he “had to spend . . . more time on how to hold the racquet and hitting” at the beginning of his tennis unit “instead of going straight to preseason” since his pupils were “very low skilled.” This change was reflected in his lesson plans.
Similarly, Stuart noted early on that he had “realized a few things about some of [his] classes and one is that they are not the most skilled groups of children.” Further, as a result of the low skill level,

An official could call something every second if they really wanted to [during formal game play] and you would have to stop action all the time. . . . I try to help the referees as much as I can. It seems like I spend more time doing that than I do any kind of technical feedback really. 

Stuart’s work with the officials was observed on a number of occasions and captured here: Where are the officials? Referees, come here. Corey and others come here. Be a little more lenient with your calls, don’t be so strict.

Finally, the fact that many pupils appeared to lack any idea of what constituted “sporting behavior” and “fair play” severely tested Stuart and Kendrick’s ability to implement the model with any success. An exasperated Stuart, for instance, explained how his pupils constantly “argued and fought with the referees” and that although he “emphasized sportsmanship . . . they [i.e., his pupils] didn’t show much improvement.” He went on to explain how he would hear some pupils “talk down to their teammate” and that even “the ones that [would] refrain from calling out a teammate . . . still weren’t really encouraging. They didn’t really change their attitude a whole lot. They just didn’t blast them openly . . . when I was around.” Kendrick, however, used the flexibility in the model to help improve sporting behavior. He wrote in his critical incident that he changed the points awarded for sporting behavior to “four” for one class which resulted in them doing “a better job during today’s lesson. This was significant because I hope by changing the sportsmanship points the students will see the importants [sic] of working together and have good sportsmanship.” This did seem to make a difference because later in the unit Kendrick corresponded that “Most of the classes did a good job with sportsmanship and playing as a team.”

Summary and Conclusions

As expected, and in congruence with the previous literature, this study indicated that a PT with a teaching orientation was fairly easily inducted by what appeared to be reasonably high quality SE-PETE. The most important finding, however, was that the study also illustrated that a PT who entered PETE with a moderate coaching orientation was also won over to the extent that he willingly delivered the full version of the SE model in circumstances that were not exactly optimal. Like the studies conducted by Curtner-Smith
and Sofo (2004), Sofo (2003), and Curtner-Smith et al. (2008), the main reason why Stuart, the moderately coaching-oriented PT, was committed to the model in the first place was its compatibility with his acculturation. It may also be a reflection of the dialectical process (Schempp & Graber, 1992) whereby he found a curriculum model that fit in with his experiences and expectations while also allowing him engage in the teaching required by his PETE program. Specifically, the focus on real sport, reinforcing traditionally gendered teaching practices (Brown, 2005; Brown & Evans, 2004; Brown & Rich, 2002), appealed to him whereas, perhaps, the foci of other competing curricular models may not have. In line with the arguments of Curtner-Smith and Sofo (2004), then, this study provided further evidence suggesting that the SE model could be used to break the cycle of non-teaching that the normal pattern of occupational socialization tends to produce in the United States, particularly within male teachers. It is important to note that implementing SE is not an easy task, and that SE is very different from coaching a team of willing athletes. In fact, while Stuart may have been won over to SE in his student internship, it remains to be seen what the long term impact of this model will be on his teaching.

The study also provided more detailed evidence about the kind of SE-PETE needed to induct both those PTs who enter thirsting for pedagogical knowledge (i.e., with a teaching orientation) and those who enter somewhat skeptical about the whole PETE process (i.e., with a moderate coaching orientation). In congruence with both the general and SE-focused occupational socialization literature, and reflecting what is known about the dialectic nature of socialization (Schempp & Graber, 1992), the study suggested that the core of any high quality SE-PETE program should be the teaching of a series of faculty-prescribed mini-seasons within EFEs as well as the teaching of PT-designed full seasons within teaching practice. In addition, faculty credibility, their commitment to training teachers and their preparation to do so, their understanding and appreciation of PTs’ acculturation, their willingness to contrast good and poor pedagogies and to supervise EFEs and teaching practice closely, and their ability to develop a technical language through which they and PTs can discuss teaching all seem to play a significant part in winning PTs over and facilitating their competence. Finally, the conditions encountered by PTs in their culminating teaching practice would appear to be fairly crucial in terms of both learning and gaining the confidence to teach using the SE model. Specifically, optimal conditions would involve PTs being supervised by relatively innovative CTs, being
asked to teach pupils who are reasonably well-disciplined in the first place and who have a reasonable level of skill and a basic understanding of sport, and being held directly accountable for teaching SE in its full form. Given the ideal teaching situation for these PTs, the question remains whether in conditions where PTs are not held accountable for teaching the full version of SE by conservative CTs to students who are not well disciplined, what would SE look like? In fact, the decision was made by the CT and US for Stuart to not teach SE to one class because of the nature of the students; had the attempt been made the results may have been very different from what was found here. Researching these different environments can help PETE faculty better understand the factors that limit SE implementation and attempt to address them in their programs.

The socialization literature indicates that PTs enter the major because of a love of activity so while some recruits may have limited content knowledge, their professional socialization should prepare them well enough to allow them to successfully teach a variety of activities. In addition, research on SE and knowledge types suggests that it is “not necessary for PTs to have high levels of content and pedagogical content knowledge in order to use SE effectively, providing they had a good understanding of the model, general pedagogical knowledge, and their pupils” (Stran, 2007). This seems to address any shortcoming in PTs content knowledge and may permit PTs to implement the model even if their CTs have limited exposure to it.
References


