

Steps to a Successful Physical Education Teacher Education Workshop

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to describe the steps to the development of a successful Physical Education Teacher Education (PETE) workshop. PETE professors share a common goal for improving undergraduate pedagogy instruction. Pedagogy issues and concerns include curriculum decisions, field experience assignments, technology in the classroom, peer teaching ideas, assessment, electronic portfolios and textbook decisions. As a way of sharing ideas and brainstorming, university and college PETE professors in Tennessee meet annually at rotating campus sites. A core group of organizers plan the workshop based on interests and concerns expressed by attendees. The ultimate goal of the workshops is to better prepare future physical educators who are currently enrolled in university and college undergraduate licensure programs. The Tennessee Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (TAHPERD) sponsors the annual event.

Introduction

For the past five years, university and college Physical Education Teacher Education (PETE) professors in Tennessee have met to discuss topics and issues pertinent to pedagogy instruction. The organizers recognized the need for a structured workshop to share teaching ideas, assignments, assessment tools, and other pedagogy specific topics. The intent of the workshop is not to place any undue planning burden on the presenters so attendees are asked to bring examples of assignments pertinent to the agenda. The workshop is a one-day event in September sponsored by the Tennessee Association for

Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (TAHPERD).

The site rotates each year and is determined by a participant who volunteers to host the group. The host college or university is responsible for finalizing the agenda, securing the room and planning the meals. All correspondences are done through e-mail and are the responsibility of the host school to send out notices soliciting workshop ideas and details of the upcoming event.

Goals and Objectives of the Workshop

The first step in the initial planning process is to determine the goals and objectives of the workshop. Goals and objectives focus on what is to be accomplished in the one-day workshop. The four objectives which outline the purpose of the Tennessee PETE workshop are: 1) To share teaching strategies used in PETE methods courses; 2) To share observation-hour requirements for pre-service teachers to include assignments, peer teaching activities and assessment tools; 3) To compare college and university undergraduate curriculums leading to Tennessee licensure; and 4) To demonstrate the latest use of technology to improve pre-service PETE experiences.

Steps to planning a workshop

Once the goals and objectives of the workshop are determined, the process of planning can begin. The following steps explain the process that Tennessee organizers follow resulting in a successful annual event.

Step One. Select one or two people who are willing to take the lead in planning the first workshop. Laying the groundwork for the first workshop requires additional time commitments from the lead planners. The lead planners are

responsible for contacting potential attendees by mailing letters or e-mailing all the university and colleges chairpersons in the state asking for the names and contact information of PETE faculty. Additionally, ask for a mailing list from the state professional organization. Once the mailing list is generated, future workshops are managed much easier.

Step Two. Determine if a funding source is available. Contact the state professional organization inquiring about funds for professional workshops. In Tennessee, the workshop is sponsored by the Tennessee Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance. The sponsoring organization by-laws may require attendees to be current members so have application forms available at the workshop.

Step Three. Prepare a budget. Suggested budget categories are the following: travel money for each attendee; lodging for anyone who has to travel more than two hours; continental breakfast and lunch; secretarial costs; and room rental fee, if any. The travel money is a flat rate per car and there is no registration fee to attend. The host school adjusts the categories to meet the unique needs of the university and submits it to the lead planners. The sponsoring organization may prepare its budget one year in advance so become familiar with the organization's deadlines.

Step Four. Select the host site. Meet at centrally located college or university, especially for the first workshop. The success of the first workshop, as measured by attendance, is enhanced by a location easily accessible. Because faculty have many other commitments, keeping travel time to a minimum is an incentive to attend. A one-day event without the necessity for overnight stay provides flexibility to the faculty member's travel plans.

Step Five. Select the workshop date. Investigate the host site's academic and athletic schedules to avoid conflicts with campus closures and home athletic contests. Also research the dates of the state, district and national conventions

avoiding events that would have priority over attending the PETE workshop.

Step Six. Secure a conference room on campus by selecting a multi-purpose facility. A checklist for room acceptability includes flexibility in moving the tables and chairs to increase group interaction; availability of technology to meet the needs of the presenters; and permission to have food and drinks in the room or at least nearby.

Step Seven. E-mail a short memo to the prospective attendees stating the intent of the workshop. Include in the memo the location, date, and time of the workshop. Request agenda items and give a two-week deadline for input. Also, solicit names and addresses of other colleagues who may be interested in attending.

Step Eight. Determine an agenda from the requested ideas. The agenda is the guide for the day but may change depending on the interest and dialogue generated by the attendees. Allow for flexibility within the agenda to account for issues that may spark more conversation than anticipated. Most importantly, plan an open forum near the end of the day for open discussion or networking to occur.

Step Nine. Ask the person who sent the topic idea to be the lead presenter for that session. To alleviate the burden of another assignment to a faculty's already full schedule, keep the presenter's preparation to a minimal. The session leader has the option of formally presenting the topic or acting as the moderator in a round table discussion.

Step Ten. Invite a campus administrator, dean, or department chair to give the opening remarks. Promoting the workshop within the host campus is beneficial to the professional service of the faculty and enhances the visibility of the sponsoring organization.

Step Eleven. Contact campus food service requesting continental breakfast and lunch for the attendees. In planning the agenda, consider how to best utilize the lunch break. To save time, the group can eat while a session continues. Another

idea is to have the group walk to the cafeteria as they tour the campus. Or lastly, leave the lunch time open for networking and informal discussion.

Step Twelve. E-mail a reminder three weeks before the date with the final agenda and directions to campus. Include in the e-mail a request for attendees to bring examples relevant to the ideas listed on the agenda. For example, if development of course syllabi is one of the sessions, have attendees bring copies of PETE syllabi.

Step Thirteen. Prepare an assessment instrument to solicit feedback at the end of the workshop. The questions should be brief and focus on the goals and objectives of the workshop. The implementation of the assessment can either be written or open discussion at the end of the day. If the latter is chosen, select someone to write down the comments.

Planning the next workshop

Planning for the next workshop begins at the conclusion of the current workshop. Before adjourning at the end of the day, ask participants for input regarding the following items: 1) ask someone to volunteer to host the next workshop; 2) come to a consensus for a suitable date; and 3) request topics and ideas for the next workshop. Attendees will return to the next workshop if the site and date are suitable and the future discussion items are pertinent to their needs.

Benefits of the workshop

There are many benefits to having an annual gathering of discipline specific professors. A strong networking system forms that surpasses any previous professional interactions at state, regional or national conventions. The workshop brings together professors from private and public colleges across the state resulting in a sense of community that may not be in place prior to the annual workshop. The informal format of the workshop allows for interpersonal interactions forming new professional relationships.

Outcomes of this interaction include co-authored publications, co-presentations at professional meetings and a means of identifying PETE faculty in the state with particular areas of expertise.

A second benefit is the faculty member maintaining a connection to current best practices in PETE programs. Undergraduate teacher education is dynamic and requires a constant examination to fulfilling the intent of National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) standards. National standards provide a framework for the planning process but the PETE professors have responsibility of preparing assignments and providing experiences to meet the standards. Realizing that other PETE professors are doing similar assignments and projects reaffirms one's dedication to the profession.

A third benefit of the workshop is that it provides a forum to disseminate state legislative actions, NCATE or NASPE issues that may be at the forefront of future change. The organized meeting is already in place and provides a setting to present information. PETE professors take the information back to their respective campuses with a level of expertise or understanding of the issues.

Next, the workshops bring visibility to the sponsoring state organization. Visibility occurs through campus signage and meeting in a highly visible area such as a conference room in the university center. Students, administrators, and other campus faculty see the signs and participants and may inquire about the workshop and its purpose.

Lastly, organizing, presenting or attending a professional workshop shows evidence of service to one's profession as expected in many higher education faculty dossiers. Professional service as defined by the respective campus has a positive impact on the annual faculty evaluation. Attendees to the workshop have the opportunity to choose their level of involvement as an organizer, host, presenter or participant.

Conclusion

The success of the workshop, as measured by the repeated attendance year to year, has surpassed the expectations of the original planners. The participants look forward to the annual event and interacting with colleagues who share similar concerns. Attendees leave the workshop with new relationships and pedagogy ideas that renew their spirit for the academic year. Better preparing PETE students and improving PETE instruction continues as the ultimate goal.

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