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PEDAGOGY

Challenges and Facilitators to the Implementation of a Sport Education Season: The Voices of Teacher Candidates

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Abstract

Background/Purpose: *Physical education teacher education (PETE) programs have been encouraged to provide teacher candidates (TCs) with the competencies and dispositions needed to implement a variety of curriculum and instructional models. Likewise, it has been suggested that TCs should have opportunities to practice implementing such models in field experiences that are closely related to methods courses. Given these recommendations, it is important to conduct research on the pedagogy implications related to the inclusion of a range of curriculum and instructional models in PETE programs. The purpose of this study was to examine TCs' perceptions of the challenges and facilitators associated with the implementation of a Sport Education (SE) season in a 5-week field experience.* ***Method:*** *In this qualitative inquiry, participants were 13 TCs enrolled in pedagogical content knowledge classes within an accredited PETE program. Data were collected through focus groups conducted on the week following the field experience conclusion. The focus groups followed a semistructured format, in which discussion prompts were designed to capture TCs' perceptions of the challenges and facilitators related to planning, classroom management, content delivery, and assessment of a SE season.*

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Data Analysis: *Data were analyzed using the inductive content analysis stages suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994), along with the constant comparative method.* ***Results/ Discussion:*** *TCs consistently reported the following challenges related to the implementation of a SE season: (a) spending time and energy on planning, (b) establishing fair teams, and (c) assessing student learning. Alternatively, TCs consistently indicated the following facilitators related to the implementation of a SE season: (a) experiencing the model as a student in the 10 weeks preceding the field experience, (b) establishing the routines pertinent to the SE model, and (c) having knowledgeable and helpful supervisors.* ***Conclusion:*** *Findings from this study contribute to the existent body of literature on how teachers learn to implement the SE model. This study provides relevant information related to the issues that might hinder or facilitate a SE season implementation from TCs' perspectives. This information can contribute to the design of SE-based field experiences in PETE programs.*

The adoption of traditional multiactivity curriculum models in physical education (PE) continues to be a hindrance to student learning and engagement, particularly at the secondary level (Bulger & Housner, 2009; Ennis, 2014). Characterized by short units of instruction focused on team sports, multiactivity curricula have been criticized in the literature for several reasons, including limited opportunities for skills development, lack of meaning and relevance, and the marginalization of nonathletic students (Ennis, 2014; Garn, Cothran, & Jenkins, 2011). Despite the wide range of alternative curriculum and instructional models available to physical educators (e.g., Sport Education, Teaching Games for Understanding, Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility, fitness education, adventure education), multiactivity approaches continue to dominate the PE scenario at the middle and high school levels (Ennis, 2014; Ferry & McCaughtry, 2013; Kirk, 2013). It has been suggested that one of the factors contributing to this longstanding predominance of multiactivity curricula in PE is teachers' lack of training regarding the implementation of innovative curriculum and instructional models (Ennis, 2014). Toward this end, physical education teacher education (PETE) programs have been encouraged to provide teacher candidates (TCs) with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to teach using a variety of curriculum and in-

structional models, an approach identified as model-based instruction (Deenihan, MacPhail, & Young, 2011; Gurvitch, Blankenship, Metzler, & Lund, 2008; McMahon & MacPhail, 2007). This approach suggests that PETE programs should provide TCs with multiple opportunities to learn, experience, observe, and think critically about different curriculum and instructional models (Gurvitch et al., 2008). Furthermore, scholars have argued that TCs should be given ample opportunities to teach using these models in early field experiences and during student teaching (McMahon & MacPhail, 2007). In their descriptive analysis of undergraduate PETE programs, Ayers and Housner (2008) reported that 50% of the examined programs included varied curriculum models in their curricular structure (i.e., Sport Education, skill themes, fitness education). This indicates a growing awareness among teacher educators regarding the need to expose TCs to a wide range of curriculum models in teacher preparation programs. However, this shift toward a model-based instructional approach in PETE is certainly accompanied with the challenges inherent to any paradigm change, including the need to understand how TCs learn to employ these models. Although there is not a consensus among PETE programs regarding which curriculum and instructional models should be included in their curricula, it appears that Sport Education (SE) is a model commonly adopted by numerous PETE programs (Ayers & Housner, 2008; Deenihan et al., 2011).

Sport Education

Sport Education is a student-centered curriculum and instruction model "designed to provide authentic, educationally rich sport experiences in the context of school physical education" (Siedentop, 2002, p. 409). The SE model differs from youth, community, and interscholastic sports in that it attempts to replicate a season similar to authentic forms of sports, yet ensures that all students participate equally and achieve educational outcomes (Siedentop, 2002). The model aims to help students "develop as competent, literate, and enthusiastic sportspersons" (Siedentop, Hastie, & van der Mars, 2011, p. 4). The competency-related outcomes of SE refer to students being knowledgeable and skillful game players in different sports (Siedentop, 2002). The literacy-related outcomes attempt to ensure that students value and understand the sport, along with being

able to differentiate between positive and negative sports practices (Siedentop, 2002). Finally, the enthusiasm-related outcomes of SE aim to foster behaviors that maintain, protect, and enrich the culture of various sports (Siedentop, 2002). The SE model is characterized by several key elements that make it unique and different from multiactivity approaches to PE. These include affiliation to teams, performance of different sports roles (e.g., player, coach, trainer, manager, referee), scheduled formal competitions, record keeping, a culminating event, and festivity. Those elements are incorporated into a sports season, allowing for students to experience the multiple facets of any given sports culture.

Sport Education is likely the most researched curriculum model in PE (Kirk, 2013). Research on SE over the past two decades has shown the model strengths and robustness in providing students with authentic sport experiences (Araújo, Mesquita, & Hastie, 2014). Scholars who have investigated the effectiveness of SE on student learning indicate substantial effect of the model on the enthusiasm-related outcomes and emerging findings related to the competency- and literacy-related outcomes (Hastie, de Ojeda, & Luquin, 2011). Moreover, the array of research on SE has shown the model applicability to different age levels, cultural contexts, gender, abilities, and sports (Hastie et al., 2011). Given these positive outcomes associated with SE in the literature, physical educators have been encouraged to learn how to use the model to deliver quality and meaningful PE (Deenihan et al., 2011; McMahon & MacPhail, 2007). However, despite the increasing body of knowledge regarding the effectiveness and appropriateness of SE in secondary PE settings, research on how teachers learn to implement the model is still in its early stages (Stran & Curtner-Smith, 2009).

Sport Education in PETE

Initial investigations on the inclusion of SE in PETE programs have provided insight related to the issues faced by TCs when attempting to implement the model during field experiences and student teaching. Curtner-Smith and Sofo (2004) examined TCs' perceptions of SE and the multiactivity model. Their findings indicated that TCs found SE more attractive than the multiactivity model and were compelled to use SE because of its congruency with their beliefs about the profession. Moreover, findings suggested that TCs valued

SE for its cultural relevance, student-centered perspective, and potential for community building in PE. From a different standpoint, McCaughtry, Sofo, Rovegno, and Curtner-Smith (2004) identified the pitfalls encountered by TCs as they learned to implement the SE model in early field experiences. Findings indicated that TCs struggled to incorporate tactical skills development within SE and lacked understanding of some of the model characteristics such as the need for ample opportunities to develop motor skills. Further, their study revealed that TCs were resistant to implement the full version of SE in future teaching experiences and willing to compromise some of its critical components given the amount of time and energy they attributed to planning and preparation (McCaughtry et al., 2004).

McMahon and MacPhail (2007) used the occupational socialization theory to examine one TC's perceptions of the inhibitors and facilitators in the process of learning how to teach using SE. Lack of experience with SE seemed to be the main inhibitor for this particular TC to use the model effectively during student teaching. The authors also noted that the school's socialization issues such as the cooperating teacher's understanding of the model and students' expectations of PE influenced how the examined TC taught using SE. Similar to McCaughtry et al. (2004), McMahon and MacPhail also reported that lack of knowledge on tactical instruction resulted in challenges to adequately teach using SE. Stran and Curtner-Smith (2009) examined the influence of the occupational socialization theory on TCs' interpretation and delivery of SE during student teaching. Findings revealed that TCs who had both teaching and coaching orientations were willing to deliver the full version of SE and did not compromise its key components. In regard to the TC who had a coaching orientation, it appeared that his experiences and expectations about the profession were aligned with the focus on "real sports" presented by the SE model, which Curtner-Smith and Sofo (2004) also observed.

More recently, Deenihan et al. (2011) studied the inclusion of SE in PETE based on the recommendations outlined by the available literature on the topic. The authors used the idea of "living the curriculum" described by Oslin, Collier, and Mitchell (2001) as a theoretical framework to discuss programmatic features that have the potential to facilitate TCs' learning and appreciation for the model. This approach emphasizes the need for PETE programs to include

a variety of instructional models in their structure so that TCs can "live the curriculum" prior to trying implement it (Deenihan et al., 2011). In summary, Deenihan et al. concluded that the inclusion of SE in PETE programs may be more effective when TCs (a) are exposed to the SE principles and characteristics prior to attempting to use the model, (b) have opportunities to experience the model as students, (c) observe SE lessons taught well by teachers in local schools, (d) have opportunities to teach using the model during field experiences and student teaching, (e) are supervised by individuals who are knowledgeable about SE, and (f) have opportunities to reflect upon the organizational socialization issues that might hinder the implementation of SE in schools. These recommendations align with previous suggestions on how to best insert SE in PETE curricula and prepare TCs to incorporate full versions of SE when they are in the field (McCaughtry et al., 2004; McMahon & MacPhail, 2007; Stran & Curtner-Smith, 2009). These studies present important insight on how TCs learn and react to the SE model, but questions about TCs' experiences with SE in PETE remain. Specifically, there is a need to gain greater understanding on how TCs respond to SE when the model is incorporated in PETE programs based on the recommendations found in the literature. The purpose of this study was to examine TCs' perceptions of the challenges and facilitators associated with the implementation of a full SE season in a 5-week field experience.

Method

Context

This study was conducted within pedagogy content knowledge (PCK) courses of an accredited PETE program of a mid-Atlantic university. As part of this PETE curriculum, TCs are required to complete 12 credits of PCK courses distributed across their junior and senior years. All the PCK courses are taught according to the SE model and include a field experience. In this field experience, TCs teach a 1-credit sport/physical activity course to college students using the SE model.

PCK classes. During their junior year, TCs take six PCK courses, all of them focused on team sports (i.e., volleyball, soccer, basketball, softball, hockey, and flag football). In their senior year, TCs also take

six PCK courses, all of them focused on individual sports or lifetime physical activities (i.e., archery, bowling, golf, pickleball, dance, and disc sports). Each of these courses is worth 1 credit hour, and TCs (in both their junior and senior years) attend all of the six classes simultaneously for 10 weeks. Graduate assistants, who are under the supervision of a senior faculty, teach the PCK courses according to the SE model. The graduate assistants and the senior faculty meet once a week to plan and evaluate the courses. These meetings help all instructors to be consistent with the key components of SE and to follow a similar structure as they deliver the lessons. All the classes follow the same structure and incorporate the following elements of a SE season: affiliation, multiple roles, formal competition, record keeping, culminating event, and festivity. Teacher candidates are placed in teams on the first week of classes and remain in the same teams through the entire season in all sports/physical activities. They perform different roles across the season including coach, team captain, referee, fitness trainer, and equipment manager. During these 10 weeks, TCs learn how to teach different sports/physical activities using the SE model but also spend time planning and preparing to teach the 5-week course. Each TC is responsible for designing a unit plan for the course and for preparing a syllabus. In their junior year, TCs accomplish these tasks in small groups (two or three students), but in their senior year they do this individually. During this process, the graduate assistants act as supervisors, guiding TCs through the unit planning and syllabus design. In this PETE program, TCs are exposed to the SE extensively and have the opportunity to experience the main features of SE from a student standpoint. Prior to enrolling in those courses, TCs also study the model and learn about its objectives, characteristics, and pitfalls during a curriculum course taught in their sophomore year. This immersion in the SE model as a student allows TCs to gain deeper understanding of the nuances of the model, preparing them to teach a sport using SE in the subsequent 5 weeks.

Field experience. During the subsequent 5 weeks, TCs teach one sport/physical activity course to college students enrolled in the basic instruction program. The basic instruction program offers a variety of team and individual sports as well as recreational physical activity courses for students of all majors across the university.

These courses, offered over a 5-week period, are worth 1 academic credit. A maximum of 25 students can be enrolled in each course, and classes are typically full. Although the basic instruction courses are designed for beginners, it is not uncommon for TCs to encounter students at different skill levels in these classes. Junior TCs teach team sports courses, whereas senior TCs teach individual sports or physical activity courses. The graduate assistants supervise TCs across these 5 weeks of field experience and provide guidance and support in the development of a unit plan and lesson plans, lesson delivery, and student assessment.

In this field experience, TCs teach the courses using SE and follow the same structure of the PCK classes including the same key elements of the model (i.e., affiliation, multiple roles, formal competition, record keeping, culminating event, and festivity). The courses are designed as a SE season, and each lesson is a stepping stone to the next, with the goal of preparing students to participate successfully in the culminating event during the last week of classes. On the first day of class, TCs assess students' skill levels and assign them to teams, in which they remain until the end of the season. The subsequent lessons follow the same structure and routine. The lesson begins with a quiz on a reading that had been previously assigned to the students. After that, the TC responsible for the class describes and demonstrates the technical or tactical skill to be learned on that day. The students then participate in a dynamic warm-up, which is led by the team fitness trainer for the day. Meanwhile, the TC meets with the team coaches for the day to discuss the coaching plan for that lesson. Students spend the majority of the class practicing the technical or tactical skills under the guidance of the team coach and the TC's supervision. At the end of the class, students participate in an application task, which is a game-like competition among the teams. In all the basic instruction courses, students are assessed within the cognitive, psychomotor, and affective domains through quizzes, application tasks, and performance of their roles as team members.

Participants

All TCs enrolled in PCK courses (juniors and seniors, $N = 22$) were invited to participate in this study through a cover letter sent via e-mail by their field-experience supervisors. Thirteen TCs agreed

to participate in this study (11 males, two females). Seven TCs were in their junior year and taught team sports; the remaining six TCs were in their senior year and taught individual sports or physical activities. Participating TCs were Caucasian and ranged in age from 19 to 23 years old.

Data Sources

In this qualitative inquiry, data were collected through focus group interviews. Focus groups are commonly used to gather qualitative data on how people think about issues and programs (Krueger & Casey, 2009). Focus groups are also used to encourage participants to express a variety of viewpoints in a safe atmosphere through group interactions (Krueger & Casey, 2009). In this study, focus group discussions were selected given their potential to identify a range of perceptions of the challenges and facilitators for the implementation of a SE season among TCs within a comfortable and nonthreatening environment. Furthermore, focus groups discussions enabled TCs to share their thoughts and beliefs in the presence of peers who had gone through similar experiences. Four focus groups were conducted at the end of the 5-week field experience. Focus group discussions lasted on average 42 min and comprised three to four participants. The focus groups were conducted by the main researchers and followed a semistructured format, in which discussion prompts were designed to capture TCs' perceptions of the challenges and facilitators related to planning, classroom management, content delivery, and assessment of a SE season. Focus groups were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Data Analysis

The content analysis stages suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994) and the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) were employed in the data analysis. Initially, the researchers used a descriptive approach to code all segments of textual data (Saldaña, 2013). The researchers coded the data independently, and as they attributed codes to the segments of text, they developed a list containing all the codes and their respective definitions. Once both researchers had coded all the data, they met and discussed their coding schemes and revised the list of codes until an agreement was reached regarding the consistency of the codes and their meaning.

The researchers proceeded with the analysis by clustering coded segments of data that had similar meanings into different subcategories. This task required several meetings to ensure that the subcategories contained coded segments of data with similar meaning and accurately represented the data. As the researchers attempted to answer the research question, these subcategories were then collapsed into categories identified as the challenges and facilitators for the implementation of a SE season from the perspective of the participants in this study.

Trustworthiness

To establish trustworthiness regarding the findings from this study, the researchers completed the following procedures: analytic memos, intercoder agreement, and member checking (Creswell, 2009). First, the researchers kept analytic memos throughout the data analysis process with the purpose of recording their coding choices, emergent patterns, and overall thoughts regarding the analysis. Second, all data sets were coded independently by two researchers, who discussed the consistency of their codes through multiple debriefing meetings until an agreement was established. Second, five participants were asked to check the findings from this study. These TCs were asked to read the findings of the study and provide their input on whether the challenges and facilitators to the implementation of a SE season reflected their perceptions. All five TCs agreed that the study findings were a valid representation of their thoughts.

Findings and Discussion

Current recommendations for PETE curriculum design emphasize the need for programs to incorporate a variety of curriculum models in their structure (Deenihan et al., 2011; Gurvitch et al., 2008; McMahon & MacPhail, 2007). This study examined TCs' perceptions of the challenges and facilitators to the implementation of a full SE season during a 5-week field experience. Findings from the inductive content analysis indicated that TCs consistently reported the following challenges related to the implementation of a SE season: (a) spending time and energy on planning, (b) establishing fair teams, and (c) assessing student learning. Alternatively, TCs consistently indicated the following facilitators related to the implementation of a SE season: (a) experiencing the model as a student in the

10 weeks preceding the field experience, (b) establishing the routines pertinent to the SE model, and (d) having knowledgeable and helpful supervisors. Some of these findings echo what other scholars have found when studying how TCs learn to use SE. Other findings bring new elements related to the inclusion of SE in PETE. The challenges and facilitators participating TCs faced while they delivered a 5-week SE season are discussed in the following sections.

Challenges

Planning is a lot of work! Similar to findings presented by McCaughtry et al. (2004), participating TCs found that designing and implementing a full SE season required a lot of time and energy. In this study, TCs were particularly concerned with planning time and consistently referred to planning as a time- and energy-consuming task. In their words, planning was "annoying," "hectic," "tough," and "extensive" and "took a lot of time." Although TCs were able to recognize the benefits of planning, they seemed to be frustrated with the extent to which they were required to provide details about their instructional decisions on their unit plan and lesson plans. One TC commented,

> The monotony of the planning . . . all we did all semester was plan for this and for that. So just all that planning . . . we had to plan for numerous different things, so just keeping up with all the different planning was kind of a struggle.

Although the establishment of quality SE seasons requires deliberative and extensive planning efforts, this task does not differ from the design of any other quality learning experiences in PE. It is possible that TCs' subjective warrants coupled with the other challenges related to the delivery of a full SE season might have contributed to their resistance to put time into planning. Therefore, creating supportive environments for planning that allow for TCs to complete tasks progressively while receiving meaningful feedback from faculty might facilitate TC buy-in to the need for thoughtful planning. This is supported by previous research suggesting that TCs should initially teach a series of lessons prescribed by faculty before designing their own (Stran & Curtner-Smith, 2009). Furthermore, when TCs begin to teach using SE on their own they can progressively

incorporate elements of the model, reducing the planning load and stress associated with it (McMahon & MacPhail, 2007).

How can we make it fair? Another issue that made the SE season delivery challenging to these TCs was the establishment of fair teams. Participating TCs often described being challenged to "set-up fair teams." Comments revealed that this was associated with difficulties in assessing students' baseline skill levels and issues inherent to teaching college students. According to a TC, "It was kind of a challenge to create teams off of watching these people play for 20 minutes the first day." Others indicated that it was hard to collect data through a "skills combine" because they "didn't know the students well enough." Likewise, a TC mentioned how using "self-assessment" to form teams was also ineffective because the "data seemed to be incorrect." On the other hand, because TCs taught college students enrolled in physical activity classes, they encountered issues with students "dropping the course," not "showing up," and being at a wide range of "skill levels" that made it challenging to create "even teams." Other comments include:

> It was the hardest at first because we had to make the teams and you have to watch them play one time and then you have to make teams that will last the rest of the semester. So you basically just have to guess most of the time on whether or not you think a student is good or bad or whatever so you can put them on a team that is fair. Nine times out of ten they are probably not going to be fair.

> I would put an emphasis on making the teams fair. This was the hardest task to complete and nearly impossible to do in one class period using a skill combine. If there was a way to develop more even teams, it would allow for a more successful class throughout the entire course.

Siedentop et al. (2011) noted that forming even teams is one of the most concerning issues of a SE season from a student standpoint. Students tend to be concerned with fairness and expect to be placed in equally distributed teams. In this study, TCs experienced the model as a student right before they implemented the season, which might have influenced their worries about making even

teams. Furthermore, TCs only had their students for 5 weeks during this field experience, limiting the amount of data they could collect prior to establishing the teams. In fact, it is challenging for teachers to assign students to teams when they do not know them enough or when students do not know each other well (Siedentop et al., 2011). However, it seemed that participants' concerns with fairness were more related to students winning competitions versus the achievement of educational outcomes. For the establishment of teams to align with the philosophy and goals of SE, teams must be rewarded not only for winning games, but, most important, also for displaying all the behaviors associated with being a competent, literate, and enthusiastic sportsperson (Brock & Hastie, 2007). The idea is to make equitable teams, allowing students to compete yet achieve the season learning outcomes, which should include skill development, tactical awareness, sportsmanship, knowledge of the sport, fulfillment of responsibilities, sport appreciation, among others (Siedentop et al., 2011). Previous studies have indicated that when learning to use SE, TCs tend to emphasize formal competition in detriment of other critical components of the model (Curtner-Smith, Hastie, & Kinchin, 2008). When that happens, tensions regarding the equitability of teams might escalate and take over the other SE key features. This emphasis on competition is problematic because it resembles traditional multiactivity models and neglects the learning outcomes embedded in SE. Hence, it is critical that faculty model the delivery of SE from an outcomes-based perspective, highlighting the need for students to be given opportunities to grow in all aspects of the model, including but not limited to competition.

Assessing student learning is a problem. Another challenge TCs faced was the ability to assess student learning, particularly at the psychomotor domain. Teacher candidates often commented that it was difficult to assess students' skill development regardless which sport they were assigned to teach. This seemed to be a pitfall because the college students enrolled in the classes were at different skill levels and TCs found it challenging to differentiate the assessment tasks. One TC said,

> When you made a criteria for a psychomotor task it would be either too low for a lot of students or it would be too high

> for a lot of students. I couldn't really find a median and that goes for basically every assessment I had. It was hard to find something that was fair for all the kids.

In addition, TCs found it problematic to assign grades to their students based on their "performance" and were more willing to reward students for "participation" and "effort." In other words, TCs struggled to implement assessment strategies focused on student learning and believed that grading students based on participation and effort would have eased the process. One TC indicated that assessing students was troublesome because he was still "learning about assessment."

Likewise, another TC emphasized the need to "learn more about assessment and understand how it could help the students." In fact, assessment in PE is known as a challenging task regardless of the curriculum model at hand (Leirhaug & MacPhail, 2015). Physical educators increasing demands compounded with restricted resources and aversive teaching conditions (e.g., large class sizes, not enough allocated time) end up pushing assessment to the column of less important tasks.

Assessing student learning in SE is even more difficult given the range of objectives and scope of the model. According to van der Mars and Tannehill (2014), "If Sport Education intends to provide children and youth with authentic and realistic sport experiences, then it is only appropriate that assessment strategies be designed to determine how well this goal is achieved" (p. 318). This involves an evaluation of student growth in different areas that include, but are not limited to, technical and tactical skills, cooperation, leadership, sportsmanship, and ability to officiate games (van der Mars & Tannehill, 2014). Such task is definitely complex and requires teachers to clearly define the season outcomes prior to selecting assessment tools. One strategy that might help TCs to assess student learning when using SE in field experiences or student teaching is to narrow the scope of the model so that fewer outcomes are outlined, facilitating student assessment. If TCs have opportunities to implement pieces of the SE model progressively, they will have more time to design meaningful and developmentally appropriate assessment tools that are aligned with learning outcomes. Additionally, when

field experiences are closely linked to methods courses, TCs are more likely to make connections between the concepts and principles of assessment and its application in real settings (Ingersoll, Jenkins, & Lux, 2014).

Facilitators

Experience is key. Prior to delivering the SE season, each TC experienced the SE model as a student in six PCK courses simultaneously. These courses were taught following similar routines, protocols, and procedures, which allowed for TCs to experience all the elements of a SE season in a regular and consistent manner across different sports over a 10-week period. There was agreement among TCs' comments that experiencing the model in the 10 weeks prior to the field experience was highly beneficial to their teaching. Participating TCs mentioned that experiencing the model as a student helped them to "understand the SE model," "learn the critical elements of each skill," gain "knowledge about the sport," and "understand how the students feel." Data also showed that TCs felt more "prepared" and "comfortable" to teach using SE after being in the "student role." In the words of a TC, "It is also nice to get hands-on stuff, we learn about all the these different curricular models in class but it's nice to get to experience them and how they actually work." Others said:

> We didn't really know what it was so we basically took the class before we taught it, so I think . . . you know, that just going through it and experiencing it and being able to take our experiences as students and then going into teaching it was very helpful.

> Being a student for ten weeks in the SE model for all of those classes was probably the most helpful thing because then you know how the students feel, where they are coming from, and whenever you teach them you teach more or less a very similar lesson that you already went through.

These findings support the argument that it is critical for TCs to experience the model as a student prior to attempting to teach it (Deenihan et al., 2011; McMahon & MacPhail, 2007). When TCs

have the opportunity to "live" the SE model, they are more likely to understand it, appreciate it, and become supportive of the model (Deenihan et al., 2011; Oslin et al., 2001). Moreover, scholars have argued that time is needed to learn SE given the amount of details required for its implementation (McCaughtry et al., 2004; McMahon & MacPhail, 2007). Participants in this study completed 5 to 10 credit hours of PCK classes based on SE, which certainly contributed to their comprehension of the model concepts and practical application. The provision of multiple SE experiences throughout the course of a teacher preparation program allows TCs to retain the model better and decreases the chances of resistance to it (McCaughtry et al., 2004). Participating TCs who were in their senior year also had the chance to experience the SE model beyond team sports and learned that the model may also be applied to other lifetime physical activities such as golf, archery, bowling, and dance. This is important because it allows future teachers to recognize that SE can take in a wide range of students' abilities and interests (Oslin, 2002).

Routines please! Data indicated that the establishment of routines pertinent to SE also facilitated the season implementation. These routines included team affiliation protocols (e.g., wearing their colored shirts, understanding and performing their roles), a warm-up guided by the team fitness trainer, a meeting with each team's captain, team practice time, and an application task. According to participating TCs, "getting a routine down," "defining roles," and "setting expectations" made classes "run a lot smoother." Moreover, TCs mentioned that implementing consistent routines helped them to overcome students' "initial confusion" about the SE model and get them to a level at which "everyone was participating, motivated, and competitive." According to one TC,

> By the end I would hand them their sheets and they would go out and work on their own. It was real smooth, they figured out how the class ran. I didn't have to do too much management at that point. Which was better because I could set up the application task and work with a couple students individually. Just having them figuring out how the class runs made everything a lot smoother.

The establishment of SE routines appears to have allowed TCs to focus on content delivery and prevented them from being distracted by the classroom management challenges commonly faced by preservice and beginning teachers (Curtner-Smith & Sofo, 2004). One element that might have helped TCs to establish the SE routines effectively is that they were teaching college students, who, according to participating TCs, easily learned the model routines. In a study of the adoption of SE in college physical activity programs, Bennett and Hastie (1997) found that college students valued the organization and accountability provided by the model. TCs also emphasized that "having students figuring out the model" allowed them to "work with students individually," "keep students accountable," and "use their teaching time better." In fact, because SE is a student-centered approach, it places greater responsibilities on students and fosters a greater level of commitment and accountability that results in less time spent in management and more time spent on instructional tasks for teachers (McMahon & MacPhail, 2007). It is important to note that the consistency regarding the SE model routines established by the supervisors during the 10 weeks prior to the field experience facilitated the model implementation by TCs when teaching their own classes.

Supervision matters. Another common facilitator mentioned by TCs was the availability of knowledgeable and supportive supervisors. During the 5-week field experience, graduate teaching assistants who had just taught the PCK classes supervised the TCs. Throughout the process, supervisors modeled the implementation of a SE season, assisted TCs with unit and lesson planning, and provided them with close supervision in every class. According to their comments, TCs appeared to value supervisors" "content knowledge," "availability," "feedback," and "different views and opinions." In their words,

> The feedback that you would get back was helpful towards future planning. If you were doing it wrong, your supervisor would let you know and then you could change your planning in the future. That happened to me a few times, so I thought that was very helpful.

> Having a supervisor did help a lot. Sometimes you got stuck in a situation and didn't know how to answer the students questions, so . . . having a supervisor to go to, to talk to who has more experience than I do helped a lot.
>
> They were able to handle situations that were too time consuming so I could still be with the class, it helped a lot. Because that supervisor taught the class before, you know they have the knowledge of it, you can trust them with making decisions in the class.

Researchers who have studied the effectiveness of early field experiences in teacher education programs appoint supervision as one of the key elements in the process (Curtner-Smith, 2012). Researchers who have examined how TCs learn to use the SE model concur with the idea that supervision is a vital component for TCs' success (McMahon & MacPhail, 2007). However, effective supervision in early field experiences based on SE requires that supervisors are knowledgeable of the model and able to offer TCs the necessary guidance and support (Deenihan et al., 2011). In this study, all supervisors had gone through extensive training on the SE model as part of their doctoral coursework. Furthermore, supervisors engaged in weekly meetings with the senior faculty throughout the semester to ensure consistency regarding all aspects of the field experience (i.e., schedule, due dates, SE model key elements, planning, lesson implementation, and assessment). This consistency allowed for TCs to trust their supervisors and even seek additional help when needed. Moreover, TCs could relate to their supervisors in deeper ways because they had just been taught the same sport by them according to the SE model. Thus, establishment of a supportive learning climate through caring and experienced supervisors may facilitate TCs learning and buy-in to the model when instructional challenges occur (McCaughtry et al., 2004).

Conclusions and Practical Implications

Findings from this study provide relevant information related to the issues that might hinder or facilitate a SE season implementation from TCs' perspective. According to participating TCs, the challenges associated with the delivery of a 5-week SE season in-

clude planning time, student assessment, and the establishment of fair teams. On the other hand, participating TCs indicated that experiencing the model as a student, having knowledgeable and caring supervisors, and consistently implementing SE routines facilitates the season delivery. The practical implications of this study refer to the issues that PETE faculty might need to consider when including SE-based field experiences in PETE programs. These include (a) establishing supportive environments for planning, (b) allowing for TCs to learn about the model components and to experience it as a student prior to attempting to teach using SE, (c) providing TCs with opportunities to incorporate elements of the model progressively as they learn how to teach it, and (d) providing TCs with supervisors who have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to teach using SE. It is important to note that this study was conducted in a college setting, which limits the generalizability of the findings. Further studies aiming at understanding TCs' perceptions of the challenges and facilitators related to the implementation of the SE model in field experiences within K–12 settings are encouraged.

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