

DEVELOPING PROFESSIONALISM WITH PRESERVICE PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

Becoming a professional requires dedication and persistence. As documented in the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) Initial Physical Education Teacher Education Standards (2008), there is no set formula or a single course to take in becoming a physical educator; however, there are certain behaviors and dispositions associated with the professional practice of teaching physical education. A physical education teacher candidate (TC) cannot be expected to display all the necessary behaviors of an effective physical education teacher at the start of a preparation program. However, a TC can start to learn how to refine those behaviors most associated with professionalism while in their teacher education program. This article covers several different teacher attributes and behaviors that a TC can focus on as they develop into a professional. Teacher educators can help promote professionalism by implementing instructional tasks and assessments that can help a TC develop characteristics that are needed to be employed and to be successful in the workplace. A teaching tool is provided in this paper for physical education teacher educators to use in order to help TCs start to refine professional behavior.

Note: all tables cited in article can be viewed on pages 15—18

Professionalism is a fluid construct requiring complex forms of intra- and inter-personal behaviors that are modified and transferred in a variety of situations. For teacher candidates (TCs) learning to become physical educators, the expectation to practice professionalism occurs from the start of the teacher preparation program. However, TCs should not be expected to know how to be professional teachers until they are given the knowledge regarding professional practice and the habits that need to be practiced in order to become quality educators. This article provides physical education teacher education (PETE) stakeholders (i.e., instructors and TCs) with information to help start developing habits of professional practice. The article is broken into two sections: (a) attributes and behaviors associated with the professional practice of teaching, and (b) a practical, hands-on teaching tool for helping TCs learn and practice some of the professional behaviors desired within PETE courses.

The Professional Practice of Teaching

“The term professional is honorific in our society, and denotes occupations characterized by certain attributes. Chief among these is a body of specialized, expert knowledge together with a code of ethics emphasizing service to clients” (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 2007, p. 6).

All professionals must abide to specific codes of conduct within their field. Teacher professional code of conduct requires them to acquire attributes and behaviors that are fair and equitable to all students regardless of student race, gender, individual differences, ability, and cultural perspectives. For the purpose of this article attributes will refer to the desired characteristics or qualities associated with teaching (e.g., passion, respect, willingness to learn, and an enduring understanding of the subject-matter). While behaviors will refer to desired actions or duties performed by teachers (e.g., equitable amount of time spent with all learners, not just selected students; consistently enforcing classroom rules, routines, and expectations for all students; assessing students with honesty and fairness; creating a warm and inviting class environment; and by presenting verbal speech and a tone of voice that is perceived as polite, kind, and receptive). The attributes and behaviors identified in

this article are not intended to be an exhaustive listing, but a preview of some of the characteristics possessed by effective teachers. In addition, these attributes and behaviors can be used with the teaching tool explained in the second section of this article to help TCs incorporate more of these behaviors into their repertoire. In this first section the authors discuss three resources that provide a variety of teacher traits associated with professionalism: (a) Shulman's (1998) attributes of a profession, (b) Hoch's (2000) behaviors of a professional, and (c) the Teacher Perceiver (1978) interview instrument used by several school districts to interview potential teachers based upon categories associated with the professional practice of teaching.

Shulman's (1998) Attributes of a Profession

All professional fields, such as medicine, law, and business, are defined by a specific knowledge set and behavioral guidelines that define the expectations of that particular career. "The idea of a profession describes a set of circumstances for deep understanding, complex practice, ethical conduct, and higher-order learning..." (Shulman, 1998, p.6). In order to be considered part of a profession all individuals must demonstrate unique behaviors associated with the specific profession. According to Shulman (1998) there are six attributes of a profession (i.e., A Calling, An Understanding, Practice of Theory, Prominent Judgment, Pragmatic Learning, and Professional Community). Viewing Shulman's (1998) attributes through a teaching lens provides an initial framework for some of the salient qualities and behaviors associated with a profession. Table 1 lists each attribute, indicates how each attribute can be transformed into a teaching behavior, and links the attribute to some example quali-

ties and behaviors associated with teaching physical education.

Table 1 can be presented as a starting point for identifying and understanding some of the attributes and behaviors associated with professionalism within physical education. Table 1 highlights some of the salient qualities TCs can develop, or continue to refine, while in their PETE program.

Hoch's (2000) Behaviors of a Professional

Although each profession is defined by specific practices, one could argue that there are general behaviors that all professionals share and exhibit when working within a specialized field. Hoch (2000) provided straightforward and simple behaviors that as a whole illustrate professionalism.

Table 2 highlights the connection between some sample professional behaviors (Hoch, 2000) and that of an effective physical education teacher. As future teachers, TCs can ask themselves whether they are exhibiting similar behaviors as they progress through their PETE program. Although these behaviors may seem very easy to understand it is important for the TC to determine whether they are demonstrating these types of behavior on a consistent basis. Teacher educators must also help the TC refine professional behavior during courses. For example, TCs need to be made aware of any unprofessional behavior that occurs in class (e.g., a TC providing feedback in a negative manner, wearing inappropriate attire, not participating in group assignments, or failing to show to class on-time).

The Teacher Perceiver

Having the knowledge and disposition to perform well during a teaching interview is another reason to develop attributes

and behaviors associated with professionalism. The Selection Research Inc. Teacher Perceiver Interview (1978) is an initial screening process currently being used by many school districts to hire new teachers. The Teacher Perceiver Interview is comprised of categories that represent various characteristics of effective teachers. Table 3 lists some of the teacher perceiver categories, with a brief example of how each category can be linked to teaching. From the Teacher Perceiver categories interview questions were created, and then asked to potential teachers to determine the disposition and potential quality associated with each interviewee.

Professionalism Teaching Tool

"Teaching is a public activity; a teacher works daily in the gaze of his or her students, and the extended nature of their lives together in schools place special obligations on the teacher's behavior" (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 2007, p. 6). Displaying professionalism is a desired trait in teaching. Within PETE programs there is an expectation to display those qualities that represent a teaching professional. TCs need to be made aware of a variety of professional behavior (e.g., be on task and engaged during all class activities, praise and provide positive feedback for good behavior witnessed from peers in class, wear appropriate clothing for activity, model social skills such as responsibility, accepting differences, respect for others, and turn off all electronic devices at the start of class). The following section provides teacher educators with a teaching tool that can be used within PETE to help TCs become aware of some desired attributes and behaviors associated with quality physical education teaching. TCs pursuing an initial physical education teacher licensure or credential

exhibit professionalism, and ways to refine or improve on their professional behavior. PETE instructors can help TCs with the process of developing behavior associated with professionalism. Table 4 is a professionalism rubric that can be used to help TCs start to practice their own professional behavior. Table 5 is a professionalism log that is used to monitor the TC behaviors that occur within and outside of PETE courses. The authors created the professionalism rubric and log while teaching at The Ohio State University. Currently this tool is used at Ohio State and California State University San Marcos as a way to help preservice physical education teachers become aware and practice professional dispositions required within the field. The professionalism rubric (Table 4) is a tool used to help TCs carefully reflect on five characteristics associated with professionalism (i.e., preparation and planning, respect, engagement, commitment, and responsibility). Each characteristic listed on the rubric is followed by example behaviors that represent ways in which the TC can demonstrate professionalism. This rubric can be used on a weekly or even bi-monthly basis depending on the PETE instructor.

In using the professionalism log (Table 5) each TC is able to rate themselves on the five characteristics associated with professionalism using a Likert-type scale. If TCs believed they consistently demonstrated professional behavior across the entire week they would rate themselves with a two. If TCs believed they sometimes demonstrated professional behavior they rate themselves with a one. If TCs believed they were inconsistent with demonstrating professional behavior across the entire week they would rate themselves with a zero. Once the TC indicates his or her rating they then provide a written rationale explaining how they demonstrated professionalism in and outside of class. If the professional behavior was inconsistent or absent then the TC can explain how he or she plans to improve for the following week. The intended purpose of this professionalism teaching tool is to: (a) help TCs become more aware of the professional behavior required of them in the PETE program, (b) help TCs become more aware of and track their own behavior, and (c) empower TCs to take more control of developing habits of professional practice that can help with the employment process. Each week the logs are handed-in and the instructor can provide feedback regarding the validity of the TC's rating and rationale based upon instructor observation during class. Modifications to the professionalism rubric/log can be structured to meet the needs of the instructor across a variety of PETE courses. For example, TC entries in the professionalism log can occur as often as necessary, or the point value of the rubric can be modified, or the actual professional

behaviors within the rubric/log can be added to or changed based upon instructor preference.

A Professional Physical Educator

"Students learn early to read and draw lessons from their teachers' character. Teachers, consequently, must conduct themselves in a manner students might emulate. Their failure to practice what they preach does not long elude students, parents or peers" (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 2007, p. 6).

To be called a professional within the teaching profession an individual must hold a value towards doing what is right for students in terms of learning. Being a physical educator should not be viewed as a job, rather as a profession where that individual devotes time and energy toward caring for children. As documented in the (NASPE) Initial Physical Education Teacher Education Standards (2008), a physical educator displays an assortment of professional behavior including, but not limited to: communicating effectively, advocating for the profession, reflecting with colleagues in creating instruction that aligns with standards, revising teaching practices, following public policies and guidelines associated with the teaching profession, participating in the professional community through attendance and presentations at workshops, conferences, or professional development sessions. As noted throughout this article, developing into a teacher who displays professionalism requires the dedication and continual practice in understanding and implementing appropriate behavior that over time can become consistent and habitual. However, many TCs may not have a clear idea or understanding of what professional behavior entails. By reviewing and reflecting on the examples provided in this article, TCs can begin to determine their strengths and weaknesses related to the professional practice of teaching. Once TCs understand the dimensions of professionalism the next step is to practice the habits of the profession during university classes, field experiences, collegial interactions, and instances outside the professional boundaries of teacher training. Using the teaching tool provided, or one similar, can be seen as one method for PETE faculty to use in helping TCs practice and engage in professional behavior throughout their teacher preparation studies.

Teachers are role models for students. As such, teachers should try to develop behavior inherent to effective teaching and provide students with enduring learning opportunities. "Teachers are professionals who must recognize that they are in a unique and powerful position to

influence the future of their students” (Ohio Educator Standards Board, 2006, p.14). Teachers are change agents and as such must be aware of their own behavior, dispositions, and values as they relate to the teaching profession and the students with whom they interact with on a daily basis.

References

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TABLES

Table 1. Six Attributes of a Profession (Shulman, 1998) Through the Lens of Physical Education

Attributes	Attributes Transformed into Behavior	How the Attributes are Linked to Physical Education
A Calling	Teachers who demonstrate a moral obligation to help students' meet specific learning outcomes.	Physical educators are drawn to helping all children learn and become physically active for a lifetime.
An Understanding	Teachers who demonstrate a robust comprehension of specific subject-matter.	Physical educators have knowledge regarding the human body (e.g., motor skills, fitness, health, sports).
Practice of Theory	Teachers who are able to use acquired knowledge to meet specific job requirements.	Physical educators receive field-based training (real world setting) before working full-time within the school setting.
Prominent Judgment	Teachers who make correct and useful decisions under stressful situations.	Physical educators have and use a moral and ethical compass in making many decisions within the classroom.
Pragmatic Learning	Teachers who learn from experience through the reflective processes.	Physical educators have the ability to teach, reflect, and re-teach to develop and refine teaching practices.
Professional Community	Teachers are committed to sharing ideas and work towards common goals.	Physical educators join professional organizations that support their current and future teaching.

Table 2. Behaviors of a Professional (Hoch, 2000)

Professional Behaviors	How the Behaviors are Linked to Physical Education
Showing Courtesy	Interacting in a polite manner, including using correct and appropriate language, an never interrupting individuals.
Being Trustworthy	Professional integrity or the ability to keep your word and to follow through on commitments.
Wearing Professional Attire	Proper clothing for various occasions and events. What may be appropriate to wear for the gymnasium may be inappropriate for a staff or parent meeting.
Using Appropriate Communication	Verbal, non-verbal, and written forms of communication (e.g., type and tone of language used, the ability to speak to parents with well-articulated vocabulary, and being personable with colleagues).
Exhibiting Enthusiasm	Exhibiting passion and interest regarding all facets of teaching.
Being a Leader	Collaborating with colleagues, creating or redesigning curriculum, and obtaining external funding for new classroom resources.
Understanding Life-long Learning	An awareness of the complexities surrounding teaching is needed in order to continue acquiring further knowledge.

Table 3. Teaching Examples Based on Teacher Perceiver Interview Categories (1978)

Category	Teaching Example Linked to the Teacher Perceiver Category
Mission	All teachers should create and periodically revise a mission statement that acts as a framework, indicating the importance of their educational practice. This statement should be aligned to the mission of the school and district.
Empathy	Taking on the perspective of another person and being able to understand and acknowledge the position of another person is important in forming professional relationships. Teachers are patient in understanding another individual's concern and provide the correct guidance in meeting the needs of that person.
Individualized Perception	Teachers who display individualized perception know the strengths and weaknesses of the students and colleagues they work with and help those individuals continue to learn and grow.
Investment	A teacher places student learning as the top priority. An investment in student learning can cultivate a deep sense of satisfaction for teachers. With continual investment teachers can develop a sense of purpose in working with students.
Objectivity	Professionals do not make claims based on partial evidence. Teachers collect evidence as objectively as possible when working with students. Assessing student learning is based upon the teacher's ability to collect accurate data.
Focus	Teachers have an enduring understanding of <i>what</i> and <i>how</i> they will teach. Focus is demonstrated through identifying learning outcomes, constructing unit and lesson plans, aligning instruction with standards, and making sure that what is being assessed has been previously taught and practiced.

Table 4. Professionalism Rubric

Professionalism Rubric

Please reflect carefully on the following five characteristics of professionalism, and the extent to which you demonstrated them in and out of class throughout the week. I will review your self-evaluation and evaluate you on your professional performance.

Preparation and Planning – Is dressed professionally and appropriately, arrives in enough time to be prepared for the beginning of class; brings all relevant instructional materials to class; has read assignments; and is prepared for leading physical activities.

Respect – Speaks clearly and professionally in front of groups; recognizes and honors multiple perspectives when communicating with others; uses gender neutral language; politely checks for understanding when necessary; uses resources and equipment appropriately; can graciously agree to disagree in times of conflict; and projects a professional image when interacting with peers.

Engagement – Actively participates in class discussions and activities without prompting; assists the instructor in setting up the learning environment; consistently contributes in ways that help support the objectives of the course; collaborates with other members of the class; stays on task during student-directed activities; and promotes a class climate that is conducive to learning.

Commitment – Demonstrates eagerness for the information presented in class; has completed the weekly quiz on time; turns in all assigned work on the assigned due date and in a professional format; seeks continual improvement in teaching behavior; responds positively to instructor’s feedback; makes changes based on instructor’s feedback; encourages others to take an active role in group discussions or activities; and demonstrates a passion towards the profession.

Responsibility – Follows instructor’s directions; follows peers’ instructions; takes responsibility for own actions without blame on others or outside circumstances; is attentive during class; demonstrates ability to work well with others; does not hold side conversations while other individuals are talking, and; does not interrupt class and/or use cell phone during class.

For each of the five professional behavior areas above the Teacher Candidates will rate themselves (on their professional behavior log) using the following rubric:

- 0 = Demonstrated few of the behaviors this week or was inconsistent in demonstrating a number of the behaviors.
- 1 = Demonstrated some, but not all, areas of the professional behavior this week or demonstrated all behaviors but not consistently.
- 2 = Consistently demonstrated all areas of the professional behavior across the entire week.

GOING BEYOND: Each week the Teacher Candidates may earn up to 1 bonus point for “going above and beyond” the stated expectations and providing leadership in promoting professional behaviors and a conducive instructional environment.

Table 5. Professionalism Log

Professionalism Log	
Please rate yourself (0, 1, or 2) for each of the five characteristics listed below and write how you demonstrated professional behavior during the past week. If you were inconsistent with the behavior then write how you can improve for the following week.	
Student Name: -----	
Week #1	
Preparation & Planning:	
Respect:	
Engagement:	
Commitment:	
Responsibility:	
Going Beyond:	