

A HERMENEUTIC PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF PRE-SERVICE PHYSICAL
EDUCATORS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR PROFESSIONAL PREPAREDNESS

by

Geoffrey Martin Hampson

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was to capture the essence of the perceptions of 11 pre-service physical educators in the final field placement and clinical practices of their undergraduate degree program at the University of Redbank, the University of Peters, and Ina University where they prepared to become professional educators. Pseudonyms protected the names of the participants and institutions. The theoretical framework guiding this study was social cognitive theory. The research questions were (a) How do the attitudes and beliefs of teaching physical education as pre-service physical educators influence their knowledge and skill development for classroom preparedness? (b) What aspects of the teacher education program do pre-service physical educators believe best prepared them for their student teaching experiences to influence student outcomes? (c) What obstacles hinder pre-service physical educators' professional development and attitudes through their teacher education program? and (d) What additional resources would pre-service physical educators perceive to be value-added to their physical education teacher education program? Data collection included interviews, focus groups, and open-ended questionnaires. Moustakas' (1994) seven steps served as the foundation for the analysis of data in this hermeneutic phenomenological study. Intrinsic motivations and self-efficacy supporting professional growth, curriculum and instruction advancing knowledge and skills, close relationships and support systems enhancing readiness, and challenging, time-consuming components influencing preparedness influenced the participants. The pre-service physical educators provided time-consuming challenges and recommended additional resources critical to the design and structure of the program.

Keywords: pre-service educator, physical education teacher education, field placement and clinical practice, teacher beliefs

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my grandmother, Ina Hampson. While she is no longer with us, she inspired me to work hard, live life, and dream big. I could always count on her to be in my corner when I needed her support. Her favorite saying was, “Isn’t it lovely!” I am thankful that I had her as a role model and yes, it definitely is lovely.

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Lastly, I would like to thank Jude, Emmitt, and Ella. They have been incredibly supportive of me and always encouraged me through tough times. This year, in particular, has been quite a challenge, personally and professionally, and I thank you for having my back. Lots of love to you all.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

Pre-service physical educators' capabilities were dependent on the quality of higher education teacher education programs they experienced as they prepared to become professional physical educators. This hermeneutic phenomenological research investigated 11 pre-service physical educators' perceptions of their professional preparedness. Physical education teacher preparation programs, like other teacher preparation programs, were critical in preparing and developing aspiring physical educators to succeed in the profession.

Chapter One includes the background, statement of the problem, and significance of the study, defining the importance of conducting this qualitative study to collect the perceptions of pre-service physical educators with no official experience. Chapter One conveys the significance of the research regarding perceptions of pre-service physical educators during their final stages of preparation.

Background

Faculty of physical education teacher education (PETE) programs attempted to share curriculum and instructional practices with pre-service physical educators that aligned with physical education standards across the United States. Thomas Jefferson noted in many of his educational literature the necessities of physical activity as part of general education (Rice, 1935). Around 1838, a committee described neglect to the body and mind; therefore, insisted that physical education promoted mental education and permitted time for rest from mental exertion that children endured in schools (Rice, 1935). According to Cook and Kohl (2013), physical education sparked conversation at the beginning of the 19th century as it correlated with gymnastics in schools. As physical education evolved in America, it became a unifying

influence among the diversity of its population (McIntosh, 2013). Physical education teacher education programs escalated by 1950 when over 400 colleges and universities in the United States offered the physical education major to teachers (Sparkpe.org, 2015). Physical education teachers played critical roles in motivating children to partake in physical education (Herold & Waring, 2016). Evans (2017) indicated that physical education exposed students to a variety of cultural, social, and ethnically diverse school experiences through enjoyable activities that promoted self-efficacy and excellence.

Nahal (2010) insisted that perceptions of the expectations and realities transformed when teachers, especially pre-service educators, stepped into their classrooms. Colleges of Education across the country endured challenges that allowed physical education teacher education faculty to design and implement tasks that connected pre-service physical education teacher candidates to real-world lessons where they applied their learning (Shaw, 2014). A report from the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE, 2011) on the initial preparation of physical educators suggested pre-service physical educators needed opportunities outside of their classrooms to practice skill development and assessment. They found that pre-service teachers ill- prepared for instruction during their initial teacher evaluations. Pre-service teachers scored low on their efforts of making flexibility an appreciated factor of their teaching. Pre-service physical educators needed to know their students earlier in the program than initially expected. Pre-service physical educators needed to set goals and develop an understanding of their scope and sequence. According to the Texas Education Agency (2015), pre-service physical educators needed to pass their subject area competencies and domains to meet the criteria for obtaining a physical education teacher certification. These competencies and domains included three categories: Movement Skills and Knowledge, Health-Related Physical Fitness, and The Physical

Education Program. Every state across the country inaugurated specific criteria to ensure student knowledge and accountability; however, according to Harris and Sass (2011), pre-service educator training showed difficulty in measuring its outcomes related to the effectiveness of pre-service educator assignments, as well as pre-service educator development and productivity. Harris and Sass also identified how data provided detailed information about the types of training pre-service educators received. Hamilton et al. (2014) implied that techniques and key components for supporting pedagogy included evaluations and improved professional developments.

Knowledge and capabilities of educators influenced P-12 classrooms (Dobson, 2013). According to Rogers (2015), effective teaching included normative professional responsibility where learned behavior coincided with the desires and willingness to connect and relate to young people in schools, such as through field placement and clinical practice experiences. Biermann, Karbach, Spinath, and Brünken (2015) inferred that field placement and clinical practices incorporated the scientific, educational knowledge that linked curricula of teacher education programs to the profession itself. Biermann et al. insisted that field placement and clinical practice experiences provided pre-service educators the opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge in actual classroom settings from the instructional practices learned in their teacher education programs. Tondeur, Pareja Roblin, van Braak, Voogt, and Prestridge (2017) concluded that the field placement and clinical practices significantly influenced the participants' preparation related to technology integration. According to Kuh, Jankowski, Ikenberry, and Kinzie (2014), learning outcomes in American higher education institutions became frequent and widespread in recent years. Kuh et al. statistically suggested that a 10% increase from 2009 to 2013 with nearly 84% of all colleges and universities embraced and implemented stated learning

outcomes for their entire undergraduate populations. Newton, Poon, Nunes, and Stone (2013) indicated growing pressures among teacher education programs across America to demonstrate their effectiveness of K-12 student learning because of their pre-service educator teaching influences.

The education profession consisted of high teacher turnover rates, especially in urban, low-performing schools (Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2013). Ronfeldt et al. (2013) also insisted that the teacher turnover rate was high throughout the United States with approximately 30% of new teachers leaving the teaching profession within just five years. This number increased to 50% in high-poverty, low-income communities (Ronfeldt et al., 2013). Henninger (2007) conducted a study on physical educators in urban schools and concluded that troupers, as those who lost their obligation and passion for teaching, quickly “threw out the ball” disengaging students in the learning process because of their self-belief of not being influential. Henninger also implied that troupers were, in fact, the opposite of lifers who looked for fulfillment outside of education to meet their interests and goals. Mäkelä, Hirvensalo, and Whipp (2015) echoed Henninger as they indicated that lifers were enthusiastic about teaching and making a difference, while troupers continually sought other employment opportunities. Mäkelä et al. also mentioned that Caucasians left the profession more than any other race within the United States.

This study informed faculty members of physical education teacher education who professionally prepared the pre-service physical educators, including participation of the field placement and clinical practices. Pike and Fletcher mentioned the varying viewpoints and opinions of the pre-service physical educators towards physical education and pedagogy influenced by orientations and socialization. Based on these inconsistencies, many pre-service physical educators began their careers prepared to teach, while others fell short of their peers.

Situation to Self

To gain an understanding of pre-service physical educators' perceptions of their professional preparedness, I approached this study with Social Constructivism in mind. Social Constructivism was the idea of understanding the world through observations and interactions with others (Burr, 2015). Walker and Shore (2015) defined social constructivism as concepts of building knowledge and learning through activities with influences based on mental capacities and social collaborations. Therefore, I understood the biases brought to this study while engaged with the participants.

My interest in conducting this hermeneutic phenomenological study helped to inform the faculty of physical education teacher education programs. Teaching was a profession that influenced and shaped youth to become civilized, educated members of society. Physical educator preparation was a requirement to become professionally certified and it was the role of the physical education teacher education programs to implement substantive, rich programs. Elliott (2011) studied pre-service educators and concluded that pre-service educators reflected on numerous concerns, including private activities and non-supporting professors who left them to deal with situations on their own. Pike and Fletcher (2014) addressed perceived roles of pre-service physical educators and disconnected viewpoints related to the profession. These researchers also examined what pre-service physical educators should know and can do when they suggested that pre-service physical educators should be physically active and fit, have a love for physical activity, a legitimate concern for children, and the capabilities to think flexibly and creatively. I felt strongly about improving the effectiveness of physical education teacher education programs across the country as influential to the development of certified K-12 physical educators to empower their students' growth and success.

Problem Statement

Newton et al. (2013) implied that pre-service teachers wanted to know how to improve their teacher education programs and wanted intelligence regarding their pre-service educator graduate counterparts' well-being once entered into the teaching profession. Many stakeholders thought teacher education programs successfully prepared educators effectively; however, Cochran-Smith and Zeichner (2010) explained that issues, such as student diversity and multiculturalism, inadequately prepared pre-service educators to teach in the classroom. They noted that what pre-service educators should be taught and are taught varies. Cochran-Smith and Zeichner reported that faculty of teacher education programs focused on teacher instruction over concerns like professional development. This implied that teacher education program faculty prepared pre-service educators ineffectively to be classroom-ready as well-rounded developed professional educators. These researchers indicated the need for professional development to prepare for globalized teaching environments. According to Chinnappan, McKenzie, and Fitzsimmons (2013), pre-service educators perceived the lack of resources as constraints and the need to provide culturally relevant, yet cognitively demanding teaching aids to engage students in their learning. Pre-service educators became pedagogically prepared to teach students with disadvantages, as they became culturally responsive and professionally assertive when they participated in multicultural student teaching experiences (Hsiu-Lien & Soares, 2014). Darling-Hammond (2012) criticized teacher education programs as weak interventions for pre-service educators to become culturally diverse as they transformed from students to certified teachers. Greenberg, McKee, and Walsh (2013) evaluated American teacher preparation programs at 1,130 institutions, concluding that most teacher education programs inadequately prepared pre-service educators as their time and return on investment proved inefficient. Greenberg et al.

implied that schools used their professional development resources to keep novice educators up-to-date. Nahal (2010) suggested that teacher education programs lacked key components to improve pre-service educator practices and student outcomes. Greenberg et al. noted the need for further research as baby boomers retired and novice teachers continued to increase in numbers. Current research compared the preparation among various programs; however, the type of preparation and frequency of it was unknown (Greenberg et al., 2013).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was to capture the essence of the perceptions of 11 pre-service physical educators in the final field placement and clinical practices of their undergraduate degree program at the University of Redbank, the University of Peters, and Ina University where they prepared to become professional educators. The University of Redbank resided in a rural area in the Northeast region of the United States, while the University of Peters and Ina University were in an urban area in the Southeast region of the United States. Sloan and Bowe (2014) implied that hermeneutic phenomenology was a method of research that provided the best chances of ‘giving voice’ (p. 1292) to the participants in the study. The phenomenon studied was pre-service physical educators’ professional preparation in their physical education teacher education programs. Physical educators required subject area competencies and skills to teach their students to meet the national standards for physical education effectively. According to Society of Health and Physical Educators (n.d.), national physical education (PE) standards (see Appendix A) were the framework for what curricula physical educators should be teaching and expectations of what pre-service physical educators should know. Faculty of physical education teacher education programs could influence changes based on this study to help drive their curriculum and instructional practices.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was to examine faculty inconsistencies with data related to curriculum design and practical experiences influencing the development of pre-service physical educators' positive attitudes, self-efficacy, and other developmental factors (Pedersen, Cooley, & Hernandez, 2014). Limited quantitative research associated with methods of professionally preparing pre-service physical educators through their physical education teacher education programs existed. The qualitative research that previously investigated pre-services physical educators' perceptions of their preparedness proved to be minimal. Cochran-Smith and Villegas (2015) indicated that the majority of past quantitative research on teacher education historically "intended to inform policy and policy makers" (p. 8). Pedersen et al. identified needs to determine aspects of physical education teacher education programs that provided the highest influences on pre-service physical educators.

Previous research studies critiqued teacher education programs as inadequately preparing the next generation of pre-service educators because of the curricula limiting perspectives and experiences (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2010; Hemphill, Richards, Gaudreault, & Templin, 2015). Brown, Lee, and Collins (2015) conducted a similar study on pre-service general education teachers' perceptions of their preparedness regarding the learning components of their field placement and clinical practice experiences and concluded that significant increases in the perceptions of pre-service teachers and their teaching efficacy existed. Nahal (2010) suggested that educator experiences throughout their teacher education programs influenced inconsistencies as they transformed to certified professionals. Byra (2000) asserted that criticism of the faculty of physical education teacher education programs contributed to the lack of high-quality physical educators in K-12 schools. Implementation and support of cooperating teachers and physical

education curricula, such as problem-solving, lifelong learning, and health substantiated as concerns (Cochran-Smith, 2001; Penny & Jess, 2008). Darling-Hammond (2014) noted the importance to improve the competence of pre-service educators through the building and strengthening of field placement and clinical practice experiences. This study qualitatively validated that developmental factors and practical components including the field placement and clinical practices influenced perceptions of pre-service physical educators' professional preparedness.

Research Questions

The following questions guided this study to examine the pre-service educators' perceptions of their professional preparedness throughout their teacher education programs:

1. How do the attitudes and beliefs of teaching physical education as pre-service physical educators influence their knowledge and skill development for classroom preparedness?
2. What aspects of the teacher education program do pre-service physical educators believe best prepared them for their student teaching experiences to influence student outcomes?
3. What obstacles hinder pre-service physical educators' professional development and attitudes through their teacher education program?
4. What additional resources would pre-service physical educators perceive to be value-added to their physical education teacher education program?

The literature and theoretical framework regarding the phenomenon of pre-service physical educators' professional preparedness helped formulate the research questions in this study.

Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009) suggested that phenomenology incorporated careful analysis

of the human experience, particularly surrounding the idea that individuals may recount their experiences with depth and rigor permitting them to detect the essential qualities of their experiences. Van Manen (2016) suggested that hermeneutic phenomenology used the reflection of lived experiences that targeted broad, comprehensible interpretations and descriptions.

Bandura (2001) and Vygotsky (1978) molded the research questions for this study. Bandura (2001) advocated that the social cognitive theory consisted of three classifications including personal agency, proxy agency, and collective agency. Personal agency was individual, meaning teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and self-efficacy influenced their professional development. Self-efficacy convictions influenced thought designs that acted as naturally supported or self-impeding (Bandura, 1989). The first research question tied to Bandura's (1989) personal agency to define how the participants' attitudes and beliefs of teaching physical education as pre-service physical educators influenced their professional preparedness. "The stronger the belief in their capabilities, the greater and more persistent are their efforts" (Bandura, 1988a, as cited in Bandura, 1989, p. 1176). I used focus groups to collect data in this study. Bandura's (1989) proxy agent potentially influenced the dialogue and results due to the influence of others in the groups. The theoretical framework and literature helped formulate the research questions in this study.

Definitions

1. *Pre-service educator* – A member of an educational program designed to actively engage students in their own learning through new concepts, prior knowledge and experiences, guided practices, and practicums (Anderson & Stillman, 2013).
2. *Physical education teacher education* – Prepares competent pre-service physical educators to teach physical education in K-12 schools through planning, managerial,

instruction, and interactive skills necessary to teach in today's global society (University of Redbank, 2016).

3. *Field placement and clinical practice* – A fundamental role pre-services teachers are mandated to complete that builds their diverse cultural capabilities, knowledge, and development that prepares them for the classroom (Anderson & Stillman, 2013).
4. *Teacher beliefs* – Individual beliefs about children and adolescence, beliefs about teaching, and beliefs about educational purposes (Biesta, Priestley, & Robinson, 2015).

Summary

Chapter One introduced the purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study as I examined 11 pre-service physical educators' perceptions of their professional preparedness as they completed their physical education teacher education programs during their final field placement and clinical practices. The background, statement of the problem, and significance of the study defined the direction of this qualitative study and the importance of conducting the study on pre-service physical educators with zero experience in the profession. The research questions guided the study's course with help from the delimitations and limitations. The research plan provided the materials to understand the participants, reasons for conducting the study, schools and location, strategies for conducting the study, and timing of the study. Chapter Two delves into the review of the literature to examine the basis for researching the perceptions of pre-service physical educators' professional preparedness.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

Many themes determined the pre-service physical educators' perceptions of their professional preparedness. The extensive literature on teacher education programs covered a vast number of theories as this research narrowed on five themes prevalent throughout the current literature reviewed. These themes included (a) teacher preparation and development, (b) perceived teaching problems and concerns, (c) teacher attitudes, beliefs, and self-efficacy, (d) commitment to teaching and becoming a teacher, and (e) classroom management. Bandura (2001), Rogers (1947), and Vygotsky (1978) were expert theorists in social learning, personality development, and human development; however, this study associated with Bandura's (1989) social cognitive theory. Though the literature presented these themes in a variety of frameworks, this paper concentrated on their application to pre-service physical educators' self-efficacy relating to the preparedness levels based on program experiences, coursework, and field placement and clinical practices. The pre-service physical educator participants participated in field placement and clinical practices in K-12 settings.

Theoretical Framework

Bandura (1989) examined different aspects of human agency as associated with social cognitive theory and their functions within the causal interactional structure. Social cognitive theory was highly influential theory of human behavior grounded in learning theory to shape behaviors (Riley et al., 2016). According to Denler, Wolters, and Benzon (2013), social cognitive theory examined the learning process in social frameworks occurring throughout the psychological model of behavior. Bandura (1989) asserted that individuals neither posed as autonomous nor power-driven conveyors of stimulating influences affecting the environment. In

contrast, Bandura (2001) suggested that positive and negative self-esteem influenced the cognitive process including self-efficacy. Schwarzer (2014) implied that self-efficacy made the difference in the way individuals portrayed themselves. A person who had the confidence to do something experienced an active and self-determined course in life (Schwarzer, 2014). Young, Plotnikoff, Collins, Callister, and Morgan (2014) indicated the two concepts in social cognitive theory as self-efficacy and outcome expectations. Young et al. also explained that self-efficacy played a vital role within the constructs of Bandura's (1989) social cognitive theory and cultivated a direct effect on behaviors, much like it had an indirect effect on other components of the model. The key components of social cognitive theory and health promotion entailed knowledge of health hazards and benefits, perceived self-efficacy that a person could regulate their health habits, the projected costs and benefits known as outcome expectations, health goals involved in the behavior, perceived facilitation and societal supports, and barriers to creating change (Stacey, James, Chapman, Courneya, & Lubans, 2015). Self-efficacy was fundamental to Bandura's multidimensional approach as meaningful, preemptive, self-evaluative, and self-regulatory constructs of human agency (Komarraju & Nadler, 2013).

Bandura (1989) noted that agents personified the capabilities, including belief systems and self-regulatory abilities, and disseminated functions by personal influence rather than inhabiting an isolated entity in a particular area. According to Bandura (2001), social cognitive theory examined the brain as the driver for interactive agency and pinned cognitive processes as determinative influences. Psychological disciplines work as different activities. Bandura (2001) also implied, "Intentionality and agency raise the fundamental question of how people bring about activities over which they command personal control that activate the subpersonal neurophysiological events for realizing particular intentions and aspirations" (p. 5). He

suggested that numerous social factors including human development, adaptation, and change manipulated human functioning. In describing intentionality, Bandura (1989) suggested that an intention was a characterization of course of action to be executed and achieved. An intention was not a calculation of future actions; however, an intention was a pre-emptive obligation to bring them about (Bandura, 1989).

Jamil, Downer, and Pianta (2012) suggested that self-efficacy was a construct rather than a trait that pre-service educators intentionally targeted to be successful in the classroom, which included skill and knowledge of pedagogy, attitude, and personal dispositions. Bandura (1989) suggested that intentions grounded in one's self-motivation and self-influence enabled performance. Environmental factors and personal characteristics influenced a person's interactions and behavior (Font, Garay, & Jones, 2016; Lin & Hsu, 2015;). Bandura (1989) also noted that forethought was a planning method that anticipated and self-guided the restructures of one's priorities. Self-reactiveness shaped the courses of action through the self-regulated process of connecting thought to action. The metacognitive ability to conduct self-reflection and the sufficiency of one's feelings and behaviors was a noticeably fundamental human feature of agency. Through reflective self-consciousness, people evaluated their motivations, values, and the meaning of their life pursuits. New and innovative social realities delivered opportunities for others to convey their influences on their development and form their collective, societal futures (Bandura, 2001).

Through his study of personality and nondirective therapy, Rogers (1947) concluded that a person's perceptions influenced behavior. Self-perceptions related to self-esteem levels and choices affecting behaviors and achievements (Fox, 2000). Rogers (1947) also implied that self-concept was a person's perception of who they were in this world. Self-concept was a person's

viewpoint of personal experiences in his or her life. According to Noack, Kauper, Benbow, and Eckstein (2013), measuring physical self-concept commonly pertained to factors such as conditions of the body, competence of sports, and attractiveness. Much literature on coordinated management of meaning portrayed a building block as calligraphy of who a person was throughout the game of life (Rogers, 1947). Rogers (1947) suggested that when people had perceptions of being funny, they exploited characteristics depicting this perception while involved in various discussions. Experiential learning related to personality and observing the dynamics of a person influenced behavior and change. Experiential learning theory was a holistic model approach and according to McCarthy (2016) was a process of learning that included a framework that “merges experience, perception, cognition, and behavior” (p. 92). McCarthy underscored the research of Kolb (1984) to define learning related to experiential learning theory as the knowledge shaped by the alteration of one’s transformative experiences. The experiential learning cycle involved four stages the learner completed for learning to materialize (McCarthy, 2016). Rogers (1947) described the process of learning as a change that happened over time where perceptions of self and reality influenced behavior.

Similarly, Vygotsky (1978) concerned himself with the learning and development process related to the social aspects of people’s lives. Smagorinsky (2013) suggested that social concepts were subjective and indefinable; however, explained educational concepts as a social reconstruction difficult to understand. Shabani (2016) implied that Vygotsky’s (1978) developmental theory bound behavior and consciousness as mind and social interactions were constructs of human development. Social development theory examined the roles social interaction and cultural adaptation and integration had on a person’s development (Bakhurst, 2015). Toomela (2015) insisted that developmental interactions, such as language and behavior,

influenced cognitive development. Vygotsky chose this definitive language because of his desire to study and analyze scientific concepts related to the state of consciousness and its development (Alves, 2014). Vygotsky (2004) investigated the imagination and creativity in children and adolescents that function with diverse factors in social development theory:

All forms of creative imagination, he says, ‘include affective elements.’ This means that every construct of the imagination has an effect on our feelings, and if this construct does not in itself correspond to reality, nonetheless the feelings it evokes are real feelings, feelings a person truly experiences. (pp. 19-20)

Cai, Liao, Wang, Chen, and Tian (2016) reported that even though the process of social learning was a combination of observations and interactions, Vygotsky (1978) implied that people preferred self-contained, independent settings and shared collaborative environments. Along these lines, Vygotsky (1978) examined child development and mental capacities relating to social development theory. According to Vygotsky (1978), when humans imitated those functions in the realm of their zone of proximal development, matured functions predicted known patterns of development. Zone of proximal development (ZPD) involved two constructs: (a) what learners can do independently and (b) what learners can do with interactions and guidance of others (Clapper, 2015). Loureiro, Costa, and Panchapakesan (2017) indicated that social influence was a belief based on certain situations that guided specific behaviors, manipulated by social values, such as viewpoints and contributions of people within a community or society. Molinero, Riquelme, and Serna (2015) noted that social influence was fundamental in understanding global behaviors enforced by cooperation.

Related Literature

Teacher Preparation and Development

There was a decline in physical education teacher education programs due to low enrollments because of the unwillingness of the American government to require physical education and that fewer school districts mandate physical education. There was a postulation that families and community programs born the responsibility to develop students (Templin, Blankenship, & Richards, 2014). The central debate in education entailed whether teacher education programs provided pre-service educators with the tools and knowledge to instructionally influence student outcomes (Kokkidou, Dionyssiou, & Androutsos, 2014). Many pre-service physical educators experienced direct instruction over field-based experiences throughout their teacher education programs, limiting the opportunities and exposure to pedagogical strategies and ideas (Hemphill et al., 2015). The preliminary review of the literature showcased a survey by Darling-Hammond, Chung, and Frelow (2002), in which these authors researched numerous studies that proved how powerful teacher preparation and self-efficacy was in the development of the pre-service educator.

Cochran-Smith and Villegas (2015) explained that since 1963 the American Educational Research Association published five handbooks of research on teaching shaped by its editors that were important milestones. The five handbooks touched on many aspects of teaching and policy; however, failed to go into teacher education itself. Cochran-Smith and Villegas also implied that past researchers on teacher education collectively showed different purposes, intentions, and audiences. Much of the literature on physical educators was rooted in the methods of teaching physical education (Hemphill et al., 2015).

Pre-service teacher learning was a concern regarding professional development and growth. Much of the focus was on “how students should learn instead of how they actually do learn” (p. 89) as they transformed through their programs (Ahonen, Pyhältö, Pietarinen, & Soini, 2015). Kabilan (2013) implied that professional development incorporated multicultural learning opportunities where pre-service educators learned and developed from one another. Teacher education programs integrated case-based learning, or circumstantial situations and challenges, such as multiculturalism and disability awareness to support pre-service educators to overcome complex matters (Hemphill et al., 2015). Multicultural learning provided educators and students with learning environments that fostered stronger bonds and relationships while embracing the differences that existed, including other’s views, beliefs, and cultures (Kabilan, 2013).

Goldhaber, Liddle, and Theobald (2013) underscored research that directly examined variations in teacher training concerning 21 programs among 2,000 traditional teacher education programs across the United States. These researchers studied teacher education programs in the state of Washington to discover that the preponderance of state-accredited teacher programs generated educators who appeared as statistically equivalent to educators credentialed outside of the state. Goldhaber et al. suggested that teacher preparation and the value of training related to the quality of teacher output that influenced student outcomes immensely. Role models influenced the development and preparation of pre-service educators as they modeled ethical and moral behaviors (Brown & Trevino, 2014). Van Ginkel, Verloop, and Denessen (2016) indicated the importance of mentor teachers to prepare pre-service educators through collaborative learning communities constructively. Teacher education programs, in general, struggled to entice cooperating teachers to volunteer their services in the developmental stages of

preparing pre-service educators for the profession (Sinclair, Dowson, & Thistleton-Martin, 2006). Loewenberg Ball and Forzani (2009) implied the need for consistent and reliable systems to ensure effective teaching practices as educational initiatives called for reform in recent years to meet the demands of the 21st century in the United States.

A significant pushback against the idea that teacher preparation programs should bear some responsibility and liability for student growth based estimates of their graduates focused on the deficiency of research about the effectiveness of teacher education programs (Goldhaber et al., 2013). Darling-Hammond et al. (2002) examined 3,000 teachers in New York City who expressed their views on teacher preparation and teacher self-efficacy and later assessed by faculty and stakeholders in teacher education programs. The teachers took various pathways to reaching their teaching status: (a) Teacher Education Program, (b) Corps, (c) Teach for America, and (d) Peace Corps. Teacher education programs showed significant and growing indications that teacher education programs made positive influences on teacher effectiveness (Darling-Hammond, 2002). Educators at the University of California-Berkeley, Stanford University, and Vanderbilt University created the Fostering a Community of Learners model (Shulman & Shulman, 2008). Shulman and Shulman (2008) also described a challenge they overcame when they established teacher education experiences that prepared and readied pre-service educators to create, sustain, and teach in a learning community as expressed and outlined by the Fostering a Community of Learners model. [Our] teacher education program (University of Redbank, 2016) was designed to provide a scientific and pedagogical foundation with multiple public-school experiences that enabled students to observe, assist teachers and coaches, experiment with curriculum, create programs, and gain structured experiences in teaching. Okas, Van der Schaaf, and Krull (2014) implied that the process of developing to an expert educator was a long-term

progression and categorized by qualitative modifications and adaptations of particular skills and concepts of teaching. Teaching Opportunity Corps was an alternative teacher preparation program designed to “enhance the preparation of teachers and prospective teachers in addressing the learning needs of students at risk of truancy, academic failure, or dropping out of school” (Educator Resources, 2015).

Teach for America (Teach for America, 2015) incorporated three strategies to their mission, including (a) enlist, (b) develop, and (c) mobilize. According to their website, Teach for America (2015) enlisted corps members who promoted two years to the cause of teaching in low-income communities. According to Teach for America, development inspired development through:

Training and supporting corps members in the practices of great teachers and leaders.

With hard work, perseverance, and strong partnerships with their students, students’ families, and communities, corps members can dramatically increase the opportunities available to their students in school and in life. (3)

Teach for America then mobilized their corps members by empowering them to learn and grow from their experiences and choosing pathways that “network, connect, and expand” (Teach for America) their opportunities to “strengthen the movement” (Teach for America, 2015). Darling-Hammond, Hammerness, Grossman, Rust, and Shulman (2005) concluded that teachers felt differently depending on their routes to achieving their teacher licensure; however, the teachers who went through a higher education teacher education program felt prepared and readied for the classroom. These authors researched numerous studies that influenced teacher preparation and self-efficacy.

Researching pre-service physical educators' professional preparedness centered on their professional development and experiences throughout their teacher education programs, including time spent during final field placement and clinical practices. Cochran-Smith and Villegas (2015) noted the complexities of researching teacher education programs due to contending viewpoints and beliefs about research purposes as it related to the aims of education. Mansker, Fulks, Peters, Curtner, and Ogbeide (2016) incited that clinical learning was a cooperative approach helpful in the development the learner's knowledge, skills, and performance levels. Darling-Hammond (2016) suggested that schools shifted their practices from selective to adaptive to provide more opportunities for their students. Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2007) delved into research surrounding educators' knowledge of curriculum and skill development to be effective in the classroom. Darling-Hammond and Bransford implied that both knowledge of curriculum and skill development improved educator performance and increased student engagement and achievement. Student engagement was tied to student achievement in that the relationship manipulated the outcome of students, especially students at risk (Finn & Zimmer, 2012). Christenson, Reschly, and Wylie (2012) asserted that student engagements connected meaningful contexts, such as home, peers, school, and society to students to outcomes of interest.

Cochran-Smith and Zeichner (2010) expressed their qualms with teacher education preparation programs and the need for focus on teaching diverse populations. A study by Cook and Van Cleaf (2000) examined first-year teachers who completed their field placement and clinical practices in both urban and rural schools. The study suggested that higher numbers of pre-service educators who taught at urban schools felt greater understanding of their students and their students' needs, which advanced their overall professional interactions and experiences

(Cook & Van Cleaf, 2000). According to a National Board of Professional Teaching Standards Report, student achievement was the status of subject-matter knowledge, understanding, and skills at one point in time, while student learning was the growth in subject-matter knowledge, understanding, and skills over time (Linn, Bond et al., 2011). Goktas, Yildirim, and Yildirim (2009) researched enablers and barriers that influenced pre-service teachers' development and their preparation for classroom instruction as well. Notwithstanding the significant commitments of financial and human resources, teacher education programs failed to offer pre-service educators the essential skills, proficiencies, and experiences to effectively ready and prepare them to use information and communication technologies in their prospective career (Goktas et al., 2009).

Rodriguez-Arroyo and Loewenstein (2013) examined teacher development in the 21st century and their approaches to educating young minds. The researchers looked beyond the paper and pencil approach as new teachers entered into the teaching world with new technologies and practices that ensured student growth and teacher readiness. As technology use increased in schools, educators advanced their beliefs to commit and understand the importance of technology development and implementation into their curricula. A study conducted by Ertmer, Ottenbreit-Leftwich, Sadik, Sendurur, and Sendurur (2012) investigated teacher beliefs and technology integration into teaching practices and found that the attitudes and beliefs of teachers played the biggest role in the prevention of effective technology-rich curriculum implementation. Along with these barriers included teacher knowledge and skills to implement technology into the classroom learning effectively. Hooker (2014) indicated that the usefulness of Google Classroom as a technologically advanced tool to promote teacher and student communications.

Google Classroom encouraged technology in the classroom by helping educators create quick assignments, provide swift feedback, and open communication (Hooker, 2014).

Along the lines of teacher development and preparation methods were the professional educators who held the key to ensuring the pathway to success for pre-service physical educators. Professors' knowledge and skill influenced best practices that ensured the pre-service physical educators' preparedness before starting their field placement and clinical practices. Ronfeldt, Schwartz, and Jacob (2014) suggested that completing methods-related coursework and practice teaching instruction to improve pre-service teacher preparation influenced their overall success as first-year teachers. Oh and Park (2009) conducted a study about blended learning and faculty members' motivation and attitudes in their instructional strategies. The researchers found that faculty members lacked motivation and enthusiasm. Lack of motivation was based on one's behavior that resulted in a non-optimal levels (Sozer, 2013). The lack of motivation was a major problem related to incentives and bonuses in the educational system at universities. Small percentages of higher education institutions (Oh & Park, 2009) created policies on incentive programs to implement learning and blended learning. Sozer also implied:

1. Motivation is a personal phenomenon. Therefore, every human is different and emphasizing these differences lies in the foundation of all motivation theories.
2. Motivation can be considered as an intention. It is presumed that motivation is controlled by the workers and behaviors are determined by motivation.
3. Motivation is multifaceted. What makes people more active and the motivation factors of humans, which change in time, need to be known at this point.
4. Motivation is not a behavior or a performance. Motivation is about forces, which affect persons from inside and outside (p. 1370).

This indicated motivation as an influence on teacher education programs' implementation methods to develop and prepare pre-service educators. There was a lack of motivation and enthusiasm for higher performance levels of faculty members at many educational institutions.

Reflection stimulated and encouraged self-awareness with the advantages of accepting and appreciating self-reactions and self-perceptions (Stoughton, 2007). A reflection was a form of mental processing, systematic thinking that influenced one's learning and capabilities that, as Okas et al. (2012) suggested, was circumstantial for educators with the self-perception and aptitude to learn, grow, and succeed through professional development. Bailey, Curtis, and Nunan (2004) defined reflective teaching as "the teacher's thinking about what happens in classroom lessons and thinking about alternative means of achieving goals or aims." Teachers thought about what occurred during their classroom experiences, reflected on the problems or issues that took place in real time, then found solutions through effective strategies and important observations to increase their teaching development (Bailey et al., 2004). Bartlett (1990) discussed his five steps Reflective Thinking process used to improve teacher development through reflective teaching to provide direction for educators and their reflective teaching methods. The five steps included mapping, informing, contesting, appraising, and acting. Reflective thinking was a process used to analyze and evaluate the learning and developmental stages (Ghanizadeh, 2017). Teachers reflected on their teaching to make their teaching highly effective because teachers analyzed and evaluated their teaching plans, teaching behaviors, and their influences on their students (Liu & Zhang, 2014; Okas et al., 2014). Liu and Zhang (2014) also asserted that the professional growth of educators occurred when transformative processes of teacher judgments and beliefs turned into effective teaching behaviors as educators became feedback-driven through self-reflection. Brown and Cox (2014) examined feedback and

reflection among pre-service physical educators and indicated feedback as a critical component to the design and structure of the program. Brown and Cox delved into recommendations to ensure teacher education programs integrated best practices to include student-generated and peer feedback as a tool to develop and grow throughout the program.

Teacher Concerns

In the United States, upwards of 40% of K-12 educators left the profession within the first five years of being in the profession (Ingersoll, Merrill, & Stuckey, 2014). Pre-service educators perceived concerns to implement effective programs designed with appropriate curricula (Hao & Lee, 2016). Perception was a conscious awareness leading to an action (Goldstein, 2013). Concerns were “one’s thoughts, considerations, feelings, worries, satisfactions, and frustrations” (p. 32) as they related to transformation (Dunn, 2016). Legette and McCord (2014) underscored a study of pre-service music educators who revealed that the field placement and clinical practice benefitted their development, while they regarded courses within the program least. Legette (2013) investigated the perceptions of novice music teachers in the profession with regards to effective development and concluded that participants voiced the need for clinical opportunities, a dialogue of pedagogical issues within different environments, and effective classroom management.

Fajet, Bello, Leftwich, Mesler, and Shaver (2005) studied the perceptions of pre-service educators who were at the beginning stages of their educational process in 2005. These researchers examined pre-service educators’ thoughts and perceptions related to their roles as they prepared for college-level work to become teachers in grade schools across the country. Their study found that the majority of the pre-service teacher participants viewed the teaching profession as an interpersonal relationship over a skilled-driven practice. Interpersonal

relationships consisted of two categories: (a) social and (b) professional. Social relationships influenced the psychological process to which it encouraged motivation and interest in learning (Ariani, 2017). Professional relationships, primarily teacher relationships, rooted in loneliness, competition, and exhaustion; however, collaboration fundamentally enriched the profession to overcome challenges (Butti, 2016). Over 1 million educators influenced social and professional communities through shared goals and interests (Zasytkin, Zborowski, & Shuklina, 2015).

Perceived teaching problems of elementary and secondary pre-service educators compared to the perceived teaching problems of elementary and secondary pre-service teachers (Evans & Tribble, 1986). Veenman (1984) studied a survey of 18 teaching problems completed by 85 males and 94 females that indicated their levels related to the teaching problems. The results showed lack of classroom experiences and insecurities, subject matter competency, and motivating students. Females showed higher degrees of self-efficacy and commitment to teaching than their male counterparts. Elementary school teachers also displayed this commitment over their secondary peers. Evan and Tribble (1986), cited hundreds of times by professionals in education, specifically targeted teacher education. A similar study in New Zealand (Smith, Corkery, Buckley, & Calvert, 2013) delved into the concerns of pre-service educators related to their field placement and clinical practice. Educators reflected on their initial views about teaching and their perspectives after each practicum related to educator efficacy. The results showed teacher concerns changed over time as their classroom experiences increased.

Participating factors in pre-service educators' concerns included policy changes, relationships, and field placement and clinical practice experiences. Pre-service educators began their field placement and clinical practice with upbeat attitudes and hoped to improve student

outcomes; however, new knowledge and skills to reach all students in multicultural classrooms perceived as a challenge (Lamberth & Smith, 2016). The field placement and clinical practice served as a viaduct between theory learned through coursework and teaching learned through practice and provided the framework for pre-service educators' competencies and their views on teaching (Smith & Lev-Ari, 2005). Pre-service educators participated in non-hostile field placement and clinical practices and reflected on their practical experiences targeting specific competencies through their development (Smith & Lev-Ari, 2005). Okas et al. (2014) pinpointed the pre-service period of an educator:

Candidates tend to identify realistically with pupils but unrealistically with teachers. Their concerns as teachers consist of only vague apprehensions. The second stage is characterized by concerns for survival: class control; mastery of content; the teacher's own adequacy in fulfilling his/her role. In the third stage, concerns turn to teaching performance and the limitations and frustrations of teaching situations. (p. 329)

The College of Education at the University of Hawaii at Manoa described the teacher candidate role and expectations of schools to support pre-service educators in their developmental experiences. They stated:

During your study in the College of Education, you will grow from being a college student to becoming a professional educator. Your cohort coordinator, instructors, field supervisors, mentor teachers, and school administrators work together in partnership to support you in becoming a teacher. ("What Does it Mean to," 2015)

Reinolds, Ross, and Rakow (2002) examined pre-service educators' stress levels concluding that pre-service educators who professionally accepted their roles articulated higher degrees of satisfaction with their experiences. Educators' with higher emotional states of well-being, such

as stress, anxiety, and depression showed less commitment and determination (DeMauro & Jennings, 2016).

Conflict management with diverse students also stemmed from the concerns of pre-service teachers. Saiti (2015) implied that conflict management negatively influenced educational experiences while manipulating interpersonal and professional elements in schools. As Kanniammal (2008) highlighted social interpersonal and professional interpersonal relationships; Parker and Bickmore (2012) underscored social and interpersonal conflicts in societies related to conflict and peace building in schools. Public schools were organizations where people with cultural differences and struggles grouped together (Parker & Bickmore, 2012). Schools used their capabilities to process change even though interconnectedness of politics, fear, and social disagreements existed (Weinstein, Freedman, & Hughson, 2007).

Rare occasions in teacher education programs advanced confidence or skills for dealing with multifaceted subject matters relating to diverse students (Parker & Bickmore, 2012). Parker and Bickmore (2012) implied that when teacher education programs and professional supports understood the root of the [conflict] problem, teachers maintained culturally appropriate, inclusive pedagogy that encouraged dialogue on conflict. However, to advance teacher confidence and aptitude for such complexities of diverse and inclusive pedagogies, teacher development needed to be constructed through oppositional experiences and dialogue. Parker and Bickmore conducted a mixed-methods research study of pre-service and first-year educators in Toronto to investigate the perceptions and beliefs of novice teachers when handling conflict, including teacher dialogue on the issue in their classrooms. Parker and Bickmore found varieties of conflict depending on the situation. Certain teachers reported normal conflict, while others placed blame on the students themselves (Parker & Bickmore, 2012).

Parker and Bickmore (2012) explained that some teachers interpreted questions differently. Researchers asked teachers questions regarding the ethnic and cultural identities of students influencing teacher handling of conflicts in schools. Among the teacher participants, 41% said no, 27% said it had some effect, and 32% said it had considerable effect. One teacher understood the question as pertaining to conflict about ethnic and cultural identities in the classroom and expressed her perceptions as not having any conflict in her classroom. Another teacher asserted having to learn to connect and relate to her South Asian-origin students. Many teachers in the study said they dealt with conflict after it took place while others took the time to directly link conflict to behavior as they modeled it for their students (Parker & Bickmore, 2012). As perceptions led to actions (Goldstein, 2013), it was important to understand that teacher education programs created awareness for pre-service educators. According to Becker, Bradshaw, Domitrovich, and Jalongo (2013), using preventative interventions reduced problems while building resilience amongst children. The effectiveness of the program's reliability and dependability related to student achievement emphasized the importance of quality implementation efforts for preventative interventions (Becker et al., 2013).

Teacher Attitudes, Beliefs, and Self-efficacy

Pre-service educators brought their own perceptions and perspectives about teaching when they entered their teacher education programs (Raths & McAninch, 2003). Loreman, Sharma, and Forlin (2013) suggested that self-efficacy was a context specific component that confined to educator perceptions about the functionality and implementations of competent teaching in certain areas that used inclusive, best practices. Educator motivations linked directly to their self-efficacy, social supports, and professional outcomes (Lee & Yuan, 2014).

The literature on the professional beliefs of educators led to strong relationships between pedagogical methods and carried out teaching practices (Ahonen et al., 2014). Savolainen, Engelbrecht, Nel, and Malinen (2012) conducted a survey of 1,000 teachers in Finland and South Africa relating to inclusive education and its influence on pre-service and in-service educators' attitudes, beliefs, and self-efficacy. This study helped to globally understand pre-service educators' preparation and self-efficacy related to inclusion. Nuttall (2016) underscored research on teacher preparation and inclusion, concluding that new graduates of teacher programs who shifted their outlook on inclusive education to adopt principles and meaningful instruction increased their self-efficacy and attitudes towards disadvantaged students. Teachers required education on inclusion to meet the needs of students with disabilities. Pre-service educators recognized that deficiency of information affected their skills and ability to meet student needs (Herold & Waring, 2016). Yildirim and Tezci (2016) indicated that educator self-efficacy and beliefs influenced multicultural education while perceptions influenced the implementation of the revolutionized teaching practices associated with inclusion and multicultural education. Davis (2016) insinuated that when educators faced multiculturalism head on and understood students' "social, economic, educational, emotional, and psychological" (p. 42) learning, classroom experiences and outcomes were positive and constructive. Sharma and Nuttal (2016) defined inclusion as a requirement of educators to modify the learning experiences of each student to expand participation in schools influenced by students' abilities. Research indicated that educators showed positive attitudes towards inclusive education (Sharma & Sokal, 2015). Pre-service educators who perceived inclusive education in a negative light limited their exposure; however, when pre-service physical educators worked with disadvantaged students they favored inclusion (Taliaferro, Hammond, & Wyant, 2015). Educational preparation and

previous experiences influenced positive attitudes of physical educators towards inclusive settings (Hodge & Elliott, 2013).

Schussler, Stooksberry, and Bercaw (2010) examined the intellectual, cultural, and moral dispositions of teacher candidates regarding effective teaching. Teachers reflected on their early teacher years and their focus points related to students and self. The researchers evaluated thirty-five teachers via personal journals and determined very few teachers displayed the knowledge to identify assumptions and attitudes that influenced their decisions made in their classrooms (Schussler et al, 2010). Raths and McAninch (2003) outlined knowledge as a condition of truth; however, explained that beliefs and knowledge were messy, yet intertwined. Okas et al. (2014) implied that information and convictions shaped systems in which the teacher managed practices that identified with long-term memory and function as articulations of considering a particular behavior. Ertmer (2005) expressed concerns amongst pre-service teachers' beliefs regarding pedagogy and technology integration suggesting low levels of technology use in schools, even though technology integration became apparent in recent years. Teachers had more access to technology, advanced levels of training, and satisfactory policy settings (Ertmer, 2005). As technology influenced perceived enjoyment and attitudes of pre-service teachers, Teo and Noyes (2011) investigated indicators of perceived practicality and the intent for its usefulness. Teo and Noyes also examined perceived enjoyment, noting, "Research has found that perceived enjoyment plays an important role in user technology acceptance and that the correlation between perceived enjoyment and perceived ease of use is supported by research findings" (p. 1646). According to Radell et al. (2016), intrinsic motivation was a spontaneously engaging and enjoyable action that led to positive effects, affectively, cognitively, and behaviorally.

Teo (2010) also examined pre-service educators' beliefs and attitudes towards computer use and found that usefulness and ease of use were key indicators influencing their attitudes towards computers. The exposure of teacher values and beliefs to students influenced teacher attitudes and approaches to technology use in the classrooms (Teo, 2010). As technology became a new method of teaching, Chai, Koh, and Tsai (2010) expressed that learners developed their cognitive skills at higher levels when supported by systems in place, including goal-lists, prompts, cues, and models. Jones and Idol (2013) implied that knowledgeable instructors with metacognition of tasks implemented meaningful instruction to develop skills.

Bandura's social cognitive theory (1997) focused on one's learning and behavior in learning environments and social surroundings. Schunk and Mullen (2012) asserted that higher levels of self-efficacy positively influenced self-regulation, education, motivation, and success. Bandura (2001) also indicated indirect influences including individual selections of actions, liveliness, tenacity, and interests. Self-regulation was premeditated self-judgments, emotions, and behaviors used in the achievement of particular individual goals (Kaviani & Ghaemi, 2014). In regard to social cognitive theory, outcome expectations were one's beliefs concerning the consequences imagined of a particular action (Bonitz, Larson, & Armstrong, 2010). Choice goals affected self-efficacy influenced by interest (Bonitz et al., 2010). Choice goals were processes consumers used to reach their best choice outcomes using contextual structures to attain satisfaction (Wang & Shukla, 2013).

Reed, Mikels, and Löckenhoff (2012) examined self-efficacy and preferences of choice and found that decision-making processes and outcomes, as well as satisfaction, depended on the level of self-efficacy of the individual. Kernis (2013) suggested that a person's self-esteem affected decision-making because those with low self-esteem were more indecisive and often

preferred isolation over fear and confrontation. Low self-esteem, high-stress levels, and adverse outcomes were consequences of perceived lack of control and self-efficacy (Romijnders et al., 2017). According to Erdem and Demirel (2007), decisions and intentions determined self-efficacy. Erdem and Demirel also outlined educators' self-efficacy regarding its influences on classroom strategies for motivating students to learn and grow, including effective classroom management, course structure and design, and communication techniques. When educators showcased high levels of self-efficacy, they felt like they controlled classroom behaviors, including student motivations and achievement (Erdem & Demirel, 2007). Those with self-efficacy appreciated the art of working hard and persevered through tough times, as their beliefs and confidence elevated (Erdem & Demirel, 2007). Brown and Cox (2014) implied that the more experiences and awareness of situational classroom practices the higher the confidence and self-efficacy of the pre-service educator.

Educators constantly experienced social working environments where interrelated components, including (a) teacher satisfaction, (b) retention, and (c) student performance, acted as the framework for the social constructs of teaching (Devos, Dupriez, & Paquay, 2012). A study conducted by Chester and Beaudin (1996) concluded that when school leaders observed novice teachers often in their classrooms novice teachers' self-efficacy increased (as cited in Devos et al., 2012). According to Jamil et al. (2012), pre-service and novice educators consumed higher senses of self-efficacy through their most challenging years. Because of this, they persevered and remained in the profession (Jamil et al., 2012). Zee and Koomen (2016) indicated the need to understand the psychological well-being of educators when examining their self-efficacy. One-third of the research related to educators' well-being correlated with teacher burnout (Zee & Koomen, 2016). According to Sanford (2017), teacher burnout was a

psychological condition comprised of mental, emotional, and physical constructs. Exhaustion and fatigue, undesirable self-concept, uncertainty and anguish, aggravation and discontent, and workplace distraction caused teacher burnout (Sanford, 2017). Pre-service educators entered the profession experiencing accelerated paces and unexpected challenges along the way. Their reality of teaching took emotional tolls on their self-efficacy and well-being as prior research concluded that self-efficacy declined in the first year of teaching (Devos et al., 2012). This study targeted self-efficacy in pre-service teachers; however, little research existed related to the development of self-efficacy in pre-service teachers (Jamil et al., 2012).

Commitment to Teaching and Becoming a Teacher

Pre-service educators enrolled in their teacher education programs with solid teaching philosophies resulting from professional interest and influence (Legette & McCord, 2014). Teaching was a profession where newcomers reflected on their learning history as they developed (Britzman, 2012). Though teachers experienced challenging years when they entered the profession (Devos et al., 2012), teachers needed to stay motivated and committed to what they were called to do as educators. Teachers were, at one time, students themselves in schools where their teacher world, established before becoming teachers, turned into reality (Britzman, 2012). Teacher self-efficacy influenced teacher commitment (Chesnut & Burley, 2015). Educators leaned towards “affluent, high-achieving” (p. 437) schools with smaller size classes and more opportunity (Jones, 2016). Commitment was vital for educator development and retention influenced by intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, from monetary rewards to social supports with peers (Kelly, 2015). Wilkesmann and Schmid (2014) implied that intrinsic motivation was an act of enjoyment that could not be visibly enforced upon others; however, work environments influenced their abilities indirectly.

Ibrahim, Ghavifekr, Ling, Siraj, and Azeez, (2014) underscored the definition of teacher commitment as the relationship between organizational values and goals, eagerness to work for the organization, and commitment to the team. Maintaining excellence through performance influenced by job satisfaction and behavior was the definition of an organization (Sawitri, Suswati, & Huda, 2016). Organizational commitment was an attachment that individuals had to their organization through psychological means (Farrukh, Wei Ying, & Abdallah Ahmed, 2016). Organizational commitment affected turnover intentions and turnover behaviors (Bashir & Ramay, 2008). Teacher commitment was a major influence in the teaching-student learning process where the teacher's performance displayed sincere, loving affection for students and their well-rounded developments to be successful (Lawrence & Deepa, 2013). Teacher self-efficacy connected performance levels and persistence behaviors (Dybowski, Sehner, & Harendza, 2017). When teacher education programs promoted teacher commitment through participation and engagement they bolstered pre-service educators' knowledge and beliefs towards the profession (O'Toole, 2017; Yuan & Zhang, 2017). Pedota (2015) asserted that teachers committed to using elevated performance levels, such as high-differentiated instructional techniques, influenced their self-efficacy and student achievement that led to increased teacher retention. Retention influenced adversity in the workplace where an individual felt a sense of belonging and had an attachment to his or her colleagues and work environment with an appreciation of commitment (Kerfoot, 1998). According to Cralley (2011), organizational commitment based its ideology on how employees of an organization identified with colleagues and other members of its workforce, as well as the workforce's potential to work hard for the organization. Many components influenced such responsibility, including whether a worker acknowledged and embraced the organization's qualities and objectives, how willing he

or she was to apply additional exertion for the organization's sake, and whether he or she wanted to remain associated with the organization (Cralley, 2011).

Akyeampong and Lewin (2002) presented three different categories of teachers: beginning training, after completion of training, and teachers with two years of experience. The researchers compared and contrasted their perceptions and perspectives based on their experiences. Okas et al. (2014) implied that a novice teacher was the timeframe of teaching between one and three years of experience in the classroom. Assuncao Flores (2006) examined novice teachers over a two-year period and found that novice teachers maintained commitment; however, overwhelmed by the amount of work and duties asked of them throughout their workdays. This influence of comparing and contrasting different groups of teachers assured the effectiveness of teacher education and continual development to promote best practices in the classroom. Teachers needed to understand the education profession and the commitment to becoming an effective teacher (Assuncao Flores, 2006). Fletcher (2012) conducted a research study on experiences and identities of pre-service elementary classroom teachers becoming physical educators, concluding that small stepping-stones formed to shape professional identities that assisted pre-service educators to imagine themselves as effective and influential physical educators, though impracticalities associated with teacher education programs existed.

Cochran-Smith (2005) examined trends in new teacher education programs, including certain targeted areas of pre-service educator preparation. Cochran-Smith entailed the struggles of change in education and purposes for adult education. Merriam and Brockett (2011) detailed adult education as a phenomenon with different experiences depending on “where you are standing” (p. 3). Pre-service educators understood these targeted areas and the commitment to understanding the challenges that pre-service and in-service teachers faced on a daily basis.

Committed teachers needed to work together to construct effective policies driven by student data with positive outcomes in mind.

Classroom Management

Upholding and maintaining stability in the classroom and designing appropriate learning environments were skills required to develop as an educator (Sivri & Balci, 2015). A teacher's classroom environment designed to educate a variety of students needed to be organized to ensure advanced development and engaging, successful experiences (Bull, Feldman, & Solity, 2013). When focused on completion of classroom management content in pre-service teacher training, novice teachers increased their confidence levels that influenced their abilities to manage and deal with misbehaviors effectively (O'Neill & Stephenson, 2012). O'Neill and Stephenson (2012) underscored Brophy's (2006) study on the conceptualization of classroom management, asserting that classroom management incorporated the structure and organization of the room, including the physical space and supplies, as well as the need for effective classroom rules, procedures, daily routines. Classroom management also included techniques and approaches to ensure student engagement and attentiveness, disciplinary mediations, and student socialization (O'Neill & Stephenson, 2012). Emmer, Sabornie, Evertson, and Weinstein (2013) suggested that beginning teachers' perceptions regarding student discipline were constant challenges in the teaching profession. Classroom management concerns continued as a trend and trigger for teacher job dissatisfaction and high burnout rates among new educators. The public's perception also categorized discipline and classroom management as one of the most pressing concerns facing schools today (Emmer et al., 2013).

Emmer et al. (2013) underscored research that indicated significant gaps between the attitudes and beliefs of classroom teachers and those of the instructors who professionally

readied and prepared them. Practically every classroom teacher in Johnson's report said that proper management and discipline was essential for a prosperous education. Fewer than 4 in 10 professions in the School of Education considered discipline to be unequivocally vital to develop and train teachers who maintained student behaviors and discipline in their classrooms (Emmer et al., 2013). Roughly 30% of the teacher participants in the study said their professors designed the structure of their teacher education program to include managing a classroom filled with disorderly students. Emmer et al. used educational theorists' experiences and knowledge to define classroom management as teacher actions needed to establish a learning environment that safeguarded academic achievement and social-emotional development and growth. The researchers also suggested that the purposes of classroom management established and maintained an orderly classroom learning environment and advanced the social and moral development of students (Emmer et al., 2013).

According to Durgunoğlu and Hughes (2010), self-efficacy and knowledge of pre-service educators teaching English language learners fell short, in part, because mentoring teachers provided inadequate guidance during their field placement and clinical practices. Stoughton (2007) examined novice teachers' classroom practices and student behaviors where novice teachers accentuated that control of student conduct in the classroom was a territory to which socialization influenced pre-service educators. Stoughton also indicted that 400 Hong Kong teachers rated classroom management as the second most significant reason for high stress levels, while educators in other countries, such as Australia, China, Israel, and England rated student behavior management from a moderate to major concern. A report from the *Times Educational Supplement* in 2004 noted classroom management as a teacher's incapability to exercise authority in his or her own classroom atmosphere (Stoughton, 2007). This inability to

implement effective classroom management tactics to control student behaviors depended on certain factors. These factors included student backgrounds (i.e., tradition vs. non-traditional), teacher backgrounds and classifications (age, marriage, children), and teacher [negative] attitudes towards their school experiences (Stoughton, 2007).

Shawer (2010) studied classroom management techniques and concluded that pre-service educators reflected and related their experiences to their management techniques, including their pedagogical skills used in the classroom. Practice and experience shaped pedagogical knowledge. Classroom management styles were (a) organization, (b) management of teaching, (c) relationships between teacher and student, and (d) rewards system (Shawer, 2010).

Ragawanti (2015) underscored research highlighting six classroom management strategies for teachers: (a) seating and instructional grouping, (b) activities and instruction, (c) authority, (d) discipline, (e) techniques and resources, and (f) working with stakeholders. Educators who implemented classroom management strategies, such as planned curriculum, organized teaching methods, observed student development, and predicted potential problems, engaged optimal learning effectively (Uysal, Burçak, Şule Tepetaş, & Akman, 2014).

Insignificant literature existed regarding the preparation of pre-service educators' confidence through coursework on classroom management; however, suggested research indicated that exposure to classroom management led to self-efficacy and confidence. In turn, educators improved choices of management influencing their stress and attrition (O'Neill & Stephenson, 2012). Previously, many teachers received less training and development related to the management of their classrooms before starting the education profession and felt overwhelmed and ill-prepared when dealing with student behaviors (Freeman, Simonsen, Briere, & MacSuga-Gage, 2014). Dicke, Elling, Schmeck, and Leutner (2015) asserted that beginning

teachers became shocked with reality when they experienced their first classroom confrontations. Somewhere in the process a collapse of principles, standards, and expectations invested in pre-service educators occurred as they developed through their teacher education programs (Dicke et al., 2015).

According to Todorovich (2009), classroom management and anxiety were prominent themes in his study pre-service teachers. Pre-service physical educators experienced optimal learning in well-controlled clinical classrooms that effectively prepared them to teach physical education (Brown & Cox, 2014). Teachers exposed to constant stressors, such as continuous student confrontations in the classroom, developed occupational strain and burnout (Dicke et al., 2015). Brown and Cox (2014) studied the confidence levels of pre-service physical educators and found that graduates felt well-prepared to accept teaching positions based on their belief and knowledge obtained through their teacher education programs. However, the authors noted that beginning teachers had major concerns regarding classroom management (Brown & Cox, 2014). Brown and Cox asserted that participation in field placement and clinical practices, and the transfer of knowledge, were common experiences that permitted pre-service educators to first witness accomplished, experienced teachers in action with students in the classroom, then ultimately accepting the roles and responsibilities of teaching. Preceding the field placement and clinical practices, pre-service educators participated in other field placement and clinical practices correlated to appropriate coursework in their teacher education program (Brown & Cox, 2014). Consequently, pre-service physical educators completed field placement and clinical practices concentrated on developing physical education school experiences effectively (Brown & Cox, 2014).

Cheng, Chan, Tang, and Cheng (2014) suggested that pre-service teachers' beliefs and attitudes, when set in the context of development and learning, influenced student teachers' classroom management practices. Downer and Pianta (2012) asserted that self-efficacy was a feeling of confidence in one's competence depending on environmental situations and not actual measures of skill. Cheng et al. used findings regarding the constructivist teaching style as they implied that when pre-service educators became aware of this method of thinking and believing in their education, they adopted a constructivist perspective into their classroom teaching practices. As students became receptive to constructivist teaching, pre-service educators favored this approach over traditional methods. Fosnot (2013) defined constructivism as a concept about knowledge and learning. Knowledge revolved around what one knows and what one comes to understand. Learning correlated to self-regulatory practices between struggling conflicts of personal worldviews and new insights through the lens of cultural and social experiences, cooperative activities, and debate (Fosnot, 2013). Chen (2003) delved into the perceptions of constructivism as a movement that coagulated cognition based on developmental perceptions and issues connected with individually motivated learning fixated on social learning.

Similar to self-efficacy, self-confidence was a key factor in a pre-service teacher's role to instill classroom management strategies effectively, yet little research provided detailed classroom management strategies that pre-service teachers employed (Reupert & Woodcock, 2010). Self-confidence was one's ability to increase motivation and determination using valuable tools that inspired perseverance and willpower (Bénabou & Tirole, 2002). According to Maclellan (2014), teachers needed to understand that knowledge and informed decision-making were prerequisites to fostering self-confidence to meet the needs of their students. Educators

with lower self-confidence referred students with low socioeconomic statuses and backgrounds that posed as challenging and difficult to teach (Jung, Cho, & Ambrosetti, 2011).

Summary

The literature review section of this study provided the qualitative data representative of the pre-service physical educators in this study. The theoretical framework established the views and perspectives through expert knowledge and professional experiences based on the review of the literature. From the literature, I created categories related to qualitative, hermeneutic phenomenological research to capture the essence of the perceptions 11 pre-service physical educators' professional preparedness as they completed their physical education teacher education programs. Discovered information within the literature helped me to examine the pre-service physical educators' professional preparedness.

Based on research, I created categories that focused on specific, targeted areas exponential and essential to pre-service physical educators' perceptions of their preparedness for their time in the profession. These categories included (a) teacher preparation and development; (b) teacher concerns; (c) teacher attitudes, beliefs, and self-efficacy; (d) commitment to teaching and becoming a teacher; and (e) classroom management. Bandura (2001), Rogers (1947), and Vygotsky (1978) examined the cognitive and social aspects of human development. Other respected and admirable educational leaders studied the attitudes, beliefs, and dispositions of pre-service educators including those with interests in physical education teacher education. Through this extensive, peer-reviewed literature, supporting evidence justified my hermeneutic phenomenological study to examine pre-service physical educators' perceptions of their professional preparedness as they enter the profession. The next chapter presents the methodology for this hermeneutic phenomenological study of pre-service physical educators'

preparation for the classroom. The methods chapter presents qualitative measures that consist of (a) design, (b) setting, (c) participants, (d) procedures, (e) personal biography, (f) data collection, (g) data analysis, (h) trustworthiness, and (i) ethical considerations.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

Chapter Three includes a detailed description of the methods used in this study of 11 pre-service physical educators. The purpose of the study revealed the pre-service educators' perceptions of their professional preparedness to become physical educators. After exhaustive reviews of the literature and reflection, I decided to use the hermeneutic phenomenological approach as the best method to conduct the study. The methods consisted of (a) design, (b) site (c) participants, (d) procedures, (e) personal biography, (f) data collection, (g) data analysis, (h) trustworthiness, and (i) ethical considerations. The methods ensured similar replication of this hermeneutic phenomenological study could occur.

Design

In this study of pre-service physical educators' perceptions of their professional preparedness, I used the hermeneutic phenomenological, qualitative approach. The hermeneutic phenomenological approach proved to be the most logical approach because it permitted me to examine a common lived experience among the pre-service physical educator participants. Miles, Francis, Chapman, and Taylor (2013) indicated hermeneutic phenomenology as commonly used to comprehend and appreciate individually lived experiences that conveyed unique stories and experiences. According to Creswell (2012), the phenomenological approach allowed researchers, through Moustakas' (1994) seven steps, to reduce the lived experiences to a central meaning. Creswell also noted that using Moustakas' modification allowed the researchers to bring personal connections and experiences into the study, as well as significant statements and meanings and the development of the composite descriptions of the meanings and essences of the participants. For this reason, I used the hermeneutic phenomenological approach

in this study. For example, pre-service educators experienced different teacher education programs that exposed them to different field placement and clinical practices, influencing their overall readiness and preparedness levels for the profession. I sought to determine actual experiences compared to what was best for pre-service physical educators throughout their program of study. According to Schutz (1967), concerns with the phenomena related only to ordinary social life through the lens of the natural attitude, which assisted in the applications of risk without error. Schutz recounted risk without error as the process of understanding the inner problem using eidetic reduction where the consciousness of the individual and concrete objects were methods of illuminating the essential structures and legitimate origin of intended existence. Moustakas highlighted the belief that to understand one's human experience that history needed to be studied. Husserl (2012) designed the phenomenological approach where the process to become a 'pure' science of the essence being studied formulated new ways of looking at things.

Research Questions

Four research questions guided this study to address the perceptions of the participants' professional preparedness throughout their teacher education programs:

1. How do the attitudes and beliefs of teaching physical education as pre-service physical educators influence their knowledge and skill development for classroom preparedness?
2. What aspects of the teacher education program do pre-service physical educators believe best prepared them for their student teaching experiences to influence student outcomes?
3. What obstacles hinder pre-service physical educators' professional development and attitudes through their teacher education program?

4. What additional resources would pre-service physical educators perceive to be value-added to their physical education teacher education program?

Setting

I used three accredited universities as sites for this study. The location of the University of Redbank was in a rural area near an urban community in the Northeast region of the United States. The location of the University of Peters was in an urban area in the Southeast region of the United States. The site of Ina University was in a rural area near an urban community in the Southeast region of the United States. I used pseudonyms for identification and confidentiality purposes during this study. The University of Redbank originated in the mid-1800s. The student population consisted of 8,106 students with 7,040 undergraduate students and 1,066 graduate students. The school offered 49 undergraduate degree programs, over 50 master's degree programs, and teacher certifications in 24 areas (the University of Redbank, 2016). The University of Peters began in the early 1900s. The student population included 8,310 students with 7,079 undergraduate students and 880 graduate students. The University of Peters offered 200 undergraduate degree programs and 15 master's degree programs in the College of Social Sciences, Mathematics, and Education that consisted of 29 different majors, minors or certificates (the University of Peters, n.d.). Ina University originated in the late 1800s. The student population consisted of 1,624 students including 917 undergraduate students and 707 graduate students. The school provided students with 28 undergraduate degree programs and 14 master's degree programs (Ina University, 2015).

I acquired site documents consisting of (a) teacher education's unit disposition, (b) accreditation status, (c) student assignments and (d) pre-service teacher graduation and licensure rates. I conducted this hermeneutic phenomenological study within the Department of

Kinesiology, Sports Studies, and Physical Education at the University of Redbank, the College of Social Sciences, Mathematics, and Education at the University of Peters, and the Health and Physical Education program inside the Division of Education at Ina University. The University of Redbank promoted itself as:

The academic major in physical education aims to produce individuals who are physically educated; who understand and appreciate the value of physical activity in human development, human interaction, human performance, and quality of life; who know and can apply sound principles for developing skills and fitness; and who are themselves active, skillful and physically fit. (2014)

According to the University of Redbank, their enrollment included 8,106 students as of fall 2014. Their total demographic makeup consisted of 73.6% Caucasian students, 9.6% African American students, 5.2% Hispanic students, 2.3% multi-race (not Hispanic) students, 1.6% Asian students, 0.2% American Indian, 0.0% Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander, and 7.5% unknown. The University of Redbank comprised of 54.6% women compared to 45.4% men. The total population of their physical education department was unknown; however, it was the highest populated program in this study. Participants were in good standings academically to be admitted into the physical education teacher education program. Faculty and staff evaluated their pre-service physical educators using professional dispositions. The dispositions included criteria, such as professional appearance, attendance requirements, professional language, and professional demeanor and practices.

The Teacher Education Council approved the professional dispositions. The Middle States Association of College and Universities and State Board of Regents accredited the university. The Department of Education that served the state, the NCATE, and Commission on

Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (CAATE) accredited the Kinesiology, Sports Studies, and Physical Education Department. According to the University of Peters:

The B.S. in Physical Education (K-12) program provides students with the academic knowledge, learning strategies and teaching approaches needed to be successful physical education or health teachers. Physical education candidates will gain certification to teach physical education classes, grades kindergarten through 12. Students are also required be certified in First Aid and CPR with AED. (para. 1)

The student enrollment at the University of Peters included 8,310 students as of 2016. The makeup of the school consisted of 66.4% Caucasian students, 5.6% African American students, 13.9% Hispanic students, 3.0% multi-race (not Hispanic) students, 1.9% Asian students, 0.3% American Indian, 0.1% Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander, and 8.7% unknown. The University of Peters consisted of 57.8% women compared to 42.2% men. To be admitted into the physical education teacher education program, students were in good standing with the university, academically and ethically. Faculty and staff assessed students on their professional dispositions. Students uploaded all targeted coursework and assessment tasks to LiveText. The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission accredited the University of Peters. The Department of Education that served the state and CAATE accredited the physical education program.

The student enrollment at Ina University consisted of 1,624 students including 917 undergraduate students. The student demographics consisted of 55.2% Caucasian students, 17.1% African American students, 3.8% Hispanic students, 1.5% multi-race (not Hispanic) students, 0.8% Asian students, 0.2% American Indian, and 15.4% unknown. Their student gender distribution was 63% female compared to 37% male. The population of the pre-service

physical educators in the physical education teacher education program was unknown; however, two pre-service physical educators were in their final field placement and clinical practices at the time of the study. The physical education teacher education program required their pre-service physical educators to complete 27 semester hours of core classes, 47 semester hours of specialty courses, and four semester hours of activity courses. “In addition to coursework, health and physical education majors participate in a number of practicum and field experiences culminating in a full semester of student teaching during the senior year” (Ina University, 2017). The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission accredited Ina University. The Department of Education that served the state and NCATE accredited the health and physical education program.

Participants

Eleven pre-service physical educators participated in this study. I used purposive sampling to select the participants for the study. Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, and Ormston (2013) stated, “Purposive samples are designed to be as diverse as possible, ensuring all key groups and constituencies and units are selected on the basis of ‘symbolic representation’ because they hold a characteristic that is known or expected to be salient to the research study” (p. 143). I strove to use purposive sampling process to select participants who experienced the phenomenon effectively. Before I sought participants for this study, I followed the protocols to obtain Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval from Liberty University (see Appendix B). The participants came from three different cohorts at different higher education teacher education programs where they completed their final field placement and clinical practices. Participants encountered different faculty members throughout their programs that influenced their

perceptions. All participants completed the necessary coursework with passing grade point averages based on the standards of their physical education departments and universities.

Participants completed previous field placement and clinical practice opportunities throughout their program to ready them for their final field placement and clinical practices. The participants passed a background check for approval to be placed in an accredited school within their communities located in the Northeast or Southeast regions of the United States where they completed their field placement and clinical practices. The participants varied in ages, ranging from 21 to 35 years old. This study included ten males and one female with males showing higher interest in the study. All participants worked toward their teaching certificate with a bachelor's degree in physical education K-12. I pre-screened (see Appendix C) the participants with the help of their program directors. I emailed the recruitment letter (see Appendix D) to the program directors who contacted the participants directly. Interested participants contacted me through email and later emailed the IRB consent forms (see Appendix E) to sign. Once signed, the participants scanned the forms and emailed them back to me.

Procedures

I used specific steps to find the most accurate results in this hermeneutic phenomenological study. Initially, an IRB consent form needed approval by the University of Redbank, the University of Peters, Ina University, and Liberty University to perform this study. I used purposive sampling to select the 11 pre-service physical educators. Communications with the physical education and kinesiology departments and specific professors took place throughout the entire process. Once I selected the 11 pre-service physical educator participants, I conducted an in-depth interview. I audio recorded and transcribed the interviews to ensure accurate data collection and findings. All materials remained secured in a locked cabinet and

kept confidential for three years. Two focus groups took place once the participants completed their interviews. The first focus group included five participants while the second focus group consisted of six participants. I audio recorded the focus groups and memoed throughout to construct qualitative concepts and themes throughout the data collection process. I used least restrictive environments and respected the perspectives, viewpoints, and confidentiality of the participants. Approximately one week after the focus groups the participants received open-ended questionnaires to answer additional questions related to the study. I analyzed the data using bracketing, coding, and memoing to ensure adherence to Moustakas' (1994) modified van Kaam method for analysis and triangulation.

The Researcher's Role

I was a United States Army veteran and a doctoral candidate at Liberty University who taught mathematics at the elementary level in the South-Central region of the United States. I taught five years total with positions in public, private, and charter schools. Most of my teaching experiences were in elementary physical education. I earned a bachelor's degree in physical education K-12 from the University of South Florida and a master's degree in education administration from Liberty University. I hold a teaching certificate from the state of Florida in Physical Education K-12 and a current teaching certificate from the state of Texas in Generalist EC-Grade 6. I hold a spiritual worldview practiced intrinsically.

Using the hermeneutic phenomenological approach, I considered the self-interpretations of the lived experiences of the participants in this study. I made every effort to bracket out any potential biases. I established the literature review before conducting the research in this study. The study's purpose further examined the information related to this study rather than furthering beliefs, assumptions, and perceptions on the research topic (Burns & Grove, 2003). I bracketed

self-perceptions and assumptions related to the experiences with the participants, allowing for self-reflection of personal biases to set them aside during the data collection and analysis processes. I understood the importance of having an open-minded to absorb new perspectives.

Data Collection

The phenomenological approach was social and behavioral research; therefore, data triangulation essentially built trust and brought validity to this study, upholding qualitative writing processes and standards. Denzin and Lincoln (2009) delved into a report from the American Education Research Association indicating:

It is the researcher's responsibility to show the reader that the report can be trusted. This begins with the description of the evidence, the data, and the analysis supporting each interpretive claim. The warrant for the claims can be established through a variety of procedures including triangulation, asking participants to evaluate pattern descriptions, having different analysts examine the same data, (independently and collaboratively), and searches for disconfirming evidence and counter-interpretations. (p. 149)

I received IRB approval before beginning the data collection. The data collection process consisted of in-depth interviews, two focus groups, and open-ended questionnaires. Interviews provided meaningful ways for me and the participants to get to know one another related to the phenomenon of pre-service physical educators' professional preparedness throughout their physical education programs. Participants felt comfortable and open as they voiced their viewpoints and perspectives. The focus groups allowed the participants to express their experiences and witness peers' experiences as well. Open-ended questionnaires proved to be the quickest and least stressful method of the collection of data. Merriam (2014) stated, "The data collection used, as well as the specific information considered to be 'data' in a study, are

determined by the researcher's theoretical orientation, by the problem and purpose of the study, and by the sample selected" (p. 86). Merriam also indicated that data collection was "asking, watching, and reviewing" (p. 85). In-depth interviews asked while focus groups and questionnaires watched, asked, and reviewed.

Interviews

Interviews took place on an individual basis. Marshall and Rossman (2016) implied that in-depth interviews, traditionally components the phenomenological approach to understand lived experiences, helped construct worldviews. Semi-structured interviews allowed me to make changes, when necessary, without having to redo them. According to Drever (1995), in semi-structured environments, the persons being interviewed had fair degrees of freedom in their input and expressions. This type of environment created flexibility for smaller scaled research studies. "A completely unstructured interview has the risk of not eliciting from junior researchers the topics or themes more closely related to the research questions under consideration" (Rabionet, 2011, p. 564). I used a systematic approach and recorded the interviews for the assurance of quality. The interview questions allowed the participants to provide quality, in-depth answers, also kept confidential throughout the entire process (see Appendix F). The data collection process started with the interviews and took place from March to November of 2016 at a designated location convenient for both the participants and me. The interviews took place over WebEx where only I and individual participant participated. I audio recorded the interviews using WebEx software and an Apple iPhone as a secondary source. I memoed throughout the entire research process.

Each interview session lasted 30-45 minutes, for a total of 150 minutes. Interview locations varied depending on the participants' locations, though they each took place online

through WebEx. I audio recorded the interviews and focus groups and transcribed the audio recordings to ensure validity and trustworthiness in the study. Edwards and Lampert (2014) implied that the transcription process played a central role in research that “enables the researcher to focus efficiently on the fleeting events of an interaction with a minimum of irrelevant and distracting detail” (p. 3). I safeguarded the validity and trustworthiness of the study. The interviews provided a deeper understanding of the research questions (see Appendix F).

Focus Groups

To ensure the accuracy of the participants’ voices I used systematic noting and recording of the events in this study. Memoing was concrete and descriptive based on behaviors and actions observed, as well as words voiced. I audio recorded the focus groups and preserved the confidential, password protected data. According to Marshall and Rossman (2016), a focus group included between four and 12 participants who shared relevant experiences supporting the study’s purpose. Marshall and Rossman also noted focus groups as social methods of interviewing participants in supportive environments that encouraged varied viewpoints and opinions. Silverman (2016) suggested that focus groups allowed the study participants to build meanings from one another’s dialogue.

Two focus groups took place in this study because of the number of participants. The first focus group included five participants and the second focus group consisted of six participants. WebEx software provided safe and confidential locations for the focus groups. I used WebEx software to audio record the focus groups and used a backed-up audio device of an Apple iPhone. The focus groups occurred after the completion of the interviews. The duration of the focus groups each lasted 40 minutes to one hour. The focus groups allowed the

participants to produce dialogue for effective data collection purposes. I used tentative prompts; however, reserved the right to modify these prompts based on preliminary interview data findings. The focus group questions are listed in this study (see Appendix G).

Open-Ended Questionnaires

All participants completed a final open-ended questionnaire (see Appendix H) based on self-reporting. I sent the questionnaires to each participant via email with requests of sending the questionnaire back to me through email or in person. Marshall and Rossman (2016) examined elites and concluded that they [elites] responded well to inquiries about broader topics and open-ended questions gave them the freedom to reflect on their knowledge and experiences through the scope of their imaginations. I sent the open-ended questionnaires to the participants approximately one week after the focus groups took place. All participants received a questionnaire where they filled in their final thoughts and viewpoints within a 48-hour timeframe. The participants emailed their completed questionnaires to me and I kept them confidential, password protected. The open-ended questionnaire gained further knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon of pre-service physical educators' preparedness throughout their physical education teacher education programs. I desired to deep-dive into the minds of the participants to ensure all value-added information and perspectives added validity to the research conducted.

Data Analysis

I used Moustakas' (1994) seven steps, modified van Kaam method for analysis as the foundation for the analysis of data in this hermeneutic phenomenological study. The seven steps included:

1. Horizontalization, listing, and preliminary grouping: A rich transcription of data where textual meanings emerge, much like textual-structural synthesis (King, 2015). Every statement transcribed and coded, called *epoche*, to eliminate prejudgments and to have a clearer understanding of the textual concepts and experiences (Moustakas, 1994).
2. Reduction and elimination: Review of interview expressions, redundancies and overlapping statements eliminated. The remaining expressions reviewed and conceptualized to ensure relevancy to the phenomenon studied. These become invariant constituents that formed the themes (Moustakas, 1994).
3. Clustering and thematizing the invariant constituents: List of categories, or invariant constituents, group together to become the core themes of the experience (Sullivan & Bhattacharya, 2017).
4. Final identification of the invariant constituents and themes by application: The validation process of the themes to ensure participants' data reviewed and invariant constituents and themes included (Moustakas, 1994 as cited in Ezejiofor, 2008).
5. Construct for each co-researcher an individual textual description: Significant themes and statements employed to compose a description of the participants' experiences (Creswell, 2012).
6. Construct for each co-researcher an individual structural description: Significant themes and statements used to write an explanation of the background and setting that influenced the participants' experiences (Creswell, 2012).
7. Construct for each research participant a textual-structural description of the

meanings and essences of the experience: The researcher established a composite description of the meanings indicating the essences of the phenomenon of all participants. (Sullivan & Bhattacharya, 2017)

Creswell (2005) noted, “In qualitative study, using manual analysis to sort, organize, and locate words is a labor-intensive activity” (p. 234). Moustakas’ seven steps ensured that data analyzed systematically and stayed relevant, without bias, to the phenomenon studied. According to Merriam (2014), reduction was a process where the researcher continually referred back to the essence of the experience to develop the central structure (p. 26). “The list of units of relevant meaning extracted from each interview is carefully scrutinized and the clearly redundant units eliminated” (Groenewald, 2004, p. 19). Clustering of themes (Groenewald, 2004) formed groups that united based on their similar meaning, resulting in themes. I used different colored highlighters when reviewing the data to create the themes. The different colors represented the various themes. This process also helped in reduction and elimination when reflecting on the analysis process to verify the themes.

According to Carel (2012), thematizing signified the “act of attending to a phenomenon” (p. 108), whether cognitive, emotional, moral, or aesthetically. Hycner (1999) indicated that themes were the essence of the clusters formed (as cited in Groenewald, 2004). Hathorn, Machtmes, and Tillman (2009) suggested that statements remaining after the initial elimination of statements emerged as invariant constituents, or horizons, of the experience. This process used descriptive texts. Textual descriptions, according to Moustakas (1994), suggested that this step adhered to the textual components and qualities of the participants’ experiences. DeHart (2008) underscored research that pinpointed reasons for structural descriptions including the ability to “articulate how the phenomenon is experienced” (p. 83). It allowed the researcher to

answer the supporting and underlying structures through “imaginative variation” (p. 83).

“Imaginative variation encourages the discovery of structural themes from the textual descriptions” (DeHart, 2008, p. 83). Textual-structural composite description represented the group as a whole, meaning, “this intuitive integration of the fundamental textual and structural descriptions brings together a unified statement of the essence of the phenomenon” (DeHart, 2008, p. 85).

This study incorporated Moustakas’ (1994) seven steps, allowing me to become an “instrument who collects and interprets data about the phenomenon from a particular phenomenological lens” (Hathorn et al., 2009, p. 228). Each of the seven steps helped me analyze the data to ensure validity and trustworthiness. Step one created preliminary groupings of participants by “transcribing each audio tape verbatim” (Hathorn et al., 2009, p. 233) to ensure the equal value of each perspective. The second step used data reduction, repetitive processes of reading the transcripts and eliminating participants’ recurring statements that did not answer questions about this study. Next, the invariant constituents, or horizons, developed as a result of the remaining statements. Then, the invariant constituents clustered into themes with definitions. The fourth step applied the invariant constituents that created validity and determined “relevancy of the experience” (Hathorn et al., 2009, p. 233) in this study. The themes shifted into a narrative text based on the excerpts from the transcripts. Along with the textual descriptions, structural descriptions identified the conditions that hastened what the participants experienced. The final step explained the experiences based on the understanding of participants’ experiences where I described the essence of the experience. I used NVivo software to code the themes and classified the codes using axial and in vivo coding.

Bracketing

I used bracketing as “the researcher is the instrument” (Patton, 2015, p. 72) to understand the significance of suspending personal assumptions and judgments about the populace of interest. I bracketed to comprehensively enable conversations with the participants to encourage and stimulate perceptions as I integrated a deeper understanding of the phenomenon with the participants’ perspectives. Bracketing provided methods of implementing my personal understandings through memoing (Creswell, 2013) as participants voiced personal reflections of their experiences.

“Bracketing is a method used by some researchers to mitigate the potentially deleterious effects of unacknowledged preconceptions related to the research and thereby to increase the rigor of the project” (Tufford & Newman, 2012, p. 81). To minimize my influence of the lived experience of the phenomenon before and during research, reflexive bracketing helped identify my assumptions and judgments about the phenomenon (Gearing, 2004). Bracketing transpired throughout and after the data collection and analysis process (Creswell, 2013).

Coding

Coding assisted me with interpreting the interviews, focus groups, and questionnaires. I grouped major concepts into similar concepts and then placed into categories. I created themes related to the participants’ self-belief, educational experiences, and relationships, for example, the grouping of similar responses into categories. Groupings occurred based on the participants’ meanings of voiced words and statements (Creswell, 2013). I considered the collaborative circumstances of the participants and the constructs related to the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013; Strauss & Corbin, 2015).

I recorded participants' key words, phrases, and other terminology relating the participants' lived experiences using in vivo coding to capture exact wording (Creswell, 2013). Therefore, I coded conversations, words and phrases, and clusters of meaning as themes ensued. Axial coding helped refine the categories, subcategories, and interrelation to the phenomenon, focusing on underlying relationships and related concerns (Creswell, 2013). This phase provided patterns regarding the participants' perceptions of preparedness and its relationship to completing their physical education teacher education programs. This process allowed me to understand how the participants interpreted their lived experiences and beliefs attributed to the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013).

Memoing

“Reflective memos are written notations about the data that are drafted as data analysis progresses. Throughout this process, coded findings are organized, clarified, integrated, and interpreted” (Finfgeld-Connett, 2014, p. 345). Creswell (2013) promoted the use of memoing to establish credibility in the study through rich descriptions that underscored the phenomenon. I added reflective statements throughout and after the transcription process of the interview and focus group data, continually reflecting on statements, words and phrases, observations, and recurring themes regarded by the participants as they voiced their lived experiences related to the phenomenon. This phase inspired further discussion of data, meanings, and categories to ensure accurate findings of this study (Creswell, 2013).

Trustworthiness

I found trustworthiness imperative to this study. Every participant felt comfortable, safe, and endured a pleasant vibe throughout the research study. Credibility and research standards upheld research practices. According to Hardin (2002), trustworthiness was more than

knowledge and based on layers of motivation, including simplicity and complexity. Hardin also implied, “One cannot simply start trusting people as of tomorrow unless the people on deals with and the one’s relationships with them are suddenly different in relevant ways and one is privileged to know this” (p. 34).

Credibility

According to Maxwell (2012), the credibility of qualitative research focused primarily on context and participants’ meaning. I achieved triangulation through the lens of the various perspectives of the participants in this study (Patton, 2015; Creswell, 2013). This study achieved triangulation through interviews, focus groups, and open-ended questionnaires to examine the perceptions of the participants’ professional preparedness during the final field placement and clinical practice, and the extent to which self-efficacy and self-esteem influenced them. This allowed for deliberation and reflection of the phenomenon from numerous perspectives as I established meanings through the participants’ viewpoints. I used member checking to verify the data collected to ensure effectiveness and accuracy of the findings. Thomas and Magilvy (2011) suggested that credible qualitative studies presented truthful and precise accounts of the lived experiences that the participants understood. Polit and Beck (2014) indicated that credibility was the confidence of a study’s findings that used truthful and honest research protocols and processes. Credibility increased the reliability of this research study because it added value to the research conducted based on reassurance and relations with participants.

Dependability and Confirmability

Dependability and confirmability allowed for transferability decisions made by participants and readers. Toma (2011) implied that dependability was a process where the constant collection of data enhanced the researcher’s understanding of the phenomenon.

Participants' viewpoints provided validity to this study. Confirmability was a method where individuals, other than the researcher, reviewed and confirmed the data and findings (Toma, 2011). Connor, Mott, Green, Larson, and Hickey (2016) suggested audit trails and external consultants as the main strategies for ensuring dependability and confirmability to research studies. This process also permitted me to use detailed descriptions using abundant, interconnected details to transfer the data and findings to other settings.

I validated the findings through outside, expert reviews to examine the overall process and product of the research. Johnson and Christensen (2010) implied that an external audit involved outside experts to review and assess the study's quality. Morse (2015) suggested external audits certified and authenticated reliability to qualitative research studies. This process allowed me to assess the accuracies of the data and findings to validate the overall procedures and methods used in the research.

Transferability

I took the context from one study to make it applicable to other research studies. Ravitch and Carl (2015) implied that transferability was a generalized method to connect the data and findings of one study to holistic findings related to the phenomenon. Transferability was a set of conclusions that offered a bigger picture beyond the context of the current study's data and findings (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Thick descriptions of the data and an obligation to recording all data collected upheld transferability as I copiously conveyed the data.

Ethical Considerations

I encountered various experiences throughout my teacher education program and my attitudes and beliefs of teaching physical education influenced the overall field placement and clinical practice performance; therefore, I needed to refrain from and personal remarks or

gestures throughout the entire research process. I used pseudonyms for the participants' and institutional names to maintain confidentiality and refrain from any conflict with other participants, other people at the university, as well as anyone else involved in the research process. Ellis-Barton (2016) suggested safeguarding ethical considerations to maintain participant privacy and manage concerns regarding participant communication practices throughout the data collection. IRB approval took place, as mandated by the School of Education at Liberty University, to ensure proper protocols and procedures met.

Carr (2013) implied that intelligent and ethical practices ensured professionalism. Participants completed and sent me signed informed consent forms to be confidentially locked, password protected. Hammer (2016) suggested that informed consent followed a tradition dating back to the early 16th century and evolved to abide by the current principles and structures of research where informed consent mostly considered the participants' well-being. The participants acknowledged their importance in this voluntary study; that at any time they could refrain from any and all participation in the research study. I addressed confidentiality to keep the participants' interviews personal without harm to others or conflict with their organization. I kept the data locked, password protected, including the audio recorded interviews and focus groups. I kept the recorded material and notes locked up and safe for confidentiality reasons. Before any collection of data, IRB approval process took place, which included approval from the University of Redbank, the University of Peters, Ina University, and Liberty University. I attempted to avoid any deceptions by providing general information about the study. I frequently assessed for personal biases that potentially influenced the findings in this study. For assurance of quality, accuracy, and trustworthiness, I implemented bracketing to limit such personal biases (Creswell, 2013).

Summary

Chapter Three detailed the methodology of this hermeneutic phenomenological, qualitative study. The protocol for the used methods consisted of the participants and sampling, setting, procedures, data collection and data analysis, and trustworthiness and ethical considerations. The instruments and collection efforts ensured I utilized qualitative methods, which included (a) in-depth interviews, (b) focus groups, and (c) open-ended questionnaires. I analyzed data through triangulation using coding and memoing. Proper reliability techniques, transferability, and credible methods ensured accuracy and validity of the findings. Confidentiality safeguarded standards and proper procedures followed. The 11 pre-service physical educator participants voiced their experiences of the phenomenon regarding their preparedness levels to become a professional educator through reliable methodological techniques. This hermeneutic phenomenological, qualitative study captured the essence of the perceptions of 11 pre-service physical educators' professional preparedness during their final field placement and clinical practices at the University of Redbank, the University of Peters, and Ina University. Chapter Four includes the findings of this study. This section, with detail, explains the results of the study based on the data collected and analyzed, qualitative in nature.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

Chapter Four presents a depiction of the participants and the results of this hermeneutic phenomenological study. The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study captured the essence of the perceptions of 11 pre-service physical educators during the final field placement and clinical practices of their undergraduate degree program as they prepared to become professional educators. Participant interviews, focus groups, and open-ended questionnaires completed the data collection process. At least three colleagues peer-reviewed the research questions, and an external auditor oversaw the entire data collection process. I used purposive sampling to select the 11 participants based on their placements in their programs. Participants completed several field placement and clinical practices; completed all academic coursework with passing grades. The pre-service physical educators completed their final field placement and clinical practices during this study. The following research questions guided this study to address the perceptions of the participants' professional preparedness throughout their teacher education programs:

1. How do the attitudes and beliefs of teaching physical education as pre-service physical educators influence their knowledge and skill development for classroom preparedness?
2. What aspects of the teacher education program do pre-service physical educators believe best prepared them for their student teaching experiences to influence student outcomes?
3. What obstacles hinder pre-service physical educators' professional development and attitudes through their teacher education program?

4. What additional resources would pre-service physical educators perceive to be value-added to their physical education teacher education program?

Through extensive data analysis, five themes and 19 sub-themes emerged. These themes were a) intrinsic motivations and self-efficacy supporting professional growth; b) curriculum and instruction advancing knowledge and skills; c) close relationships and support systems enhancing readiness; d) challenging, time-consuming components influencing preparedness; and e) additional resources critical to the design and structure of the program. Chapter Four presents a chapter overview, a depiction of the participants, results of the analyzed data, and summary of the research. Sub-themes resulted from formulated clusters and meanings obtained from the participants' significant statements. Quotes were typed verbatim for the accuracy and validity of the statements made by the participants in this study.

Participants

Eleven pre-service physical educators participated in this study. The selection of participants used purposive sampling due to the participants' placements and statuses of completion in their physical education teacher education programs. Participants had zero experience in the profession as certified physical education teachers at the time of data collection. I conducted interviews as participants completed their final field placement and clinical practices. The participants included ten males and one female, meaning males showed higher interest in this study or made up greater demographics of their physical education teacher education programs. Six participants were Caucasian, three were Hispanic, one was African American, and one characterized himself as "other." Participants were between the ages of 21 and 35 at the time of data collection. I input quotations verbatim disregarding any grammatical errors throughout the data collection to ensure the validity and integrity of statements of the

participants. Table 1 exhibited the demographics of the pre-service physical educator participants.

Table 1

Demographics of Pre-Service Physical Educator Participants

Pseudonym	Race/Ethnicity	Gender	Age
Christian	Hispanic	Male	23
Kurt	Other	Male	22
Mike	Caucasian	Male	24
Ben	Caucasian	Male	22
Adam	Caucasian	Male	22
Tom	Hispanic	Male	23
Olivia	Caucasian	Female	21
Paul	Hispanic	Male	23
Noah	African American	Male	22
Sean	Caucasian	Male	23
Ryan	Caucasian	Male	23

Note: Data were collected from electronic mail.

Christian

Christian indicated during the introductory part of the interview that he was a pre-service physical educator in his final field placement and clinical practice who enjoyed learning new things and coaching. His favorite sport was baseball as he coached a junior varsity team near his residence. He implied in the questionnaire that he was a Hispanic male who was 23 years old and resided in the Northeast region of the United States. Throughout the interview, Christian emphasized how closely related his endeavors were to his field placement and clinical practices

and how he enjoyed his experiences. He wanted to be a positive role model because he believed in himself to motivate others and to help them achieve their highest potentials with his friendly personality and feedback-driven mindset. Christian thought highly about relationships to be successful as an educator, especially when guided by others. He said, “The relationship the school has [among stakeholders] teaches to really tough situations that I will be dealing with” (Christian, personal communication, May 2, 2016). Christian signified early in the interview that he was an energetic sports-minded individual, comfortable teaching sports and physical education to help others succeed.

I’m really comfortable. I feel really, really comfortable. I feel like I will succeed in this field, in this profession. I’m always open for more help and someone to lead me to a path. I’m confident that I’ll be great in this profession. (personal communication, May 2, 2016)

Kurt

Kurt suggested at the beginning of the interview that he was finishing up his final field placement and clinical practice as part of his physical education K-12 degree requirements. According to the questionnaire, he resided in the Southeast region of the United States and was 22 years old. He indicated his love for sports early in the interview who enjoyed activities, in particular, playing baseball. He played baseball during his tenure at his school and played a variety of sports during his high school years. He categorized his ethnicity as other on the questionnaire. Kurt quickly indicated strong feelings in the interview about his success through his physical education teacher education program due to his abilities to play most sports. His ultimate goal was to professionally coach as he enjoyed working with kids and college students. As Kurt reflected on his time in his physical education teacher education program, he said, “I

think that my personal motivation for wanting to teach and wanting to make a difference in kids' lives has been very beneficial to me" (personal communication, November 23, 2016). As the interview approached its final moments, Kurt mentioned his childhood teacher, also his baseball coach, who kept in constant touch with him and influenced and motivated him through the years to help others. Kurt believed that his school's small-town influenced his overall experiences. He claimed:

I get a lot of attention I need. If I have any questions, it's face to face with your advisors. They want to meet with you. A lot of the teachers that you have you'll have a bunch of times over again. I think it's very good because you develop those relationships that you need to ask questions and do well. (Kurt, personal communication, November 23, 2016)

Kurt suggested in the closing part of the interview that he felt prepared as a pre-service physical educator; however, he believed there should be more focus on physical education courses from which pre-service physical educators will benefit, as well as less script-like lesson planning. He also wanted to see more training on grading systems within schools.

Mike

Mike implied at the opening of the interview that he grew up in Canada playing hockey. The hockey player gene ran in his family as both his father and brother both played in the National Hockey League. He was finishing his physical education teacher education program and said that not being a hockey player was a weird thought since he played starting at a young age. Mike indicated on the questionnaire that he was a 24-year-old Caucasian man. He was the most social and outgoing participant throughout the interviews and focus groups in this study. Early in the interview, he claimed that his upbringing focused on helping others in his community and not so much on himself. "[I was raised] to look out for everyone else...look out

for other people who are important to you so I think that's helped me a lot" (personal communication, May 5, 2016). Mike endured hard times with his academics until he began his physical education teacher program. "I probably started off kind of rough. I mean, I didn't do too well in my first year and a half of school, but as soon as I started getting into my PE program, I kind of skyrocketed" (Mike, personal communication, May 5, 2016). Throughout the interview, Mike continually touched on the fact that his school had amazing professors who wrote the textbooks they used in their classrooms. His advisors, peers and other educational professionals supported him throughout the entire program. During the final portion of the interview, Mike stated, "Honestly, it's the faculty. They're amazing. They're just fantastic and they're all geniuses. They know what they're talking about and they help us a lot" (personal communication, May 5, 2016).

Ben

Ben was a Caucasian student who indicated his age on the questionnaire as 22 years old. At the initial moments of the interview, he suggested that he loved the outdoors and active lifestyles in general. He enjoyed chopping wood or riding his bike. He asserted that his program enhanced what he already knew about sports and physical education. "I really feel like my prior experience kind of led to me getting through the whole program" (Ben, personal communication, May 19, 2016). The program had similarities to other college courses to him. Halfway through the interview, he indicated that he enjoyed the progression of his physical education teacher education program and believed in himself when it came to being an educator. "It was almost like one of my teachers just told me one thing and it kind of just flipped the switch and I was like wow, this is really easy" (Ben, personal communication, May 19, 2016). Ben noted at the

beginning of the interview that he hoped to go to graduate school for a master's degree in special education.

Adam

Adam specified in the opening part of the interview that he loved to golf. In fact, he golfed approximately two to three times weekly. He played and watched golf since his middle school years. He also indicated that he was a camp counselor and sports instructor at a local camp in the Southeast region of the United States for almost a decade. "I wanted to do something with kids. It's a big part of my life" (Adam, personal communication, June 1, 2016). Adam noted on the questionnaire that he was Caucasian and 22 years of age. Throughout the interview and focus group, Adam prided his experiences on the uniqueness of his low-populated school and the one-on-ones he was able to have. Midway through the interview, Adam indicated that he appreciated the progression and pace of his program. "You felt comfortable. You didn't feel rushed into teaching" (Adam, personal communication, June 1, 2016). In the closing part of the interview, Adam suggested that while he had great experiences with his cooperating teachers, he believed there should be better resources to obtain engaged cooperating teachers who guided student teachers effectively as they completed their field placement and clinical practice.

Tom

Tom noted in the introductory part of the interview that he enjoyed watching football when he had down time. In the primary stage of the interview, he indicated that he was a U.S. Marine veteran who was serving in the Air Force Reserves while completing his physical education teacher education program. Tom noted on the questionnaire that he was a Caucasian male and the oldest participant in this study at the age of 35 who had other professional experiences throughout his adult life. From his experiences, he expected to have a career to lean

on as a source of income to take care of his family. Throughout the study, the positive experiences empowered Tom to complete his physical education teacher education program; however, he emphasized the need to focus on classroom management for pre-service physical educators and teachers in general. In his closing remarks of the interview, Tom said, “I was at a middle school and it [student behavior] was just nuts. I’m pretty sure you have to do it [classroom management] yourself when they [school leaders] just throw you in there” (personal communication, April 3, 2017). Tom indicated in the final stage of the focus group his anxiousness to find a job after completing his program. “I’ll be struggling to find a job. Maybe not struggling, but out there with everyone else” (personal communication, April 15, 2017).

Olivia

Olivia suggested at the beginning of the interview that she was a soccer player. She played for three years at her school until she blew out her knee that impacted her ability to continue playing. While soccer was her favorite sport, it was her competitive nature and love for all sports that interested her in becoming a physical educator. “I think I wanted to become a PE teacher because I loved sports so much. I grew up being very into sports. I played all of the sports and was very athletic” (Olivia, personal communication, March 30, 2017). Olivia was the only female participant in this study who happened to be the youngest as she indicated on the questionnaire that she was a 21-years-old Caucasian American. Olivia implied in the preliminary phase of the interview that once she graduated from her school with her degree in physical education, she aspired to continue her education as a graduate student.

Paul

Paul suggested on the questionnaire that he was a 23-year-old Hispanic male. He indicated in the early part of the interview that he wanted to become a physical educator because

of his love for children and promoting healthy lifestyles. “I like children and I want them to be in shape and I want them to show an active lifestyle and the ways to do it: to be healthy and physically active” (Paul, personal communication, April 5, 2017). Paul implied in the introductory part of the interview that his expectation was to find a job that allowed him to be indispensable when and if he made his way back home after completing his physical education teacher education program. “I studied to get a job. I may come back into my country so experience in the program, communication, and hours of student teaching” (Paul, personal communication, April 5, 2017). During the closing of the interview, Paul noted the benefits and worth influenced by his physical education teacher education program’s experiences; however, he indicated the need for less paperwork throughout the entire process.

Noah

Noah was a 22-year-old African American as indicated on the questionnaire. He suggested in the beginning phase of the interview that he enjoyed playing video games. He was the only African American who participated in this study. Noah indicated in the introduction of the interview that his openness to different cultures empowered his perspectives of working with others.

I’m from New York City so I come from a diverse background. I’m African American.

In New York City, you see a ton of different cultures and ethnicities in people, so one belief I’d say is that I’d like to work with people with a lot of different backgrounds.

(Noah, personal communication, April 8, 2017)

Noah implied near the end of the interview the need for teacher training and development regarding diverse cultures and diverse student populations in schools. He also desired more preparation when it came to the exams and certification to become a physical educator.

Sean

Sean indicated on the questionnaire that he was a 23-year-old Caucasian male. Sean stated in the introductory part of the interview that he loved sports. “I like sports, including all of them but I like soccer and basketball, volleyball and motorcycle racing” (Sean, personal communication, April 5, 2017). Sean reflected on his mother early in the interview as being his inspiration for choosing to go into the physical educator profession. “I think it all started with when my mom was a camp counselor and teaching them [children] how to be fundamentally sound in a sport, seeing the ‘ah ha’ moment. I think that is what pushes me the most” (Sean, personal communication, April 5, 2017). Sean noted early in the interview that he chose his major late after taking several courses that did not transfer into the physical education teacher degree, which set him back a year. He was placed into his physical education teacher education program on an academic probationary period because of his lower grade point average; however, he excelled through each course that led up to his final field placement and clinical practice. Sean suggested in the last moments of the interview that he also got into physical education teaching because of a former educator who helped him overcome his challenges in school while having an IEP, or Individualized Education Plan. “It took that one educator to get me on the right path. If I could do that for just one student, I have been able to give back” (Sean, personal communication, April 5, 2017).

Ryan

Ryan was also 23-year-old Caucasian male as noted on the questionnaire. He indicated in the beginning stage of the interview that he loved fishing and did it since he was a child. Ryan indicated midway through the interview that he believed in fostering relationships and perceived his peers as family as they progressed through their physical education teacher education

program. In his closing remarks, Ryan voiced, “I’ve built relationships with the peers that have gone through this. It felt more like a family to me” (personal communication, April 6, 2017).

Ryan indicated through the interview and focus group that he had a passion for physical education and putting his students’ needs before his own. Like Noah, Ryan sought for the program faculty to implement classroom strategies and teacher development related to multicultural education and diverse student populations, specifically transgender students.

Results

I aspired to understand the means in which pre-service physical educators expressed their perceptions of their professional preparedness as they completed their physical education teacher education programs. Participants completed interviews, focus groups, and questionnaires to consider their perceptions of their professional preparedness during the final field placement and clinical practice, and the extent to which self-efficacy and self-esteem influenced them. I used participants’ descriptions to tell their life stories related to the phenomenon and to emphasize the themes that answered the four research questions in the study.

I bracketed personal experiences regarding physical education teacher education programs and perceptions of self-efficacy and self-esteem throughout the research collection and analysis process. Dowling (2007) defined reflexivity as bracketing tools that allowed researchers to continually “self-critique and self-appraise” (p. 136) their experiences that influenced the research process. I contained self-assumptions to embrace those that fit exclusively to the participants’ accounts even though researchers do not fully suspend their assumptions (Groenewald, 2004).

I analyzed interview, focus groups, and questionnaires and transcribed the interviews and focus groups, stating the exact words, phrases, and statements of the participants as they voiced

their lived experiences regarding the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2015;). I reviewed and read through the transcripts numerous times noting exact words and phrases, statements and terminology used by the participants as they voiced their lived experiences and perceptions. Transcripts and memos reinforced the stories told by the participants and the writing recorded by me (Creswell, 2013). I grouped patterns of recurring words, statements, and similar phrases using in vivo coding. Then, I used axial coding to group the categories, later synthesized and classified into themes (Groenewald, 2004; Moustakas, 1994).

Themes that emerged from the data analysis included a) intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy benefiting attitudes and beliefs of teaching physical education, b) advanced development from curriculum and instructional experiences, c) closer relationships and support systems that advanced preparation and readiness, d) challenging, time-consuming components of the physical education teacher education programs, and e) additional resources related to the design and structure of the program. Table 2 represents the qualitative analysis of emerging themes and sub-themes. These themes provided a framework meaningful to the phenomenon of pre-service physical educators' professional preparedness.

I used NVivo software to code the themes from the interview, focus group, and questionnaire transcripts, classifying the codes using axial and in vivo coding to group similar responses into categories (Groenewald, 2004; Moustakas, 1994). I coded themes to arrange the data as to answer the four research questions investigated in this study (Creswell, 2013). I generated themes as a result of the data analysis to understand the participants' perceptions of their professional preparedness during the final field placement and clinical practices, and the extent to which self-efficacy and self-esteem influenced their knowledge and skill development. Originally, I identified 157 codes from the transcripts and classification led to 19 themes.

Table 2

Themes and Sub-Themes

Themes	Sub-Themes	Research Questions
Intrinsic motivations and self-efficacy supporting professional growth	Confidence & motivation Passion for helping others Sports-minded background	How do the attitudes and beliefs of teaching physical education as pre-service physical educators influence their knowledge and skill development for classroom preparedness?
Curriculum and instruction advancing knowledge and skills	Progression of the program Structured curriculum Improved development Clinical experiences	What aspects of the teacher education program do pre-service physical educators believe best prepared them for their student teaching experiences to influence student outcomes?
Close relationships and support systems enhancing readiness	Stakeholders' influential support Small populations of programs & schools Communication with stakeholders Faculty knowledge	What aspects of the teacher education program do pre-service physical educators believe best prepared them for their student teaching experiences to influence student outcomes?
Challenging, time-consuming components influencing preparedness	Excessive & irrelevant coursework, information, & commitment Exam & certification preparation	What obstacles hinder pre-service physical educators' professional development and attitudes through their teacher education program?
Additional resources critical to the design and structure of the program	Meaningful, precise information & curriculum Practical lesson planning Placement & structure of courses in program Influences of cooperating teachers Added courses on content & management More clinical experiences	What additional resources would pre-service physical educators perceive to be value-added to their physical education teacher education program?

Intrinsic Motivations and Self-Efficacy Supporting Professional Growth

One of the significant themes that emerged as the participants voiced their perceptions of professional preparedness was intrinsic motivations and self-efficacy that supported their professional growth. Intrinsic motivation related to self-determination, specifically to physical educators who developed as competently skilled movers with confidence, coordination, and agility to maintain their physical fitness (Davies et al., 2015). Self-efficacy influenced commitment, higher engagements and discipline, and overall satisfaction (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017). The intrinsic motivations and self-efficacy supporting the participants' growth in this study narrowed on three subsequent themes. Confidence and motivation, passion for helping others, and sports-minded background were the sub-themes that assisted me with answering research question one.

Confidence and motivation. The participants agreed that confidence and motivation influenced self-efficacy and attitudes of teaching physical education. Throughout the interviews and focus groups, confidence and motivation appeared 76 times, while the participants voiced self-efficacy and beliefs 23 times. The importance of having confidence and a sufficient level of motivation resulting from increased self-efficacy and self-esteem influenced attitudes and developed knowledge and skills to be successful (Sozer, 2013; Erdem & Demirel, 2007). I asked, "How has your personal self-efficacy affected your teacher development and experiences in your PETE program as you have prepared to become a physical education teacher?" Ben noted, "Really early on in my teaching, just going through the program I didn't really have a lot of confidence in myself as a teacher" (personal communication, May 19, 2016). Ben further stated, "I didn't really believe in myself. It was probably halfway through my classes where I really ended up just realizing that I can do this" (personal communication, May 19, 2016). Sean

said, “The biggest thing there is knowing not to drop your head” (personal communication, April 5, 2017). Mike added:

I didn’t have the confidence in myself. Once I got that, it was night and day. I think that’s been huge for me. Believing in myself and believing in what I can do for others.

Once I turned that corner, it was massive. (personal communication, May 5, 2016)

Adam said, “I would have to agree with everything there, I think confidence-wise and just being able to connect with kids on a different level than anything I was used to before” (personal communication, December 17, 2016). Olivia shared, “The program itself helped me extremely become a confident, able teacher” (personal communication, April 15, 2017). Noah stated:

My college has a lot of expectations and requirements and we each have blocks. The first block was intro, then elementary and secondary. With each block comes more work so every time I complete a block or every time I complete a difficult assignment or task I get more confidence and believe in myself a little bit more because I did something really difficult. (personal communication, April 8, 2017)

Ryan added, “Through my whole program, I have felt like I could believe that I could actually do it” (personal communication, April 6, 2017). Ryan continued, “What really happens at my school, they will actually show you that you can and will be a qualified teacher and you should be able to go right into it feeling confident” (personal communication, April 6, 2017). Christian stated, “I think motivation and eager to learn, eager to take good feedback and apply it to my teaching made me become a better teacher” (personal communication, May 2, 2016). Paul said, “I’m student teaching and accomplished everything thus far and I’m believing in myself” (personal communication, April 5, 2017). Paul added, “You have to do this and you have to do

that. So every day it helped me prepare myself and it helped me fix my mistakes” (personal communication, April 5, 2017).

Helping others. Another intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy supporting the participants’ attitudes of professional growth rallied around helping others, mostly students, as role models. A commitment to others above oneself materialized as the participants’ perspectives of helping others emerged as a significant sub-theme. Many participants spoke of their gratitude from the role models that influenced their life decisions; therefore, they aspired to pay it forward, particularly to children and students. Helping others in the context of helping stakeholders appeared 22 times, while role models emerged 17 times as a result of the participants’ perspectives articulated during the interviews and focus groups. Prior research suggested that prosociality, or helping others was a self-determinative approach influencing intrinsic motivations without reciprocation (Oarga, Stavrova, & Fetchenhauer, 2015). Christian proved:

I feel like my attitude towards the field changed and it made me learn so much more because I felt that I wanted to change people around me and motivate others. And [that] I should be a role model. So, I took that initiative and just ran with. I tend to see myself being a friendly [person] and having a good personality so, actually being involved with students and helping them achieve their best abilities helped me show that more often.
(personal communication, May 2, 2016)

Adam stated, “I’ve always had a passion for working with students and I knew it [would be] something along with education and physical fitness” (personal communication, June 1, 2016). Kurt added, “I have always liked working with kids so that’s always helped me as well. Mike suggested:

I was raised to help other people and to do anything you can for others. Not so much focus on yourself, but to focus on what you can do for your community and what you can do for the close people around you or people who need help or whatever it is. (personal communication, May 5, 2016)

Mike continued, “Having a genuine passion for people and having a genuine, caring I guess you should say, ‘compassion for others’ has helped me quite a bit, especially, I find, at a high school level that helped me a lot” (personal communication, May 5, 2016). Paul stated, “I like teaching. I like working with children. I like exercising so I think all of that together” (personal communication, April 5, 2017).

Sports background. Participants in the interviews commonly expressed that their abilities to play sports and their love and enjoyment of sports and being sports-minded influenced their intrinsic motivations and self-efficacy that influenced their attitudes to improve knowledge and skills to teach physical education. The introductory question in the interview asked what sports or activities the participants enjoyed in their spare time. Participants voiced 15 times their ability to play sports and activities because of their sports background. Noah was an outlier participant who shared his love for video games; however, he implied that he admired the skill acquisition through the activities courses in his program. In the beginning of the interview, Noah said, “I only played one sport, so I wasn’t good at a ton of stuff like basketball, football, badminton, the whole nine (personal communication, April 8, 2016). Other participants noted how important their sports background was for their professional growth. Kurt explained:

I think that my personal beliefs are very sports-minded that has benefited me throughout the process. I’m a bit more understanding than just the teacher realm of it. I feel like my

sports background and being really active have helped me. (personal communication, November 23, 2016)

Olivia stated:

I think just me loving sports so much I kind of wanted to do something as a living working with sports and athletes and teaching that. I'm also very competitive so I think growing up loving sports, being competitive really fostered the idea of me wanting to be a PE teacher. (personal communication, March 30, 2017)

Ben added, "I think I had a lot of knowledge about sports and physical education before going into classes and going through the program" (personal communication, May 19, 2016). The essence of the participants' preparedness to teach illustrated the benefits of having intrinsic motivations and self-efficacy supporting their professional growth.

Curriculum and Instruction Advancing Knowledge and Skills

Curriculum and instruction advancing the participants' knowledge and skills developed as the second main theme as participants voiced their perceptions of their professional preparedness. Subsequent themes included the progression of the program, structured curriculum, improved content knowledge and skills, and clinical experiences. The participants shared their stories of their experiences as they developed through their physical education teacher education programs indicating that their content knowledge and skills improved as their experiences with the curriculum and instruction of their programs increased. Previous research suggested the importance of understanding how pre-service educators perceived their learned knowledge and skills while developing pedagogical teaching approaches through their programs (Wong, Chong, Choy, & Lim, 2012).

The participants discussed curriculum and instruction 16 times, knowledge and skills 52

times, and improved development and growth 19 times, specifically when asked, “How has your PETE program’s curriculum and instruction, including your skill and cognitive development, impacted your experiences as a pre-service physical education teacher?” I also asked the participants to share their perspectives related to the format and structures of their physical education teacher education programs during the interview process. The data revealed the aspects of the participants’ programs that best prepared their development to influence student outcomes through effective student teaching, answering research question two.

Program progression. The progression related to the configuration of the physical education teacher education programs highlighted positive influences on the pre-service physical educator participants’ outcomes. Participants voiced progression in context to curriculum and instructional practices 30 times. Mike revealed:

I’d say the biggest that thing I enjoyed was they [program] kind of ease you towards everything. They [professors] start with, they kind of, every year add on to it. Every semester kind of adds on from the last one. I kind of really enjoyed that. You go from intro where you do 15 hours and basic lesson plans, basic block plans and stuff like that. Then have elementary more hour commitment, more work commitment. Then by secondary, you’re doing something every single night. You’re busy, busy, busy. But, you’re ready for student teaching. (personal communication, May 5, 2016)

Olivia stated, “I feel like they [the professors] slowly ease you in” (personal communication, April 15, 2017). Olivia added, “The first semester you just watch. The second semester they throw you into one or two classes. The third semester you’re given a little bit more responsibility and the fourth you’re just teaching” (personal communication, April 15, 2017).

Tom agreed with the ease of the progression, suggesting, “From the get-go, they [the professors]

actually let you see if you want to actually continue the [physical education teacher education] program” (personal communication, April 15, 2017). Tom also stated, “If you don’t want to be a teacher, you get to see their struggles; see if that’s something you want to do instead of having you teach right away and then you wind up not liking it” (personal communication, April 15, 2017). Noah asserted, “You begin in three blocks, or methods classes, and each one progressively gets a bit more difficult and more workload and managing time and everything” (personal communication, April 8, 2017). Ben stated:

I like how it [the physical education teacher education program] kind of leads you from one station. It [the physical education teacher education program] starts you at intro, so you get the basics of writing lesson plans and what an objective is and what your state standards are. Those are really pounded into your head so it’s like second nature when you go on to elementary and secondary. (personal communication, May 19, 2016)

Ben also mentioned:

It’s nice that they [the professors] lead you into that [elementary practicum experience] just before you get into student teaching so it’s the most, fresh thing in your head and you know what you’re going to do. It’s [elementary practicum experience] the last two semesters of classes that you’re taking. It’s pretty fresh in your head so you’re able to use those situations that you learned in class into your student teaching. It’s good. I like the progression that they put us through. (personal communication, May 19, 2016)

Adam suggested,

I like how you start off with just a little bit of responsibility and then as the semesters go on it just becomes a little bit more demanding. And the pace was great. I thought the pace was not too fast, not too slow. (personal communication, June 1, 2016)

Christian said,

I like how we start with our intro with the intro to PE, knowing how to, knowing what PE means, like what are the aspects of PE like common core, things we have to teach, and why we want to become teachers. (personal communication, May 2, 2016)

Ryan indicated:

As it [physical education teacher education program] progressed through the years, we got more in depth with figuring out how to actually communicate with children and how to get the parent community involved, what to teach, how you should plan all your things, and what you should really be looking for as you move on throughout your time as a teacher. (personal communication, April 6, 2017)

Kurt stated,

I think the progression of the classes went really well and that it led up to a successful final internship. I think that without those steps it could've been sloppy and you didn't know what you were getting yourself into. (personal communication, December 17, 2016)

Paul talked about the progression of his field placement and clinical practice stating, "We start the first week as an observation week. Then just covering 25%, 50%, and 75%. We do this for weeks that lead up to months at different percents" (personal communication, April 5, 2017).

Structured curriculum. The structured curriculum proved to be palpable throughout the data collection. The pre-service physical educator participants shared the desire for more structure 24 times across the data sets. Kurt simply suggested, "I like the structure and design for the most part" (personal communication, November 23, 2016). Kurt then mentioned:

It's [the physical education teacher education program] kind of a lighter atmosphere than you have in the classroom. So even if the curriculum is hard you have that relationship with the professors to not move at your own pace, but to fully understand the information you need to understand without being just a number in the classroom. (personal communication, November 23, 2016)

Mike stated, "I'd say the way the curriculum is developed is pretty good [too]. It's a strong course development here" (Mike, personal communication, May 5, 2016). Christian said, "Going through my field and all the classes I've taken with the structured classes, I've learned how to be firm, but also authoritative on how to teach a class" (personal communication, May 2, 2016). Ben noted, "The huge help for me was that the program was extremely structured and you kind of know what they expect of you each part of the way" (personal communication, December 17, 2016). Ryan suggested, "I feel like they [professors] trained us so we would retain it until we retire. I really, really like the way the curriculum was set up there" (personal communication, April 6, 2017). Sean stated, "He [professor] has gotten the curriculum engrained in our minds" (personal communication, April 5, 2017).

Improved development. The content knowledge and skills of pre-service physical educators improved from their exposure to the curriculum and instruction throughout their physical education teacher education programs. The study participants regarded improved development and growth in context to curriculum and instruction 19 times, while continuously reflecting on knowledge and skills. Paul stated, "It allowed me to develop my skills like jump rope, catching, throwing, volleying, striking, and kicking" (personal communication, April 5, 2017). Paul also implied, "It helped me experience different activities that improved my skills as a PE teacher. I have been able to use these skills while student teaching" (personal

communication, April 5, 2017). Noah asserted, “You have to take activities courses ranging from volleyball, badminton, archery, soccer, softball, etc. so that also prepares you to not only participate but teach a lot of different things” (personal communication, April 8, 2017). Noah added, “They [professors, advisors, and cooperating teachers] were able to really guide me in that area really well. Just picking up the teaching strategies, content knowledge, and the whole nine” (personal communication, April 8, 2017). Adam stated, “They [physical education teacher education program] have classes with almost every sport. I took field hockey, golf, badminton, football, and wrestling. They had classes for any physical activity that you could really think of” (personal communication, June 1, 2016). Kurt shared, “You move to child development and then do sports specific classes like how to teach volleyball, golf, swimming, like, you name it they take you through that” (personal communication, November 23, 2016). Ben stated, “You learn so much from all those classes and it’s definitely helped a lot cognitively” (personal communication, May 19, 2016). Mike advised:

They [professors] make us take, I want to say, six classes outside . . . like six science-based classes that help us for our content specific [area of study]. And then our secondary class, she touches on everything and anything before you go to student teaching. (personal communication, May 5, 2016)

Mike added, “You teach a variety of different sports: pickleball, handball, lacrosse. They [professors] have you do two invasion games. You have to do two net-wall games. Stuff along those lines” (personal communication, May 5, 2016). Sean said, “We were prepared to know the content so when it came time to student teach it was really helpful” (personal communication, April 15, 2017).

Clinical experiences. Clinical experiences advanced the pre-service physical educator

participants' preparedness for the profession. All participants completed several field placement and clinical practices that provided them with real-life, clinical teaching experiences. At the time of the data collection, the participants were completing their final field placement and clinical practices. Clinical practices appeared 15 times across the data sets. Paul stated, "I would say that the student teaching is crucial for our readiness in order to be a physical education teacher" (personal communication, April 15, 2017). Paul added, "This experience is where we really learn about being a teacher and where we can carry out the teacher strategies and plans that we have learned since I have been in the program" (personal communication, April 15, 2017). Ben said, "Just to build on what I already said about confidence, I just felt a lot more prepared and I started getting out there and doing stuff" (personal communication, December 17, 2016). Adam also stated, "The progression of the practicums also went really well and gave us more hands-on experience at all levels: elementary, middle and high schools. So, I think that was probably the one thing that really went well" (personal communication, December 17, 2016). Adam also said, "I think the learning by doing was definitely beneficial in the exercise science classes" (personal communication, June 1, 2016). Christian added:

I had a fun, interesting time where a kid was learning how to throw the football and he couldn't get it. He would throw with the same arm and footing was all crazy and backwards on it, but after we were able to demonstrate good [form] and go through the steps and work hands-on with the kids, we were able to watch him grow. (personal communication, December 17, 2016)

Olivia stated, "I have full control over my class so I think that just being in there and getting that real experience has helped me become ready to be a teacher" (personal communication, March 30, 2017). Noah indicated, "We get a lot of hours and field experience hours" (personal

communication, April 8, 2017). Sean said, “I enjoyed getting the practicum hours in while still learning the material because you get a widespread age group you enjoy working with” (personal communication, April 5, 2017). Tom merely suggested, “Mainly the internships” (personal communication, April 3, 2017) when asked about the influences of the curriculum and instruction of his physical education teacher education. Kurt and Ryan were the only two participants who wished for more clinical experiences. Kurt said, “I feel like it’s cut up a lot and I feel like I didn’t get a lot of hands-on work” (personal communication, December 17, 2016). However, Kurt explained his learn-by-doing experiences:

I would go take a Science class where I would go and sit in a class for two and a half hours and then I would go outside and I’d play baseball and learn the ways to teach baseball to the students or I’d be playing basketball or volleyball. And I think that was just a good thing to have in a major because you weren’t getting too burned out from constantly doing work or sitting in a classroom. You’re kind of going back and forth and kind of just mixing it up so it’s a fun major to take. (personal communication, December 17, 2016)

Ryan stated, “One thing I would say is for us to have more observation hours. Kind of like having more student teaching hours. Where you go in and have a couple days straight and build relationships with the students” (personal communication, April 6, 2017). The essence of pre-service physical educators’ perceptions of their preparedness was positively influenced by the progression, structured curriculum, improved content knowledge and skills, and clinical experiences throughout the program.

Close Relationships and Support Systems Enhancing Readiness

Across the data, participants voiced how important the close relationships and support systems of stakeholders were that enhanced their preparation and readiness to teach physical education. The professors, advisors, peers, and cooperating teachers influenced the pre-service physical educator participants' perceptions of their professional preparedness through close relationships and support systems. After repeated reviews of the interview and focus group transcriptions and audio recordings, stakeholders appeared 47 times to validate the close relationships that enhanced readiness. Relationships emerged 32 times across the data sets. Because of the small school settings with low student populations, the participants' relationships fostered constant communication with knowledgeable faculty and stakeholders. Support and guidance appeared 21 times, communication appeared 12 times, small populations emerged eight times, and faculty knowledge appeared seven times throughout the data analysis process authenticating the support systems that improved preparedness. Participants voiced that stakeholders encouraged preparedness through friendships, both personally and professionally. I grouped similar/like responses into categories using in vivo coding and classified the categories to themes using axial coding to answer research question two.

Stakeholders' supports. According to the participants in this study, the professors and advisors appeared to have the biggest influential support on the participants' preparedness. Christian insisted, "They [the professors] really helped guide me through what I have to do at least to really hustle and succeed in different ways" (personal communication, May 2, 2016). Tom explained, "They've [his professors and advisors] been out in the real world before. You can always lean back on them and trust their word when they give you advice. They've always been open, so it's been very helpful" (personal communication, April 3, 2017). Paul stated, "My

advisor helped me a lot. She encouraged me. Sometimes a little bit hard, but I learned and without them [the professors and advisors] I wouldn't have been able to do what I've done" (personal communication, April 5, 2017). Ryan suggested, "The professors are great trying to accomplish the end goal of [per-service physical educators] actually becoming a teacher and really helped you in the way of developing your teaching style and professionalism and things like that" (personal communication, April 6, 2017). Olivia indicated:

My professor is amazing. She's just one of my favorite professors I've ever had at my school. Just her being such an awesome person and being very open and available really helped me to not be afraid to ask questions and not be afraid to go to her whenever I needed to. I think just her and all of the other human performance professors have been awesome. It's a smaller class so I get to know my professors a lot better so I think just being able to be personable with them and email them or text them and having that opportunity to really help me get good grades and be on top of everything. (personal communication, March 30, 2017)

Adam explained, "My advisor just did so much for me over the years. And I know that compared with other majors, they [students] don't have that relationship with their advisors as education majors do" (personal communication, June 1, 2016). Adam said, "I had amazing advisors and professors that were really like a close-knit family" (personal communication, December 17, 2016). Adam further explained, "I could always go to my teachers and advisors so that definitely helped a lot" (personal communication, June 1, 2016). Kurt asserted, "My advisor and my professor have helped a lot. I interned under her [my professor] husband who has helped me a lot" (personal communication, November 23, 2016). Ben said, "I really enjoyed my program and professors that went through it with me" (personal communication, December

17, 2016). Mike stated, “Our professors here are amazing” (personal communication, May 5, 2016). Mike further claimed, “From the professors, I’ve learned so much. You can’t really turn your nose up at somebody that’s had that [much] success” (personal communication, May 5, 2016). Sean indicated, “I think they [administrators] are all there but others go to certain lengths to help you out more. Some will always ask you, they’ll text you, to make sure you’re doing well” (personal communication, April 5, 2017). Sean said, “This is the time to make mistakes because I have the teachers’ support because it’s not as ‘real life’ situation where things could completely go wrong” (personal communication, April 5, 2017). Sean insisted, “Right now people are backing it up, like co-op and the administrators I have on my side. Just knowing not to drop your head is what has kept me going” (personal communication, April 5, 2017). Noah added, “I feel like the professors have given us the proper tools to be successful” (personal communication, April 8, 2017).

Peers also influenced the preparedness levels of the pre-service physical educators in this study. Peers had to complete the same amount of work within the same period of time with the same professors and advisors. However, peers may or may not have experienced their completed practicums and field placement and clinical practices at the same location. Christian added, “Having another colleague here at my school also student teaching helped. So, we definitely try to learn how to adjust when things are going wrong” (personal communication, May 2, 2016). Mike implied that his peers were a huge help, especially when he was going through his field placement and clinical practice of his physical education teacher education program. Mike said:

You have your peers and you have your student teachers that are at different schools that you’re really close with and you came through the program together. We’re at the library together pretty much every night. We have an I-message together. How’s your day

going? Anybody know what I could do for this? This is the issues I'm having, anybody got a solution? So, it's huge. (personal communication, May 5, 2016)

Adam indicated, "For me, it was just kind of working with my group. It was a close-knit group. You know, people you got to work with and learn from and really depend on" (personal communication, December 17, 2016). Noah said, "I think the school helps shape a really good perception of the profession by keeping us around people in the profession already" (personal communication, April 15, 2017). Noah added, "I've come into contact with other people that are also PE professionals or teacher candidates from other schools. Hearing the things that they have to do, I feel that [my school] over prepared me, in a good way" (personal communication, April 8, 2017). Ryan said, "With peers, you can just shoot ideas to each other and they are really good for support and for things like that" (personal communication, April 6, 2017). Ryan also suggested, "I guess kind of liked meeting with peers, like at the AAHPERD [American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance] conference we went to" (personal communication, April 15, 2017). Ryan continued, "Different things like that where we all got together, not just in a classroom with classmates, to expand the knowledge of physical education and to show the social side of it as well" (personal communication, April 15, 2017).

Tom implied, "I liked the second semester where we were co-teaching. Helping each other out. See what we're good at, see what we're bad at, ya know?" (personal communication, April 15, 2017). Tom added, "It was pretty fun just playing off each other and helping each other out" (personal communication, April 3, 2017). Tom continued, "Using each other's confidence to get up in front of a class because we had never done that before" (personal communication, April 3, 2017). Olivia stated, ‘

She [advisor] did a field day with all of us, like the people who were above us and below

us and brought us all to the ROTC [The Reserve Officers' Training Corps] range and we had to do a team-building exercise. (personal communication, April 15, 2017)

Olivia continued, "Going through all these obstacles was pretty fun" (personal communication, April 15, 2017).

Another factor related to close relationships and support systems enhancing readiness revolved around the cooperating teachers who were out in the field with the participants during their clinical experiences, including their practicums and final field placement and clinical practices. The participants may or may not have had the same cooperating teachers in their local areas. The participants expressed higher levels of preparedness because of their interactions and experiences with their cooperating teachers. Ben implicated, "I think a lot of the help was from the teachers that you had by your side when you were actually out in the field doing your student teaching" (personal communication, May 19, 2016). Participants focused on their development and growth while reflecting with their cooperating teachers who acted as professional advisors. Ben continued:

Your classroom teachers can only prepare you for so much. They [the professors] can't give you every situation. They [the professors] can't tell you what you're going to go out and experience. It's kind of nice having the teachers that you kind of take over their job. They're [the cooperating teachers] still there for you, in a way, to use as a crutch so if you are struggling or you had a rough class you can self-reflect or reflect with them [the cooperating teachers] on what just happened. They're [the cooperating teachers] more of a help than I think the classroom teachers are even though they [the professors] give you all the informational stuff that you do need to know going into student teaching. It's kind

of more helpful that the teacher you're taking over for is there for you more. (personal communication, May 19, 2016).

Paul said, "My relationship with my cooperating teacher is great. She has given me everything she knows. All of the teaching strategies and class management, I know everything that we learned through the program" (personal communication, April 5, 2017). Christian suggested, "I feel like the student teaching portion of it should be longer because you build a good relationship towards the ending of your placements" (personal communication, May 2, 2016). Noah stated, "In my first placement, I was at an elementary school and my supervisor, she also specializes in elementary so she, along with the elementary cooperating teacher, influenced me a lot because it's their area of expertise" (personal communication, April 8, 2017). Adam insinuated, "I think they're [cooperating teachers] are extremely crucial and critical for the success of the intern. I was lucky enough to have awesome cooperating teachers throughout my four semesters of student teaching" (personal communication, June 1, 2016). Adam further stated, "Some of my friends, you know, had trouble building strong relationships with their cooperating teachers, so I think that's an important aspect of the education department and curriculum" (personal communication, June 1, 2016). Sean said, "I was given a chance to work with a tremendous Cooperating teacher and I think that has made the biggest impact" (personal communication, April 15, 2017). Sean continued, "She strives to work more with the national standards instead of just the state standards; ties them together and holds herself to a higher level than most" (personal communication, April 15, 2017). Olivia added, "My professor helped me pick a school with an amazing cooperating teacher. I was at an elementary school and the cooperating teacher was phenomenal" (personal communication, March 30, 2017).

Small settings. The University of Redbank, the University of Peters, and Ina University consisted of smaller physical education teacher education programs that incorporated small-town feelings that helped build the rapport needed for effective teacher development. Kurt said, “I think that the way my program was structured was very small so every professor and every advisor, you all knew each other and it was a first name basis where we all stayed in touch” (personal communication, December 17, 2016). Sean suggested, “The smaller class size is better for me right now because it’s not 12 other people fighting for their position in there” (personal communication, April 5, 2017). Sean continued, “It’s nice because we are able to compare what we are doing in each of our classes which I feel is beneficial” (personal communication, April 5, 2017). Adam implied:

It’s [the University of Peters] a small-knit school and I graduated with only one other physical education major so I had a lot of time with my advisors in my departments and the small classes really helped me succeed. Again, that one-on-one with the teachers because our classroom sizes were no more than 25. So it felt, honestly, like I was still in high school. I didn’t have those large lecture classes. That definitely helped me with my own strengths and weaknesses. I could always go to my teachers and advisors so that definitely helped a lot. (personal communication, June 1, 2016)

Olivia stated, “The fact that there is a small number of people, it’s kind of intimate” (personal communication, April 15, 2017). Olivia continued, “I don’t feel like just another number. I feel like I’m one of the only PE people and they [professors] take pride in that and want me to succeed” (personal communication, April 15, 2017). Christian alleged:

One thing that I really liked is that our school has that small-town feel and when you go to a university in a city you almost lose that sense of being able to know who you go to

class with and who your professors are. I really felt they knew us because we got to go with them throughout our time at school. (personal communication, December 17, 2016)

Sean insisted, “My school is small so it is easier for people to come and help you out because you’re not by yourself in the process” (personal communication, April 15, 2017). Mike claimed, “If I look back three years from now and I’m like, ‘look, I don’t know what to do here,’ I can call one of my professors and they’ll give me the answer. That’s just who we are here. We’re not a huge community. (personal communication, May 5, 2016)

Christian implied:

I would have to add in on that. [Mike], I think by us being able to have solid relationships with everybody involved from advisors or peers, and working so closely with the professor, I think that was the best thing for us to have and our readiness going forward in the program and just learning. A better, more positive relationship will result in, at least for me, a better and more positive outcome in my success. (personal communication, December 17, 2016)

Constant communication. The close relationships constructed in their physical education teacher education programs appeared as a result of having constant communications with the same professors, advisors, and peers throughout the entire program. Mike added:

The way they [the faculty] communicate with us is, it’s open-door policy. Everybody has a right to go talk to your professor. Everybody has a right to email them whenever you want. And they’re [the faculty] pretty good at getting back to you right away. They’re [the faculty] always open for you. (personal communication, May 5, 2016)

Kurt explained:

I was able to communicate a lot with my advisors and even my interning teachers I still stay in touch with because I think it's important that when it comes time to get a job now you have all these people in your corner and like he [Adam] said you don't burn any bridges. (personal communication, December 17, 2016)

Adam mentioned, "She [my advisor] would always come out to whenever we were student teaching and observe us and write notes" (personal communication, June 1, 2016).

Faculty knowledge. The professors enhanced the physical educator participants' preparation and readiness due to their expert knowledge of sports and physical education. Some of the professors authored textbooks used in their classrooms. Therefore, faculty intelligence levels influenced the participants' readiness. Mike stated:

We have some of the best faculty around. It says something when you're learning from the textbooks that your professor wrote. That says something about where they've been and the views they have from the outside and from the profession, obviously, that they're important enough that they've been able to have that success. (personal communication, May 5, 2016)

Christian added,

I would probably say that we have some of the best professors in the field who are really intelligent and knowledgeable. Just when it comes down to PE and physical education, in general, they're always willing to help and go that extra mile for everybody. (personal communication, December 17, 2016)

Tom explained, "She [advisor] was always giving us books and always knowledgeable on everything" (personal communication, April 15, 2017). Adam said,

You may think you know everything about a sport and some of these professors really, like for basketball class, open me up, I've been playing basketball all my life, open me up to new teaching strategies and ways that the kids would really enjoy the class. (personal communication, June 1, 2016)

Sean said, "My co-op has done a great job working with me especially with her expertise level she had" (personal communication, April 5, 2017). Ben suggested, "I'd showcase that the professors are really experts and they show that in their teaching" (personal communication, December 17, 2016). Ben further shared, "You don't sense any kind of questioning on their part. They know what they're going to teach and they know what you need to know and they're going to get you ready" (personal communication, May 19, 2016). Olivia added, "The professors that we have there are amazing. One of the professors is a genius who would sit there and help you" (personal communication, April 15, 2017).

It is the essence of the perception of the pre-service physical educators' in this study that the professors, advisors, peers, and cooperating teachers enhanced their preparedness to teach physical education due to the smaller school settings with effective communication and experts' knowledge. Adam stated, "I think what I've learned to do is cherish the bonds that take place between everyone involved in the entire process" (personal communication, December 17, 2016). Kurt explained, "I think all of these relationships have been very good for my future and future development" (personal communication, November 23, 2016). Olivia implied, "I think the program helped me become a better teacher. Just having fun and learning a lot is something I'll remember forever" (personal communication, April 15, 2017). Noah said, "I feel prepared to go into my field" (personal communication, April 8, 2017). Ryan stated, "I feel like we have one

of the greatest PE programs. It's so much fun when we're just learning different things. I've had a great time at our school" (personal communication, April 15, 2017).

Mike said,

I just liked how everybody worked together. I thought the faculty was awesome and that sort of togetherness, like working together, helped get me through it because I felt, at times, it was overwhelming, but it was overall a really positive experience. (personal communication, December 17, 2016)

Challenging, Time-Consuming Components Influencing Preparedness

The pre-service physical educators expressed constructive pros and cons regarding challenging, time-consuming components influencing preparedness. I strove to examine the perceived frustrations and difficulties influencing participants' experiences through their physical education teacher education programs. After thorough bracketing, memoing, and coding, I used the audio recording and transcriptions to continuously review the voiced perceptions of the participants. In context to the challenging, time-consuming components of the program, participants voiced excessive coursework 27 times, difficult exam/test material 23 times, irrelevant information 18 times, certification 14 times, and time-commitment eight times. This data analysis process revealed the theme: Challenging, time-consuming components influencing preparedness. The two sub-themes were: (a) excessive and irrelevant coursework, information, and commitment and (b) exam and certification preparation. These themes answered research question three.

Coursework challenges. Excessive and irrelevant coursework, information, and commitment played a role in improving and obstructing the participants' experiences. Kurt said:

I feel like it's [the physical education teacher education program] very, very, very focused on the lesson planning and writing the lesson plans. You kind of lose the whole aspect of being in a class and taking it day-by-day opposed to planning it out, which drives you crazy. So they [the physical education teacher education program faculty] focus way too much on lesson plans. When you intern and talk to teachers they're not writing lesson plans every day. They [teachers] develop their classes based on the students they have opposed to scripting out a lesson plan, saying exactly what you're going to say and 100% of the time you don't even say those things. You know the cues you're going to say, but scripting it out is not very realistic. (personal communication, November 23, 2016)

Ryan suggested, "I feel like we have a scripted lesson plan which is great to write but sometimes when we lesson plan like that it's sometimes hard to not just read the plan instead of actually teaching the lesson plan" (personal communication, April 6, 2017). Christian said, "With tough lesson plans, they teach all of us students to write lesson plans like it's given to a substitute" (personal communication, May 2, 2016). Christian further expressed, "Just knowing, for us, we don't have to stick so true to them, but as long as the skill is accomplished that day, it doesn't matter how we did it. It's just being more flexible" (personal communication, December 17, 2016). Mike suggested, "I'd say I wasn't always thrilled about doing the whole lesson planning to the extent that we had to do it to" (personal communication, December 17, 2016). Paul implied, "I like lesson planning and I think you have to be ready, but I think it's tiring and excruciating sometimes" (personal communication, April 5, 2017). Paul added, "I would change all of the paperwork that we have to do to be able to enjoy more time teaching. I would definitely decrease the paperwork" (personal communication, April 5, 2017).

Sean said, “With writing lesson plans and implementing them, I think they are good and I understand the concepts of them when an administrator comes in and can check them and know what you're doing” (personal communication, April 5, 2017). Sean continued, “I think after you've known the lesson plan, you don't have to live by each individual step. And you have to know how to adjust as you go” (personal communication, April 5, 2017). Olivia insisted, “I didn't really have to do that many lesson plans for PE until this semester.” (personal communication, March 30, 2017). Tom said, “I'm not of fan of them [lesson plans]” (personal communication, April 3, 2017). Adam stated:

The science classes can be difficult at times, just for physical education majors. Just because we're given that early exercise science classes. Like I said, the basic anatomy, but then there's kind of like a gap where, or even how your semester could be set up. (personal communication, June 1, 2016)

Adam continued, “Those [exercise science classes] are hard classes for students. They're hard classes in general for any student, but for us, we are worrying about our education classes too” (personal communication, June 1, 2016). Kurt alleged, “I feel they [the physical education teacher education program faculty] put too much emphasis on the kinesiology part and the anatomy part. I'm not saying it's not useful but a lot of the information is invaluable” (personal communication, November 23, 2016). Kurt continued, “I think diving so deep into those specific sciences is unnecessary in some cases because I know it poses a big ‘blah’ to some students” (personal communication, December 17, 2016). Christian added, “I would agree because kids don't really understand the full extent of the anatomy like we had to learn. I'd go along that line. Maybe not so in-depth with it” (personal communication, December 17, 2016). Ben stated,

It's [the physical education teacher education program] kind of a lot. There's some classes in there I think they don't need and there's some classes that I feel like they could combine. That's kind of what I really didn't like. (personal communication, May 19, 2016)

Ben added, "You have all these 1-credit classes that you have to get done that other majors don't have to do" (personal communication, May 19, 2016).

Certification challenges. The exam material and certification preparation also emerged as a challenging, time-consuming component for the participants in this study. This sub-theme also benefited some of the participants while thwarting others. Ben explained, "There's a lot of exams and I don't always understand all of the information. I learned a lot of it, but some of it is just forgotten after you take that exam when there's so much all at once" (personal communication, December 17, 2016). Christian added:

Things on those exams aren't things we learned. I understand that it's all about common core, but some things, when you're going into the field, you're only programmed on that field. It's not like you have time to worry about other things. Those exams hold you to another standard that most people fail from. (personal communication, May 2, 2016)

Mike said, "It's been a cognitive challenge to go through" (personal communication, May 5, 2016). Mike continued, "If you failed the state's test, I don't know how you did it. You must not have paid attention" (personal communication, May 5, 2016). Adam said:

I feel extremely prepared. Not only just from the student teaching experiences because that definitely helped a lot, but for all the competencies that go on especially for the state testing that we have to do to get certified as a PE teacher. (personal communication, June 1, 2016)

Kurt implied, “I passed everything K-12, which was simple because of the information learned in school and the study books recommended to us so I think we were pretty prepared to take the exams” (personal communication, November 23, 2016). Tom said, “I didn’t even study for my PE exam. Everything, she pretty much told us what was on the test and pretty much prepared us for the test” (personal communication, April 15, 2017). Noah stated, “I think there should be more of an emphasis on the other ones [exams] we have to take. Giving us knowledge about exams we have to take. How they prepare us for the exam and everything” (personal communication, April 15, 2017). Sean stated, “My advisors are giving me information on how I can excel with the practice scores so I can get my licensure, and I feel confident” (personal communication, April 5, 2017). Olivia implied:

I have actually already passed all of my exams. I passed my subject area and professional, as well as my general knowledge. I think they really helped me with that. My university has practice tests there so I was told that I couldn’t take the real subject area exams until I got at least an 80% or better on the practice one. I had to schedule time with the department head and I had to take a timed test with her watching and once I got an 80% there then I could take it for real. So, I think that them having the practice tests and them giving us materials to study really helped me take it once and pass.

(personal communication, March 30, 2017)

Ben said, “I’ve learned all the information that I’m going to see on that exam. It’s just the mass amounts of that. That’s kind of what scares me” (personal communication, May 19, 2017).

Adam stated, “Our teachers made sure, especially our advisor, made sure that we knew each of the competencies extremely well” (personal communication, June 1, 2017). Adam also mentioned, “Not only did you need to know them for your certification exams, but they’re

important to know for actual teaching” (personal communication, June 1, 2017). It is the essence of the perceptions of the pre-service physical educator participants that challenging, time-consuming components influencing preparedness, including excessive and irrelevant coursework, information, and commitment and exam and certification preparation, influenced their experiences and overall perceptions of their preparedness.

Additional Resources Critical to the Design and Structure of the Program

The participants incorporated value-added material critical for the preparation and development of pre-service physical educators as they progressed through their physical education teacher education programs. The participants indicated the need for precise information 23 times, practical planning 19 times, course structure 13 times, influential cooperating teachers 11 times, adapted classes seven times, health components eight times, diversity eight times, classroom management six times and additional clinical experiences five times. After considerable reviews of the transcripts and audio, bracketing, memoing, and coding the data, I classified the theme: additional resources critical to the design and structure of the program, answering research question four in that it focused on the participants’ perceptions of critical components to improve and overcome challenges within their physical education teacher education programs. Subsequent themes included meaningful and precise information and curriculum, practical lesson planning, placement and structure of certain courses in the program, influences of cooperating teachers, added courses related to content and classroom management, and more clinical experiences.

Meaningful information. Meaningful, precise information and curriculum emerged as the first sub-theme from the theme: Additional resources related to the design and structure of the physical education teacher education program. Christian stated, “Just making sure I was

given more exact material of what I was needing to use instead too much fluff to confuse me before exams” (personal communication, December 17, 2016). Christian also said, “Implement a way to ready students for all aspects of the program. Kind of thinking passing the exams and then knowing exactly what is expected from each person starting your very first day your freshman year” (personal communication, December 17, 2016). Noah added, “Have mock certification exams where students have to take them throughout the program to prepare them for the real thing” (personal communication, April 15, 2017). Kurt agreed with Christian regarding exact information that should be given early on. He said, “They should give us all the information needed at the very beginning” (personal communication, November 23, 2016). Ben talked about the abundance of information and having a specific curriculum for physical educators. He said,

The load of information was a lot for me sometimes. They [The physical education teacher education program faculty] could change some things related to that. Maybe getting rid of some of the things and diving deeper that relate more to just PE teachers (personal communication, December 17, 2016).

Ryan mentioned, “I think some of the subjects we need to have touched on, is maybe transgender students” (personal communication, April 6, 2017). Ryan further suggested, “building a relationship with the people around them” (personal communication, April 6, 2017). Noah added:

I’d probably include a bit more diversity training. I feel that present teachers are unaware of how to deal with certain situations. Like dealing with students who come from diverse backgrounds, whether it be race, class, socioeconomic status, gender, religion, whatever

the case is I feel a lot of present teachers, not in my program, aren't really prepared for that kind of stuff. (personal communication, April 5, 2017)

Olivia mentioned, "I would connect it [physical education teacher education program] a little bit more to actual education program" (personal communication, April 15, 2017). Olivia added, "We're kind of like separated. So, I feel if there was a way to connect us, they all know each other so well and we don't really know anyone. They give them all the information that they all need" (personal communication, April 15, 2017).

Practical lesson plans. Practical lesson planning was another sub-theme that emerged from the data. Participants articulated the advantages of writing lesson plans as resources to use while teaching content and skills; however, many expressed their concerns regarding the reality and practicality of them. In many cases, the pre-service physical educator participants voiced their lesson plans as being wordy and too detailed. Kurt said, "I felt that they [the physical education teacher education program faculty] readied us to make lesson plans that we don't, that we aren't going to use. They [lesson plans] aren't practical in what we use them for" (personal communication, December 17, 2016). Kurt continued, "I just think we should've been shown, or told that these are more academic lesson plans than what we're going to use because you shouldn't have to script out what you're going to say verbatim on a lesson plan" (personal communication, December 17, 2016). Paul stated, "I think that the program would have to work more on [lesson] planning with the students because it is very important and I was kind of lost at the beginning" (personal communication, April 5, 2017).

Course structure. Placement and structure of certain courses in the physical education teacher education programs proved to be value-added. Adam's main focus went back to the science courses. He suggested:

They [science courses] posed difficulty and the progression around how those are placed throughout the actual program. I think they can definitely approve on that. Those seem to be more difficult at times, especially when there could be gaps in your semesters between those types of classes. So, a smoother transition and progression with exercise science and kinesiology would better the program. (Adam, personal communication, December 17, 2016)

Mike stated, “Our elementary block that we do, I would change. I’d change that because I don’t think it’s so much of what’s going on in that class, but just the way it was structured” (personal communication, May 5, 2016). Mike further stated, “We just kind of do the same thing as intro a little bit and then all at the end it’s like ‘whack,’ you have to do a unit plan, go. It wasn’t like a progression in that class” (personal communication, May 5, 2016). Ben indicated, “I might bring up the idea of an accelerated program, especially on stuff or topics that I’m better at” (personal communication, December 17, 2016). Ben added, “If you’re a student you always want options to get through things faster and if you’re able to work harder you have more time to dedicate to it” (personal communication, December 17, 2016).

Influential cooperating teachers. The positive influences of cooperating teachers on pre-service physical educators also materialized as value-added in this study. Adam brought up cooperating teachers and their importance in the process of preparing pre-service physical educators to be successful. While he had amazing experiences, he implied that some of his peers endured trouble when building relationships with their cooperating teachers. Adam said:

I think the cooperating teacher should have an open mind, don’t have too high of expectations, always be there for advice, make sure you’re watching the classes when we

teach, and tell us what we're doing right and tell us what we are doing wrong. (personal communication, June 1, 2016)

Olivia added, "I think I learned a ton, but I think it's also about what school you get. A lot of my friends that are different subjects got not so great school, not so great teachers" (Personal communication, March 30, 2017). Olivia continued, "I really think it depends on whether you get a good cooperating teacher or not" (Personal communication, March 30, 2017).

Added courses. Another value-added element consisted of added courses and coursework related to content and classroom management. Mike indicated the need for more adapted classes. He said, "I don't think there was a big enough focus on adapted. We took one class that was required. It was a 15-hour placement and we take it while we take our first intro class" (personal communication, May 5, 2016). Mike continued:

It would've been big for me to do it [adapted class] last semester because it's like, okay, I have to brush up on how do I treat this kid? How do I adhere to his disability while also doing it with Susie over here? I think they're could've been more emphasis on that.

(personal communication, May 5, 2016)

Noah stated, "I'd say, make the teaching and the books and content a bit more relatable to the real world" (personal communication, April 5, 2017). Paul said, "As I said, work more of planning and class management with the students that are being prepared for being a physical educator" (personal communication, April 5, 2017). Tom suggested:

It would be the classroom management. You pretty much learn that when you get out into the field. There's no classes telling you this is how you should do it or this is how it should look or things like that. (personal communication, April 15, 2017)

Sean added, “I would say areas that need improvement would be focusing more on the health standards and with that tying in the national standards” (personal communication, April 15, 2017). Olivia agreed with Sean stating:

It may have helped to have more health classes. Even though I took anatomy, kinesiology, physiology, and all those classes, they didn’t really teach me; they taught more as if I was an exercise science major. They didn’t really teach me to teach high schoolers so maybe doing a class about health and basics to teach high schoolers. They really taught me as if I was going to be an athletic trainer. Not as much teaching me to teach other kids you could say. (personal communication, March 30, 2017)

More clinical experiences. The physical educator participants also explained the importance of more clinical experiences in their physical education teacher education programs. Sean said, “I suppose it would be to have more clinical time preparation or more work of seeing what it is like during your student teaching semester” (personal communication, April 15, 2017). Ryan added, “One change would be to go out and teach in the beginning of all this just to get the nerves out. Doing observations with other teachers even just to get a feel for if you can actually do it” (personal communication, April 15, 2017). Paul mentioned, “I would say that the thing that I would include to my PETE program would be having more experience in schools and less in the classroom” (personal communication, April 15, 2017).

Summary

This chapter presented a depiction of the participants and the results of this hermeneutic phenomenological study. Each participant described views exclusively, cooperatively, and honestly, that yielded five themes and 19 sub-themes from the collected and analyzed data. The themes included a) intrinsic motivations and self-efficacy supporting professional growth, b)

curriculum and instruction advancing knowledge and skills, c) close relationships and support systems enhancing readiness, d) challenging, time-consuming components influencing preparedness, and e) additional resources critical to the design and structure of the program. Challenging, time-consuming components influencing the pre-service physical educators' preparedness was excessive and irrelevant coursework, information, and commitment, along with the exam and certification preparation. Six sub-themes provided value-added material, including meaningful and precise information and curriculum, practical lesson planning, placement and structure of certain courses within the program, influences of the cooperating teachers, additional courses related to content and management, and additional clinical experiences. Questions asked of the participants throughout the study shaped the five themes and 19 sub-themes defined and explained in this chapter. Sub-themes resulted of formulated clusters and meanings obtained from the participants' significant statements. I typed quotations verbatim to ensure the accuracy and validity of the statements made by the participants in this study.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

Overview

The purpose of this qualitative hermeneutic phenomenological study is to capture the essence of the perceptions of 11 pre-service physical educators during the final field placement and clinical practices of their undergraduate degree program where they prepared to become professional educators. The underlying problem is that pre-service educators brought their own perceptions about teaching expectations and professional requirements and attitudes related to self-efficacy, growth, and development (Raths & McAninch, 2003). Further, while states enact educational initiatives to ready and prepare pre-service physical educators for the profession, the problem lies in the notion that the faculty of physical education teacher education programs know little about the extent to which the characteristics of their programs best prepare and influence their pre-service physical educators, as well as the challenging components that need improving.

The following questions guided this research: (a) How do the attitudes and beliefs of teaching physical education as pre-service physical educators influence their knowledge and skill development for classroom preparedness? (b) What aspects of the teacher education program do pre-service physical educators believe best prepared them for their student teaching experiences to influence student outcomes? (c) What obstacles hinder pre-service physical educators' professional development and attitudes through their teacher education program? and (d) What additional resources would pre-service physical educators perceive to be value-added to their physical education teacher education program? Understanding the extent to which pre-service physical educators feel prepared them most for the profession is the central focus of this

research. Additionally, value-added suggestions of the pre-service physical educators are essential to improving experiences within physical education teacher education programs.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, focus groups, and open-ended questionnaires to examine pre-service physical educators' perceptions of their professional preparedness. I transcribed and analyzed participant interviews and focus groups. Data revealed significant statements that identified themes.

Chapter Five provides an overview of the findings related to four research questions. The empirical and theoretical literature presented in Chapter Two is applied to the findings in this study and discussed accordingly. A discussion of the emerged themes is addressed, followed by the implications of the study and limitations of the study, and recommendations for future research are detailed.

Summary of Findings

I strove to understand the mindset of participants by having them describe their physical education teacher education program experiences, including their final field placement and clinical practices. The five themes included: (a) intrinsic motivations and self-efficacy supporting professional growth; (b) curriculum and instruction advancing knowledge and skills; (c) close relationships and support systems enhancing readiness; (d) challenging, time-consuming components influencing preparedness; and (e) additional resources critical to the design and structure of the program.

I created the first research question, "How do the attitudes and beliefs of teaching physical education as pre-service physical educators influence their knowledge and skill development for classroom preparedness?" to understand how the pre-service physical educators' attitudes and beliefs of teaching physical education influenced their knowledge and

skill development for classroom preparedness. Data analysis revealed the central theme: intrinsic motivations and self-efficacy supporting professional growth. Three sub-themes were: (a) confidence and motivation, (b) passion for helping others, and (c) sports-minded background. Throughout the interviews and focus groups, study participants reflected on their intrinsic motivations and self-confidence as influencing their attitudes and beliefs of teaching physical education. They shared that playing sports improved their attitudes and motivated them to develop as professional physical educators. They voiced that social influence enriched their self-efficacy and confidence, ultimately improving their cognitive abilities and social development through their physical education teacher education programs. Many of the participants also noted individual role models as key motivators become professional educators. These role models were influential friends, family members, and previous educators who inspired the participants to help others. Throughout the research study process, data proved that intrinsic motivations to helped the participants to succeed.

The purpose of research question two was to identify the aspects of the physical education teacher education program that the pre-service physical educators perceived best prepared them for their final field placement and clinical practices to influence student outcomes. Research questions two was, “What aspects of the teacher education program do pre-service physical educators believe best prepared them for their student teaching experiences to influence student outcomes?” Analysis of the data showed two themes. The first theme, curriculum and instruction advancing knowledge and skills included four subsequent themes: (a) progression of the program, (b) structured curriculum, (c) improved content skills and knowledge, and (d) clinical experiences. The second theme of close relationships and support systems enhancing readiness consisted of four sub-themes: (a) stakeholders’ influential support, (b) small

populations and of programs and schools, (c) communication with stakeholders, and (d) faculty knowledge.

In general, participants noted higher social engagements and social influences with their peers, advisors, professors, and other stakeholders within their small schools and programs that developed their professional growth and prepared them to teach physical education. Many of the participants began their physical education teacher education programs with knowledge and understanding of movement as a result of their personal interests in various sports and recreation; however, their understanding of teaching physical education and sports escalated through learned behavior to develop into professional physical educators. The pre-service physical educator participants indicated their perceptions of being prepared to teach physical education and pedagogical content and skills, specifically, because of their developmental experiences and relationships as they progressed through their programs. The universities that hosted the participants of this study underwent commonalities in their pedagogical methods to foster the teaching and development of their pre-service physical educators.

Research question three focused on identifying the perceived frustrations and difficulties influencing participants' experiences throughout their physical education teacher education programs. Research question three consisted of "What obstacles hinder pre-service physical educators' professional development and attitudes through their teacher education program?" This revealed the theme: challenging, time-consuming components influencing preparedness. The two sub-themes were (a) excessive and irrelevant coursework, information, and commitment and (b) exam and certification preparation. The participants voiced concerns about their experiences to improve physical education teacher education programs for future educators. Participants shared frustrations related to the abundance of coursework, overload of information,

and time commitments for the preparation of the exams to become certified in physical education. Though participants shared their frustrations and concerns, they expressed high overall satisfaction and gratitude for their experiences and for the stakeholders who developed them through their teacher education programs.

The final research question asked participants for additional information about ways to improve the developmental experiences of physical education teacher education programs. The specific question was, “What additional resources would pre-service physical educators perceive to be value-added to their physical education teacher education program?” The need for additional resources critical to the design and structure of the program emerged as the theme. Six sub-themes were: (a) meaningful, precise information and curriculum, (b) practical lesson planning, (c) modifications to placement and structure of courses in the program, (d) influences of the cooperating teachers, (e) added courses on content and management, and (f) more clinical experiences. The responses to this question revealed specific expectations and requirements pre-service physical educators perceived to be value-added to their physical education teacher education programs. The participants shared information related mostly to the design and structure of their physical education teacher education programs. The pre-service physical educators enjoyed their cohorts with others who shared common interests and with whom they felt comfortable and supported. They all indicated the need for additional curriculum and resources to improve the development and preparedness of pre-service physical educators to help create pathways for success. The participants wanted their faculty to place more effort on making their physical education programs supportive to future students’ preparedness.

Discussion

Discussion Related to the Theoretical Framework

This qualitative phenomenological study captured the pre-service physical educators' perceptions of their professional preparedness that included benefits, challenging components, and value-added suggestions related to their program of study. This study examined pre-service physical educators' professional preparedness through their physical education teacher education programs. Through interviews, focus groups, and open-ended questionnaires, I revealed the lived-experiences of the pre-service physical educator participants, ranging in age from 21-35 years old. The findings of this study strongly entwined with theoretical and empirical studies.

Bandura's (1989) and Vygotsky's (1978) theories provided the theoretical framework for this research study. Both Bandura's (1989) and Vygotsky's (1978) theories underscored the implications related to the perceptions and experiences of the pre-service physical educators regarding their professional preparedness. Further discussions may showcase the correlation between the findings of the data and the theoretical literature.

Bandura's social cognitive theory. Bandura's (1989) social cognitive theory focused on self-efficacy and observed learning behaviors. Bandura (1986) implied that self-efficacy was a cognitive process influenced by self-esteem. The participants in this study underscored their self-efficacy and confidence that resulted in the theme: Intrinsic motivations and self-efficacy supporting their professional growth. Bandura's (2001) theory stressed that people learn through social interactions, observing others, and through relationships. The pre-service physical educator participants revealed that they learned best during clinical teaching experiences involving the observations and interactions of professional educators, students, and peers that influenced their self-efficacy and preparedness.

Self-efficacy was regulated by goals influenced by perceived capabilities (Bandura, 1989). The participants in this study expressed that their experiences throughout their programs empowered them to feel confident in their teaching abilities to reach their goals of becoming a certified physical educator. These goals varied based on the pre-service physical educators' intrinsic motivations and confidence levels, which changed over time as the participants acquired new knowledge and experiences, influencing their self-efficacy and beliefs. This notion associated with the fact that individuals acquired self-beliefs that empower them to have control over their feelings, thoughts, and actions that influenced their behavior (Bandura, 1989). The stakeholders' connection with the participants proved to be influential in preparing and expanding their capabilities of teaching physical education as they progressed through their programs. They shared that the feedback provided by instructors and the participants' self-motivations influenced their self-confidence and self-belief, enabling their performances. They stood in front of students in their classrooms and drew on their learned knowledge and skills to teach lessons successfully.

Bandura's (1989) social cognitive theory guided the framework of this study to question whether pre-service physical educators' self-efficacy and self-esteem influenced behaviors and attitudes through their development of becoming physical educators. Environmental factors also influenced the participants' development and preparedness for the profession. They made emotional connections with stakeholders, the schools, and communities in which they taught. This underscored previous research that indicated environment and social factors of influence, reflecting on Bandura's (1989) social cognitive theory, such as ecological change, government protocols, social pressures, and personal perception and preference, that affected behavioral choices (Font et al., 2016; Lin & Hsu, 2015).

The participants in this study sustained their self-efficacy and beliefs throughout their physical education teacher education programs, which influenced their development and preparedness. The study participants demonstrated the concept that self-efficacy positively influenced cognitive function and attitude and increased successful performance outcomes in a variety of work and academic settings (Bandura, 1989). The participants inadvertently replicated and imitated Bandura's (1989) social cognitive theory as they perceived to be developmentally influenced by their self-efficacy and self-beliefs.

Vygotsky's social development theory. A second theory guiding this study was Vygotsky's (1978) social development theory. Vygotsky's (1978) social development theory examined the matured functioning of humans as it related to social learning and patterns of development. The pre-service physical educators expressed that their relationships highly influenced their preparation for the profession. This influence on the participants revealed the theme of Close relationships and support systems enhancing readiness. The program faculty implemented courses and experiences that entailed constant social influence on their teaching practices and development, underscoring Vygotsky and Kozulin's (2011) focus on relationships and social interactions shaping cognitive development.

Social development accounted for the social and cultural values and goals developed and passed on through social interactions (Vygotsky, 1978). The participants shared experiences within their programs, including those in their classrooms and during their field placement and clinical practices that improved their social development. The study participants shared numerous stories about their exposure to various cultural and social interactions and underscored the importance of relationships with students, especially those with differences. Participants suggested that physical education teacher education programs focused on social development

and cultural awareness to promote multicultural education. Participants also shared that their smaller populated programs promoted social interaction and communications with stakeholders that enhanced their development and preparedness to teach.

Behavior and consciousness influenced human development (Shabani, 2016). The pre-service physical educators voiced that their social interactions and social behaviors influenced their skills and cognition to teach physical education successfully. The pre-service physical educators perceived themselves to be prepared to teach physical education as a result of influence by their relationships and social supports.

Discussion Related to the Literature

Participants in this study underscored the benefits of their physical education teacher education programs perceived to be most influential to their professional preparedness. Student-generated feedback was impeccable to the practices that teacher education programs used to develop their pre-service physical educators for the profession (Brown & Cox, 2014). Participants indicated that their intrinsic motivations and self-efficacy supported their professional growth as they progressed through their physical education teacher education programs. Pre-service educators with strong self-efficacy and confidence proved to be successful when entering the profession (DeMauro & Jennings, 2016). This correlated with Goldhaber et al. (2013) who examined teacher preparation programs and linked teacher quality to teacher commitment and output. The pre-service physical educator participants conveyed motivations for the profession with self-efficacy of teaching physical education. Pre-service physical educator graduates perceived to be prepared to teach physical education because of their self-efficacy developed through their physical education teacher education programs (Brown & Cox, 2014). The intrinsic motivations and self-efficacy of the participants in this study echoed

the assertions of researchers who contended that high levels of self-efficacy influenced the participants' commitment to education, motivation, and success (Chesnut & Burley, 2015; Kelly, 2015; Schunk & Mullen, 2012).

As the participants voiced their perceptions, activities surrounding their passions and interests indicated that participants portrayed themselves as having intrinsic motivations and self-efficacy to teach physical education. Those with self-efficacy described themselves as confident, determined individuals (Schwarzer, 2014; Yuan & Zhang, 2017). Participants of this study conveyed levels of decisiveness and confidence, underscoring research that suggested that one's self-esteem affected decision-making and that individuals with higher self-esteem have self-efficacy (Kernis, 2013; Romijnders et al., 2017). Enjoyment influenced the participants' perceptions of favoring one sport over another. Participants had a background in sports and enjoyed participating in at least one activity and sport over another. Intrinsically motivated behavior influenced enjoyment (Wilkesmann & Schmid, 2014). Many of the participants shared their desires to be role models to young students because of motivations stemming from encounters with previous individuals. Physical educators were vital to student motivation and participation in enjoyable activities (Herold & Waring, 2016). The participants' role models supported the participants to overcome challenging periods. Role models influenced pre-service educators by exhibiting principled, professional behaviors (Brown & Trevino, 2014).

Study participants noted the benefits of the curriculum and instruction advancing their knowledge and skills to teach physical education. Participants' professional development depended on knowing how pre-service educators learned (Ahonen et al., 2015). Participants perceived the sequence and timing of the courses in the program to ready them with ease for their field placement and clinical practices as their responsibilities increased over time. This

correlated with Smith et al. (2013) who contended that pre-service educators perceived to be prepared to teach in the field; nevertheless, as classroom experiences improved their perspectives changed. Legette and McCord (2014) implied that pre-service educators' preparedness advanced more from their field placement and clinical practices. The progression allowed for effective content knowledge and skill development that prepared and readied the participants to teach physical education. To develop a professional educator effectively, knowledge and skill acquisition and informed decision-making required extensive progression to meet students' needs (Maclellan, 2014; Okas et al., 2014; Reupert & Woodcock, 2010). Participants reflected on numerous courses taken, teaching strategies and pedagogy learned, and classroom experiences as they developed to become professional physical educators. Participants' stories aligned with research conducted by Ronfeldt, Schwartz, and Jacob (2014) that implied that pre-service teacher preparation improved achievement through methods-related instruction and practical teaching experiences. The participants spent time between coursework, mostly related to theory and teacher instruction. Participants also experienced various clinical practices, contradicting research that concluded that pre-service physical education programs exposed pre-service physical educators to instruction over practical teaching that limited their development (Hemphill et al., 2015).

The participants perceived close relationships and support systems to be one of the biggest influences on their professional preparedness. The participants in this study shared that their social and professional relationships developed their teaching practices to become professional educators, underscoring research regarding the influence of social interaction and social influence on behavior and relationships (Ariani, 2017; Cai et al., 2016; Loureiro et al., 2017; Molinero et al., 2015). Participants discussed the background and knowledge of their

professors, advisors, and other leaders that positively influenced relationships. The participants expressed periods when professors or advisors reached out personally to help achieve their highest potential. Jones and Idol (2013) implied that when knowledgeable individuals with profound understanding of a skill's purpose teach that skill, the instruction was more meaningful. Faculty of physical education teacher education programs who focused on specific constructs of classroom practices and who constantly challenged self-concept, embraced the research that targeted pedagogical strategy, skills, and attitudes influenced the body and competency (Jamil et al., 2012; Noack et al., 2013). The faculty promoted development and growth throughout programs that involved self-reflection, peer-reflection and feedback. The voices of the participants resonated the contentions of Kabilan (2013) who claimed that peer interactions influenced educators' professional development to enhance teaching and learning practices.

The participants voiced that their programs provided engaging activities that influenced their relationships and development for teaching physical education. Student engagement, influenced by relationships, manipulated student achievement and outcomes (Christenson et al., 2012; Finn & Zimmer, 2012). Support from peers and teachers influenced participants' self-efficacy and confidence to stay committed to their programs. They relied on one another when challenged as they completed coursework of their programs, including clinical experiences. This support correlated the confidence of completing tasks with self-efficacy, self-esteem, and motivations (Downer & Pianta, 2012; Lee & Yuan, 2014; Yuan & Zhang, 2017). According to the shared experiences of the participants, the University of Redbank, the University of Peters, and Ina University, comparable in population, bolstered their readiness and preparedness as the benefits of having small class sizes and open-door policies promoted constant contact with intelligent and helpful professors, advisors, peers, and stakeholders. Previous research suggested

that smaller class sizes promoted higher achievements and opportunity (Jones, 2016). Because of the sizes of their programs, participants shared their experiences as family-like, which inspired social influences on communication, inquiry, and partnerships. Relationships proved to be a major factor to prepare the pre-service physical educators for the profession. Collaboration enriched professional and social communities (Butti, 2016; Zasytkin et al., 2015).

Participants perceived challenges through their physical education teacher education programs; however, provided value-added information to improve their programs to overcome these challenges. The amount of coursework and information emerged as excessive, in which some materialized as irrelevant. This contradicted research that revealed that insufficient information influenced pre-service educators' abilities to meet students' needs (Herold & Waring, 2016). The exam material and certification preparation were also challenging to the participants, as they shared frustrations with the high expectations and pressures to become certified physical educators. Dunn (2016) implied that understanding educator' concerns and resistance helped determine the influences on their emotional responses.

Participants shared that some of the coursework had zero influence on their preparedness to teach physical education. These courses, mostly isolated to sciences classes, such as exercise science and anatomy, delved deeper than needed to teach the constructs of physical education successfully. Participants indicated less interest in these courses as they logistically disconnected with the reality of teaching. Participants shared that when students got injured they immediately sent them to the school nurse instead of medically examining students. When people faced challenges, they experienced insecurities in their performance capabilities (Bandura, 1989). The participants perceived these courses as beneficial before taking them; however, the abundance of information proved to be overwhelming as they wished for courses

related specifically to physical education and sports content and skills. Bandura (2001) implied that individuals who generated activities demonstrated motivation and valued the external influences.

The pre-service physical educators stressed shared challenges to overcome long hours of learning theories and best practices in the classroom and practical teaching full-time during the field placement and clinical practices. The field placement and clinical practices negatively influenced pre-service educators' attitudes and motivations as new knowledge and skills grew to meet the demands of students' needs (Lamberth & Smith, 2016). Time commitments placed copious amounts of stress, anxiety, and exhaustion on the pre-service physical educators that influenced their preparedness. Pre-service educators maintained their commitment; however, unexpected challenges of actual teaching overwhelmingly influenced emotions (Devos et al., 2012). Somewhere in the process, there was a "collapse of ideals and expectations" (Dicke et al., 2015, p. 1).

The participants shared that even though curriculum and instruction proved effective as a whole, they noted the desire for meaningful, precise information and curriculum to enhance their readiness and preparedness to teach physical education. Many shared their concerns regarding practical lesson planning with choice, flexibility, and adaptability in mind. Choices impacted decision-making processes, outcomes, and satisfaction (Reed et al., 2012; Wang & Shukla, 2013). Participants voiced that lesson plans were too black and white, lacking the creativity and openness that the pre-service physical educator participants perceived to be beneficial. While the participants disliked writing verbatim lesson plans because of the impracticalities to real-life teaching experiences, they agreed that planning was an important aspect of teaching. They

shared expectations for better-formatted designs of lesson plans to be practical to the realities of teaching in the 21st century.

The participants in this study described their aspirations for better placements and structure of courses, specifically science courses, being chunked together for efficient growth and development. They voiced that courses covering similar topics should be structured together to foster knowledge and skill. The participants shared the need for similar progressions between various courses within the physical education teacher education program. Becoming an expert in the profession required modifications and adaptations to teaching and learning processes (Okas et al., 2014). The participants requested that the faculty within the physical education department implement the same information and expectations. The participants also shared that similar material should be covered in the elementary and secondary courses with comparable structures. Individuals who reached their goals satisfactorily incorporated choice into their decision-making processes (Wang & Shukla, 2013).

The pre-service physical educators voiced that adaptive and multicultural courses promoted inclusive, real-world experiences. Pre-service educators with inclusive experiences conveyed positive attitudes of working with diverse students (Hodge & Elliott, 2013; Sharma & Sokal, 2015; Taliaferro et al., 2015;). The participants sought strategies for dealing with confidence and self-efficacy about diversity in schools. Opportunities for educators to expose themselves to race, social justice, and equal opportunity in the classroom, fostered robust relationships with students while embracing differences (Davis, 2016; Kabilan, 2013; Parker & Bickmore, 2012). Many participants wished for experiences working with adaptive and diverse students. Those that altered their views on inclusive education to embrace the values of

instruction that targeted inclusion enhanced their self-efficacy and beliefs towards disadvantaged students (Nuttall, 2016; Savolainen et al., 2012).

The participants of this study voiced their concerns to add coursework to improve their development. They suggested having courses on classroom management to advance their preparedness. Application of classroom management in teacher education programs increased teacher confidence and minimize student behaviors (O'Neill & Stephenson, 2012). Classroom management was a serious concern facing schools that influenced teacher satisfaction and burnout rates (Emmer et al., 2013). Participants shared their positive feelings of preparedness as they stepped into their cooperating teachers' classrooms with established rules and policies; however, many participants felt insecure and unprepared to take over the class. This underscored research that suggested that educators needed classroom management development and training to overcome their feelings of anxiety and stress (Freeman et al., 2014). Pre-service educators endured real shock when they entered classrooms, especially when confronted with challenges (Dicke et al., 2015). When educators planned, organized, developed, and predicted classroom experiences effectively, they promoted engaged learning environments (Uysal et al., 2014). It was the faculty's undertaking to instill classroom management techniques effectively as they developed pre-service educators' confidence. Knowledge and informed decision-making influenced classroom management (Maclellan, 2014). Previous research implied that educators' beliefs and attitudes about teaching and learning influenced classroom management practices, particularly individuals entering the profession (Brown & Cox, 2014; Cheng et al., 2014). Some participants also shared their desires to add health courses to the curriculum to advance development and preparedness. The study participants rallied around the idea that health courses related to regular high school course settings; therefore, they wanted exposure to the teaching

and learning practices to meet those students' needs. Knowledge and benefits of health promotion and hazards integrated behaviors, societal supports, and self-efficacy (Stacey et al., 2015). Participants also voiced their aspirations of aligning health standards to national standards.

Cooperating teachers proved to be positively influential in the preparedness of the participants in this study. Many study participants indicated their gratitude towards their cooperating teachers and the learning experiences gained throughout their field placement and clinical practices. Some of the participants voiced the negative experiences of their peers' relationships with their cooperating teachers. Van Ginkel et al. (2016) implied that mentor teachers played important roles in preparing pre-service educators through cooperation and learning. The participants voiced how crucial cooperating teachers were to the learn-by-doing process and transformation to becoming a professional physical educator. This correlated with experiential learning constructs that "merges experience, perception, cognition, and behavior" (McCarthy, 2016, p. 92). The participants shared that they completed their final field placement and clinical practices as full-time teachers, taking over their cooperating teachers' classrooms and duties while continuously assessed and provided with feedback. Reflective thinking influenced educators' development to analyze and evaluate their practices and behaviors (Ghanizadeh, 2017; Liu & Zhang, 2014; Okas et al., 2014). Participants voiced that faculty of physical education teacher education programs needed to implement screening processes to select influential cooperating teachers. Van Ginkel et al. underscored selection processes to acquire and prepare mentor teachers effectively.

Though participants shared their appreciation for their clinical learning experiences, they voiced their desires for more clinical experiences. Participants voiced that some of the best

memories came from their field placement and clinical practices. In fact, zero participants in this study expressed having countless opportunities for clinical learning. Legette (2013) implied that most pre-service educators aspired for more clinical experiences throughout their teacher education programs. Clinical approaches promoted collaboration among stakeholders, specifically between teachers and learners, while providing learner investments in their outcomes (Mansker et al., 2016). The participants shared that the clinical experiences influenced their preparedness, including self-efficacy, to become physical educators through the process of observing others and learn-by-doing where they demonstrated their abilities and performance levels while reflecting on mistakes and misconceptions. Pedagogical knowledge, attitude, and dispositions influenced self-efficacy and preparation (Jamil et al., 2012). The clinical experiences also provided opportunities for relationship building and community involvement. The participants voiced frequent occasions where school and community events and conferences brought stakeholders together in collaborative, fun-filled ways. Many pre-service physical educator participants participated in field days where they witnessed their students enjoying different activities outside of the educational setting with parents and other community members. Social and professional communities shared common interests and fundamentally enriched the collaboration of stakeholders (Butti, 2016; Zasytkin et al., 2015).

The essence of the physical educator participants' perceptions included additional resources critical to the design and structure of physical education teacher education programs, such as meaningful, precise information and curriculum, practical lesson planning, efficient placements and structures of courses within the program, influences of cooperating teachers, added courses related to content and management, and more clinical experiences to positively influence the participants' preparedness. Qualitative and quantitative research in the literature

review of Chapter Two supported the perception that educator preparation and self-efficacy influenced pre-service educator preparation, which guided me to consider the comparable outcomes found within the study of pre-service physical educator perceptions of their professional preparedness. The findings of this qualitative, hermeneutic phenomenological study captured the essence of perceptions of 11 pre-service physical educators' professional preparedness that validated the research within the literature review. The findings were not startling considering other research conducted about pre-service educators underscored similar findings. Darling-Hammond (2016) suggested that the use of systematic approaches to improve the structures and designs related to investigative perspectives that continually improved teaching practices. This study echoed much of the literature that existed regarding pre-service educators' perceptions of their professional preparedness to teach, elucidating the need for faculty of physical education teacher education programs to implement systematic developmental appropriate processes designed to prepare pre-service physical educators for the professional effectively.

Implications

Theoretical

This study provided theoretical, empirical, and practical implications. From a theoretical perspective, the findings confirmed Bandura's (1989) social cognitive theory and Vygotsky's (1978) social development theory. The results of this study provided additional support for the influences of behavior and self-efficacy, as well as the influences of social learning and social influence on a person's development, especially in relation to teacher education programs.

Bandura (1989) affirmed that social development and behavioral choices influenced cognitive

learning. Similarly, Vygotsky (1978) asserted that social influence and interactive environments constructed and manipulated knowledge.

Social theoretical frameworks influenced teacher development and preparedness. Beliefs, attitudes, and behavior played vital roles in the teaching and learning processes (Kokkidou et al., 2014; Schunk & Mullen, 2012). Furthermore, self-efficacy, including motivation and confidence impacted development and performance levels (Bandura, 1989; Dybowski, 2017; Pedota, 2015; Sawitri et al., 2016). Self-efficacy, multifaceted in nature, influenced affective, cognitive, and behavioral constructs (Radel et al., 2016). Self-regulation and choices influencing goals, such as adaptations of self-thoughts and behavioral choices to achieve individual goals, must be considered when exploring self-efficacy and teacher development (Kaviani & Ghaemi, 2014; Kernis, 2013; Reed et al., 2012; Wang & Shukla, 2013).

Empirical

Existing literature emphasized the challenges, including accountability, policy, and effectiveness, of pre-service teacher education programs and their teacher preparation and certification landscapes (Darling-Hammond, 2016; Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2015). Much of the research examined pre-service and in-service teacher efficacy and commitment to teaching related to teacher practices and policy (Chesnut & Burley, 2015; Devos et al., 2012). As shifts from “industrial to a knowledge economy” (p. 9) in America shaped educational practices and policies to evolve global competitiveness, educators should influence policy and accountability, intellectual, and demographic trends to improve educational systems (Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2015). The theoretical and empirical literature merged together, for that the pre-service physical educators shaped their perceptions and formed their teacher development, practices, and expectations.

Practical

This study addressed specific implications recommended for stakeholders of physical education teacher education programs, including program faculty and cooperating teachers.

Program faculty. Faculty of physical education teacher education programs could consider understanding the needs of their students to ensure developmentally appropriate, engaging preparation for the profession (Finn & Zimmer, 2012). Faculty should implement effective program-specific designs and structures to activate best practices that promote social interaction and learning (Bakhurst, 2015; Cai et al., 2016; Toomela, 2015). Since the pre-service physical educators voiced their concerns regarding specific courses and relevant information for exam certification, program faculty should reflect on their protocols to ensure that adjustments are made to meet their students' needs so that pre-service physical educators feel their programs strongly prepare them for the exams and certifications.

Program faculty may be compelled to seek effective ways to promote their physical education programs to increase student interest and opportunity as programs are at risk. As physical education teacher education programs decline, program faculty should implement effective recruiting and communicative strategies and possibly modern makeovers to attract students into their programs (Templin et al., 2014). Participants in this study voiced the desire for larger programs with higher numbers of pre-service physical educators in cohorts. Programs across the country could allow the use of effective communicative tools and technology to promote significant and insignificant developmental techniques to prepare pre-service physical educators (Ertmer et al., 2012; Rodriguez-Arroyo & Loewenstein, 2013). Faculty could implement strategies to promote influential cooperating teachers that would be value-added to their students' development as physical educators (Van Ginkel et al., 2016). Faculty may

consider integrating assessment strategies to ensure that highly qualified and motivated cooperating teachers meritoriously complete their roles, as some participants shared stories from their peers regarding the lack of development and negative influences from poorly motivated cooperating teachers. They should ensure that each cooperating teacher upholds standards, expectations, and outcomes to develop and prepare the pre-service physical educators (Dicke et al., 2015).

Study participants indicated their clinical experiences as sufficient; however, program faculty could consider incorporating additional clinical experiences to influence self-efficacy and preparedness (Mansker et al., 2016). Multicultural education and diverse experiences, including adaptive courses, should be thoroughly integrated into physical education teacher education programs (Davis, 2016; Hemphill et al., 2015). Through the lens of the faculty of the physical education teacher education programs, prospective students must undergo the mentality to work hard and the temperament to complete assignments through teamwork, communication, and open-mindedness, as the participants shared stories and dispositions related to these characteristics that influenced development. The pre-service physical educators could consider that persistence pays off, in that through challenging times to pursue assistance through collaborative efforts from program faculty, peers, and other experts in the profession (Butti, 2016; Zasytkin et al., 2015). The study participants shared the importance of relationships and its influence on their communication and development; therefore, nourishing relations through the participation of the program, school, and community events may advance preparedness for the profession.

Cooperating Teachers. Much could be done to prepare cooperating teachers to effectively develop and prepare pre-service physical educators for the profession. Study

participants voiced that cooperating teachers should understand their roles as influential to the participants' self-efficacy and confidence. Cooperating teachers may increase the pre-service physical educators' exposure to various school experiences and reactive methods to those experiences, including classroom management and disruptive student behaviors, and multicultural and adaptive learning to influence student outcomes, as these proved as challenges for the participants in this study.

Cooperating teachers could understand that even though they may have different philosophies of teaching and various methods to develop and prepare for the profession, they may want to collaborate together and with the physical education teacher education program faculty to ensure standards, expectations, and outcomes are met by the end of the field placement and clinical practice (Dicke et al., 2015). Cooperating teachers may need to deliberate and encourage pre-service physical educators to become vulnerable, quickly "jumping into the role" as learning-by-doing and feedback-driven methods enhanced readiness and preparation (McCarthy, 2016). As the pre-service physical educators enter their field placement and clinical practices, cooperating teachers should have an open-mind and embrace new knowledge and new ideas learned from the pre-service educator that they could implement into their teaching practices that influence their self-efficacy (Smith et al., 2013).

Limitations

This research was a qualitative hermeneutic phenomenological study with several limitations. First, the study occurred in the Southeast and Northeast regions of the United States of America with schools of similar populations. Therefore, this study was not a generalization and representation of all physical education teacher education programs throughout the United States.

Second, lengthy questions often confused the participants as some asked me to rephrase questions that occasionally led to uncertainty and hesitancy in expanding their beliefs and opinions. Study participants occasionally responded with single worded answers where I was obliged to rephrase or condense the wording to ensure participant understanding of the questions asked. Third, the participants, at times, used verbiage with vague significance and meaning and occasionally limited themselves in their abilities to express their thoughts. At other times, the participants used the same or similar responses from previously answered questions to answer new questions asked.

Next, though this research was open to all pre-service physical educators who attended the school sites of this study, eleven participants showed interest. The participants in this study consisted of ten males and one female who were nearly equivalent in age with one outlier. Tom was the outlier with his age being one decade older than most of the participants and he experienced the military and other professions in the real world. The participants' viewpoints and perspectives may not be representative of their entire physical education teacher education programs. Their backgrounds and race may not be typical of the populations in their physical education teacher education programs, schools, and communities. Female participants, in general, either lacked interest in this study or their male counterparts outnumbered them in their physical education teacher education programs.

Next, the size of the participant polling restricted generalizability. This was mostly a result of declining physical education teacher education programs around the United States (Blankenship & Templin, 2016). While physical education teacher education programs still exist in many universities and colleges around the country, physical education teacher education programs, along with general education teacher programs continue to battle survival with smaller

enrollments of students and less interest in the major itself (Blankenship & Templin, 2016). At two locations in this study, the physical education teacher education programs consisted of one or two professors. Also, based on the pre-service physical educator participants' responses, many pre-service physical educators left their physical education teacher education programs altogether; however, the reasons were unknown.

Lastly, the participants had diverse experiences based on where they completed their field placement and clinical practices of their undergraduate degree programs. Each school site differed regarding its student population, demographic, socioeconomic status, school policies, professor educational levels and experiences, teacher supports, student supports, and so on. Sinclair et al., (2006) implied that cooperating teachers lacked the enthusiasm and commitment, influencing their decisions to accept pre-service educators into their classrooms. One reason cooperating teachers chose to mentor pre-service educators was for personal learning and influences on the profession (Van Ginkel et al., 2016). Therefore, cooperating teachers may have varied perceptions of their roles as cooperating teachers to develop and prepare pre-service physical educators.

Recommendations for Future Research

I highly recommend research surrounding the theme: Additional resources critical to the design and structure of the program including meaningful, precise information and curriculum, practical lesson planning, placement and structure of courses in the program, influences of cooperating teachers, added courses on content and management, and more clinical experiences. While the pre-service physical educator participants voiced their challenges and shared value-added suggestions for improvements, it would be noteworthy to specifically examine the faculty's teaching and learning of multicultural education effectiveness. As societal norms

continually change, examining physical education teacher education programs' designs and implementation of pre-service physical educators' effectiveness to teach diverse, multicultural students would prove to be beneficial. I highly recommend examining cooperating teachers and the influential roles they play in the developmental stages of pre-service physical educators. Investigating their inhibitions and expectations of being a cooperating teacher and methods used to advance preparation for the profession would prove vital. Examining whether cooperating teachers follow program guidelines or create their developmental processes for pre-service physical educators and whether cooperating teachers involve themselves in a collaborative learning community or isolate themselves.

I also recommend research involving higher numbers of female participants, diverse ethnicities and cultures, and higher ranges of participant ages. Enlarging the population and setting of the existing research substantiated the current findings of this study. I recommend interviewing new pre-service physical educators and those at the halfway points of physical education teacher education programs. Pre-service physical educators who failed to graduate or left the physical education teacher education program voluntarily or involuntarily would prove beneficial. Interviewing professors and other stakeholders could add value to studies on this topic.

I recommend conducting additional research in other geographical areas of the United States, specifically targeting higher populated universities and physical education teacher education programs. Lastly, I recommend conducting qualitative research expanding to novice and experienced teachers with less than five years in the profession; to examine the perceptions of physical educators' preparedness over time, as exposure to professional experience, development, and relationships change.

Summary

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study captured the essence of the perceptions of 11 pre-service physical educators during the final field placement and clinical practices of their undergraduate degree program where they prepared to become professional educators. Clinical practice in this study was an essential part of physical education teacher education programs to develop the knowledge and cultural competencies needed to teach. This study sought to examine factors of physical education teacher education programs that influenced the pre-service physical educators most. Data analysis channeled five themes and 19 sub-themes. These themes included: (a) intrinsic motivations and self-efficacy supporting professional growth; (b) curriculum and instruction advancing knowledge and skills; (c) close relationships and support systems enhancing readiness; (d) challenging, time-consuming components influencing preparedness; and (e) additional resources critical to the design and structure of the program. Chapter Five included the implications, limitations, and recommendations for future research centered on the findings of this study. This chapter also included the summary of the findings and discussion of the themes and sub-themes. The essence of the pre-service physical educators' perceptions regarding their professional preparedness supported the need for this study as it highlighted their favorable viewpoints and those that helped headway the necessary changes to improve and develop the hindering aspects exposed in this study. Participants were adamant about their preparedness to teach physical education because of their experiences in their physical education teacher education programs. Intrinsic motivations and self-efficacy benefitted attitudes and beliefs to teach physical education. Curriculum and instruction and close relationships and support systems heightened participants' development and preparedness. Challenging, time-consuming components influenced the pre-

service physical educators' preparedness. The pre-service physical educators voiced value-added material critical to overcoming the challenges; however, the participants unanimously shared that they felt prepared to teach physical education.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Shape America's National PE Standards

- Standard 1 - The physically literate individual demonstrates competency in a variety of motor skills and movement patterns.
- Standard 2 - The physically literate individual applies knowledge of concepts, principles, strategies and tactics related to movement and performance.
- Standard 3 - The physically literate individual demonstrates the knowledge and skills to achieve and maintain a health-enhancing level of physical activity and fitness.
- Standard 4 - The physically literate individual exhibits responsible personal and social behavior that respects self and others.
- Standard 5 - The physically literate individual recognizes the value of physical activity for health, enjoyment, challenge, self-expression and/or social interaction.

The Society of Health and Physical Educators (n.d.). National Standards define what a student should know and be able to do as result of a quality physical education program.

States and local school districts across the country use the National Standards to develop or revise existing standards, frameworks and curricula

Appendix B: Liberty University IRB Approval Letter**LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.**
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

March 21, 2016

Geoffrey Hampson

IRB Approval 2418.032116: A Hermeneutic Phenomenological Study of Pre-Service Physical Education Teachers and the Perceptions of Their Preparedness for Their Time in the Profession

Dear Geoffrey,

We are pleased to inform you that your study has been approved by the Liberty IRB. This approval is extended to you for one year from the date provided above with your protocol number. If data collection proceeds past one year, or if you make changes in the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit an appropriate update form to the IRB. The forms for these cases were attached to your approval email.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,


G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
The Graduate School

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Appendix C: Pre-Screening Criteria

- The participant will be from cohorts in a higher education teacher education program where he/she will be completing their field placement and clinical practice, student teaching phase of the program.
- Participant will have encountered different faculty members throughout his/her program.
- Participant will have completed all necessary coursework with passing grade point averages based on the standards of the kinesiology department and university.
- Participant will have completed previous field experience opportunities throughout the program.
- Participant will have passed a background check and been approved for placement in an accredited school located in a rural area near an urban community in the Northeast region of the United States to complete his/her student teaching practicum.
- The participant will be of age, ranging from 20 to 60 years old.
- Both males and females will take part in this study.
- Participant will be working toward his/her teaching certificate with a bachelor's degree in physical education K-12.

Appendix D: Recruitment Letter

Liberty University Online

IRB Study # 2418.032116

Dear Pre-Service Physical Education Teacher,

I am writing to ask you to consider participating in a research study of pre-service physical educators' perceptions of their preparedness for their time in the profession. This effort is in part to fulfill a requirement for my dissertation and doctoral degree.

I have planned a qualitative, hermeneutic phenomenological study about pre-service physical educators' perceptions and you all are the best pre-service physical educators to describe what it is like to be part of a Physical Education Teacher Education program. I am asking for 11 pre-service physical educators, including those in your physical education teacher education program who are currently in their student-teaching phase and in good standings academically or recent graduates to participate in this study. Through my research I am hoping to answer four questions. They are:

1. How do the attitudes and beliefs of teaching physical education as pre-service physical educators influence their knowledge and skill development for classroom preparedness?
2. What aspects of the teacher education program do pre-service physical educators believe best prepared them for their student teaching experiences to influence student outcomes?
3. What obstacles hinder pre-service physical educators' professional development and attitudes through their teacher education program?

4. What additional resources would pre-service physical educators perceive to be value-added to their physical education teacher education program?

The data collection portion of the study is intended to be completed by early to mid-November 2016. I will conduct an in-depth interview that will be approximately 30 minutes in length via WebEx. In addition to the interview, I will ask for your participation in a focus group with the other members of this study that would last approximately 30-45 minutes as well (WebEx). The final stage of the data collection process will be an open-ended questionnaire that will be emailed to you. Each process will take place in one- to two-week intervals.

I will stay in regular contact with your PETE coordinator and/or administrator. I will promptly send you copies of transcripts of our interview session in order that you may confirm that what I have written and recorded is what you intended to convey. I will use pseudonyms in the writing of the phenomenological study in order to protect your privacy. Your privacy and safety will be of utmost concern at all times throughout the data collection, analysis, and summary of information. Thank you for considering participating in this study. An informed consent document with more information will be sent out to you as well, and if you agree to participate in the study, I will ask you to return the signed copy of the informed consent form to me. Thank you for your time and I anticipate hearing from you soon.

Very Sincerely,

Geoffrey Hampson
Doctoral Candidate
Liberty University Online

Appendix E: Consent Form

The Liberty University Institutional
Review Board has approved
this document for use from
3/21/16 to 3/20/17
Protocol # 2418.032116

CONSENT FORM

A Hermeneutic Phenomenological Study of Pre-Service Physical Education Teachers and
the Perceptions of Their Preparedness for Their Time in the Profession.

Geoffrey Hampson
Liberty University
School of Education

You are invited to be in a research study of pre-service physical educators in their clinical practice of the physical education teacher education program to determine the perceptions of their preparedness for their future in the profession of education. You were selected as a possible participant because your PETE program director recommended you as an excellent participant for this study. I ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by Geoffrey Hampson, a doctoral candidate from the School of Education at Liberty University.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to capture the essence of the perceptions of 5-10 pre-service physical education teachers in the clinical practice or student teaching phase of their undergraduate degree program at the University of Redbank (pseudonym) where they are preparing for their time in the profession.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:

- A. An in-depth interview that would last approximately 45 minutes. The interview will be audio recorded using two sources: WebEx program and a backup voice recorder. The interview will be conducted online using WebEx in a quiet, comfortable, and safe atmosphere.
- B. A Focus group that would last approximately 45 minutes. This focus group will take place approximately one to two weeks after the interview. There will be five others in the focus group. The focus group will be conducted online using WebEx in a quiet, comfortable, and safe atmosphere. The focus group will be audio recorded using two sources: WebEx program and a backup voice recorder.
- C. An open-ended questionnaire that will be emailed approximately one to two weeks after the focus group. The questionnaire will be completed within approximately two days of being received. Participants are asked to complete the open-ended questionnaire to the best of their ability and returned on time. If a participant cannot return the questionnaire via email, special accommodations can be made.

The study will be completed over a period of 4-6 weeks.

Risks and Benefits of being in the Study:

Risks in this study are minimal, meaning no more than the participant would encounter in everyday life. Throughout the study, the researcher may be privy to information that triggers the mandatory reporting requirements for child abuse, child neglect, elder abuse or intent to harm self or others. In this case, I must disclose this information as a risk to participants. The benefits to

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Protocol # 2418.032116

participation are minimal. Participants will not receive direct benefits, but there may be a benefit to society.

Compensation:

You will not receive payment or compensation for your participation in this study.

Confidentiality:

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Since I will be recording participants, I will use pseudonyms for confidentiality purposes. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher and his committee chair will have access to the records. All data will be locked up for a minimal of three years after the collection of data. Data will be used for education purposes only. Because focus groups will be used in this study to collect data, I cannot assure that other participants will maintain the subject's confidentiality and privacy.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or [REDACTED]. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

Contacts and Questions:

The researcher conducting this study is Geoffrey Hampson. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at [REDACTED]. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships. Geoffrey's dissertation chair is Dr. Dawn Lucas. You may contact her at [REDACTED].

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd, Carter 134, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

☐ By checking this box, you permit the researcher to audio-record you for purposes of collecting data in this study.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Investigator: _____ Date: _____

Appendix F: Semi-Structured Open-Ended Interview Questions

Pre-service Physical Education Teacher Perceptions

1. Icebreaker question – What is one thing you love to do in your spare time? What is your favorite pastime activity?
2. In what ways do you feel that your personal beliefs, or attitudes, of teaching physical education have affected your knowledge and skill development throughout your physical education teacher education program as you have trained to become a physical education teacher?
3. How has your personal self-efficacy affected your teacher development and experiences in your physical education teacher education program as you have prepared to become a physical education teacher?
4. You have experienced your student teaching and are about to graduate as a pre-service physical education teacher. How have the relationships with your peers, professors, and other physical educator professionals influenced your development to prepare you for teaching physical education?
5. Describe the structure and format of the physical education teacher education program you completed.
6. What, if anything, did you like about the program structure and design? What, if anything, did you dislike about the program structure and design?
7. How has your physical education teacher education program's curriculum and instruction, including your skill and cognitive development, affected your experiences as a pre-service physical education teacher?

8. If you could change a couple of things about the systems in place related to the overall development of the pre-service physical education teacher of your physical education teacher education program, what would you choose and why?
9. In what ways do you feel personally and professionally readied as a pre-service physical educator to pass your subject area competencies to become a certified PE teacher?
10. What areas of the physical education teacher education program do you feel still need further development in relation to preparing PE teachers to achieve the role of highly qualified, certified physical education teacher?
11. What other information about your experiences in your physical education teacher education program would you like to add?

Appendix G: Focus Group Questions

1. Let's go around the table and let everyone know a little about us before we begin.
Tell us your name and where what your favorite sport is.
2. How have your experiences in your physical education teacher education program influenced your overall feeling of becoming a physical education teacher as it relates to your readiness and preparation?
3. Think back over your time in your physical education teacher education program and tell us your fondest, or most enjoyable, memory.
4. Think back over the past year of the things that your physical education teacher education program has done regarding your overall development as a pre-service physical educator to prepare you for success. What went particularly well?
5. What would you say needs improvement?
6. If you were inviting a friend to join your physical education teacher education program, what things would you include in the invitation?
7. Suppose that you were in charge and could make one change that would make the program better. What change would that be?
8. Suppose that you had one minute to talk to the school president about your physical education teacher education program, the topic of today's discussion. What would you say?
9. Of all the things we've discussed in today's session, what to you is the most important?
10. Today's purpose was to focus on your perceptions of your physical education teacher education program as you prepare for teaching physical education. If you could add

one more thing about your physical education teacher education program or today's session what would it be?

Appendix H: Open-Ended Questionnaire

1. In what ways have you provided value-added information pertaining to your physical education teacher education program and its abilities to effectively prepare you and other pre-service physical educators for the profession?
2. Based on your experience, how did the comfort level with your peers and the researcher play in your efforts of fully expressing yourself throughout this study?
3. What aspect of the study, including the interview and the focus group, afforded you the best opportunity to express your personal opinions, viewpoints, and perspectives the most?
4. If you could have added anything else of value related to the research topic, what would you like to add?
5. If you could recommend ideas for further research related to pre-service physical educators' perceptions of their preparedness for their time in education, what would you recommend?