

The challenges of models-based practice in physical education teacher education: A collaborative self-study

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Abstract

There are two purposes of this study. The first is to examine our experiences as beginning teacher educators who taught using models-based practice (using the example of Cooperative Learning). The second is to consider the benefits of using collaborative self-study to foster deep understandings of teacher education practice. The findings highlight the challenges in adapting school teaching practices to the university setting, and the different types of knowledge required to teach about the “hows” and “whys” of a models-based approach. We conclude by acknowledging the benefits of systematic study of practice in helping to unpack the complexities and challenges of teaching about teaching. Our collaborative self-study enabled us to develop insights into the intertwined nature of self and practice, and the personal and professional value of our research leads us to encourage teacher educators to examine and share their challenges and understandings of teaching practice.

Keywords: teacher educators, pre-service teacher education, cooperative learning, practitioner research, pedagogy

41 However, if MBP is to become a sustainable means to pedagogical and curricular
42 reform, examination of the innovation needs to extend beyond school contexts. For example,
43 although research on the challenges of implementing MBP in schools has recently expanded
44 (Dyson & Casey, 2012; Harvey & Jarrett, 2013; Hastie, 2012), little attention has been paid
45 to the challenges of MBP in pre-service teacher education. Researchers at Georgia State
46 University (GSU) recognized this matter and conducted a large-scale study of how physical
47 education teachers learned “about and made decisions to adopt models-based instruction¹”
48 (Gurvitch et al., 2008, p. 454). They considered the influence of the university physical
49 education teacher education (PETE) program at three stages of teachers’ development: pre-
50 service (Gurvitch, Tjeerdsma Blankenship, Metzler, & Lund, 2008; Lund & Veal, 2008;
51 Metzler & McCullick, 2008), induction (Gurvitch & Tjeerdsma Blankenship, 2008), and
52 veteran (Lund, Gurvitch, & Metzler, 2008). Although there was general support for MBP
53 across all three stages of teachers’ development, a key finding concerned the powerful role of
54 PETE faculty as change agents in pre-service and veteran teachers’ decision-making
55 processes to adopt MBP (Metzler, Lund, & Gurvitch, 2008). While these findings hold
56 promise, the voice of the PETE faculty was largely silent. As such, while the GSU
57 researchers claim that their approach was impactful on the pre-service teachers who
58 completed the program, there was not a clear sense of how teacher educators made their
59 impact or the challenges they faced in doing so. When PETE programs have been identified
60 as perpetuating *more of the same* (Kirk, 2010), understanding the processes that lead to
61 successful implementation of MBP in the university setting is crucial. It is our belief that if
62 MBP is to become a preferred approach for physical education teachers, pre-service teacher
63 educators must similarly change how they teach. To this end, we used collaborative self-

¹ Gurvitch and colleagues prefer to use the term models-based instruction, while we prefer models-based practice (MBP). This term has gained increased significance on the field (c.f. Armour’s (2011) book “Sport Pedagogy”). However it is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss this decision in detail and we direct the reader to Haerens et al. (2012) for a thorough discussion of the semantics behind the choice to use certain terms when referring to models in physical education.

64 study to examine the challenges we faced as two teacher educators who taught using MBP in
65 PETE programs.

66 A unique feature of our study is the examination of **physical education** teacher
67 education practices through collaborative self-study. While several teacher educator-
68 researchers have demonstrated the benefits of using collaborative self-study to unpack the
69 complexities involved in teaching teachers (Bullock & Ritter, 2011; Kitchen, Ciuffetelli
70 Parker, & Gallagher, 2008; Petrarca & Bullock, 2013), there are few examples in the physical
71 education literature. The examination of teacher education practices is being increasingly
72 recognized as a powerful way to both understand and communicate the problematic and
73 challenging circumstances of learning to teach (Zeichner, 1999). As Loughran (2013)
74 suggests, teacher education is a key location where deep understandings of pedagogy can be
75 developed, and so the work of teacher educators as inquirers of pedagogy becomes central to
76 the mission of developing a commitment to strong and innovative teaching practice. Teacher
77 educators **thus** have a responsibility to provide a glimpse inside their own teaching,
78 articulating the reasoning and assumptions behind the decisions they make while teaching,
79 thus making teaching a site of inquiry (Loughran, 2007). However, as Berry (2007) and
80 Bullock (2009) have shown, the complex nature of teaching sometimes means that teacher
81 educators are challenged or frustrated by trying to understand and explain their practice.
82 Although this task may prove difficult, it is worth undertaking because when pre-service
83 teachers are provided with access to thoughts and knowledge about problems of practice,
84 they are more likely to develop deeper understandings of pedagogy and teaching (Grossman
85 & McDonald, 2008).

86 **Theoretical Framework**

87 **Models-based practice.** The work of Metzler (2011) has been central to articulating a
88 practical and theoretical understanding of models in physical education. Metzler's definition

89 of a “model” includes three aspects: (a) the foundations, (b) teaching and learning features,
90 and (c) implementation needs. Metzler (2011) identified eight models that have been used in
91 physical education: Cooperative Learning (CL) (Dyson & Casey, 2012; Dyson, Linehan, &
92 Hastie, 2010), Sport Education (SE) (Siedentop, 1994), Teaching Games for Understanding
93 (TGfU) (Bunker & Thorpe, 1982), Direct Instruction, Personal and Social Responsibility
94 (TPSR) (Hellison, 2011), Peer Teaching, Inquiry Teaching, and the Personalized System of
95 Instruction. We advocate and apply a multi-model approach in our respective PETE
96 programs. For example, Tim regularly teaches about and through CL, TGfU, and TPSR while
97 Ashley uses CL, SE, and TGfU; however, providing a coherent analysis of the challenges of
98 implementing multiple models is beyond the scope of this paper. We will therefore use
99 Metzler’s defining aspects to talk generally about models but make specific reference to CL
100 as an analytic example. We chose CL for several reasons: (a) its ability to be implemented in
101 the classroom and gymnasium, (b) despite its existence for more than 30 years there are
102 relatively few examples of the use of CL in physical education when compared with some
103 other models (Dyson & Casey, 2012), and (c) it is a model that we have both had experience
104 implementing in our programs and practice.

105 *Foundations of a pedagogical model.* Metzler (2011) argued that each model is based
106 on learning theory, providing the philosophy and rationale for its use and offering concrete
107 examples of the most effective conditions in which it might be used. For example, CL
108 emerged in the 1920s following research into the effects of cooperation on performance and
109 drawing from studies in social relationships, group dynamics, learning, and instruction (Antil,
110 Jenkins, Wayne, & Vadasy, 1998). In the 1970s cooperation was used as a pedagogical
111 foundation for learning, focusing on two-way processes in which the outputs of each
112 participant become inputs for their peers in an exchange of ideas (Bishop & Mahajan, 2005).

113 ***Teaching and learning features.*** Stemming from each model’s theoretical base,
114 Metzler held that there are several features that separate each model from the others. This
115 includes a “set of managerial plans, decisions, operations, learning activities, and
116 assessments”, and descriptions of the “roles and responsibilities for the teacher and students”
117 (Metzler, 2011, p. 23). For example, in CL these features include positive interdependence,
118 individual accountability, face-to-face interaction, small group skills, and group processing
119 (Dyson & Casey, 2012; Johnson & Johnson, 2009). In CL interdependence between teacher-
120 student and student-student is used to deliberately challenge traditional notions around who
121 should be in charge of classroom dialogue. Furthermore, small, structured, heterogeneous
122 groups are used to support learning in the affective, cognitive, and psychomotor domains
123 (Dyson & Casey, 2012). Other decisions around content selection, managerial control, task
124 presentation, engagement patterns, instructional interactions, pacing, and task progression are
125 also key parts of teaching and learning using models (Metzler, 2011).

126 ***Implementation needs and modifications.*** Each model represents a “plan of action”
127 that, when faithfully implemented, leads to achievement of the desired learning outcomes.
128 Teachers are expected to understand the different knowledge, skills, and abilities required of
129 learners so a model’s full potential can be reached. As with any pedagogical approach,
130 teachers must understand the contextual requirements in which the model will be used (i.e.
131 student characteristics, facilities, equipment, time, and learning materials) and modify their
132 implementation to fit their students’ needs (Metzler, 2011). In CL, a key pedagogical
133 implication is that the role of the teacher and student(s) needs to be changed with the teacher
134 acting as facilitator. Furthermore, features such as face-to-face interaction or small group
135 skills need to be learnt and this takes time; however, it is the combination of features of the
136 model, modifications, and contextual requirements that help define the model and its learning
137 outcomes.

162 stated that their “collaborative self-study became not only a source of critical friendship, but
163 also a way for us to name, interpret, and critique our pedagogical approaches” (p. 13).

164 In undertaking our inquiry we have sought to deliberately align our work with
165 LaBoskey’s (2004) five characteristics of self-study. Specifically, our design:

166 (a) was self-initiated and self-focused. Based on informal conversations we had with
167 each other about our respective teacher education practice, we identified specific and
168 salient aspects that provided us with challenging moments, dilemmas, and
169 frustrations. A common theme for both of us was the challenges we faced teaching
170 teachers about and through MBP;

171 (b) was improvement-aimed. We conducted the inquiry with the intention of
172 improving our own understanding and enactment of MBP. Further, through sharing
173 our experiences, understandings, and insights that we gained through the collaborative
174 self-study, we hoped that others could draw upon that information to improve their
175 own practice;

176 (c) was interactive in terms of its process. We used each other’s experiences,
177 questions, challenges, and analyses to better understand our own. For example, upon
178 reading passages from Ashley’s reflective diaries, Tim was often stimulated to apply
179 what he had read and interpreted from Ashley’s experience to “map onto” his own
180 reflections, gaining new and previously unforeseen insights (and vice versa). Also, we
181 both acted as independent observers of each other’s initial reflections and analyses;

182 (d) used multiple qualitative methods. As described later in the methods section, we
183 gathered and analyzed qualitative data from reflective diaries and journals, field notes,
184 and lesson plans;

185 (e) provides exemplar-based validation. That is, we rely on others in our community
186 of teachers and teacher educators to determine whether our findings are trustworthy
187 and meaningful.

188 In the following sections we describe the respective contexts in which our collaborative self-
189 study was conducted, and outline the methods we used to gather and analyze data.

190 **Context of the Study**

191 For readers to engage with our insights we have made efforts to highlight specific
192 details about the contextual features in which we taught and conducted our inquiry
193 (Kelchtermans & Hamilton, 2004). Both authors teach in university-based pre-service PETE
194 programs, having had prior experience as secondary school physical education teachers. Tim
195 taught in schools for five years and during his PhD taught physical education methods to
196 primary generalists in a pre-service teacher education program. At the time of writing he was
197 in his second year teaching pre-service physical education teachers at Memorial University of
198 Newfoundland in Canada. Ashley taught for fifteen years in schools **and at the time of**
199 **writing was** in his fifth year at the University of Bedfordshire in the United Kingdom.

200 Examining our socializing experiences as teachers who became teacher educators (Casey &
201 Fletcher, 2012) provided us with important insights about how we identified and addressed
202 the different challenges of teaching in school and pre-service contexts. Like others who have
203 studied their own transitional experiences into teacher education (e.g., Bullock, 2009), we
204 find the different pedagogical requirements of teaching teachers challenging and complex and
205 believe that our school teaching experiences alone could not have prepared us to perform the
206 role effectively. Further, we continue to be challenged by adjusting (or indeed abandoning)
207 our school-based pedagogies to suit the needs of prospective teachers, rather than of children
208 and youth. These enduring dilemmas provide a necessary impetus for us to continue to study
209 our practice in order to improve how we go about teaching teachers.

210 Drawing on the work of Hastie and Casey (in review), we feel it necessary to
211 articulate the extent to which we considered the fidelity of our teaching practices to the CL
212 model. We do this to show how our teaching practices were (or were not) congruent with
213 benchmarks described in the CL model and not simply our own versions of CL. Hastie and
214 Casey (in review) identified the following features as being salient in any description of
215 researchers' use of pedagogical models: (a) rich description of the curricular elements of the
216 unit, (b) a detailed validation of the model implementation, and (c) a detailed description of
217 the program context (including previous experiences of the teacher and students with the
218 model or with models-based practice).

219 **Unit descriptions.** The unit that provided the context for Tim's data was a double-
220 credit elementary physical education curriculum and methods course carried out during a 13-
221 week term. There were 22 students in the class, all of whom were in their third or fourth year
222 of an undergraduate degree in physical education. The first six weeks of the course involved
223 intensive campus-based coursework where students learned about physical education content
224 and pedagogies. Thematic topics addressed throughout the term included: becoming a
225 teacher, classroom community and organization, program planning, developing a vision for
226 teaching, assessment, and teaching inclusively. In each of the first six weeks, students
227 attended two 1-hour classes in a "traditional" classroom environment (that is, a lecture-type
228 class) and two 2-hour classes in the gymnasium. CL was the main approach through which
229 the thematic units were taught in the classroom and gymnasium. The second seven weeks
230 was a blend of on-campus coursework (maintaining the two 1-hour classes) and a supervised
231 field experience, where students spent three mornings a week in a primary/elementary school
232 (K-6) with a specialist physical education teacher. Students were paired with peers for their
233 placements and encouraged to collaborate, team-teach, share planning, reflect together, and
234 so on.

235 For Ashley, the unit of significance for the incidences reported in this study was
236 taught to a group of 25 undergraduate students in their second year of a four-year PETE
237 program. The track and field component of the unit ran for twelve weeks and was delivered
238 practically (that is, in a gymnasium or on playing fields) in weekly two-hour sessions. To
239 ensure model fidelity Ashley used materials that had been previously validated (see Casey,
240 Dyson, & Campbell, 2009) as (a) appropriate for the 11-14 year old students that PETE
241 students were expected to teach, and (b) prioritizing the five elements of CL.

242 **Validation of model implementation.** To consider the extent to which our teacher
243 education practice reflected the benchmarks of CL, we used Metzler's (2011)
244 recommendations both as we developed our respective units *and* after we had taught the
245 units. As such we conducted document analysis on our unit and lesson plans to understand
246 the extent to which we were being faithful to the features of CL. We analyzed each of our
247 lesson plans to consider the extent to which we applied the following essential elements:
248 positive interdependence among student; face-to-face interaction; individual accountability;
249 interpersonal and small group skills, and; group processing (Metzler, 2011).

250 Ashley has devoted considerable time and energy (both in his scholarship and
251 teaching) to understanding the extent to which his teaching faithfully aligns with the tenets of
252 the CL model, both in this study and elsewhere (*cf.* Casey, 2013; Casey, et al., 2009; Dyson
253 & Casey, 2012). Analysis of Ashley's lesson plans showed a more complete faithfulness to
254 the essential elements of CL than Tim's. As we show in the results of this study, it was Tim's
255 inexperience with using CL in schools and universities that may partially explain why the
256 version of CL that he employed might fit somewhere between what Curtner-Smith, Hastie,
257 and Kinchin (2008) described as "full" and "watered down" versions of model
258 implementation. For example, he regularly mixed small group membership rather than
259 maintaining the same groups throughout a unit or task.

260 **Program context.** An important contextual feature of this study is the extent and
261 nature of our respective school and university teaching experiences using CL. While Tim had
262 not implemented CL (or indeed any other pedagogical model) as a secondary teacher, Ashley
263 examined his use of MBP, including CL, in his teaching over a seven-year period for his
264 PhD. For Ashley, this knowledge and experience of using CL was drawn upon extensively to
265 inform his teacher education practice. This contrasted with Tim's more limited school
266 teaching experience where he did not use MBP and implemented practice that might be
267 described as traditional (for example, short units consisting of primarily team sports using
268 direct instruction). Although he had a basic awareness of pedagogical models, Tim had never
269 seen a colleague use MBP, nor did he know where to begin if he ever wanted to implement
270 this in his own program. It was not until he took courses during his PhD that he came to
271 realize the potential of MBP and began to use the TPSR and TGfU models in a pre-service
272 program. When he took on a faculty position in 2011, he was interested in learning more
273 about and teaching through CL. As a result, Tim had no practical experience of CL or any
274 other models to draw from, and he could only imagine how this approach to teaching might
275 work in either schools or universities.

276 In the units of work that provide the main source of data gathering and analysis for
277 this study, neither Tim nor his students had any experience with CL. This was a significant
278 point for Tim, providing much of the focus for the challenges he faced. Similarly, while
279 Ashley had over a decade of experience of using CL, his students had no experience with the
280 model. Therefore, while he did not face the need to learn to teach in a new way (as Tim had
281 to do), he was required to teach his students not only about track and field, but also about CL.

282 **Data Sources and Analysis**

283 We drew from three qualitative data sources, relying mostly upon open-ended
284 reflective diaries and fieldnotes. As we have outlined in previous collaborative self-studies

285 that we have conducted together (Casey and Fletcher, 2012) our views of reflective practice
286 and the purposes of reflecting draw heavily from Schön's (1983) concepts of reflecting-on-
287 action and in-action. According to Russell (2005), reflection-on-action typically involves
288 thinking back on previous events, while reflection-in-action involves thinking about how an
289 unexpected event in teaching led to a reframing of practice, and consequently, a new view or
290 perspective. Ashley's reflective diaries have been written daily since 5th September 2009 (his
291 first day in teacher education), providing a written narrative of his experiences working in the
292 university environment. His diaries have been written as personal reflections on-action with
293 the intent of aiding Ashley in better understanding how the contextual elements of high
294 school and university settings have influenced his teaching. Tim's written reflections have
295 had a slightly different focus to Ashley and are certainly logged less frequently: he has
296 compiled reflections from every PETE class he has taught since 2008. Although Tim's
297 reflections have been largely open-ended he has tended to focus on the extent to which he
298 was able to: identify instances where his teaching visions, planning, and actions have
299 connected coherently (or seemed disconnected); make explicit his tacit knowledge of
300 teaching to student teachers, and identify challenges and ways forward for future practice.

301 Our reflective diaries were supplemented by fieldnotes written during teaching or
302 planning PETE classes. Cumulatively, there were over 1500 diary entries containing more
303 than 300 000 words. Elsewhere (Casey & Fletcher, 2012), we have outlined how we used our
304 reflective diaries and fieldnotes as "literature of place" (Kelly, 2005) to situate ourselves back
305 at the time of our written experiences. Similarly, Ham and Kane (2004) refer to such data as
306 an archive "that serves as an ongoing stimulus to even more data" (p. 114). Thus, re-reading
307 our reflections (at times several years after they were written) as artifacts provided a third
308 data source, giving us new perspectives and insights into our use of pedagogical models in
309 PETE.

310 Analysis involved four steps. First, we read all components of our own data set
311 independently and using content analysis and constant comparison (Corbin & Strauss, 2008)
312 recorded instances where critical incidents, challenges, contradictions, and “aha moments” in
313 our practices were found. We used an inductive approach to analyzing the data where we let
314 our identification of concepts, themes, and ideas be guided by the extent to which our
315 research question/purpose was evident, rather than by pre-existing theories. Second, with our
316 independently coded data, we shared the instances we had identified that we individually felt
317 represented pressing challenges in teaching about and through MBP. Each example was
318 offered, and then questioned and critiqued by the other author in an attempt to tease out key
319 elements of the problem related to teaching practice. By engaging in this step we attempted to
320 act as external analysts of each other’s reflections, seeking clarity by asking questions and
321 probing for deeper meaning where appropriate. We did this as a way of holding each other
322 accountable for interpreting the data to ensure some sense of trustworthiness. As teacher
323 educators in physical education we felt we were able to relate to and find individual meaning
324 from the scenarios each other has described, validating one another’s analyses (LaBoskey,
325 2004). Third, once we identified examples that both of us found meaningful, insightful, or
326 that highlighted a particularly problematic aspect of practice, we collated those examples into
327 themes. We sought to identify themes that we felt would act as exemplars (LaBoskey, 2004)
328 or “ring true” for readers situated in PETE contexts. In some instances data were moved
329 based on discussion until agreement was reached. We repeated this step until we were
330 satisfied that analysis of the data had reached some level of theoretical saturation (Corbin &
331 Strauss, 2008). Finally, Ashley engaged in member checking with a colleague who was
332 external to the research. Ashley did this because a specific interaction that took place with
333 Kieran (pseudonym) provided a salient moment in the analysis that highlighted a discrepancy

334 between theoretical and practical understandings of implementing CL. In this way, Ashley
335 wanted to ensure that his interpretation of the events “meshed” with Kieran’s interpretation.

336 **Results**

337 Soon after we began our roles as teacher educators, we both experienced disruptions of our
338 respective school practices and were quick to learn that what worked when teaching
339 secondary school students would not necessarily work in pre-service teacher education. Thus,
340 one of the first tensions we had to address involved the crucial element of context and its role
341 in shaping our teaching decisions and practices.

342 **In transition: Opportunities gained and lost**

343 Tim found teaching in a new context to be liberating and he eschewed many of the
344 outdated, teacher-centered approaches he had come to realize had dominated his practice. He
345 committed to adopting a fresh approach to teaching in PETE in the form of MBP. While this
346 approach might be considered research-informed, innovative and cutting edge, it should also
347 be considered new from the practitioner’s perspective. For Tim this meant it was grounded in
348 theory but not yet in practice. He liked the ideas of MBP but initially could not draw from
349 experience to understand how those ideas might “look, sound, and feel” in a gymnasium with
350 pre-service teachers, let alone with school students. In contrast, Ashley’s approach was old: it
351 had been developed over many years of intensive planning and research, was couched in
352 MBP, and it formed the heart of an innovative school practice that had garnered him
353 accolades and admiration. Yet – as he would quickly learn – it would have to be thought
354 about in an entirely different way when working with a different group of learners with
355 different needs.

356 A major difference between our early experiences using MBP in pre-service settings
357 was therefore based on the extent of our theoretical and practical understandings of the
358 challenges of using MBP. We both felt we were using innovative practice but it is how we

359 handled the challenges we faced in doing so that serves to differentiate our experiences. For
360 example, in adopting MBP in school settings Ashley had already taken the risks necessary to
361 have his innovative practice challenged, recognized and validated, both personally and
362 publicly. This certainly provided confidence in how he faced and overcame the challenges of
363 teaching using MBP in the pre-service program. However, for Tim, the anxiety, risk, and fear
364 of the unknown posed significant challenges to the likelihood that he would persevere with
365 MBP. Both Ashley and Tim were therefore vulnerable in using MBP in the pre-service
366 context but for different reasons: Ashley had expectations attached to his implementation of
367 MBP, and both he and his colleagues held those expectations. In contrast, Tim had few
368 expectations of his implementation of MBP; yet, fear of appearing to be incompetent to
369 students and a constant voice asking: “Am I doing this right?” were significant features of his
370 initial foray into MBP.

371 **Juggling the “hows” and “whys” of teaching**

372 Loughran (2006) explains that for pre-service teachers to develop complex
373 understandings of teaching practice it is crucial that the tacit knowledge of teaching be made
374 explicit by teacher educators in order to articulate the “why” of practice and not just to
375 demonstrate the “how”. Importantly, we realized that if we intended to provide strong
376 learning experiences for our students we had to move beyond simply modeling teaching of
377 MBP by having them experience a model as learners. However, this was a challenging
378 prospect because in our school practice there was no need or expectation from students or
379 colleagues to explain the pedagogical reasoning behind our actions; we simply implemented
380 what we felt was appropriate for the outcomes we wanted our students to achieve. We also
381 understood that we could not be satisfied with having pre-service teachers “merely reading or
382 being told about the model during classroom-based lectures” (Curtner-Smith, et al., 2008, p.
383 98) and had to articulate to students *how* we were teaching using MBP while we also taught

384 *about* MBP. This involved explicitly describing how each of our teaching actions aligned, for
385 example, with CL, and explaining *why* we were doing things as we taught. This start-stop-
386 start feeling conflicted with much of what we believed reflected strong practice in schools,
387 where we relied upon a sense of flow and were conscious of transitions within and between
388 classrooms. For example, Tim wrote:

389 Coming away from today’s class I am left feeling a tension between articulating
390 the reasons behind my teaching and disrupting the flow of my lessons. I tried to
391 justify this to myself by acknowledging that teaching is messy and often veers off
392 the intended path. This led me to wonder if, in order to be most effective, whether
393 articulating reasons behind teaching decisions needs to be quite tightly scripted
394 and anticipated if it is to seem as a coherent lesson.

395 Attempting to strike a balance between articulating and modeling the “hows” and
396 “whys” of teaching required significant intellectual and practical demands in terms of: (a)
397 teaching about the principles of MBP, (b) actually teaching and demonstrating how to teach
398 using MBP, and (c) unpacking reasons why we made the pedagogical decisions we did *in*
399 *situ*. The following passage from Ashley’s reflective diary shows the difficulties he faced in
400 teaching about and through CL:

401 What do I want student teachers to learn about [CL]? Continuing to look at the
402 prior learning disaster², what can I glean from it? I had a difficult group whose
403 prior learning in [track and field] had generally been poor. I wanted to showcase
404 an alternative approach but I didn’t consider that the session, as planned, was
405 asking too much of both the students and me. Furthermore, I didn’t take into
406 account my prior learning about CL. I should really have known that there was
407 too much to do.

² Caused by trying to fit too much practical content into a 2-hour session.

408 In Ashley's terms, he felt that he was able to "show-case" CL by modeling the approach,
409 using small groups and asking students to learn with, by, and for one another. However, in
410 order to move beyond the "disaster" of the previous session, he realized the need to be more
411 explicit in teaching *about* the model as he taught through it, explaining the "hows" and
412 "whys" as he was teaching.

413 Alternatively, the tensions Tim faced hinged upon the nature of his own learning
414 about, and implementation of, CL which was driven by theory rather than practice. Initially
415 he felt he had a fairly strong grasp of the "whys" of CL but was less sure about the "hows".
416 While he used the opportunity for teaching renewal to reframe his practice he found more
417 problems than solutions in adjusting to a new approach. Not only was he teaching different
418 types of learners in a new setting, he was attempting to implement an innovative approach
419 without the benefits of observing experienced, skilled teachers use CL. As such, his decisions
420 and thoughts about CL (and MBP more broadly) were entirely researcher-centered –
421 assumptions about what worked, what didn't, and the reasons why were made purely from
422 his own reading. Even though he was able to draw from the theoretical guidelines of CL,
423 when it came to their implementation he was constantly questioning his actions due to doubts
424 about whether he was staying true to the model's principles. While he was initially positive
425 about his first few classes, Tim wrote: "I wish I had come across [MBP] sooner so that I
426 could see how it worked in [my secondary classes], rather than relying on written research
427 done by other teachers".

428 While Ashley had the benefit of understanding CL from both theoretical and practical
429 perspectives his teacher educator colleagues had experiences similar to Tim, with few having
430 any practical experience of CL to draw from. This meant that Ashley not only faced the
431 challenge of articulating "how and why" to pre-service teachers but also to his colleagues.
432 Many of the classes he taught involved a team approach where several faculty members were

433 responsible for teaching individual units that made up a parent course. While his colleagues
434 were responsive to his suggestions that they introduce CL into the teacher education
435 curriculum as a conceptual framework, he had not fully anticipated the disparity in his
436 colleagues' knowledge and practical understandings. For example, Kieran, a colleague of
437 Ashley's, had an opportunity to use CL for the first time and, like Tim (in another time and
438 place) set about learning the theory behind the model from a widely used text. But when it
439 came to co-planning their lessons, Kieran's reliance on the theoretical aspects of teaching
440 using CL led to a disparity in understanding between he and Ashley:

441 Part of the problem is that Kieran does the thinking first, and this is where we
442 diverge. His expertise is in [track and field] while mine is in CL yet we are
443 both trying to fit that into each other's expertise. Kieran has the first call [as unit
444 leader], however, and I am struggling to fit his model of athletics [as a sub-elite
445 athlete] into his perception of CL [as an academic].

446 As the situation transpired, the value of Ashley's experience using CL in secondary
447 teaching still held. However, it led him to realize that simply transferring knowledge of CL
448 from school practice into the university setting was not tenable. In the past, he had been
449 solely responsible for planning and teaching his own classes and was somewhat free to do so
450 in whatever way he liked, as long as the curriculum outcomes were being met. He knew the
451 “hows” and “whys” of teaching using MBP but he had never had to articulate this knowledge
452 to students or peers. Now he had to work with colleagues to ensure that, in each of the
453 individual units, pre-service teachers were not only observing a coherent set of CL practices
454 but also that they heard coherent messages *about* CL. The combination of teaching teachers
455 and teaching teacher educators about MBP was difficult; by his own admission Ashley was a
456 little intimidated by his initial university teaching experiences:

457 The second [lesson] was just ... well ... flat. The students weren't great, the
458 subject was out of my comfort zone but the pedagogy was just not where I
459 wanted it to be. I guess that this is the problem with teaching someone else's
460 lessons.

461 **The highs and lows of teaching in a new context**

462 Ashley found that the contextual differences in teaching using MBP in school and
463 university were significant aspects in shaping the doubts he had about his teaching. Even
464 though the students he taught in school mostly valued their experiences of MBP (Casey,
465 2013; Casey, et al., 2009), it was clear that the pre-service teachers whom he was now
466 teaching had different learning priorities. For example, as is so often reported in teacher
467 education research, students took on a “ ‘hunter-gatherer’ approach to accumulating teaching
468 procedures” (Loughran, 2006, p. 45) and started to complain about the lack of practical “tips
469 and tricks” that they were learning. As Ashley reflected, they wanted more “drills [...] that
470 they can replicate or adopt wholesale in their teaching” or to learn “more about behavior
471 management [and] timings in a lesson”.

472 These comments show a disconnection between the pedagogical aspirations of the
473 teacher educators (including Ashley) and the pre-service teachers, highlighting an enduring
474 problem at the root of the theory-practice divide in teacher education (Korthagen & Kessels,
475 1999). However, rather than being confident that MBP was a positive direction for new
476 teachers' practice and physical education as a subject, Ashley sometimes gave in to students'
477 expectations around teaching. Due to the new context in which he was working, he
478 approached his teaching more cautiously and put aside his previous innovative practices,
479 seeking instead to match the practice stereotypes he remembered from his own undergraduate
480 experience.

481 For Ashley finding solutions to this challenge proved difficult, involving negotiations
482 around the teacher educators' and pre-service teachers' respective expectations. Further, there
483 was an acknowledgement from both parties that it would take time to arrive at a mutually
484 agreed upon pedagogical direction. To echo Lundgren (1983), the difference for Ashley was
485 between the hope and the happening.

486 Some [students] hadn't read the chapter but not many. What was more
487 significant was the number who just didn't get it. It was too difficult or maybe
488 too clever, or maybe it was them who just weren't clever enough. Wait on. I'm
489 the teacher here. It's not about learning it wrong, but about teaching it right. So
490 it's my fault. Well, our fault [including other colleagues]. Confusion reigns
491 because we got it wrong. Then they [students] tried to explain, but they
492 couldn't; they didn't understand. Then I tried to explain, but to be honest I was
493 only a couple of steps ahead of them. I'd found the reading a challenge too, but
494 I was better placed to re-consider the words and compare them to a deeper
495 understanding. We moved the idea forwards, but it wasn't an easy journey as
496 we had many misunderstandings to overcome and repair.

497 In contrast, although doubt still loomed large in Tim's implementation of CL, he felt
498 somewhat more comfortable in the murkiness. This may be partially due to the expectations
499 and experiences of the pre-service elementary generalist teachers he taught when he first
500 experimented with MBP through TPSR and TGfU. This is significant because, unlike
501 prospective specialist physical education teachers, many were unsatisfied with their prior
502 learning in physical education and were keen to learn about new approaches (Fletcher, 2012).
503 So in the initial stages of his implementing MBP it was necessary for Tim to engage in a lot
504 of reading about the models and planning for his classes, he found he was learning about
505 content and pedagogy along with his students *as he was teaching*. Those students came to the

506 PETE setting with few prior assumptions about how MBP would “look” and play out. As his
507 confidence and willingness to adopt MBP grew, Tim used his own background and
508 experiences as an example to challenge pre-service teachers to think of themselves as learners
509 while teaching:

510 I think I am one of those people that Siedentop (2002) might have thought of as
511 “unskilled” when it comes to content knowledge. I am hoping to draw on
512 students’ content knowledge quite a lot then and I hope that I can keep this
513 commitment. It might also be a good way to model learning from students, i.e.,
514 disrupting the “teacher as expert” point of view.

515 Despite the uncertainties Tim felt in his new approach, he found that sharing his doubts in his
516 knowledge of teaching using MBP had led him to become more intentional in the ways he
517 unpacked the “hows” and “whys” of teaching with his students. In his third year of using
518 MBP Tim found that he was being more consistent in:

519 ...stopping and thinking about what and why I am doing things, and inviting
520 students to stop and think about their learning and the effectiveness of [MBP].
521 While I have felt vulnerable in stopping and inviting critique (and many times it
522 has been forthcoming), I feel that... I am thinking more deliberately about my
523 actions.

524 These examples provide evidence that is contrary to what we had expected would lead
525 to a commitment to teach using MBP in pre-service teacher education. Specifically, because
526 Ashley had extensive experience and was committed to using MBP in schools, it would have
527 been fair to assume that he would have similarly committed to adopting the practice in pre-
528 service contexts. However, the different role that Ashley now assumed and the different
529 institutional context in which he worked led him to doubt whether innovative practice carried
530 the same currency in the university as it did in schools – at least with the students whom he

531 was teaching. Further, because Tim had no experience implementing MBP in schools, it was
532 perhaps more likely that he would have abandoned MBP in the face of barriers. This is
533 because he was faced with the demands of learning about a completely new approach to
534 teaching *while* simultaneously teaching about that new type of teaching.

535 **Discussion**

536 The purposes of our paper were (a) to examine the challenges we faced in using MBP in our
537 respective programs, and (b) to highlight how collaborative self-study could be used to
538 identify and understand those challenges. Although we used the example of CL as an analytic
539 case in this study, our experiences teaching about and through other models such as TGfU or
540 Sport Education reveal similar challenges and uncertainties. We concurred with the views of
541 some in physical education that MBP is an approach through which radical reform might
542 occur (Kirk, 2013), however, we felt that a crucial element of reform was missing.
543 Specifically, for prospective teachers to learn about the problematic and complex nature of
544 innovative teaching practice (in the form of MBP), those charged with the task of teaching
545 teachers should understand the problematic and complex nature of adopting innovative
546 practice themselves. Yet, prior to our research little was known about the challenges that
547 physical education teacher educators themselves face in learning about and implementing
548 MBP in university programs: **in essence**, the *who* (Kelchtermans, 2009) was missing from
549 any discussions of MBP in the context of PETE. Although our findings are highly personal
550 and contextual, our collaborative self-study provides a first step toward addressing this gap.
551 We hope that sharing our vulnerabilities and personal challenges encourages others in PETE
552 to similarly share their struggles and successes in adopting innovative pedagogical practice.
553 If, as Zeichner (1999) suggests, teacher educators are uniquely placed to understand, analyze,
554 and overcome the challenges of teacher education, such sharing is imperative.

555 Despite the challenges we faced, we remained committed to adopting MBP
556 throughout our first years of university teaching. Metzler's (2011) claims that implementing
557 MBP is hard work for schoolteachers resonated with our experiences teaching in universities.
558 Despite our diverse experiences learning about and teaching using MBP, through using the
559 example of CL our research has demonstrated that it is not as easy as learning about teaching
560 practices from a book, nor is it as simple as transferring practices that were effective in
561 schools to universities. There was an extensive commitment of time, energy, and emotion in
562 trying to make MBP work. Ashley had already experienced such a commitment as he
563 adopted MBP in schools, but he had to persevere through this for a second time in adapting
564 his practice to the university context. Much like his school experiences, there were moments
565 when he questioned the value of what he was trying to do; however, reflection and inquiry
566 into the purposes and outcomes of both MBP and his own teaching values served to reinforce
567 to him that such commitments were worthwhile. In contrast, Tim had no idea what to expect
568 in terms of committing to a new approach. His commitment was required on two fronts: (a)
569 learning about the models and (b) implementing what he was learning in his practice. While
570 there were times when Tim questioned the value of committing to these new ways, like
571 Ashley, self-study provided him with evidence that such commitment was needed if change
572 were to occur in his pre-service classroom and beyond. In common for both of us were
573 regular feelings of frustration, vulnerability, and doubt; however, we also experienced
574 feelings of satisfaction in finding new pedagogical insights or by seeing "seeds planted" and
575 assumptions about teaching and learning disrupted in pre-service teachers whom we taught.

576 Our collaborative self-study also highlighted how we were coming to know our
577 respective teaching selves and practices in more nuanced and refined ways. For example,
578 Tim showed evidence that he was becoming better at articulating the tacit knowledge behind
579 the teaching decisions he was making. In this way, he felt that he was learning more about

580 teaching in a broad sense but he was also learning more about priorities for his practice.
581 Alternatively, Ashley was challenged more by the contexts in which he was teaching rather
582 than in what he was teaching. In particular, he was challenged by the expectations of pre-
583 service teachers to amass “tips and tricks” of teaching in order to “do teaching”. They
584 appeared less interested in the broader justifications for a pedagogical approach and what it
585 could achieve in the long-term but were instead looking for ways to survive in schools. This
586 is not to be critical of pre-service teachers for their feelings; indeed, Ashley also found
587 himself doing what he needed to survive in the university. But through Ashley sharing the
588 difficulties in his teacher education practice with his colleagues and students, he was able to
589 articulate how MBP represented a meaningful, student-centered approach to teaching that
590 required skills far beyond the technical that were desired by most of his students.

591 These findings also highlight how beneficial engaging in a scholarship of teaching
592 (Kelchtermans, 2009) can be for teachers – regardless of their teaching context. Through
593 engaging in the study of our practice we became better able to make explicit our tacit
594 knowledge of teaching. Our analytic frame of attending to the “hows and whys” of teaching
595 using MBP proved especially useful in enabling us to understand and articulate tacit
596 knowledge to students. When teacher educators are able to make their tacit knowledge of
597 teaching practice explicit to students, more powerful influences on students’ understandings
598 of the complexities of teaching are likely (Grossman & McDonald, 2008; Loughran, 2006).
599 As such, we feel that teacher educators have a responsibility to engage in the study and
600 sharing of the pedagogical challenges they face. Indeed, if innovative approaches are to gain
601 a foothold in university PETE programs and school physical education teachers’ practices,
602 *communication* of the complexities, problems, and strategies used to overcome them are
603 required. Despite Zeichner’s (1999) acknowledgement almost 15 years ago that self-study
604 represented one of the most significant advances in the field of teacher education, there

605 remain few examples of how physical education teacher educators have used self-study to
606 improve understandings of the complexity of teaching, or that demonstrate how PETE
607 scholars have gone about developing and articulating a pedagogy of teacher education. Our
608 study shows that the sharing that comes from engaging in discussion and debate with critical
609 friends led us to question our assumptions and practices about MBP. In turn, we are more
610 deliberate in our actions of using MBP in pre-service teacher education but are, at the same
611 time, open to the uncertainties that arise from trying to understand teacher education practice.

612 Such have been the findings of MBP in schools that Casey (2014) suggested that the
613 time to ask if these approaches work has passed; we must now seek to better understand how
614 they can work in the long-term. To do this teacher educators need to challenge not only
615 students' expectations around what it means to teach but also their own pedagogies of
616 teacher education. We need to better understand both what MBP is and how those of us
617 charged with teacher education can teach teachers – theoretically and practically – to become
618 skillful proponents of robust and innovative approaches to teaching. Through self-study we
619 were able to articulate the “hows and whys” of teaching, which certainly aided in our own
620 understanding of teaching using MBP. We call upon other teacher educators involved in
621 PETE to not only articulate their knowledge and understanding of PETE practice but to share
622 how they developed that knowledge.

623

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