

# Introducing Exemplary Teachers to a Responsibility-Based Professional Development Protocol

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## ABSTRACT

Research in education and physical education has emphasized the need for continuing professional development (CPD) programs that are aligned with best practices. More specifically, scholars interested in teaching personal and social responsibility have emphasized the need to examine teachers' CPD. The purpose of this study was to examine three teachers' fidelity to implementing nine responsibility-based teaching strategies that were introduced through a novel responsibility-based CPD protocol that utilized systematic observation and reflection tools. The study employed the Tools for Assessing Responsibility-based Education Observation Instrument (Wright & Craig, 2011) in two different ways. First, the teachers and the researcher partnered to observe seven live physical education lessons. Second, 10 physical education lessons were videotaped for analysis. Results indicated that the CPD increased teacher's awareness of the responsibility-based teaching strategies and they perceived them to positively impact students, the teachers were empowered to make positive adaptations, and they worked collaboratively toward those outcomes. Furthermore, all observations met or exceeded minimum standards for observer reliability. The findings of this study offer support for using systematic observations tools for CPD with in-service physical educators.

## Purpose

The national standards for physical education endorse the notion that teachers should promote responsible personal and social behavior in physical activity contexts. Continuing professional development (CPD) programs are needed to assist teachers in updating their curriculum to meet those standards. The purpose of this study was to provide a novel responsibility-based CPD experience to teachers during a physical education reform project and examine its influence on an exemplary program.

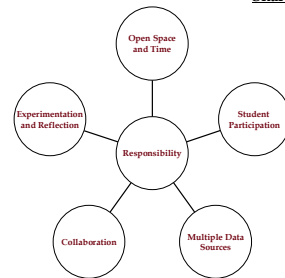
## Background

Recently, physical educators have called for more research on professional development related to the teaching personal and social responsibility (TPSR) curriculum model (Martinek & Hellison, 2009). In pre-service teacher education, responsibility-based programs that are sustained over a period of time, include practicum experiences, promote reflection, and provide expert feedback have been the most effective (Doolittle, 2011). Similar findings have been effective for in-service professional development programs (Pascual, Escarti, Llopis, Gutierrez, Marin, & Wright, 2011). Additionally, a self-supervision process that promotes guided reflections has been an effective strategy (Beaudoin, Brunelle, & Spallanzani, 2010).

Wright (2009) has emphasized the need to address the extent to which professional development programs are implemented with fidelity to its original intentions. Researchers and practitioners now have several tools to help assess the fidelity of implementation in TPSR programs. The tools include a time-sampling observation instrument that facilitates systematic observations (Wright & Craig, 2011). Systematic observation tools provide a reliable strategy to collect specific information about activities and events in a classroom (Behets, 1993). Although systematic observations are a common feature of pre-service teacher education, they may also be a valuable tool for the professional development of in-service teachers (De Marco, Mancini, Wuest, & Schemp, 1996). It has been argued that "decisions made in the interest of improving instruction that are based on self-confrontation and an understanding of systematic [observations] are virtually certain to produce targeted gains" (Kindsvatter, Wilen, & Ishler, 1988, p. 329). However, few examples are available in the physical education literature to demonstrate how systematic observation tools can be employed as an in-service professional development tool.

In this study, three teachers from a nationally-recognized exemplary physical education program were introduced to a novel CPD protocol. The protocol enlists the physical education teachers as key contributors by asking them to undergo training and to engage in systematic observations of responsibility-based teaching. The intention of the training was to empower the teachers to systematically observe their peers and conduct self-reflections. The TARE observation instrument and post-teaching reflection were facilitators of this process (Hellison, 2011; Wright & Craig, 2011). Taken together with feedback from the investigator, each teacher received triangulated feedback that included reports from the investigator, an instructor, and a peer teacher.

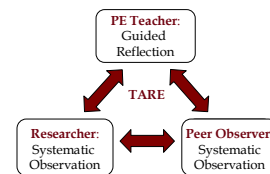
## Professional Development Protocol



### Shared Inquiry Approach

- **Responsibility-focused inquiry** chosen with input from participants
- **Open space and time** to examine the possibilities for teaching responsibility
- **Student participation** provides contextualized feedback
- **Multiple sources of data** guides all discussions
- **Collaboration** among peers increases support and generates new ideas
- **Experimentation and reflection** on in an on-going, cyclical process

### Collaborative Learning Cycle



- The **Tools for Assessing Responsibility-based Education (TARE)** guided all observations and reflections.
- The **PE Teacher** led all instruction during the observation period and completed the TARE Post Teaching Reflection immediately after the lesson.
- The **Peer Teacher and the Researcher** observed the full lesson while completing the TARE Observation Instrument.

## Methods

### Responsibility-Based Teaching Strategies

M = Modeling Respect; E = Setting Expectations; S = Opportunities for Success; SI = Fostering Social Interaction; T = Assigning Tasks; L = Leadership; V = Giving Voices and Choices; A = Assessment; Tr = Transfer

### TARE Observation Instrument

- Live observations (N = 7) conducted by a researcher and physical educators
- Observations triangulated by guided reflections by the physical educators
- Videotaped observations (N = 10) collected to assess observer reliability

### Qualitative Data Collection

- TARE document analysis
- Interviews (formal & informal)
- Field notes
- **Trustworthiness**
  - Triangulation
  - Member checks
  - Observer reliability

## Observer Reliability

Table 1. Reliability of TARE Systematic Videotaped Observations

	M	E	S	SI	T	L	V	A	Tr
% Agreement	100	96.43	97.62	95.24	88.10	94.05	92.86	91.70	96.43

Table 2. Reliability of TARE Live Observations

	M	E	S	SI	T	L	V	A	Tr
% Agreement	100	77.78	85.71	80.95	73.43	92.06	71.43	84.13	87.30

## RESULTS

1. **Increased Awareness of Responsibility-based Teaching:** Teachers reported that the TARE training and peer observations raised their awareness of the nine teaching strategies and made them more likely to use them. Additionally, observing their peers made them aware of their own strength and weaknesses.
  - "It has made me more aware that it is important that I hit these things and it helped me to stop trying to tell [students] everything and just let them know what we expect out of them" (John).
  - "I think that sitting there and circling and making yourself aware of the criteria, I think that that really helps; it helped me become much more aware and much more focused" (Dolly).
2. **Positive Impact on Students:** The teachers perceived the responsibility-based teaching strategies to have a positive influence on their students.
  - "We work on [self-control] every class and it has been improving since the first of the year" (John).
  - "Some kids are really being more empathetic toward kids with special needs or kids that were different from them. They were learning, and I don't know if its leadership but I guess it is because they are learning empathy, they are learning to communicate, they are learning to be helpers and they are learning to lead by example" (Dolly).
3. **Integration and Contextualization:** Data revealed that the teachers integrated the responsibility themes with their school's pre-existing responsibility strategies. Furthermore, they made adaptations to the TARE categories to suit their context.
  - "I do think it is important in PE to make that connection not only with the social responsibility but the skills connection as well since one of our goals in PE is to make students aware of the need to be life-long learners" (John).
  - "You know we do a lot of positive talk. I don't know if that's really a part of the TARE. But we do a lot of positive talk and I don't know where to put that. Because to me, if I am going to say something negative to a kid, I need to make sure I say three or four things positive to that kid too" (Dolly).
4. **Responsibility-based Community of Practice:** The three teachers worked collaboratively to integrate responsibility-based teaching and assess its outcomes.
  - "The nice thing is we will all take turns being the lead. So if this is something I want to do later in the week, let me start it out, let me take it in a certain direction, and you guys can follow along with it. That is the wonderful part, I feel like we are all willing to take the lead and try some things" (Sally).
  - "Look at what a team effort we have now and how well we work together and how we get stuff done. Think of what we could do if we actually had time to plan together" (Dolly).

## CONCLUSION

- The Shared Inquiry Approach facilitated teachers' learning, reflection, and discussion
- The teachers felt empowered to experiment with the TARE and make positive adaptations.
- The teachers perceived the CPD to positively impact students, which increased the potential for sustainability.
- Systematic observation could be a viable tool to support CPD.

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