

## PEDAGOGY

# The Influence of Alternative Field-Based Experiences on Preservice Physical Education Teachers' Perceptions of Assessment


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## Abstract

*This study employed occupational socialization theory to explore three physical education preservice teachers' (PSTs) perceptions of assessment during an alternative field-based experience. A phenomenological approach guided this study, and data were collected through autobiographies, lesson plans, video recordings of teachings, and three rounds of interviews per participant. Data were examined through thematic collaborative qualitative analysis. Three major themes emerged: (a) out of sight, out of mind: assessment disappears in actual teaching practices; (b) PSTs valued assessment; and (c) PSTs' socialization impacted assessment practices. There were subsequent subthemes within each theme. The results suggested PSTs valued assessment; however, their socialization influenced their lack of assessment implementation even with supports at the alternative field-based setting.*

To ensure physical education (PE) preservice teachers (PSTs) are aware of assessment benefits, professionals in the PE field have highlighted assessment literacy as an area of potential growth in PE (Dinan Thompson & Penney, 2015; Hay & Penney, 2013; Starck

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et al., 2018). From a critical or transformative mindset, scholars have made the case to employ assessment *as* pedagogy, which recognizes the use of assessment *for* learning to inform teachers and students of their learning, as opposed to traditional formats (Hay & Penney, 2013). Assessment *of* learning differs from assessment *for* learning. It relates to more traditional styles of assessment, interested in the end product of the learning instead of the process, and mainly thought of as a surveillance or accountability tool (Lopez-Pastor et al., 2013). Although some literature supports why assessment is vital to the function and existence of the field (Lopez-Pastor et al., 2013), ample evidence indicates a lack of assessment practices in PE (Dinan Thompson & Penney, 2015).

Utilizing the broad terminology of assessment in PE, scholars have defined assessment in a multitude of ways; for example, Hay and Penney (2009), stated assessment is the “collection and interpretation of information about students’ learning in PE” (p. 391). Although this definition continues to evolve, we have adopted the perspective to differentiate assessment due to its purpose (Hay & Penney, 2009; Dinan Thompson & Penney, 2015; MacPhail & Murphy, 2017). The purpose of assessment *of* learning is to demonstrate what students have learned, as an end product (i.e., summative, formal), whereas the purpose of assessment *for* learning is to inform both students and teacher of their learning in authentic ways (i.e., formative, informal, performance-based), which can challenge a student’s higher ordering thinking (Hay, 2006).

Scholars have acknowledged assessment comprehension, contextual barriers, and misguided exposures of assessment in K–12 as contributors to a lack of assessment literacy among PE teachers (Collier, 2011). Therefore, physical education teacher education (PETE) programs have been called upon to ensure PSTs gain the experiences and exposure within their training to employ effective assessment (MacPhail & Murphy, 2017). PETE is the prime place for PSTs to be trained on assessment to ensure PSTs understand the various purposes of assessment and comprehension and have the confidence and skill sets to incorporate assessment effectively into everyday instruction. Scholars have made many claims that high-quality training and support are necessary for PSTs to incorporate these assessment practices effectively into their instruction and

provide quality experiences for students. Hastie (2017) suggested that “if our goal is to ultimately change practice, we need to give serious consideration as to how we can best serve teachers in terms of their professional learning,” specifically during teacher preparation (p. 14). MacPhail and Murphy (2017) recommended that when PSTs’ have little exposure to assessment practices, it is essential for support mechanisms to be in place to aide in the PSTs understanding and enactment of the new content and skill sets, starting with PSTs’ teacher preparation. Scholars have highlighted the necessity of PSTs’ going through training on assessment to increase the credibility of student-led assessment, which could take place within PETE (Brennan, 2001).

During their program, PSTs are often placed at local schools to gain a practical experience teaching and to learn from their cooperating teacher (CT). These experiences are necessary to allow course faculty the time to create a dialectic around teaching and learning with PSTs (Schempp & Graber, 1992), which might differ than their current beliefs. However, quality field experiences can be challenging to find, leaving faculty to place PSTs at alternative field placements (Doster & Polter, 2008). Without the normal contextual boundaries of PE within a school day, and without supports of a traditional field placement such as a CT and administration, it is important to consider the effect of alternative field placements on PSTs’ perceptions of assessment.

## **Occupational Socialization Theory**

Occupational socialization theory has been a valuable framework to further the understanding of various areas of teaching and learning in PE (Richards et al., 2014). Zeichner and Gore (1990) noted that the theory explains “the process whereby the individual becomes a participating member of the society of teachers” (p. 329). Within this process, it is viewed as a dialectical exchange, whereby teachers have the ability to overtly and covertly succumb to, or resist, social variables (individuals or institutions) that attempt to socialize them (Schempp & Graber, 1992). Within PE, the theory has been extended to consist of three temporally oriented phases: (a) acculturation, (b) professional socialization, and (c) organizational socialization (Lawson, 1983). For the purposes of this study, acculturation and professional socialization will be explored based

on the target population of PSTs because they have not yet experienced the third phase of organizational socialization.

### **Acculturation**

Lawson (1983) referred to this phase as the pretraining socialization that initiates the birth and endures until the point at which an individual chooses to enroll in a PETE program. Within this phase, individuals develop subjective theories about the field of PE by engaging with a variety of stakeholders (e.g., teachers, coaches, counselors, or parents), through the apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975). During this time, students gain subjective theories that are essential to understanding their openness to PETE programming and their future dispositions as PSTs (Richards & Ressler, 2016).

### **Professional Socialization**

The professional socialization phase commences when a PE recruit “makes the formal decision to pursue a career in [PE] by enrolling in a PETE program” (Richards & Ressler, 2016, p. 37). Professional socialization is deemed the weakest phase of the theory for PSTs (Richards et al., 2014). Due to the discourse exchange between PSTs and other stakeholders in this phase, it cannot be expected that PSTs will submissively adopt the views of the PETE faculty (Graber et al., 2017) nor that students will keep the same preconceived notions over time (Richards & Templin, 2019). Richards and Templin (2019) claimed that during teacher preparation, “field experiences can, however, become problematic when they reproduce, rather than challenge [PSTs’] acculturation” (p. 16).

To date, however, little research has been done on PSTs’ perceptions and use of assessment in a field experience placement while enrolled in a PETE program. Further, none of these studies have been done in an alternative field-based setting. Therefore, guided by occupational socialization theory, this phenomenological study examined PSTs’ perceptions of assessment in an alternative field experience during their PETE program. Specifically, these research questions were explored: (a) How do alternative field-based experiences during a methods course influence PSTs’ perception of assessment? and (b) How do preservice teachers’ socialization experiences influence

their perceptions of assessment during an alternative field-based experience?

## Method

### Participants and Setting

A convenience sampling method was employed. Recruitment for the PST participants ( $n = 3$ ), which made up all of the students enrolled in the course, took place in their PETE elementary methods course, at a large state university, during a 5-week term in summer 2019. Due to the methods course being offered during the summer when traditional K–12 schooling was not available, the PSTs were placed in an alternative field-based setting. All of the participants have been provided pseudonyms for confidentiality of their identity.

Jaxson identifies as a White male in his early 20s who has a strong emphasis on the affective domain through his own recollections of his K–12 PE student experience, as well as his perspective as a PST and its impact in the PE setting. During his K–12 experience, he had a unique exposure to PE abroad in England, where he spent two of his elementary years at an international school. During high school PE, he was a part of the athletics program throughout the school day for PE. Due to the area that all three participants were from, this was common practice for any student involved in an athletic team to be tracked in a section of PE where they either cross-trained or worked on content for a specific sport. Jaxson started going to college with the intent of becoming a physical therapist, but switched into PETE. Both his mother and sister were educators, which is what influenced him to transition over into the education profession.

Cody identifies as a White male in his early 20s who grew up in a supportive household that fostered movement and sport participation. His main influence for joining the teaching profession comes from his desire to coach, cultivated in his K–12 years. In addition, he discussed enjoying a student leadership role during his elementary PE program and believes his elementary PE was positive. Just as with Jaxson, Cody enrolled into athletics PE courses in sixth grade and on through high school.

Marianna identifies as a Latina female in her early 20s who had a mix of private and public school experiences. For her elementary and into early middle school years, she was enrolled in two private

schools. From seventh grade through her senior year of high school, she was enrolled in the public school setting. When this transition occurred, she too experienced an athletics-style PE, with only one semester of general PE in high school. She enjoyed her elementary PE experiences at her initial private school the most.

The course occurred over the first summer term, with one instructor, and one teaching assistant; however, there was not a CT present. The course was offered over the summer as an alternative option for nontraditional students who are not able to attend classes during the normal school hours to gain educational degrees. The main instructor for the course was a doctoral student who had 21 years of elementary PE teaching experience, and the teaching assistant, also a doctoral student, had 3 years of PE teaching experience at the secondary level. Prior to entering the field placement, the students engaged in coursework at the university for 2 weeks to prepare for application of planning, implementing, and assessing during their placement. One lesson, lasting approximately 2 hours, was dedicated to assessment in which the PSTs were asked to practice with a variety of assessment tools (e.g., video recording, technology video playback, apps). During their placement, the PSTs were asked to implement two assessments within their teaching and have an assessment present on each of their lesson plans. PSTs were asked to reflect on their assessment usage verbally with instructors following their teaching, as well as in their written reflections in the course. The students were also asked to complete an assessment autobiography at the culmination of the semester.

The field experience took place in the summer at an alternative setting, a Boys and Girls Club location, because the methods course occurred over summer and K–12 schools were not in session. Throughout the placement, each PST taught between 10 and 12 students per 30- to 45-min session and had different grade levels ranging from K–5 a total of 10 times over 5 weeks. The students were a diverse group with their racial identities represented as most prevalent in the following order: African American, Latino, and White. Students with disabilities were not represented within this student population. During the day, the students rotated through a variety of sessions and activities such as music, art, and other content topics, in which one was specifically dedicated as PE class. The PSTs were

asked and expected to approach their teaching as they would in a K–12 school PE placement.

## Data Collection

Four data collection techniques were used, which included semi-structured interviews, an assessment autobiography, video recordings of teachings, and lesson plans. Three semistructured interviews per participant were conducted before, during, and after the alternative field-based experience, for a total of nine interviews. The first two interviews were executed individually over the phone. However, the third interview, a stimulated recall interview in which the PST watched videos of their teachings and discussed their thought process while teaching, was done over Zoom. The first interview lasted approximately an hour and was geared toward gaining an understanding of the participants' acculturation, subjective theories, and initial professional socialization perceptions in the profession of PE, as well as briefly with assessment specifically. The second interview, lasting between 30 and 45 min, explored the phenomenon itself and how the alternative field-based experience was influencing their perception of assessment. The third interview, lasting approximately 45 min, utilized stimulated recall in which the PSTs reflected and made meaning of their previous lesson plans and videos of teachings. Although the interviews were done chronologically throughout the participants' experiences in the alternative field-based setting, the intent was not to show potential increases in their assessment perceptions, but was to understand how their socialization and current context of the alternative field-based setting influenced their perceptions of assessment.

Document collection included an assessment autobiography, lesson plans, and video recordings. The assessment autobiography template was adapted from a broader autobiography template from Betourne and Richards (2015) that explored PSTs' acculturation and professional socialization in the field of PE, executed as a class assignment at the end of the summer methods course. Lesson plans and video recordings were collected from all teachings that commenced throughout the course (10/participant). The lesson plans and video recordings were employed as a form of stimulated recall within the third round of interviews. Stimulated recall is a research method that helps the participant recollect the original situation by

inciting thoughts, meanings, and subjective responses associated with the situation (Hansebo & Kihlgren, 2001). The researcher identified specific lesson plans and video recordings that did and did not display uses of assessment as the source for stimulated recall within the interview.

## **Data Analysis**

A six-step collaborative qualitative analysis (CQA; Richards & Hemphill, 2018) through a constant comparative process (Creswell, 2007) was conducted. This process consisted of (1) preliminary organization and planning, (2) open and axial coding, (3) development of a preliminary codebook, (4) pilot testing the codebook, (5) final coding process, and (6) review the codebook and finalize themes. Within the process of coding, inductive and deductive approaches were employed. In the deductive analysis, occupational socialization theory was used as a lens for the PSTs' lived experiences, and an inductive analysis allowed the study to remain open to data beyond the theory.

Trustworthiness was a continuous focus throughout the data analysis process: (a) credibility, (b) transferability, (c) dependability, and (d) confirmability (Guba, 1981). In terms of credibility, the study used triangulation, frequent peer debriefing, negative case analysis, member checking, background and qualifications of the investigator, and a rich thick description data. Open coding was conducted with the first two rounds of interviews, informing meaning making for the third interview, which was then open coded after completion. About 50% of the data were axial coded before being transitioned into the preliminary codebook. After the initial axial coding as inner-case analysis, we realized there were more commonalities between the participants' data than there were differences, and then switched to a cross-case analysis. The final phase of coding included a review of the codebook, which ensured the data supported the themes, and a the final codebook was created after the review. Throughout the process, Rachyl Stephenson and Jenna Starck collaboratively analyzed all of the collected data and peer debriefed frequently and agreed the data supported the themes and structure of the codebook (Richards & Hemphill, 2018).

## Results

Data analysis resulted in three first order themes and six sub-themes. Each section describes the first order themes: (a) out of sight, out of mind: assessment disappears in actual teaching, (b) PSTs valued assessment, and (c) PSTs' socialization impacted assessment practices. The subsequent subthemes are discussed within each main theme.

### **Out of Sight, Out of Mind: Assessment Disappears in Actual Teaching Practices**

The PSTs in the study valued and understood the importance of assessment but often did not implement assessment from their planning. Although there were assessment experiences and exposures offered within PETE, it seemed the PSTs' perceptions outweighed PETE programs' efforts to use assessment in alignment with teaching. The two emerging subthemes included (a) disconnect from planning to implementation and (b) positive environment and climate did not cultivate assessment use.

#### *Disconnect From Planning to Implementation*

The participants valued and understood the importance of assessment in the planning process, but upon entering the field, they chose not to implement it. Jaxson recognized this disconnect in an interview, stating, "I thought everyone at least had the assessments in their lesson plan. It just turned out that day or week we didn't have enough space, or with the way the lesson went, they just didn't end up doing it." When recalling a lesson during her second interview, Marianna acknowledged this disconnect: "I had a checklist that they had to do, but we didn't really get to it." However, during her stimulated recall, she expressed value in utilizing a formal assessment and using data to drive lesson planning: "It can be helpful because [teacher] observation just by itself [might cause you to] forget what you observed, but by having assessment written down, you can go back to the data . . . and base your lesson plans off of that." Jaxson also knew of checklists but did not implement it as a formal assessment. Alternatively, he used it as a guide: "Today I did skill checklists. I was just watching them, how they were doing it."

### *Positive Environment and Climate Did Not Cultivate Assessment Use*

Although the climate and environment fostered a potential for innovative teaching practices in the study, there was a lack of assessment use. PSTs were aware of the differences in environment from the traditional school setting and the Boys and Girls Club. They felt supported by staff and felt they had more autonomy. While they had these advantages within the alternative field experience, the positive environment did not cultivate assessment use. For an example of speaking to the environment broadly, Jaxson compared the alternative field-based setting to his clinical experiences in the K–12 setting: “I liked the overall environment of the Boys and Girls Club. It was super inviting . . . it felt a lot more welcoming and they wanted you to be there.” Marianna alluded to the assistance of the alternative field-based experience staff in her second interview: “I think the employees really helped with the students to get what I wanted them to do, because sometimes I couldn’t get full compliance from them.” She felt the staff was willing to support their instruction in ways not present in the K–12 setting. Cody also recognized staff as welcoming and inviting: “The campus coordinators were great . . . they were nice and super great people.” With regard to autonomy, Jaxson also noted the staff at the alternative field-based experience “were completely supportive of whatever choices we made” and, in another interview, commented that he “felt like the cooperating teachers had already set the environment,” whereas in the alternative field-based setting he had more freedom over the environment for his teaching.

### **PSTs Valued Assessment**

The second theme of the study includes PSTs’ value of assessment with two emerging subthemes: (a) valued informal assessment to promote learning and (b) assessment is a motivator or demotivator in student learning.

#### *Valued Informal Assessment to Promote Learning*

The participants understood assessment as a necessary and integral aspect of their instruction. At some points, this value came through in subtle ways, as depicted in the first interview with Jaxson: “I honestly think [assessment] needs to be in every single lesson.” Cody also made an explicit statement about assessment in

his assessment autobiography when he recognized that his teacher training helped shape his perception: “It has helped me see that assessment has a place in more than just standard teaching in general education, it is a powerful tool as a PE teacher.” In her autobiographical essay, Marianna spoke highly of assessment: “Assessment can make the teaching experience better for both [the] student and teacher.” However, she also suggested she did not fully understand the role of assessment enough to use it “right now.” She continued, “I don’t think I place a lot of value on assessment. I focus more on going through the lesson and not really thinking about how assessing kids benefit both the student and teacher.”

The PSTs in this study emphasized assessment as being utilized as a means to show progress and improvement in student learning. In the third interview, Marianna suggested that assessment can give students a visual of their improvement in PE. She further explained, “If you keep showing the students the comparison from the beginning of the year, to the middle, to the end, it helps them recognize they have improved throughout the year, if they didn’t even realize it.” Marianna revisited this idea and provided a more detailed example in the third interview: “I think it should be used for how the student is progressing on the specific tasks and how they can become better.” The importance Jaxson placed on assessment showing progress was extremely eminent, so much that it was within his definition of assessment itself. He stated, “I would define [or] describe [assessment] as testing or seeing where your students progress in a skill or activity you’re having them do.” Cody also stated, “I strongly believe that assessment is very good at showing improvement for individuals.”

The PSTs in the study valued informal assessment to promote learning. When referencing informal assessment, Jaxson claimed, “I know there’s a lot of different ways to do it as well, but that’s what [informal assessment] I have been exposed to, and what I’ve been implementing lately.” Within this quote, Jaxson is referring to informal assessments such as teacher observation, checks for understanding, and verbal questioning. The intent behind his quote is that he understands there are a variety of assessment methods. He alluded to formal along with informal assessment but indicated he prefers to incorporate only informal assessment because that is what he has mainly experienced within his teacher training and what he

is comfortable implementing within his own teaching. The PSTs accentuated the role of informal assessment for giving specific feedback and believed it was positive for the teacher and students. Cody recognized the role of feedback in his own K–12 experience, clarifying a response to a question in the third interview. He explained the role of feedback with relation to assessment and student learning: “I feel like [feedback] kind of played a solidification role . . . and then through a session they can realize what they’re doing wrong and then go from there and try to fix it.” In a form of data-driven instruction, interpreting the data from informal assessment, Marianna stated, “I think for the teacher, it serves to see how well the class has been learning the content that she or he has been teaching.”

### *Assessment Is a Motivator or Demotivator in Student Learning*

Participants acknowledged the potential impact of assessment to be a motivator or demotivator on student learning. Marianna suggested that assessment can motivate students: “I think that was a motivator for them because they knew they could have done better.” Similarly, Cody stated, “I feel like you can use assessment as a motivational tool for individuals.” Alternatively, the PSTs in the study also acknowledged that assessment could be a demotivator for certain students. Jaxson alluded to this in his autobiography: “From my experiences, formal assessment seemed to make students nervous, and even more so for students who weren’t as confident in their ability to perform the task.” When discussing inappropriate practices he had witnessed, Jaxson stated that he believed assessment could be a demotivator to students: “I think if they’re being assessed individually in front of their peers, it could be a huge demotivator [to those who do not perform very well].” In line with this, Cody stated in his interview that he was fearful of students comparing assessments: “[I] don’t want to make somebody who’s doing worse from one assessment to the next, or worse than a fellow peer to feel bad because [the student will] lose motivation.” When reflecting on a knock-out game of basketball in elementary school, he continued, “I did not feel successful . . . They were definitely assessing and that’s probably also partially why I was so unhappy with that particular experience, because I knew I was not doing well.” During an interview, Marianna also mentioned the demotivation due to performing an assessment in front of peers: “I was never able to do pull-ups and everyone

would always make fun of me. So that's when I knew I suck. I don't want to do this anymore."

Because of this perception of assessment being a demotivator, the PSTs placed a large emphasis on the need for assessments to be fair, which influenced their grading philosophies and covert forms of assessment. Jaxson explained, "Normally, I use skill checklists, so they never knew that I was assessing them." Both Cody and Jaxson viewed fitness testing as unfair with regard to grading. One of Cody's narratives on the topic was "I've been a firm person that's against . . . the total performance-based assessment. If a kid can't run a mile in six minutes, they can't get an A, they'll get a B. I'm kind of against that." He further noted, "I do think assessment has its place in grading. I just don't know if it would be my main source of a grade."

### **Preservice Teachers' Socialization Impacted Assessment Practices**

Each of the PSTs recognized the influence their PETE programming and acculturation experiences had on their perceptions of assessment. Within this theme, two subthemes emerged: (a) positive influences on PSTs' assessment perceptions through PETE programming and (b) absence of assessment exposures and modeling.

#### *Positive Influences on Preservice Teachers' Assessment Perceptions Through PETE Programming*

The PSTs valued assessment and recognized its importance through their professional socialization experiences in the PETE program. Jaxson explicitly stated this in his autobiography:

My experiences have only reinforced my view on assessment when teaching. Everything that I've been learning over the course of two semesters has helped me in my teaches because the students have responded well when I've implemented an assessment and I've been able to collect data on the students' progression with the skills I was trying to teach.

Likewise, Marianna also stated, "I didn't think of assessment entering the field. Looking back, I had an inaccurate conceptualization because there is so much more to playing sports and running a mile during PE class!" She also articulated later on in her autobiography

how the PETE influenced her assessment perceptions: “Without a doubt, the teacher education program opened my eyes that assessment is just not the typical FitnessGram or the mile run. There is so much more that a student can be assessed on and how to do it.”

Throughout the PSTs’ teacher training, both Marianna and Jaxson suggested multiple staff positively influenced their perceptions of assessment. While recalling an experience at the alternative field-based experience, Marianna stated, “George [and the other] employees would make the assessment happen, because sometimes I just couldn’t really do it.” Jaxson described an instance during his alternative experience when an instructor from the PETE program provided him feedback on how to improve his instruction and assessment incorporation. However, Cody believed one instructor negatively influenced his assessment perception although previously having positive influences: “I’ve had a couple scuffles with an instructor about how I feel about assessment . . . it soured my opinion more . . . I didn’t like how insistent she was on using assessment as a standardized thing that would count for a grade.”

### *Absence of Assessment Exposures and Modeling*

The PSTs described a lack of assessment exposure and modeling during their acculturation and professional socialization. During her K–12 experience, Marianna stated, “The only assessment I remember would be the fitness test . . . she would mark down the time or how many we did.” She also wrote in her autobiography, “I never really thought of assessment in a PE class, because I never grew up doing any besides the FitnessGram.” Similarly, Cody stated, “I’m sure they were assessing, but other than [the] standardized FitnessGram, I couldn’t tell you a time where they were assessing.” Jaxson also felt an absence of assessment, recalling, “Obviously I don’t remember them ever having us peer assess each other . . . I never had an assessment that was teacher led that I knew.”

Cody also made a clear connection between his own student experience and his developing philosophy on assessment during his PETE program in his autobiography: “I never really thought about how my experiences affect my use of assessment, but looking back now, that might be why I am so reluctant to use it because it wasn’t well implemented when I was in PE.” Marianna wrote about lack of assessment understanding and exposure during PETE coursework

in her autobiography: “Vague ideas of assessment were given to us, which made it somewhat hard to create our own way to assess students or students to assess themselves.” Jaxson spoke about lack of assessment exposure out in field experiences, particularly teachers not modeling assessment practices: “I didn’t see much actual assessment other than teacher observation. At [the high school], there was little to none with the older high school students.”

## Discussion

The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of PSTs’ perceptions of assessment in PE during an alternative field-based experience in a methods course. This section discusses the main themes of out of sight, out of mind: assessment disappears in actual teaching practices; PSTs valued assessment; and PSTs’ socialization impact on assessment practices. It also discusses their respective subthemes in relation to the literature.

### Impact of Alternative Field-Based Experience on PSTs’ Perceptions of Assessment

In organizational socialization literature, many structures within the educational system have been shown to influence PSTs’ instruction (Richards et al., 2014). These structures such as prescribed curriculum, administrative or supervisory constraints, marginalization and perceived mattering, and lack of funding/facilities/equipment, along with other realities of teaching, often create a barrier to assessment implementation (Collier, 2011), resulting in an indifference with assessment implementation (Lander et al., 2015). While these barriers are present for most teachers, they were nonexistent within the environment of the alternative field-based experiences, which created possibilities that may not take place in a traditional placement (Doster & Polter, 2008). Due to the PSTs being placed at a Boys and Girls Club for field, the participants did not experience some of the typical organizational structures inherent in a K–12 setting, one being the CT. Because the PSTs planned for assessment but did not use formal assessment in this study, the direct support of a CT or instructor might have been helpful among their assessment literacy journey. Curtner-Smith (1996) discussed this notion when he outlined six aspects that should be present in early field experiences to promote positive professional socialization. To

this end, all of the suggestions from Curtner-Smith were met, with the exception of the field placement at a nonschool setting, which had the potential to impact their PETE programmatic messaging.

However, while a CT may positively influence a PST's assessment practices, they could also be a negative influence (McIntyre & Killian, 1987). For example, a CT may not incorporate assessment at all, incorrectly utilizes it (not valid or reliable), or not use effective assessment practices (inefficient with time management, not assessing correct content, etc.). Therefore, although CTs may not be available in alternative field-based settings, this study suggests that PSTs should work closely with a supervisor who can hold them accountable for best practices, which include assessment implementation and data reflection, that inform future teaching practices. Following occupational socialization literature, PSTs need to be met with discussions surrounding their misconceptions of assessment while practicing and learning to teach in a field-based setting (Starck et al., 2018). True to both traditional and alternative field-based settings, without the connection and discussions between a supervisor in this setting, the PST may continue to teach as they were taught or potentially follow custodial practices of a CT.

PSTs are finding value in assessment; however, as participants in a study conducted by Lorente-Catalan and Kirk (2016) did, the three participants in this study predominantly prioritized informal assessment during their PETE program. It seemed that the PSTs grasped the concept of using assessment to gauge student learning and provide immediate feedback. The push on assessment *for* learning (Hay, 2006) was implied by the PSTs in their field experience; however, their focus on informal assessment was influenced by their perception of assessment to be a motivator or a demotivator. Therefore, with the PSTs' concerns of fairness and previous negative experiences with formal assessment during their acculturation, they did not employ formal assessment during their teaches. Occupational socialization literature has suggested that acculturation has an extremely strong influence on teachers' perceptions, especially with assessment (Matanin & Collier, 2003). While the PSTs' professional socialization was at least in some ways impactful toward increasing value of assessment, PSTs still have the capability to surrender to, or fight back against, social variables that attempt to socialize them

(Schempp & Graber, 1992). Because these PSTs' subjective warrant coming into PETE did not include positive exposure to assessment, PETE faculty would have to engage PSTs in a dialectical regarding assessment to challenge their subjective warrant toward teaching with assessment. If PSTs are to grapple with and explore both purposes of assessment (assessment *for* and *of* learning) to buy into assessment as part of the teaching–learning process, intentional assessment with accountability measures that include formal evidence is necessary (Anderson et al., 2005; Lund & Veal, 2008; Starck et al., 2018). Moreover, there is a need to increase PSTs' assessment literacy so they have the knowledge and skills to assess in fair and equitable ways that support learning (Hay & Penney, 2013).

### **Future Directions for PETE Programming With Assessment**

If the goal is to change assessment practices, there needs to be serious thought on how teachers are being supported in their professional learning on the topic (Hastie, 2017). An integral space to increase assessment literacy is placed upon PETE faculty within the PSTs' professional socialization experiences. MacPhail and Murphy (2017) suggested that starting with teacher preparation, there needs to be proper support mechanisms in place to support PSTs' understanding and performance of new content and skills with regard to assessment. To provide these supports, PETE faculty need to be more intentional with their accountability measures for assessment in all aspects of the teaching–learning cycle, not just within the planning phase, which was the case with the participants in this study. This accountability could occur in a variety of ways such as requirement of assessment content on lesson plans, implementation within the PSTs' teaches, video recordings of teaches for PSTs to reflect upon assessment practices, and engagement with the data gained from assessment utilization and how this will impact future student learning and teaching practices. The PSTs' socialization of assessment needs to be confronted early within programming and be constantly reflected upon throughout their coursework and field experiences. Starck et al. (2018) suggested that assessment must be interwoven within pedagogy and curriculum to encourage PSTs practices to include assessment *for* learning. Starck et al. stated that to support PSTs' application and interpretation of assessment, CTs should

discuss the realities of assessment implementation. If programs are to use alternative field-based settings, either field supervisors or PETE faculty should take on that responsibility to ensure the same support is provided. Starck et al. also indicated that PETE faculty need to intertwine assessment implementation into fieldwork experiences in conjunction with methods courses and that PSTs should interpret data and reflect on the influence of data on the educational process.

## **Limitations**

Although this study did not employ a large sample, the purpose of qualitative research is not to be able to generalize the results but to have the possibility of transfer to others who may have similar experiences in like contexts (Merriam, 2008). A second limitation was not being able to conduct in-person field observations; however, as video footage of teaches and lesson plans were used as a form of stimulated recall, what participants said was occurring was validated. Last, while the students were held accountable to include assessment on the lesson plan during the planning phase, there was no accountability toward implementation within their actual teaches.

## **Conclusions**

This study adds to the understudied area of the influence of occupational socialization on PSTs' perceptions of assessment in the context of an alternative field-based experience. A unique finding includes the impact of PSTs' K-12 experiences and time during their PETE program on their perceptions of assessments as a motivator or a demotivator. This study highlights the potential for alternative field-based experience to provide supports to PSTs in their assessment literacy growth due to avoiding organizational barriers that may hinder learning within a school setting (e.g., increase of equipment, freedom and autonomy, employees as a teaching assistant). However, although these supports were present, the PSTs presented a disconnect from planning to implementation when implementing assessment. These unique outcomes are new areas for future inquiry toward how more supports and accountability may help PSTs become more assessment literate within their field experiences whether traditional or alternative field-based placements. Finally, with a shortage of placements and CTs in a virtual, hybrid, or modified learning environment due to the COVID-19 pandemic,

PST clinical experiences might occur in alternative settings such as at local organizations that offer physical activity as a component of their programming or online through a live stream or other virtual method.

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