

PEDAGOGY

Teacher Perceptions of the Tennessee Student Growth Measures in Physical Education

Todd Estel Layne, Carol Irwin, Kelly Simonton

Abstract

Few states have implemented an evaluation system to measure teacher efficiency through the use of student growth measures within physical education. Evaluation procedures can be extensive and have the potential for reduced active student learning time in addition to reduced teacher discernment. Therefore, the purpose of this research was to analyze teacher perceptions of a current state evaluation system that measures teacher efficiency within physical education. The overarching goal of this research was to help improve overall physical education instruction through high-quality evaluation systems. This study employed a mixed-methods design due to the collection of survey data, which included quantitative results and responses to open-ended questions during the focus group (qualitative). Forty-five (26 male, 19 female) teacher participants completed the online survey questionnaire (Phase 1), and 17 (6 male, 11 female) teachers volunteered to participate in follow-up focus group interviews (Phase 2). An electronic survey designed to obtain feedback regarding the student growth measures system was sent to all participants. Once surveys were collected, two focus group sessions occurred during an in-service for all physical education teachers. Survey data and interviews were analyzed. Results show that teachers believe the intent of the Tennessee Student Growth Measures portfolio is good and can provide potential benefits to teachers. However, adjustments that better support teachers, students, and the physical education program should occur. It is the duty of state

Todd Estel Layne, College of Health Sciences, University of Memphis. Carol Irwin, College of Health Sciences, University of Memphis. Kelly Simonton, College of Health Sciences, University of Wyoming. Please send author correspondence to telayne@memphis.edu

leaders to improve the portfolio system to help maintain high-quality PE teachers.

Research suggests that there has been a focus in the last decade on the implementation of teacher evaluation assessment protocols including the use of student growth measures in physical education (PE; Mercier & Doolittle, 2013; Metzler, 2014; Norris, van der Mars, Kulinna, & Amrein-Beardsley, 2017; Norris, van der Mars, Kulinna, Amrein-Beardsley, Kwon, & Hodges, 2017; Norris, van der Mars, Kulinna, Kwon, & Amrein-Beardsley, 2017; Phillips et al., 2017). One reason for this is the general uptick for improved accountability in teaching and learning in all school subjects (Rink, 2013). In addition, effort to raise the status of subjects like PE with increased accountability and evidence of student learning is being made because PE continues to be a marginalized subject area (Rink, 2013; Phillips et al., 2017). However, recent evidence suggests a great deal of pushback from PE teachers regarding evaluation systems. This is due to content-related differences that do not seem to be accounted for given the similarities and universal principles in evaluation tools and procedures used predominantly targeting regular classroom teachers (Norris, van der Mars, Kulinna, Amrein-Beardsley, Kwon, & Hodges, 2017). Research also indicates that effective assessment procedures in PE that are needed to measure student growth can be problematic because of time demands (Phillips et al., 2017) and lack of content knowledge from the evaluator (Norris, van der Mars, Kulinna, & Amrein-Beardsley, 2017). Several studies are combatting these issues by examining current teacher evaluation systems and assessment delivery efficiency within PE.

To better understand teacher perceptions of evaluation systems, Norris, van der Mars, Kulinna, Amrein-Beardsley, Kwon, and Hodges (2017) surveyed and interviewed current PE teachers to better understand the issues they faced. Results indicated that teachers were confused by the evaluation system and were unsure of their expectations as a PE teacher. In addition, over half of the participants did not believe their administrator could effectively evaluate them due to their lack of content area knowledge. This led to a belief that a fair and valid assessment of their instructional delivery was not being implemented in the current system. Similarly, Norris, van der Mars, Kulinna, and Amrein-Beardsley (2017) found that administrators

acknowledged that a lack of content knowledge made it difficult for them to provide proper assessment of the delivery of content unique to PE teachers. These administrators reported the value of PE and believed it provided benefits to all students, but believed they needed more training to evaluate PE teacher effectiveness accurately and fairly, overall. For administrators to provide effective evaluation of all teachers, there needs to be a system in place to assist with obtaining the proper knowledge of high-quality instruction with all content areas within the school (PE, music, art, etc.).

Another benefit of strengthening the evaluation system is the potential for enhancing the expectations of teacher content delivery and the significance PE teachers could have in their position in schools (Rink, 2013). As PE is a marginalized subject, the expectations for PE teachers are often diminished by peers, administration, and from students (Phillips et al., 2017). If a subject is not seen as important in the school system, students can inaccurately and inadvertently be provided feedback on the lower status of PE as compared with other subjects, which likely leads to lack of interest in the subject. Administrative support is critical to the success of any PE program. For change to occur and the subject to be given importance, PE stakeholders must find ways to help their administrators believe in, and understand, what they are doing and the difference they make with students. For example, student growth measures that align with state and/or national PE standards may provide evidence of objective and subjective student achievement and concrete areas of knowledge, ability, and experience tied specifically to PE content. The lack of administrative awareness to the PE standards and the complexities of measuring these student growth outcomes likely contribute to limited awareness and overall marginalization of PE in schools.

One hindrance to changing the viewpoint of administrators is the mandate of certain state evaluation systems that are less cohesive to subjects like PE (Metzler, 2014). If states require all teachers to be evaluated through the use of the same system, teachers will be forced to incorporate a “teach to the system” approach. In addition, several teaching strategies and approaches that are conducive to quality PE delivery may not align with regular classroom expectations (Metzler, 2014). This approach could limit teacher creativity and the various

pedagogical approaches that can be implemented in PE. There is fear that teacher effectiveness research will be found useless due to the evolution of state educational policy, which can hamper high-quality teacher instruction and focus more on what the evaluation system measures. This directly impacts areas such as PE due to the uniqueness in how it is taught.

Current Trends in Evaluation Systems: Teacher Portfolios

One method for enhancing teacher evaluations is the use of video portfolios (Admiraal et al., 2011). Instead of using written narratives to describe their teaching, teachers record actual teaching to provide an understanding of what is happening in the classroom and provide evidence of student growth. This tangible evidence provides immediate evidence of what is happening with students in the classroom. Teachers are expected to create teaching plans, record teaching performances and student learning, and then provide follow-up reflection and evidence of teaching quality, which is then reviewed by administrative evaluators. To complete the video portfolio components, teachers are expected to store everything in an online platform and to use the technology provided to understand the steps as well as collect and store the data and information. While the use of technology by teachers continues to evolve, it is not without issues. Regardless of experience, some teachers are not educated on current technology features or the expectations for portfolio artifacts they submit. This can limit their ability to display their teaching accurately. In addition, setting up a recording opportunity can take time away from other important duties of a teacher, such as teaching, assessing, and spending time with students.

The state of Tennessee implemented the use of student growth portfolios for the purpose of teacher evaluation in nontested grades and subject areas (Stone & Walker, 2017). Grades and subjects included fine arts, first grade, pre-K/kindergarten, world languages, and PE. PE teacher evaluations was first implemented by pilot schools the 2013–2014 school year. That year, 33 teachers participated. In following years, that number went up to 146 (2014–2015) and 193 (2015–2016). The intent of the student growth portfolios was to provide a way for PE teachers to be measured for their work and effectiveness in their subject, instead of through use of a school-wide growth measure. Stone and Walker (2017) found that when

teachers used a content-specific evaluation method, approximately 7 out of 10 received scores better, or the same, as their school-wide growth measure, which is often disconnected from PE goals and objectives in the first place. In addition, teachers who used a portfolio scored slightly higher in observation ratings than those who did not. However, teachers who used a portfolio did not have different perceptions of the teacher evaluation process compared with those who were not required to complete a portfolio. This led to the question of importance of the portfolio process for teaching in a nontested subject such as PE. In sum, although teacher evaluation systems like the portfolio seem to be assisting in more content-specific evaluations, there is still a lack of information on how well the system works, how competent teachers are in completing the system, and last, if administrators can effectively communicate the value and need of such a system.

This Study

Therefore, the purpose of this research is to analyze a current state evaluation system to measure teacher efficiency within PE. With more states incorporating teacher evaluation systems, it is important to analyze the methods being implemented to better understand the effectiveness of enhancing teacher satisfaction and improving student development. The overarching goal is to understand the benefits and pitfalls from a teacher perspective to help improve overall PE instruction through high-quality evaluation systems.

The results from this study can provide possible adjustments that better serve the learner, the teacher, and the PE program. Research indicates that teachers who are satisfied with their use of time are more likely to stay teaching (Wirt et al., 2005). Evaluation procedures can be time-consuming. However, teachers are more likely to stay in their schools if they believe they are being supported and provided quality feedback regarding their instruction (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). As well, tested content areas (e.g., language arts, math, science) are using research to refine their assessments to be more valid and reliable. Therefore, we have a duty to polish and perfect the new student growth measures protocols for PE to maintain high-quality teachers. In addition, school leaders have to consider an effective approach for maximizing teacher instructional time as well as providing physical and emotional support.

Method

Recruitment and Procedures

Following university institutional review board and district administration approval, we worked with instructional advisors in Health, PE, and Lifetime Wellness from the participating school district to distribute information about the study to potential participants. We used a purposeful sampling technique to recruit only teachers participating in the district-wide teacher portfolio evaluation system. Electronic mail was used to describe the study to teachers and how they can be involved. Participants gave consent electronically at the beginning of the online survey. The survey was sent to all participants in the school district. Teachers who completed the survey were invited to provide their contact information and participate in a follow-up interview group. Once surveys were collected, two focus group sessions occurred during an in-service for all PE teachers who volunteered following the survey.

Participants and Setting

Forty-five (26 male, 19 female) elementary teacher participants completed the online survey questionnaire (Phase 1). The participants reported as being in the current teaching setting for approximately 8 years and teaching on average as a group for 10 years in the district. Within the survey responses, 17 (6 male, 11 female) teachers volunteered to participate in follow-up focus group interviews (Phase 2). Each Phase 2 participant provided consent prior to interview participation. The participants' school district was an Urban and Suburban setting and the largest public school district in the state. The school district served over 100,000 students in more than 200 schools.

Teacher Evaluation

The state of Tennessee implemented the PE student growth portfolio model in 2014. It was designed by a group of vested individuals who served as teachers, district leaders, and university employees (<https://team-tn.org/physical-education/>). Each participating teacher was directed to submit four performance-based evidence collections (2 each from 2nd and 5th grades) that addressed a

standard aligned to a specific skill theme. The portfolio guide provided teachers with directions and an assessment to use for each performance-based skill. In addition, a rubric for each assessment was provided for measurement of student success. Teachers could choose from the following skills: second grade—locomotor skills (required), underhand throw, underhand catch, kicking with a running approach, dribbling with hands, balance skills, or jump rope skills, and fifth grade—overhand throw (force or distance; required), overhand volley, forehand strike, invasion game task, or educational gymnastic routine. A pre-and-post assessment was completed and recorded with results for two students from each category of emerging, proficient, and advanced being submitted. A student growth indicator chart was then used in the calculation of student growth between the two time points. Teacher effectiveness was then scored according to the student growth from the beginning of the school year to the end. At the time of the study, only elementary portfolios had been implemented and completed by schools. The Middle School portfolio was in the beginning stages and thus was not used for this study. High school grades were not included in the portfolio requirement.

Instrumentation

Online Survey

The short Phase 1 online survey was based on the literature and identified needs for the specific district. The first purpose of the survey was to reveal demographic information on the teacher as well as their teaching context, education, and years of teaching experiences. The second purpose was to collect information on school context and resources including time permitted for students in PE, facilities to teach PE, and administration support. Examples included “What type of facilities does your school offer?” with options of common areas where PE is held including gymnasium, auditorium, “T” building, and so forth. In addition, items regarding perceptions of administrative support such as “Rate your administrative support for physical education” were included. Items were rated on a scale from 1 to 10 with 10 being the highest support possible. The final purpose of the survey was to collect information on the portfolio evaluation experience including previous submission, scores, and

perceived fidelity of the system for PE teachers. Evaluation experience items included a 12-item scale specifically addressing teachers' perceived utility, validity, and ease of use of their current evaluation system. Example items for this series of questions included "I believe the [state] system is fair," "I believe the [state] system is a valid way to evaluate teacher effectiveness," and "I believe the [state] system is a waste of time." For measurement of these 11 items, a 4-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly agree* (4) to *strongly disagree* (1) was used. The Appendix shows the survey.

Focus Group Interviews

Phase 2 consisted of focus group interviews for teachers who volunteered to participate. We developed an open-ended semi-structured interview that aligned with previous research concerns including teachers' perceptions of ease of use with the evaluation tool, professional development support for use of the evaluation tool, and fidelity of the tool in measuring and improving effective teaching. Focus group questions also included basic demographic questions (Figure 1). We administered the questions for discussion among the group. The group interviews were 60 min in duration and were video-taped and audio-taped for data analysis. All interviews were transcribed verbatim. For any data reported on an individual teacher, a pseudonym was used in place of their identity for anonymity.

Data Analysis

Online Survey

All online survey data were downloaded to the investigator's computer for analysis. The data were stored in the investigator's computer and were retained for 1 year from the date the first data were obtained. Statistical analysis was conducted in SPSS (IBM Package 26). Demographic and descriptive information was calculated for each item, and open-ended responses were summarized and reported by frequency. Mean scores and frequency percentages were calculated from the items regarding the types of facilities available to the teachers as well as their general perceptions of the support they received from their administration. Next, composite mean scores for perceived utility, value, and ease of use were created through each of

Figure 1

Focus Group Questions

Demographic items:

1. How many years of teaching experience at your present school?
 - a. Approx. number of years teaching experience in your school district?
 - b. Approx. number of years teaching experience (total)?
2. Have you been granted tenure in your school district? (Show of hands)
3. What type of facility does your school offer for teaching physical education?
 - a. Advantages/disadvantages?
4. Please discuss the support you receive from the following...TN Department of Education, district officials, school administration, and other teachers.

Please discuss the following questions:

5. Is the TN SGM portfolio system easy to complete?
6. Has the TN SGM portfolio system helped you become a better teacher?
7. Has the feedback you received from the TN SGM portfolio system been helpful?
8. How much time outside of instruction does the TN SGM portfolio system require?
9. Identify 1 part of the TN SGM Portfolio System that is most beneficial?
10. Identify 1 part of the TN SGM Portfolio System that is most problematic?
11. Any last comments about the TN SGM Portfolio System?

Note. TN SGM = Tennessee Student Growth Measures.

the variable indicators. Overall, means scores and frequencies can be interpreted to identify key areas of perceived support as well as areas where teacher's identified areas of need from their schools and in completing the teacher evaluation portfolio. Final survey results informed Phase 2 focus group interviews and supplemented main findings regarding teacher experiences.

Focus Group Interviews

All interview data were recorded and transcribed verbatim. We conducted an initial inductive analysis procedure wherein each of us read each transcription line by line and identified initial codes and meaning. Coding consisted of labeling key words and phrases participants offered that pertained to important information on the perceptions of the evaluation process (purpose and intent of manuscript). Codes that shared theoretical or practical relationships and subthemes were combined, and descriptive definitions and rationale were provided for each theme (Clark & Creswell, 2011). Next, we analyzed data through constant comparison methods and developed final categories and themes (Patton, 2015). Two of the research members, Todd Estel Layne and Carol Irwin, worked first collectively and then independently during the review process to refine themes until consensus was reached. Additionally, we used several peer-debriefing sessions to determine themes and build congruent interpretations of the findings.

Results

Survey Data

Findings from the survey data were multifaceted including teacher demographics, teaching contexts, perceptions of administrative support, and previous/current experiences with the teacher portfolio evaluation system. Table 1 shows Phase 1 demographic background and school content information. In regard to the general perceptions of administrative support, the first item asked about administrative support for PE in their school and on average teachers reported an 8.08 out of 10 ($SD = 2.62$). They also reported an average of 7.76 of 10 ($SD = 2.72$) for their district and 6.89 of 10 ($SD = 3.13$) for their state support. The next item asked about feelings of support

from staff and peer teachers. Participants reported an average 7.86 of 10 ($SD = 2.37$). Participants also reported on if they received administrative and financial support for professional development. Approximately, 75% said *probably yes* or *definitely yes* to financial support. Follow-up open-ended responses for the most frequent types of support included professional development training (55%), webinars (35%), district learning days (35%), and/or equipment (25%).

Table 1
Demographic and Context Results for Phase 1 Participants

Demographic variable	Frequency	
	<i>n</i>	%
Gender		
Male	26	58
Female	19	42
Education		
Bachelor's	21	48
Master's	19	47
Education specialist	4	5
Tenured in district		
Yes	32	73
No	12	27
Teaching facility (primary)		
Gymnasium	15	31
Multipurpose room	9	18
Cafeteria	4	8
Classroom	5	10
Portable	5	10
Outdoor area	11	23
Share facilities		
Yes, every day	15	39
Yes, every so often	9	22
No	15	39

In terms of participants' perceptions of the evaluation system, teachers reported on their perceived utility, validity, and ease of use (Table 2). The highest mean score items were perceptions that the evaluation took too much time (Item 9) and that more professional development was needed to support completion of the portfolio (Item 12). The lowest scores were reported for items that pertained to the quality of feedback the portfolio evaluation provided (6, 7, and 8). Specifically, low scores were identified for the feedback being beneficial for improved teaching performance, for teachers understanding their scores, and for the feedback being relevant to specific teaching assignments. Interestingly, a moderate mean score was found on the item asking teachers if the evaluation was easy to complete. This contradicted issues of being time-consuming and needing more support; however, this finding also suggested that while some teachers found the evaluation easy to complete, an additional large number of teachers did not. Interview analysis may shed light on these difference, but, overall, the feedback scores following evaluation submission appear to be problematic.

Also reported were the scores for teachers who had completed the evaluation previously. Teachers reported that they received an average score of 4.49 out of 5 for the observation portion and 4.27 out of 5 for the portfolio score. When they were asked what suggestions would make the evaluation system better, the most frequent answers (from most to least frequent) included (a) improved peer-reviewing training as they felt reviewers were either too subjective or not following rubrics carefully; (b) reviewers should be given more/any opportunities to provide feedback for why scores were given; (c) revisions were needed for portfolio expectations/more training on what the reviewers wanted to see; and (d) ultimately, some teachers reported removal of the portfolio entirely would be best. Of note, one participant reported angrily on spending many hours on the portfolio submission to find out it was never graded. Likewise, reported answers for problems with the system (from most to less frequent) were very similar to improvements as (a) issues with scoring system and reviewers was most frequently reported, followed by (b) feeling a general lack of fairness in the evaluation, (c) the large amount of time for recordings and putting materials together, and (d) the lack feedback for scores and inconsistencies year to year.

Table 2

Physical Education Teachers' Perceptions of the Perceived Utility and Ease of Use of Their Current Portfolio Evaluation System

Prompt: I believe the TN SGM Portfolio		%
System...	M (SD)	completed
1. is fair.	2.13 (0.94)	100
2. is easy to complete.	2.58 (0.86)	100
3. is a valid (accurate) way to evaluate my teacher effectiveness.	2.05 (0.90)	100
4. is something in which the students enjoy participating.	2.29 (0.84)	100
5. has helped to make me a better teacher.	2.08 (0.88)	100
6. has provided me feedback that I understand regarding my scores.	1.81 (0.88)	97
7. has provided my feedback that has been beneficial in improving my teaching.	1.72 (0.88)	94
8. has provided my feedback that was relevant and specific to my teaching assignment.	1.83 (0.88)	94
9. takes too much time away from instruction.	2.97 (0.79)	100
10. has a grievance process that is fair.	2.17 (0.81)	94
11. is done in a fair, consistent, and reliable manner.	2.11 (0.89)	100
12. should offer professional development as I would attend workshops to help me better implement it.	2.68 (0.66)	100

Note. Likert scale range from *strongly agree* (4) to *strongly disagree* (1). Percentage indicates number of participants in Phase 1 who answered item.

Teachers also reported their biggest challenges with the evaluation system (from most to least frequent) including (a) miscommunication/unclear guidance for completion, (b) time spent on recordings/technology and materials, and (c) feeling it lacked authenticity/accuracy to quality PE practices. When

prompted, teachers also reported a few benefits for the use of the system including beliefs that (a) students showed growth and learning could be measured more appropriately, (b) teachers learned to focus on the details of teaching that needed improvement, and (c) videos may help with technology in PE and for seeing improvements in teaching.

Interview Results

The following themes resulted from the focus group interview data: (1) school setup can make completion difficult, (2) support is needed to complete the portfolio for the first time, and (3) feedback is needed to provide evidence of portfolio results.

School Setup

Administrative support was evident with most of the participants. If there was a need for their classroom, the administration or parent groups provided what they needed. This aligned with a large percentage of teachers reporting they received at least basic profession support from their schools in the survey analysis. For instance, Marie said, “My PTA asked me to make a list of most important/least equipment needs. They purchased \$4,000 worth of equipment.” Judy added, “The principal and parent group at my school is very supportive. The parent group provided a climbing wall that was needed for the gym. I also collaborate with teachers all the time to bring PE into the classroom.” Even with this support and quality resources, participants discussed how the setup at their school could be problematic at times in terms of completing the evaluation steps. For example, if there is only one PE teacher at the school, it was difficult for the teacher to complete the video recordings while the rest of the class was waiting for instruction. Rachel said, “It helps when you have two teachers. One can be with the class while the other is doing the portfolio.” Another issue for participants was having to do their recording while outside, which is unique to PE environments in most cases. If weather was bad, it forced them to delay their recording and thus added time to an already lengthy process. Sarah stated, “It’s difficult because everything is completed outside. January, February, and March are months that are difficult due to the weather.”

Support for First-Time Teachers

Participants believed that the process for completing the portfolio would be much easier their first year if they had a mentor to guide them. Marie shared her thoughts regarding first year teachers:

I feel bad for those doing it the first time. They need to be assigned a mentor to help them understand the steps to complete the portfolio. Then, for the postsubmission, they should be able to do it on their own.

Amy believed that a year of experience made a difference in using the system to submit materials: “I had so many questions my first year because I like to be organized and some information was not clear. It’s time-consuming. It is easy now that I know how to work with the system.”

Survey results indicated teachers’ desire for professional development that aided them with implementing the portfolio system. State education leaders should consider partnering with content-specific associations to establish proper development opportunities that maximize learning and ease the transition to the portfolio system.

Feedback From Results

In corroboration with main findings from the survey results, participants were disappointed that evaluation scores were not accompanied by specific feedback. If lower scores were to be given, then feedback should be provided to allow for improvement. All participants from the study indicated that the system does not allow feedback to be provided to the teacher. Alice, who was also a scorer, clarified this situation: “As a reviewer, there is only a place for you to put in a score, but nothing for feedback.” Alice added that she would provide other teachers “unofficial” feedback prior to submitting their portfolio. She indicated doing because no feedback would be given once the process was completed. Aaron discussed how he would be upset if a low score was received because of something outside of his control: “I would be very upset if I received a low score because of procedure, not my teaching.” Another issue with not receiving feedback was the consistency in scores. Rachel discussed how she and her co-teachers received different scores: “It is too subjective. My co-teachers and I received a different score even though

we were from the same school.” While there were problems with not receiving feedback, all participants stated that they would feel better about their scores if it was accompanied by feedback stating why they received that score.

While no other themes were produced, there were statements of significance related to the Tennessee Student Growth Measures (TN SGM) for PE. Participants appreciated having video evidence to provide students with feedback and to display student growth to administration. “When I can show students what they need to do to improve, it made them better,” stated Becky. Finally, participants believed the portfolio system required too much time for completion. With busy schedules and limited time with students, quality instruction time was lost. Aaron provided some thoughts: “It’s extremely time-consuming. I chose one class to complete my portfolio. While they had to focus on the parameters of the test, my other classes were able to have more opportunities for growth.” Because of the amount of time needed, Helen indicated, “It can be very boring for students. You spend so much time getting them prepared for the video. It can take two days just to get through the filming.”

Discussion

Overall, results from this research show that the PE teachers surveyed believe the intent of the TN SGM portfolio can be worthwhile and provide some potential benefits to individual PE teachers as well as the profession as a whole. These benefits include that the teacher behavior indicators within the portfolio system more closely measure and align with high-quality PE classroom, as opposed to a generic observation evaluation that is based on more traditional “classroom” teacher behaviors. However, results from this study illustrate a gap between what teachers believe the portfolio evaluation system can represent and what resulted from the experience. This particular observation is evident in the centrist manner of teachers’ responses to the initial survey questions. The low score for almost all the prompts may indicate that many teachers feel ambivalent about the process. For example, the survey prompt asking if the TN SGM evaluation system is fair shows a 2.13, a “middle of the road” result. At the same time, the results show a more negative reaction by more teachers to the prompt concerning if the portfolio system provides feedback to improve their teaching (1.72). The results show more

positive perceptions about teachers attending professional development workshops to assist in implementation of the portfolio system (2.68). This particular result suggests that while they have undecided feelings about the system in general, teachers want to know more about how to implement the system to improve their abilities.

The quantitative survey responses match the focus group responses, which points to the reliability of the teachers' responses overall. Many focus group comments support teachers' belief that an evaluation system is needed to enhance their abilities and that if a detailed analysis were provided, it could help them become better educators. Their responses also point to teachers' need for help and professional support in teaching and engaging in the evaluation process, which aligns with previous work on teacher perceptions of assessment and evaluation (Norris, van der Mars, Kulinna, Amrein-Beardsley, & Kwon, 2017; Phillips et al., 2017). Overall, the most deliberated issue is teachers' lack of preparation to create and submit this portfolio, which creates feelings of being deserted and marginalized (Norris, van der Mars, Kulinna, Kwon, & Amrein-Beardsley, 2017). Further, numerous teachers in this urban school district do not have a dedicated gymnasium or multipurpose room in which to teach PE, which can create difficulties with filming and accessing the technology they need to complete a high-quality, submittable portfolio. Additionally, brand-new teachers have tremendous challenges despite learning to complete a confusing, complicated evaluation system on top of everything else they need to master. Most importantly, it is important for teachers, according to almost all the focus group participants, to receive more detailed feedback on how to improve their teaching. Although some participants responded that they received specific scores in categories, but no detailed feedback. Thus, a teacher receiving a low score in one category would have to guess why they may have not done well in that particular teaching behavior classification. Overall, it is not surprising to see a great deal of frustration from teachers after completing a complicated and novel evaluation tool that provides essentially no meaningful feedback to validate and support the process as a whole.

Data from this research suggest that adjustments that better support PE teachers through the evaluation process should occur. It is the duty of state and school district leaders to improve the portfolio

system to help maintain high-quality PE teachers. Providing feedback is crucial so that the teacher being evaluated understands what might be missing as well as what might be exceptional. A teacher evaluation system without a distinct narrative and with only a number is not a valid appraisal for this group of dedicated professionals. During this time frame and considering “regular” classroom teachers, the State of Tennessee evaluation system uses with the evaluator pre-and-post evaluation conferences (e.g., principal), which focus on specifics within the overall evaluation and offer feedback to underscore both positive behaviors and disadvantageous behaviors. The results show frustration among research participants in being evaluated differently and what they believe is unsuitable (Mercier & Doolittle, 2013). According to Rink (2013), “Designing and conducting a quality teacher or program evaluation for PE has the potential to be a significant impetus for change in our field” (p. 416). It is the responsibility of stakeholders to ensure the future of high-quality PE instruction and its impact on student learning.

Practical Considerations

To counter the negative aspects of the TN SGM portfolio evaluation system, PETE programs need to prepare future PE teachers as they progress through their undergraduate and graduate coursework. University programs in PETE need to include the TN SGM portfolio system in the late coursework. Further, the mentor school-site student-teacher supervisor can expose the student teacher to this evaluation system. Understanding how to manage the process to complete the portfolio will ready future induction teachers for this complicated process.

Principals and other administration (e.g., school-district curriculum coordinators) also need to step up. Professional development is a possible solution. Further, the PE state associations need to host special professional development sessions during their annual state conventions and possibly offer regional conferences that focus on this evaluation system during the summer. Although this research includes a limited number of participants ($n = 45$), a major piece of feedback is the teachers want to know more on how to be a better teacher.

Future Research

The findings from this study highlight the need for additional studies to continue this important line of inquiry in the PE field. To go along with the numbers, annual teacher opinion surveys can be utilized, as “teacher voice” is essential toward uncovering the advantages and the disadvantages of any evaluation system. In addition, focus group responses not only confirm what we believe are the major factors captured in the quantitative survey but also reveal additional issues. Focus groups can be hosted annually at the PE state association conventions. Next steps include establishing and testing a mentorship program for first-year teachers or first-time evaluation completers. A proximal training program and instructional leader may be needed in districts to enhance teachers’ acceptance and understanding of the system, but more work is needed for further understanding of its potential impact. It is also important to evaluate proper methods for providing administrators with adequate content knowledge without sacrificing important time away from their job as school leader. If this occurs, it is possible to improve the validity of teacher evaluation. It is evident that research and practical considerations for reporting and responding to feedback following an evaluation can show if effectiveness can be improved.

Conclusion

Understanding how this evaluation system is impacting the state of Tennessee teachers is key to the creation of a fair and beneficial assessment. Therefore, scrutiny and reporting of actual research findings is an obligation. Assessing the reliability and validity of any evaluation system is a requirement. Providing specific PE teacher evaluation systems is likely going to improve PE teachers’ perceptions about evaluation and, more importantly, to improve teaching and learning in PE. However, major considerations for the practical feasibility of evaluations need more research and support. In addition, using teacher evaluations to make improvements can be done only through a strong review and critical feedback reporting process. State and district level departments should consider investing resources into improved mentorship, training, and support to enhance this process, which will likely also improve the acceptance of the system.

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Appendix: Survey Questions

Demographic Items

1. What is your gender? Female Male
2. What is your age?
3. What is your employment status as a teacher?
Full-time 1 school Full-time 2 or more schools Part time
4. List the approx. number of years teaching experience at your present school
5. List the approx. number of years teaching experience in your school district.
6. List the approx. number of years teaching experience (total).
7. Have you been granted tenure in your school district? Yes No
8. Have you been granted tenure in other school districts?
Yes No N/A
If yes, which school district(s)? _____ (open-ended, OE)
9. What is the highest level of formal education that you have completed—the degree name/program (e.g., BA Physical Education), the name of the granting higher education institution (college or university), and the year conferred?
†Bachelor degree: Degree Name—Institution Name—Year
†Masters degree: Degree Name—Institution Name—Year
Other degree(s) and/or certifications (OE)
10. In a **typical school week**, estimate the number of hours (60 minutes) you spend on the following for your job. This question concerns your work for all schools—you work for two or more schools. Please write a number in each row and round to the nearest hour in your responses. Write “0” (zero) if none.

Teaching students (either whole class, in groups, or individually):

Planning/preparation of lessons, in school or out of school (including marking of student work):

Administrative duties either in school or out of school (including school administrative duties, paperwork, and other clerical duties you undertake in your job as a teacher):

Other (please specify type of work & hours): (OE)

11. What type of facility does your school offer for teaching physical education? (circle all you use)

Gymnasium	Multipurpose Room	Cafeteria	Classroom
Portable	Outdoor areas	Other (OE)	

12. Do you share this facility/space? Yes No

If yes, describe who you share these spaces with and the frequency:
(OE)

13. Rate your administration's support of physical education (1–10 with 10 being highest support)

Comments about administration support (OE)

14. Rate the teacher/staff support of physical education (1–10 with 10 being highest support)

Comments about teacher/staff support (OE)

15. Does your administration fund/help to fund professional development? Yes No

If yes, describe the support (e.g., sending you to conferences, money for substitute teacher to observe other school district teachers, purchases webinars/books, etc.) (OE)

16. What was your most recent TEM evaluation score? (1–5)

If you were full time last year (2015–16) what was your overall score? (1–5)

17. If you participated last year, what was your TN Student Growth Measures score? (1–5)

Agree/Disagree Statements: (4-point Likert Scale)

I believe the TN SGM portfolio system is fair.

I believe the TN SGM portfolio system is easy.

I believe the TN SGM portfolio system is a valid way to evaluate teacher effectiveness.

I believe the TN SGM portfolio system is hard.

I believe the TN SGM portfolio system is a reliable way to evaluate teacher effectiveness.

I believe the TN SGM portfolio system is too much paperwork.

I believe the TN SGM portfolio system takes too much time away from instruction.

I believe the TN SGM portfolio system is something in which the students enjoy participating.

I believe the TN SGM portfolio system is a waste of time.

I believe the TN SGM portfolio system has helped to make me a better teacher.

I believe the TN SGM portfolio system results are used in a rational manner that improves my teaching.

Do you have any suggestions to make the TN SGM Portfolio System better? (OE)

What part, or parts, of the TN SGM Portfolio System is (are) problematical? (OE)

If this is your first year of completing a TN SGM Portfolio:

Describe the challenges. (OE)

Describe the positive outcomes. (OE)

If this is your second (or more) time you have completed a TN SGM?

Portfolio:

Describe the challenges (OE)

Describe the positive outcomes (OE)

Any last comments about the TN SGM portfolio system? (OE)