

CONTENT DEVELOPMENT DECISION-MAKING OF ELEMENTARY  
PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS

by

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(Under the Direction of Paul G. Schempp)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to examine the content development decision-making process of three experienced elementary physical education teachers in their natural teaching environment. Each teacher planned for, taught, and reflected on a series of five lessons that focused primarily on one movement skill.

The criteria used to select the participants were ten or more years of teaching experience and a primary curriculum focus of motor skill acquisition. The research design was a multiple case study. The data collection techniques included interviews, videotaped observations, stimulated recall interviews, a think-aloud procedure, and document analysis. Each case was analyzed inductively and reported independently as a data story followed by the researcher's interpretations. A final analysis was done across the cases.

The individuality of the teachers was a significant theme throughout the data that influenced the many decisions they made. Across the three cases, there were many commonalities. For example, planning was an area all three teachers felt was important to quality teaching and was where most of their content development decisions were made.

They all were goal oriented in their plans and had set, yet unique, planning routines. For all three teachers, many planning thoughts occurred sporadically and rarely reached paper. All three presented their plans as a progression formulated primarily from past teaching experiences and included additional knowledge sources as an avenue to strengthen the lesson. All three viewed reflection as an ongoing process that occurred while planning, during teaching, and after teaching. The reflections were generally used to make changes in the present lesson, the next class, or for future planning. Another theme that emerged was the constraints brought on by administrative rulings that influenced decision-making.

Through the process of describing, analyzing and interpreting the data, and observations and discussions with the participants, several recommendations are made for teacher educators. These include: (1) A re-examination of how we teach the planning process, (2) Encouraging the use of a variety of knowledge sources early in the preservice teacher's training, and (3) Addressing reflection as not merely occurring after teaching but while planning and during the act of teaching.

INDEX WORDS: Content Development, Decision-Making, Planning, Reflection, Teacher Education

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## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated in memory of my mother, Margaret Alyene Hall. She would have been proud of this accomplishment. I also dedicate this dissertation to Jason Porterfield whose strength and courage through his personal tribulation has been an inspiration to me the past three years.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The idea of attempting to describe and understand the thinking and decision-making processes that contribute to teacher effectiveness potentially began in a book entitled *Life in Classrooms* (1968) by Philip Jackson. He explained the complexity of teacher decision-making as preactive, interactive, and postactive. In other words, teachers make decisions before, during, and after teaching in a linear fashion.

In 1977, Yinger conceptualized that the boundaries between planning, teaching, and reflecting are not distinct by proposing a cyclic model contrasting Jackson's (1968) linear model. He theorized that teaching is not about a series of plans and teaching episodes but that each planning event can be influenced by previous plans and teaching experiences. Consequently, the reflection from a teaching event contributes to future planning and teaching.

One aspect of the research on teacher cognition was the idea that teachers' thoughts and subsequent decisions form the context for teaching and, in turn, learning (Medley, D. M., Coker, H., Coker, J., Lorentz, J., Soar, R., & Spaulding, R. L., 1981). Shavelson (1983) characterized decision-making as simply being a basic teaching skill that is a part of every aspect of a teacher's professional life. In a review of the literature on teachers' thought processes, Clark and Peterson (1986) discovered that Jackson's concept of preactive and interactive teacher decision-making was considered distinct and was consequently retained as an avenue for cognitive research. The idea of postactive decision-making, however, was occasionally grouped with preactive thoughts or not included at all.



It was in the mid 1980s that researchers interested in teacher cognition and decision-making began to explore the differences between novice and expert teachers that continued into the 1990s (Berliner, 1986; Borko & Livingston, 1989; Borko & Shavelson, 1990; Swanson, O'Conner, and Cooney, 1990). The research implied that novice and experienced teachers make decisions based on different criteria, and as a result, teach differently. Three prominent studies with the same focus in the field of physical education were Housner and Griffey (1985), Graham, Hopple, Manross, and Stitzman (1993), and Griffey and Housner (1991).

The endeavor to understand teacher decision-making in physical education was initiated by Housner and Griffey (1985) wherein they compared the planning and interactive decision-making of preservice teachers and experienced teachers. In a laboratory setting, they compared eight elementary physical education teachers with five years or more experience with eight preservice teachers. Each planned for and taught two lessons to four elementary students. The results indicated that experienced teachers made over twice as many planning decisions concerning strategies for implementing instructional activities than did the inexperienced teachers. While actually teaching the lessons, the inexperienced teachers made decisions based on the interest level of the class as a whole, while the experienced teachers focused on the needs of each individual student and made decisions accordingly. Additionally, the experienced teachers made about 30% more instructional decisions during the lesson than did inexperienced teachers and the experienced teachers had a much greater focus on skill acquisition (Housner and Griffey, 1985).

Graham, et al. (1993) reported similar results as they compared three experienced and three inexperienced teachers each instructing a full class in a dribbling lesson. The study was conducted in the schools at which the veteran teachers worked and the novice teachers were

placed for student teaching. The results indicated that beginning teachers were less able to predict when and where a lesson might need a change and therefore did not include it in their plans. During planning their lesson content primarily came from textbooks and other written resources. While teaching they frequently progressed from one task to another based on what they perceived as a need to cover the material more than readiness of the students. In contrast, the experienced teachers' plans were more child-focused, included fewer tasks and provided a higher percentage of time to learning cues. The decisions made in planning came primarily from the teachers' experiences in teaching the same content. The planning decisions of the experienced teachers carried over into the decisions made while teaching, as their time spent on developing tasks was based on their perceptions of the students' needs.

The question remains as to what truly informs experienced teachers' decision-making that results in the effective teaching described in the two studies above. For, according to Clark and Peterson (1986), "research on teachers' thought processes ...has deep roots in early teaching effectiveness and curricular research" (p. 292). Based on this idea and the framework established by the research of Housner and Griffey (1985) and Graham et al. (1993) this inquiry was designed to expand the body of knowledge presently available on teacher decision-making. Specifically, this study focused on three experienced elementary physical education teachers' decision-making regarding content development.

Critical to the teaching-learning process is for a teacher to have general pedagogical skills, knowledge of the content and knowledge of how to best teach particular content (Rink, 2001). This is called pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1987). One of the essential content pedagogy skills is the ability of the teacher to break down the content and sequence it into appropriate learning experiences. One goal in teaching physical education is to take the

learner from one level of movement performance to a higher level. To do this requires planning and presenting a carefully designed progression of tasks. This process is called content development (Rink, 2001). According to Rink, a teacher typically begins a lesson with an initial or *informing task* and progresses through the lesson by changing the conditions of the practice, therefore *extending* the task. Tasks included in a lesson that allow the student to put the movement in a game-like situation, thereby applying the skill, is called an *application* of the task. An additional part of content development, *refinement*, is the cognitive aspect wherein the students are instructed to focus on the process of a movement. One avenue to determine how experienced teachers develop content is to explore their decision-making processes of building a progression within a lesson and from one lesson to the next.

An elementary school physical education program provides a unique setting to further study the content development decision-making of teachers. An elementary physical education teacher will teach anywhere from seven to thirteen different classes per day. The class times may range from 25 minutes to 50 minutes. The schedule is often arranged wherein classes of the same or successive grades follow each other as elementary physical educators tend to teach the same content area to successive grades. Therefore, this atmosphere provides an excellent opportunity to examine the content development of teachers and the circumstances allow an observer to discern if lessons are modified from one class to another. If a change is made, the opportunity exists to identify what actions and decisions prompted the modification(s).

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the content development decision-making of three experienced elementary physical education teachers. Each teacher was observed in their natural teaching environment as they planned for, taught, and reflected on a series of five lessons

that focused primarily on the development of one movement skill. Two consecutive classes were observed of the same or successive grade levels. The questions that guided the three case studies were:

1. What informs the decision of when, why, and how often a task is changed?
2. What informs the decision of to what a task is changed?
3. How and when are these decisions made?

### Contributions of the Study

The results of this study will contribute to a better understanding of the many decisions involved in teaching elementary physical education. For the experienced practitioner, insights into effective teaching may arise as well as the possible affirmation of current practices. The novice practitioner can gain knowledge of how, when, and why experienced teachers make decisions. Teacher education programs may also benefit from this study by using the case studies as exemplifiers of the decision-making process of three experienced teachers.

### Overview of Succeeding Chapters

Chapter two presents a review of the literature related to teacher cognition, decision-making, and the planning, interactive teaching, and reflection practices of teachers. Chapter three provides a thorough examination of the methods used in this study including the design, the selection of participants, data collecting techniques, procedures, and data analysis. Chapters four, five, and six each represent an individual case and the researcher's from the respective case. Chapter seven concludes with a summary of the interpretations across the three case studies and addresses recommendations for how the data "findings" can be used to improve teacher practices.

### Glossary of Terms

*Application of a task* A mode of changing the task from a practice of how to do the movement to how to use or assess the movement (Rink, 2001).

*Extension of a task* A mode of changing the complexity or difficulty of a task (Rink, 2001).

*Informing task* The initial task of an episode (Rink, 2001).

*Progression* Sequencing learning experiences from simple to complex (Rink, 2001).

*Refinement of a task* A form of communication to enable the student to focus on the quality of a skill (Rink, 2001).

*Task* An activity assigned to a student that is directly related to the content of the lesson.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Based on a thorough review of the research literature, it appears teacher behavior is substantially influenced and possibly determined by teachers' thought processes. Planning, teaching, and reflecting make up the context that curriculum is interpreted and acted on. The research on teacher cognition has examined teacher thought processes before, during, and after teaching in an effort to understand the decisions they made, why they do what they do, and the cognitive processes they employ (Borko & Livingston, 1989; Clark & Yinger, 1979, 1987; Ethell & McMeniman, 2000; Griffey & Housner, 1991; Twardy & Yerg, 1987). While various terminologies were used to describe what teachers do prior to, during, or after teaching, I have chosen, for the purpose of this review, to be consistent by using the following vocabulary: planning, teaching, and reflecting.

Gleaned from the literature, it appeared that the research focus on teacher cognition has occurred in stages. For example, the planning literature and research was developed and conducted in the late 1970s through the 1980s. The majority of research on the act of teaching or interactive teaching began in the 1980s and continued into the 1990s. Although reflection has appeared sporadically in the literature, it has become a major focus of current research. For the purpose of this study, the sources of literature used primarily addressed and focused upon the process of planning, teaching and reflection. It must however be noted that while much of the research linked the study of planning with the teaching process, few examined all three.

This review of literature begins with planning and examines why teachers plan, the types of plans used, and the function of these plans. Next, the literature was examined to explain how planning is incorporated into the act of teaching. While discussing the act of teaching, the role of teacher decision-making and use of observations skills were expounded. Finally, literature on teacher reflection was reviewed.

### Planning

Research in education suggested that what teachers think about prior to teaching shapes what they do in the classroom (Carnahan, 1980; Clark & Peterson, 1986; Clark & Yinger, 1987). Research also indicated that planning served as a guide or mental image for the lesson that, in turn, influenced content covered, lesson focus, learning opportunities provided, organization of students and teacher-student interaction (Carnahan, 1980; Griffey & Housner, 1991; Hill, Yinger, & Robbins, 1981; Peterson & Comeaux, 1987). Planning served as a connection between curriculum and instruction.

#### *Why Teachers Plan*

Often preservice teachers have trouble comprehending the need for the extensive planning required of them in undergraduate courses. For many, it is not until the student teaching experience that the value of planning becomes recognized.

One aspect of a study by Clark and Yinger (1979) was for teachers to reply to the question of why they plan. Teachers' responses included to:

1. determine a direction to take a lesson.
2. build confidence and security about the lesson.
3. learn the material or refresh their memory by studying and reviewing the content.
4. organize the material for presentation.

5. make decisions on timing and flow of the lesson.
6. organize students.
7. provide an outline for instruction and evaluation.
8. meet organizational needs such as daily, weekly, and semester schedules.

Planning can be both internally and externally motivating for teachers. While the above list represents internal motivation, systematic, or formal written plans represent external motivation (McCutcheon, 1980). Experienced teachers in three studies viewed systematic written plans as important (McCutcheon, 1980; Neale, Pace, & Case, 1983; Sardo, 1982). However, in these studies the teachers claimed formal, written plans were useful only for beginning or preservice teachers, to turn in to administrators, or to have available for substitute teachers. In other words, while systematic, detailed written plans, as taught in most teacher education programs, have their place and are produced by some teachers; they appear to be of little practical use to the experienced teacher. This subject is addressed in more detail in a later section discussing how teachers plan.

Over a ten-year period, 1984-1994, several studies compared the planning of experienced and inexperienced teachers. Housner and Griffey (1985), in a laboratory setting, compared eight novice and eight experienced teachers as they planned and taught two physical education lessons to four students each. They discovered that experienced teachers expressed much more concern in their planning than the inexperienced teachers. In reporting a different research question from the same data collection stage, Griffey & Housner, (1991) found that experienced teachers asked questions linked with prior planning concerning students, facilities, and equipment.



While experienced teachers understood the need for planning, it was often difficult for preservice teachers to grasp the need for the time that experienced teachers invested in planning. This lack of time preservice teachers spent planning often reflected in their teaching. Twardy and Yerg (1987) found preservice teachers' demonstrations and information giving to be related to how well they planned content and prepared the activity structure.

Additional evidence of the importance of planning on the act of teaching came from a comparison of a group of preservice teachers, one group teaching a planned lesson and one an unplanned lesson (Byra & Coulon, 1994). The results implied that planning had a positive effect on some preservice teachers' instructional performance, which transferred to the learners. The students that were taught in planned lessons spent less time waiting turns and were more on-task during activity, resulting in greater practice time. The teachers who planned were more attentive to the students during pre-task presentations, were clearer during the task presentation, and provided specific congruent feedback more frequently during student on-task time.

As demonstrated by the above studies, in order for inexperienced or experienced teachers to have "effective" teaching behaviors, planning has to occur. This planning appears to be a confidence builder that eliminates or, at the very least, reduces uncertainties of the upcoming teaching experience.

### *Types of Plans*

Substantial teacher time and energy is devoted to structuring, organizing for, and managing instruction. During a year, experienced teachers engage in as many as eight different types of planning (Borko, Lalik, Livingston, Pecic, & Perry, 1986; Clark & Yinger, 1979; Yinger, 1980). In Clark and Yinger's (1979) study, 78 teachers listed and described three examples of their most important types of plans. In the order of importance, most teachers

selected unit plans followed by weekly and daily plans. In describing their choices, it appeared that these varied types of plans were dependent on each other and were of little help independently. Only 7% of the teachers mentioned formal lesson plans among their most important choices. Listed in the order of the frequency mentioned, the data revealed the following: weekly, daily, unit, long-range, lesson, short-range, yearly and term planning.

In a case study by Yinger (1980), one teacher identified five types of plans used: yearly, term, unit, weekly, and daily with each type of plan serving a different purpose. Borko et al., (1986) with the exception of term plans, found the same in a single teacher case study. Sardo (1982) recognized that inexperienced teachers used their planning time mainly on daily and individual subject or grade level lesson plans. Experienced teachers, on the other hand, spent less time planning, focused more on the flow of the lessons for a week and wrote plans but did not focus on the finer details of an individual lesson.

When preparing yearly plans, experienced teachers in a study by Clark and Elmore (1981) focused more on reflections from past years, while using published curriculum materials along with the current school calendar. Smith and Sendelbach's (1979) participants revealed that the use of mental pictures of the unit to be taught, the activity sequence, and the expected responses of students guided their planning. The findings of the discussed literature, therefore poses the question: how do teachers actually plan?

### *How Teachers Plan*

The most commonly reported practice for written plans was to first identify the subject matter and activities. Other considerations included materials needed, goals and objectives, and procedures for assessment (Borko & Shavelson, 1990). In the reviewed literature, there appears to be controversy about teachers' use of objectives in planning. Peterson, Marx, and Clark (1978)

found that teachers spend the smallest proportion of actual planning time on objectives. Several studies on planning revealed the same or similar findings and some even went as far to claim learning objectives were rare and that teachers appeared mainly interested in activities rather than outcomes (Goc-Karp & Zakrajsek, 1987; Housner & Griffey, 1983; Placek, 1984; Sardo, 1982; Twardy & Yerg, 1987). Contrary to these findings, the teachers Stroot and Morton (1989) characterized as effective did consider objectives prior to determining activities.

McLeod (1981) specifically studied when teachers think about objectives. Out of 17 kindergarten teachers, 8 formulated objectives during the act of teaching while most of the others planned outcomes before or after material and activity selection but prior to actual teaching. She suggested that without studying teaching as a whole process of planning, teaching, and reflecting, one could miss the opportunities teachers use to think about and apply specific and general learning outcomes for their students.

As one aspect of his case study, Yinger (1977, 1980) developed a three-stage cyclic model representing an individual teacher's approach to daily and weekly planning. The cycle began with a problem finding state whereby the teacher conceptualized the plans based on consideration of content, goals, and her own knowledge and experience. In the problem formulation and solutions stage that followed, she designed activities by repeatedly elaborating, investigating, and adapting. The third stage consisted of implementation with ongoing evaluation of the activities in the actual classroom setting. Because of these processes, activities were either rejected or modified. Through reflection, those activities evaluated as effective eventually were incorporated into the teacher's repertoire of knowledge and experience. When asked to describe the planning of a two-week unit, the teachers in Clark and Yinger's (1979) study noted that they followed a similar cycle.

Another research concern that often appears is the use of written plans by teachers. Experienced teachers in most studies revealed that much of their planning occurs outside of recognized planning time and is never written down in a formal lesson plan (Borko & Livingston, 1989; Kneer, 1986; McCutcheon, 1980; Morine-Dersheimer, 1979; Placek, 1984). Many claimed fine-tuning of instructional plans and lesson rehearsal occurred spontaneously at any point in the day. McCutcheon (1980) referred to these thinking and rehearsing processes as mental dialogues. She found the teachers in her study used mental dialogues to cover a wide range of concerns including the actual teaching of particular skills and concepts, handling of potential behavior problems, and anticipating potential instructional pitfalls.

Written plans are not always in a formal context. For example, Borko and Livingston (1989) described the process of an experienced teacher's planning as the integration of scripts for teaching activities. The scripts of an experienced teacher might include explanation and demonstration, the structure for specific instructional content and teaching strategies, and scenes for instructional formats whether individual, partner, small group, or whole-class. Smith and Sendelbach (1979) asked teachers to plan a sixth-grade science lesson. The mental picture of instruction included a sequence of activities and students' possible responses. Notes that accompanied the teachers' mental plans were typically just lists of things to remember.

Morine-Dersheimer (1979) pointed out that planning is seldom fully reflected in teachers' written plans. Mental plans are much more comprehensive and include lesson images. The fact that certain planning elements are not included in written plans should not bring one to the conclusion that they are non-existent and unimportant in the scheme of planning. In her study, objectives were not a part of her teachers' written plans, but they did seem to be a part of the mental dialogues.

McCutcheon (1980) suggested that teacher educators or theorists in education often do not recognize the importance of mental planning. She further elaborated this may be the reason teachers, administrators, and supervisors do not legitimize mental planning as a typical and professional action. With the strong emphasis on written plans and lack of acknowledgement to mental planning, this aspect of planning warrants further attention by educational researchers and practitioners. Maybe teachers need to be assured that those thoughts in the shower or on the way to and from work are truly meaningful planning experiences.

Research comparing experienced and novice teachers' planning conveys many differences between the two. Levels of experience or experiences of teachers seem to affect planning both in the nature of the process and the actual plans. As mentioned earlier, few experienced teachers use formal written planning and many use mental planning only. Less experienced teachers use written, more formal plans and generally demonstrate time-consuming, less efficient planning processes (Barrett, Sebren, & Sheehan, 1991; Borko & Livingston, 1989). In addition, experienced teachers are more selective in their use of information and are able to incorporate more instructionally relevant material thereby creating their unique, yet, purposeful plans (Berliner, 1986; Borko & Niles, 1982; Housner & Griffey, 1985; Sardo, 1982; Warner, 1987).

Livingston and Borko (1989) compared three novices and three experienced math teachers and discovered all six actually used mental plans for their lessons. The planning processes were different, however. The novices devoted much of their planning time to deciding how to present the subject matter to the students, working out solutions to problems and constructing detailed mental images for their presentation. Detailed written plans accompanied their mental plans. Experienced teachers typically included sequencing of lesson components and

content while none prepared formal written lesson plans. Experienced teachers did not include such details as timing and pacing, as did the inexperienced teachers. The experienced teachers claimed those would be determined during the class based on student questions and responses. In fact, two of the experienced teachers planned specific contingencies that were dependent upon student performance and understanding.

Research that focuses on how a physical educator plans appears to parallel the practices of classroom teachers. Housner and Griffey (1985) compared the planning and interactive decision-making of experienced and preservice teachers in a laboratory setting. Experienced teachers made over twice as many planning decisions concerning strategies for implementing instructional activities than did inexperienced teachers. The planning decisions concerned assessment, observation and analysis of student performance, provisions for feedback, management of student behavior, focus of student attention, and demonstration of motor skills. Prior to the lessons, experienced teachers requested more information about facilities, equipment, and the students' previous experiences than did the inexperienced teachers. Most asked to see the instructional facility ahead of time (Griffey & Housner, 1991; Housner & Griffey, 1985).

Research has also noted that experienced teachers were better at anticipating critical problems that could occur in a lesson and created contingency plans in the event of these situations (Housner & Griffey, 1985). Beginning teachers, in contrast, were less able to predict when and where a lesson might need a change; therefore, this was not typically part of their plans (Graham, et al., 1993). The lack of experience teaching children forced beginning teachers to rely on written resources as their guide until they gained the rich repertoire of tasks and activities that experienced teachers have tested over the years (Borko & Livingston, 1989). An example of this arose in a study by Graham, et al., (1993), wherein three novice and three experienced

teachers were asked to teach a dribbling lesson to the same classes of children. The novice teachers tended to rely on textbooks and university courses to develop an extensive progression of tasks to present to the classes. In fact, they intentionally over planned, as they were not sure of the level of the children. The experienced teachers knew which tasks would be appropriate and devoted more time to fewer tasks. The experienced teachers' plans were more child-focused and provided a higher percentage of time to learning cues.

Experienced teachers generally plan in a less structured way than inexperienced teachers do. However, there are times when experience teachers revert to more structured planning. For example, a teacher might want to attempt a novel idea they observed at a conference or there may be subject matter that is new or more difficult for experienced teachers. Borko and Livingston (1989) observed that any teacher would act like a novice, at least to some extent, the first time he or she attempts to teach a new body of knowledge. Planning would become more time consuming, references would be made to written material, and guiding information for the lesson might be in the form of written plans. This evidence suggests that knowledge is a key difference between novice and experienced teachers. Even with new material, however, experienced teachers can plan more efficiently than novices due to their existing knowledge, allowing them to combine information from previous experiences to fit the new lesson. According to Chen and Rovegno (2000), experienced teachers, in turn, can better help students connect with previous learning.

The patterns that appear to emerge from the literature characterizes experienced teachers' planning, whether mental or written, as richer, more detailed, and as a more efficient process than inexperienced teachers' planning. Cognitive psychology credits these differences to the more elaborate cognitive schemata for organization and storing knowledge of teaching and

subject matter that experienced teachers have over novice teachers. These more-advanced schemata allow them to determine relevance of tasks and to plan more efficiently (Borko & Livingston, 1989).

Research focusing on measured growth and development suggests that advanced schema development begins with a teacher's first teaching experiences. Byra and Sherman (1993) suggested that there is a difference in the decision-making process of planning between levels of experience in preservice teachers. The more field experience the preservice teachers had, the better they understood effective lesson planning. In a similar study, Jones and Vesiland (1996) established that at the onset of student teaching, preservice teachers described planning as more of a lesson plan for the day inclusive of equipment and material needs. By the middle of student teaching, the unpredictability of classroom events was taken into consideration. By the end of the student teaching experience, planning became a complex concept even connecting lessons, maintaining class management, and meeting the needs of students.

As Yinger (1977, 1979, 1980) emphasized in his cyclic model of planning, the third stage involved implementation, evaluation, and eventual routinization of plans. Evaluation, reflection, and routinization contributed to the teacher's repertoire of knowledge, and in return, experience affected future planning. The way that teachers planned influenced what occurred in the classroom (Clark & Elmore, 1981; Smith & Sendelbach, 1979) and, in turn, this influenced future planning deliberations. While planning shaped the lesson and provided a general outline of what was possible or likely to occur while teaching, and was used to manage transitions from one activity to another, the finer details of teaching were unpredictable; and therefore, could not be planned.



For the teachers examined in several studies (Carnahan, 1980; Hill, Yinger, & Robbins, 1981; Peterson, et al., 1978), once the act of teaching began, the plans moved to the background and interactive decision-making became more important. However, before moving the plans to the background it is important to investigate how teachers use their plans in the act of teaching.

### Teaching

Marx and Peterson (1981) found that teachers who made the most decisions in planning have a tendency to do the least decision-making in teaching, whereas those who made the most decisions during teaching actually made the least number of decisions in planning. They also found teachers' lessons to follow the focus of their plans. For example, if subject matter was a focus in planning, it was evident in teaching. Those who set goals in their planning focused on these same goals in their teaching.

Experienced teachers seem to use the agendas they created during planning as a guide to their actions while teaching. They referred to these plans during the lessons to ensure that they remained on track, or they worked from mental scripts. They also used these guidelines as they made connections between student understanding and the concepts and skills that were enumerated in the objectives of the lesson. This flexibility allowed them to fill in the outlines during teaching to ensure that their instruction was responsive to actual student understanding and performance (Borko & Livingston, 1989; Leinhardt & Greeno, 1986).

In contrast, novice teachers made decisions based on their written plans more than on the needs of the students. In fact, beginning teachers typically encountered problems when students did not respond as they anticipated, causing a potential detour from their written plans. Interestingly, the beginning teachers often continued to follow the set plan, as they were potentially unaware of alternative decisions (Borko & Livingston, 1989; Graham, et al., 1993;

Westerman, 1991). Byra and Coulon (1994) reported similar findings from preservice teachers. In addition, they also identified a distinction between experience levels of the preservice teachers; the more experienced preservice teachers tended to make some adjustments if their lessons were perceived to not be progressing as planned.

The primary teaching strategy for novices in Housner and Griffey's (1985) study of experienced and inexperienced physical education teachers was to keep the class on task and interested. Experienced teachers focused their attention most frequently on individual student performance cues and implemented more instructional changes based on these cues. Inexperienced teachers appeared to choose activities to fill the time and then to rush the activities as if to be sure to use all the activities from their plans. These data indicate that experienced teachers were more concerned with facilitating motor skill acquisition while inexperienced teachers had a low degree of concern for instructional intent (Griffey & Housner, 1991).

Regardless of the level of experience of the teacher, we have come to realize that teaching requires various forms of knowing and decision-making for "teaching is a complex, dynamic, and personally construed activity, sometimes impulsive, not always logical, and often unpredictable" (Cole, 1988, p. 26). Overall, the literature indicates that there is a relationship between a teacher's experience and their ability to deviate from predetermined plans, make accurate decisions, and make needed pedagogical adjustments.

### Decision-making

Decisions made during teaching differ from decisions made during planning in that they are "in-flight" or "real time" decisions. Typically, these decisions are made without the time to reflect or to seek additional information (Borko & Shavelson, 1990). The success of an experienced teacher making spur of the moment decisions or improvising requires that the

teacher have an extensive network of interconnected, easily accessible schemata. In addition, he or she must have the ability to select particular strategies, routines, and information from these schemata during actual teaching (Borko & Livingston, 1989).

Research on teacher thinking has attempted to describe what decisions teachers make that lead them to change their plans or their behaviors in the classroom. Further, research has also sought to answer how often teachers made these decisions and what stimulated the decision-making process (Clark & Peterson, 1986).

Across four studies (Fogarty, Wang, & Creek, 1982; Marland, 1977; Shroyer, 1981; & Wodlinger, 1980), teachers consistently made interactive decisions every two minutes. Housner and Griffey (1985) found that experienced physical education teachers made about 30% more instructional decisions during the lessons than did inexperienced teachers and with a much greater focus on skill acquisition. This suggested that experienced teachers were conscious of more relevant stimuli in the teaching environment and could attend to a wider range of information possibly allowing more integration of this information for decision-making (Tan, 1996).

Several studies provided evidence that the greatest percentage of thoughts teachers made during the act of teaching were concerned with students (e.g. Marx & Peterson, 1981; Marland, 1977; McNair, 1978-79). These decisions involved observation of student cues including the assessment of student behaviors, student cognition, student affect, and other student characteristics.

In addition to these studies, Housner and Griffey (1985) and Griffey and Housner (1991) added that experienced teachers possess knowledge structures rich in strategies for managing students and facilitating psychomotor performance, thus allowing them to attend to individual

students while simultaneously altering their lessons based on student needs. It seemed experienced teachers' knowledge went beyond subject matter to include knowledge of a wide range of student abilities, as well as knowledge of their own ability to generate and select alternative activities or strategies to keep the lessons focused on the planned content. In contrast, inexperienced teachers possessed fewer of these strategies and focused more attention on the interest level of the students, off-task behaviors, and the flow of the entire class.

In Borko & Livingston's (1989) study, experienced teachers appeared more goal-oriented while novices were easily distracted from the original objectives. Graham, et al., (1993) found that experienced teachers taught classes differently based not only on the students but also, more specifically, on the characteristics and attitudes of the class on a given day. They would develop tasks based on their observations of the needs of the children, sometimes providing fewer tasks while they increased or decreased the learning cues or refinements. The inexperienced teachers followed their plans and made decisions to change tasks based on the perceived need to cover all planned material. Berliner (1986) found when asked to summarize the needs of a class, experienced teachers could easily and accurately summarize important features of an entire class while novices focused on only a few individuals.

In his study comparing five experienced and five inexperienced teachers, Tan (1996) found that experienced teachers focused more on students' improvement and previous skill success. Using concept maps, the experienced teachers revealed that students' needs, involvement, and skill performance had greater defining features in comparison to the maps of the inexperienced.

A study conducted by Swanson, O'Conner, and Cooney (1990) compared experienced and inexperienced solutions to classroom discipline problems. Experienced teachers placed a

priority on defining and representing the problem, as well as evaluating possible strategies, whereas, novice teachers tended to represent problems in terms of possible solutions. The results represented yet another area that experienced and inexperienced teachers differ in mental processing.

Studies of teacher decision-making clearly demonstrated that novice and experienced teachers make choices based on different criteria and as a result teach differently. Experienced teachers seem to “receive clues” to change tasks or strategies as some teachers seem to “just know” when something is or is not working or does or does not feel right (Cole, 1988). What do teachers “see” to receive these clues?

### *Observing*

Research has suggested there are differences in the ways experienced and inexperienced teachers perceive, understand, monitor, and process visual information in the teaching environment (Berliner, 1986). Teachers constantly interpret classroom events and make decisions based on perceived input and experiences (Allison & Pissanos, 1994). Doyle (1986) noted that two major functions of a teacher are to promote learning and to maintain order in the teaching environment. Both tasks require closely observing the learners and the overall class environment.

The skills of observing, understanding, and making decisions have been studied extensively in comparisons of beginning and experienced teachers in the classroom (Carter, et al., 1988; Needels, 1991; Sabers, Cushing, & Berliner, 1991; Westerman, 1991) as well as in the gymnasium (Graham, et al., 1993; Graham, French, & Woods, 1993; Imwold & Hoffman, 1983; Rink, French, Lee, Solomon, & Lynn, 1994; Tan, 1996). A teaching environment can be complex. It is often overloaded with visual stimuli and characterized by simultaneity,

immediacy, and unpredictability (Doyle, 1986). The physical education setting is even more complex. A gymnasium is larger than the regular classroom, the students are usually moving, complex equipment is present, and teaching situations vary (Behets, 1996).

Successful physical educators are skilled observers and are selective of which stimuli get their attention. The teacher observes and analyzes the motor behavior of pupils in order to make decisions to promote learning, and this occurs while simultaneously maintaining order in the gymnasium. To accomplish both of these goals, the physical education teacher must closely scan and supervise the learning environment. Several studies on the relationship between teacher monitoring and students' on-task behaviors confirm the importance of good observation skills (Hastie, 1994; Hastie & Saunders, 1990, 1991; van der Mars, Vogler, Darst, & Cusimano, 1994).

A physical educator's skill in observing movement is essential for interpretive and decision-making practices during planning and teaching (Allison, 1987; Barrett, 1983; Bell, Barrett, & Allison, 1985; Hoffman, 1983). Hoffman, however, reviewed research findings that indicated how poorly physical education teachers observe. In hopes of a remedy, he designed a "clinical diagnosis" model to explain observation of sport performance skills while Barrett proposed a framework for preservice and inservice teachers to use in developing specific observations skills.

According to Barrett (1983), teachers must first decide what to look for when teaching a physical education class. Deciding what to observe requires the ability to analyze and identify critical elements. Some experienced physical education teachers have task-specific experiences that generally allow them to detect selected characteristics or critical skill components of individual's movement responses better than inexperienced teachers (Imwold & Hoffman, 1983).

Other studies have demonstrated how experienced observers differ from novices in diagnosing movement skills (Pinheiro & Simon, 1992; Tan, 1996; Vickers, 1986).

Studies of observation skills among physical educators revealed that preservice and inservice teachers could improve their skills through systematic training (Allison, 1987, 1990; Barrett, Allison, & Bell, 1987; Behets, 1993; Belka, 1988; Bell, et al., 1985). Beginning teachers and some experienced teachers must be taught observation skills, as there is no evidence that these skills develop automatically. In addition, some teachers may find it difficult to break out of their current “observational comfort zone” to learn better and more efficient observation techniques (Imwold & Hoffman, 1983; Radford, 1991).

One element of quality physical education instruction is the ability to analyze movement and, in turn, to give accurate feedback about the observed performance. Accurate feedback is based on the ability to analyze movement qualitatively. Many feel the ability to diagnose motor skills is one of the most important competencies of a teacher of physical education and sport (Bell, et al., 1985; Dodds, 1994; Graham, French, & Woods, 1993; Morrison, Reeve, & Harrison, 1992; Pinheiro & Simon, 1992; Wilkinson, 1992) and others recommend that teaching qualitative skill analysis should be part of a teacher education program (Beveridge & Gangstead, 1988; Bian, 2003; Gangstead & Beveridge, 1984; Morrison & Harrison, 1985; Morrison & Reeve, 1986, 1988, 1989; Morrison, Reeve, & Harrison, 1992; Wilkinson, 1991).

Movement analysis skills are essential to physical educators if a high priority-teaching goal is improving students’ movement skills. Subject matter knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge intersect in observational analysis. The ability to notice correct and incorrect aspects of motor skill performance in individuals involves identifying appropriate and inappropriate

components of movement skills as the first step toward helping students improve in their performance (Dodd, 1994).

Most of the research on observation and movement analysis appears to be by those who study motor learning. The above information is argument for the need to combine knowledge of students, content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and motor learning together for effective teaching in physical education.

### Reflection

Mention the word reflection to educators, teachers, professors, and administrators, and inquire about the meaning and their understanding of it and you are likely to receive numerous responses and definitions. Kruse (1997) suggests that reflection is simply a dialectic process of thought and action. Most definitions and conceptions of reflection stem from the concepts derived by Dewey (1933), Van Manen (1977), or Schon (1983, 1987). Therefore, as one can see, "... the value of reflection in teaching and the need for preparing more reflective teachers are not new to the education literature" (Tsangaridou and Siedentop, 1995, p. 212).

The first real relationship between education and reflection can be found in the work of John Dewey in the early 20th century. Dewey (1933) linked the notion of reflection to how we think and to two types of teacher action: the routine and the reflective action. The theoretical concept of reflection as described by Dewey (1933) is "active, persistent and careful considerations of belief or supposed form of knowledge in light of the grounds that support it and further conclusions to which it tends" (p. 6). In addition, he highlights three areas or prerequisites in attitude that must work in collaboration with reflection: open-mindedness to alternative possibilities, consideration of consequence, and whole-heartedness to put ideas into practice.



In contrast, Van Manen (1977) suggests that within self-reflection, there are three levels of reflectivity: (1) *technical*, defined as a means to reach an end or goal; (2) *practical*, representing the process of review and analysis of meaning, assumptions and perceptions or informing practical actions; and, (3) *critical*, defined as the highest, questioning the status quo, or relating to moral, ethical and political aspects of the education. In a study of four experienced elementary and secondary physical education teachers, Tsangaridou and O'Sullivan (1997) attempted to describe teachers' reflection using the terms microreflection and macroreflection. Microreflection was reflection that informed teachers' day-to-day practices and addressed pedagogical content, ethical, moral, and social issues. The researchers found microreflections to be situationally driven and contextually bound. Macroreflection was the term used to define the type of reflection that informed teachers' practices over time and thus influenced changes in the teachers' classroom practices and professional development.

The third and possibly most influential discussions and understandings of reflection originate from the work of Schon (1983, 1987). Schon's work proposed and coined the terms reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action as the constructs of reflection as a whole. As the terms suggest, in-action refers to the process of analyzing and interpreting during action, as opposed to the same types of process following action, when one mentally reconstructs and analyzes prior events.

However, it must be noted that the majority of research addressing the issues of reflection are espoused in the realms of theory. Very little research has been examined in the practical and the research that has is still in its infancy (Tsangaridou and Siedentop, 1995). It seems appropriate for this study to remember that the way professionals solve problems and construct professional knowledge is a process "whose underlying structure is the same: A reflective

conversation with a unique and uncertain situation” (Schon, 1983, p. 130). Therefore, planning not only includes the thought processes that teachers engage prior to teaching but also includes the thought processes or reflections that they engage during and after classroom interaction. Returning to Yinger’s (1977) study, he maintained that the third stage in his cyclic planning model involved implementation, evaluation, and eventual routinization of the plan. Reflection could well be the process leading to evaluation and to eventual routinization that guides teachers’ thinking.

It is believed that some individuals are more inclined to be reflective (Bolt, 1996; Gore, 1990; Rovegno, 1992). In an attempt to study reflective practices, much of the research compared experienced and novice teachers. Experienced teachers relied heavily on reflections from past lessons to plan new lessons (Graham, et al., 1993). The ability to recall is therefore key to reflection. In a study by Peterson and Comeaux (1987), experienced teachers both recalled more classroom events and relied more often on procedural knowledge and principles of analyzing than did novice teachers. In a similar study examining the evolution of accuracy and thoroughness of novice, intermediate and experienced teachers’ ability to recall their own as well as their student behaviors, Allen and Casbergue (1997) found that individual teachers progressed in thoroughness of recall along different paths and at different rates. In general, novices and intermediates displayed only minimal inaccuracies in their recall of their own and their students’ behaviors while all of the experienced teachers were extremely accurate.

Other discrepancies define inexperienced and experienced teachers’ reflection practices. Inexperienced teachers tended to use only the lesson of one day to determine if the plans for the next lesson should be modified (Graham, et al., 1993). In a study by Borko and Livingston (1989) novices reported more varied but less selective post-lesson reflections than experienced

teachers. In Allen and Casbergue's (1997) study teachers were characterized in three groups: experienced, intermediate, and inexperienced. For the intermediate group, if inaccuracies in recall occurred they were in relation to recall of their own behaviors while the inexperienced teachers made more recall errors about the behaviors of the students. Additionally, just as experienced teachers have a tendency to teach according to initial goals determined in planning, their reflection appeared to focus on these same original goals.

The reactions to lessons that experienced teachers shared with Livingston and Borko (1989) were concise, focused primarily on student comprehension, and mentioned only those events believed to impact the accomplishment of instructional goals. The experienced teachers reported that their own effectiveness was rarely assessed. In contrast, novices' post-lesson reflections, while less focused than the experienced teachers, addressed many more concerns. All three novices were attentive to primarily their own teaching. The only observation made of students was regarding student activity level.

It is believed some skills required for reflection can be taught, thereby encouraging more reflective practices (Allen & Casbergue, 1997; Byra, 1996; Tsangaridou & O'Sullivan, 1994). In fact, research efforts on reflection in physical education have focused mainly on preservice teachers. The development of reflective abilities in preservice teachers is a persistent concern for some teacher educators.

Bainer and Cantrell (1992) stated that before reflection skills can be developed or fostered teacher educators need to know the focus of preservice teachers' reflection. In their analysis of 96 preservice teachers, 91% reflected on lesson implementation, planning, self, reflective teaching, and evaluation. Korthagen, (1992) claims there are techniques that can be used to help stimulate preservice teachers to reflect on their teaching. Wade and Yarbrough

(1996) found that the use of portfolios in teacher education programs is one avenue to promote reflective thinking.

Pinsky and Irby (1997) surveyed a group of distinguished clinical teachers in the medical field regarding episodes of failure that had subsequently led to improvements in their teaching. Reflection on failure was used as a tool for experiential learning. Common failures caused these teachers to return to the planning stage as they had misjudged learners, were not adequately prepared, presented too much content, had shown lack of purpose, or had difficulties with using technology. The primary failure associated with actual teaching was inflexibility. Most had used only one teaching method. For each identified failure, the respondents were required to follow with a recommendation for improvement.

A unique and interesting approach used by Ethell and McMeniman (2000) in one stage of a qualitative study involving development, implementation, and evaluation of a cognitive intervention in teacher education took the preservice teachers “into the head” of an experienced teacher. The preservice teachers viewed a video recording of the teacher’s thinking and reflection of a lesson they had previously observed. The preservice teachers articulated that through observation of the lesson alone, they had not begun to recognize the intention behind the teacher’s classroom practice. All claimed this experience contributed significantly to their understanding of good teaching. This experience might have revealed how teachers made sense of the day-to-day complexities of classroom practice, as this individual teacher reflected on his own lesson bringing his professional knowledge of teaching and learning to these preservice teachers.

As mentioned in the above research, reflective teachers have the ability to recall and to focus on goals from planning transferred into teaching. Sebren (1995) suggested that reflection

may promote these connections not only from mere planning to teaching but also within the knowledge structures needed to be used for future planning and teaching. This finding supports Yinger's (1977) cyclic model of planning.

### Summary

Most research reported in this review emphasized that teaching experience influences the planning processes, the act of teaching, and the reflective practices of teachers. The experience itself adds to the teacher's knowledge. Planning whether mental, written or a mixture of both influences what occurs in the classroom. Teachers' main in-class teaching focus typically parallels their main planning focus. However, many in-class decisions are made without the time to reflect or to plan. While teachers make decisions an average of every two minutes, most of these decisions are made from observations of student behaviors, cognition, affect and other characteristics. Successful physical education teachers are skillful observers and based on their observations, use knowledge of students, content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and motor learning combined to make decisions that are more effective.

According to the research in this review, reflection occurs during and after teaching and feeds back into the next lesson. While experience plays a role, the ability to recall is a key attribute for reflection. Just as teaching parallels a teacher's plans, so too does reflection.

This review was presented similar to the research itself in categories of planning, teaching, and reflecting. Despite Yinger's (1977) model representing the cycle as continuous and defining the boundaries between planning, teaching, and reflection as not being sharp or distinct, much of the literature is comprised of studies that focus on separate components. From most of the research, it appears that to know teaching means to know the teacher cognitively. However,

studies on teacher cognition have searched to find what teachers think and given little consideration to how they were actually behaving (Beattie, 1995).

For the practicing teacher, action may follow thought but action is also a part of thought through the decisions they make. As is evident in the research, experienced teachers do store information and access it in different ways, allowing them to make decisions about what to do. The act of teaching can and has been studied as part of the interactive process of intent and action (Rink, 1993). However, while most research has a focus on either teacher thought or teacher action, more research needs to be conducted in the practical setting so we can come to “know” teaching and teachers and better understand how teachers’ thoughts translate to their intent and actions. In hopes of linking the literature on teacher cognition to that of teacher intent and action, the purpose of this study was to examine teacher decision-making. Specifically, the study focused on the decision-making process of three experienced elementary physical education teachers and investigated what decisions they made and how, when, where, and why they made them.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The primary goal of this study was to examine the content development decision-making process of three elementary physical education teachers. Each teacher was observed in their natural teaching environment as they planned, taught, and reflected on a series of five lessons that focused primarily on one motor skill. Specifically, I investigated when the tasks were changed during the lesson and where, when, how and why these decisions were made. All names of individuals, schools, and the school system are pseudonyms to protect anonymity.

#### Design of the Study

The design of the research is qualitative, specifically, a multiple case study. As suggested by Yin (1993), a full variety of evidence was used, as this is a basis of strength in the case study method. The study was substantiated from several different data collection sources: interviews, videotaped observations, stimulated recall, a think-aloud procedure, and document analysis.

While qualitative research as a form of inquiry has increased over the past decade in physical education, rarely does a researcher use more than two data collection techniques. In a review of 113 qualitative research articles published in the *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education* or *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Science* (pedagogy section) between the years of 1988 - 1997, Byra and Karp (2000) found that 76.6% of the studies involved only one or two data collection techniques. With the use of only one or two data collection techniques, one might be concerned about the authenticity of the study (Blumenfield-Jones, 1995; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and the ability to triangulate the data. These studies are more vulnerable to errors linked to

that particular method than studies that use multiple methods allowing cross-data validity checks (Patton, 2002). Studies that incorporate multiple methods also allow one method to compliment the strengths or compensate for the weaknesses of the other methods employed (Brewer & Hunter, 1989).

Another concern when researching education, and one stated by Housner and Griffey (1985) about their own inquiry is that many studies are conducted in a laboratory setting or an unrealistic teaching environment. A third issue is that few studies about teacher decision-making have been conducted in the gymnasium with physical education teachers. As the gymnasium is a much more complex and dynamic environment than a typical classroom, the decisions physical education teachers make are probably quite different from those of the classroom teacher. I chose to study three elementary physical education teachers in their natural teaching environment thus adding more depth and authenticity to the present literature on teacher cognition and, more specifically, the literature on elementary school physical education teacher decision-making.

#### Participant Selection and Gaining Entry

The participants for the study were three elementary physical education teachers. Criterion sampling, a strategy used to determine if potential cases meet predetermined criteria, was used to select the participants via a teacher information questionnaire (Patton, 2002). The five criteria used to select the participants were: (1) ten or more years of teaching experience in elementary physical education, (2) a curriculum focus on motor skill acquisition, (3) a teaching schedule that provided the opportunity to observe two classes of the same grade level or two consecutive grades of any combination grades two through five, (4) sole use of a teaching facility (exception being if during my observations, only the participant is instructing the class), and (5) a willingness to invest the time after school hours required by the study.



Initial preparation to obtain research participants began by discussing my subject of interest in a session at the *Share the Wealth Conference* in Jekyll Island, Georgia in January of 2002 where I made informal contacts with several teachers. Unfortunately, travel time eliminated all of them as potential participants. One contact I did make, Mr. Thomas Harding, proved very helpful. He is the Supervisor of Physical Education for Fairfield County Schools, a school system in suitable travel distance. Mr. Harding approached me and informed me that his school system might be appropriate for my study. Fairfield County is located on the outskirts of one of the largest metropolitan cities in Southeast USA. The schools that make up the Fairfield County School System are primarily located in suburban communities with a few schools situated in an area that serves both urban and suburban families.

In March that same year, I drove to Fairfield County and met with Mr. Harding. I shared with him the details of my prospective study and answered his questions. In return, he handed me a copy of the Fairfield County Curriculum and the Academic Knowledge Skills (AKS) for physical education. The AKS represents minimum level benchmarks a student is expected to achieve in each grade level (see Appendix A). Both documents served as evidence that the mission of elementary physical education in Fairfield County is to teach movement skills and concepts, provide the opportunity for children to participate in developmentally appropriate health-related fitness activities, promote personal and social responsibility, and promote active, healthy lifestyles. In addition, Mr. Harding informed me of the school district website that could provide me with additional information and the application materials to gain research approval.

In early August, Mr. Harding invited me to a physical education inservice workshop where I was given the opportunity to address the teachers and solicit potential participants. Of the 80 attendees, nine volunteered and each was given a brief questionnaire (see Appendix B).

After examining the questionnaires I discovered only three met the initial research criteria. Purposeful sampling was then used to select “information-rich cases” necessary to examine my research questions (Patton, 2002, p. 230). As Merriam (1998) explains, “Purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned” (p. 61). I contacted the three teachers for a classroom observation and an informal interview. This was necessary to determine if they would be “information-rich-cases.” Based on the observation and interview, one was deemed not appropriate for the study. The other two, Jake Logan and Peggy Nolan were given detailed information regarding the time commitment and agreed to participate in the study.

In order to secure a third participant, I spoke with two university professors as well as Jake and Peggy to obtain suggestions of potential teachers to contact. I was given eight names and five of the names were repeated by these “knowledgeable sources” that were familiar with what they deemed quality experienced teachers in the immediate travel area. This process is referred to as the “snowball effect” (Patton, 2002, p. 237). Due to scheduling conflicts or lack of interest by the teacher, the list was quickly narrowed to four potential participants. As before, I observed and conversed with each teacher and was able to select my third participant, also a Fairfield County teacher, Debbie Peterson.

By mid-September, I was ready to begin data collection but was still awaiting research approval from the Fairfield County Research and Accountability Board. They required a research proposal that entailed eleven pages of detailed information about the study. Having previously taught in a university town where I was often visited by unannounced professors and graduate students, I respected the process and understood the need to protect the students, teachers, and system. My only concern was that the research board did not meet between May and August. I

submitted the research proposal to a board of ten members on August 29 and received approval on September 30.

In compliance with the regulations for conducting research on human subjects at The University of Georgia all appropriate forms were submitted and permission obtained prior to data collection (see Appendix C). The three teachers that met the criterion and purposeful sampling were contacted and a second visit scheduled to inform them of the study specifics, to organize the data collection schedule, and to sign a consent form. Additionally, this visit included obtaining study approval by the school principal.

Due to the variety in the three physical education schedules, organizing my data collection agenda was not an easy task. Beginning in the year 2002-2003, the Fairfield County School Board mandated a 45-minute planning period for all classroom teachers. Most schools responded by placing the burden of providing this break on special area teachers. Given the size of the gymnasium in relation to the other special area classrooms, physical education was expected to carry the bulk of this new load. The result of this mandate doubled or tripled class size or it reduced the number of times per week the children attended physical education. In some cases, both occurred. At any rate, the teaching situation in most schools did not afford an ideal learning environment. This mandate gave physical education teachers a new challenge and caused many of them to make major program changes. All three teachers in the study were affected by scheduling changes requiring them to make modifications in their management practices, curriculum choices and teaching strategies.

#### Data Collection

The data collection protocol is similar to the research on planning, teaching, and reflecting by Borko and Livingston (1989) and Graham, et al. (1993). Five data collection

techniques were employed in this study: (a) semi-structured interviews, (b) videotaped field observations (c) a stimulated recall protocol (d) a think-aloud procedure, and (e) an analysis of pertinent documents. I opted to use these different data collection techniques for two reasons. One goal was to provide several sources of evidence as an “important aspect of case study data collection is the use of multiple sources of evidence—converging on the same set of issues” (Yin, 1993, p. 32). A second was to allow an in-depth study of the processes and patterns of teachers’ decision-making for according to Sturman (1999), “To explain why things happen as they do, and to generalize or predict from a single example requires an in-depth investigation of the interdependence of parts and of the patterns that emerge” (p.103).

In order to evaluate and rehearse the data collection techniques, a pilot study of one physical education teacher was conducted in May 2002. During the pilot study, procedural adaptations were made as needed. Following the pilot study, the participant was interviewed about the data collection procedures and her suggestions proved valuable in making needed changes. In the following sections, each data collection technique is described and any adaptations resulting from the pilot study clarified.

### *Interviews*

Three semi-structured interviews were conducted with each participant in this study. A biographical interview was conducted to learn the background experiences of each teacher. This interview was conducted to aid in the understanding of how these experiences potentially influence the teacher’s present thinking and decision-making. The second interview focused specifically on the present and past planning and reflective practices of the teacher. Both of these interviews took place early in the data collection schedule. An interview guide for the biographical and the planning and reflection interviews are provided in the appendices (see

Appendix D). The final interview took place following an initial analysis of the data and served the purpose of gaining additional information prompted by this analysis and for the purpose of authenticating and triangulating the data.

### *Field Observations*

As in Borko and Livingston (1989) and Graham, et al., (1993) the teachers were observed teaching two consecutive classes. Each teacher was videotaped teaching two 45-minute classes of the same grade level (Jake) or successive grade levels (Peg and Debbie) on seven different instructional days. The same two classes were observed each visit. The video camera was situated as unobtrusively as possible in the gymnasium (Jake and Peg) or on the playing field (Debbie). I was positioned at the camera in order to focus on the teacher moving through the learning environment. The teacher wore a wireless microphone to provide audio input onto the video recording. As a backup, an additional audiotape was recorded of each lesson. Each video was later viewed and field notes obtained from the screening.

The first two observations were conducted for context and field entry and consisted of lessons previously planned by the teacher. Having taught elementary school physical education, I anticipated field entry might be a challenge with young children. Therefore, I decided to arrange two observations prior to the five-lesson sequence. This decision proved appropriate during the pilot study, for despite my attempts to be unobtrusive, I observed several students paying more attention to the camera than to the teacher. In addition, the teacher initially appeared to be somewhat distracted by wearing the microphone. These lessons, in essence, were videotaped with the premise of gaining entry by establishing a comfort zone for the teacher and the students of my presence and that of the camera and microphone. Additionally, these videotaped

observations allowed me the opportunity to focus on the context of the learning environment and experiment with camera positioning.

### *Stimulated Recall Protocol*

Stimulated recall, a technique originally employed by Bloom (1953), has been used in several physical education studies with the intention of gathering data about teachers' interactive thoughts and decisions (Byra & Sherman, 1993; Housner & Griffey, 1985; Tan, 1996; Walkwitz & Lee, 1992). The procedure for stimulated recall is to have the teacher and the researcher view a videotaped lesson previously taught by the teacher in order to "stimulate recall" of what she was thinking during interactive teaching.

With the exception of Walkwitz and Lee (1992), the studies above mirrored Clark and Peterson's (1986) work, wherein a typical procedure would include a showing of pre-selected segments of the lesson and structured interview questions to correspond with the segments. In lieu of the segmented viewing protocol, Walkwitz and Lee (1992) had the teacher view the entire class session and the teacher was in control of stopping the video at any point selected. The researcher had the option to stop the video and ask questions, as well. The questioning was in the form of probing at the points the video was stopped rather than structured interviewing at predetermined stopping points.

The stimulated recall procedure served as a valuable source of evidence. The first three of the series of five lessons planned and taught by the teacher were videotaped and followed with a stimulated recall interview while the teacher and I viewed the tape. The format for this study was similar to Walkwitz and Lee (1992), in that the teacher controlled the stopping and starting of the video and I had the option to do the same when necessary. While examining the videotape of the lesson, the teacher provided specific information as to what they were thinking and doing during

the lesson and why. Prior to the screening, the teacher was requested to stop the tape when changing tasks, when changes were made from the original plans, when giving input to a child, or at any point identifiable thoughts were occurring. On a few occasions, I had to stop the video and probe based on such observations. The entire stimulated recall process was audiotaped and later transcribed to coincide with the time it occurred in the lesson. In order to warrant that the times were correct I used a time log for taking notes during the viewing. The time log was an idea developed during the pilot study.

The stimulated recall experience of the pilot study convinced me to make two changes from the original plan. One modification was to use the stimulated recall for only three of the five consecutive observations instead of all five. The procedure is very time-consuming and appeared tiring to the teacher by the third day. In addition, as the researcher, I was beginning to see a decision-making pattern by this point. For these reasons, the last two observations were followed with questions of my lesson analysis and provided the teacher the opportunity to confirm my evaluation without the viewing of the videotape. The second modification was to have the teacher, when viewing the second class of the same lesson to stop the tape only when sharing decisions that were different from the previous lesson. This actually happened automatically by the teacher in the pilot study and was both efficient and sufficient for the data desired from the stimulated recall procedure.

One additional observation made during the pilot study concerning the videotape analysis was that the teacher, at first, seemed to analyze herself as opposed to the requested observations of the recording. For this reason, in this study, I chose to view part of one of the first two videotaped observations with the teacher. This allowed the teacher the opportunity to self-

analyze before we continued with a few minutes practicing the requested protocol for the stimulated recall.

### *Think-Aloud Procedure*

The think-aloud procedure is a technique used by researchers to obtain verbal reports from participants during the performance of a task. The procedure has been used in educational research to examine both teacher and student thought processes (Clark & Peterson, 1986; Shavelson, Webb, & Burstein, 1986; Wittrock, 1986). In physical education the think-aloud procedure has been used to understand student interpretations during motor skill learning (Langley, 1992, 1995; Shea & Zimny, 1983) and teachers observation of student skill performance (Allison, 1990). Housner and Griffey (1985) examined teacher planning using a think-aloud protocol.

In this study, the planning and reflecting practices of each teacher was examined through a think-aloud procedure, the interview mentioned previously, and a review of additional documents such as lesson plans and resources used for planning. In the think-aloud procedure, each teacher was asked to think out loud while planning and reflecting and to audiotape these verbalizations. The audiotapes were later transcribed and analyzed.

The initial think-aloud procedure involved the teacher verbalizing thoughts while planning the sequence of five lessons. Then, a modified think-aloud was used at any time the teacher had thoughts regarding the lesson prior to, during, or after the actual teaching of the lesson. The teacher was asked to record where and when they had these thoughts.

During the pilot study the modified think-aloud of random planning and reflecting was successful. However, the actual detailed planning of the lesson was limited. I felt I was delinquent in providing adequate instructions. Having learned from this, I decided to provide a



practice session of the think-aloud procedure. A description of the practice think-aloud process follows (modified from: van Someren, Barnard, & Sandberg, 1994):

1. The teacher was asked to plan one lesson on dribbling, as in basketball, to a class of third grade children.
2. The teacher was then instructed to verbalize all of his or her thoughts while planning the lesson.
3. I was physically present while the participant completed the task in order to verify that the participant was thinking aloud. If there was silence for more than three seconds, I reminded the teacher to continue thinking aloud.
4. The teacher had pencil, paper, and was encouraged to use any other resources they chose.

The protocol was explained to the teacher in the following manner:

I am interested in what you think about when you are planning a lesson. In order to do this, I am asking you to think out loud as you plan. In other words, voice everything you are thinking from the time you first start until you are finished. I would like you to talk aloud constantly from the time I present the subject of the lesson until you are finished. I do not want you to try and plan what you say or try to explain what you are thinking. Just act as if you are in a room talking to yourself. It is most important that you keep talking. If you are silent for more than a few seconds, I will ask you to talk. (This monologue was adapted from directions given by Younker and Smith, 1996.)

The teacher was given a hand held audio recorder and encouraged to continue practicing this procedure a few times prior to planning for the scheduled classes to be observed. In addition to structured planning, the teacher was asked to practice the think-aloud at any time thoughts of lessons emerged before, during, or after the lesson. Therefore, the focus of this modified think-aloud was on both structured and unstructured planning and reflecting moments.

### Document Analysis

Documents were obtained from the office staff of each school to determine the school demographics. Additional documents were acquired from the participants such as lesson plans and any materials or books used to plan, other evidence of planning (e.g., theme, yearly plans, note cards), and instructional materials (e.g., assessment sheets, behavior notes, letters to parents, task sheets). As with the rest of the data, these documents were analyzed for pertinent information relating to teacher decision-making.

### Research Procedure

There was a minimum of eleven visits for each case study. Given this study was conducted in the natural school environment, I anticipated that variables would arise that might alter the original design of the study. Two third grade classes were observed on consecutive days as Jake taught a series of five basketball lessons with dribbling as the focus. Two fifth grade classes combined followed by a combination fourth grade and an Emotional Behavior Disorder (EBD) class were observed on the same day as Peg Nolan taught a series of five lessons on basketball dribbling. Debbie Peterson taught a series of five lessons on striking with feet to a third grade immediately followed by a fourth grade class.

#### *Day One*

The initial visit was to observe and interview for purposeful sampling, gain entry into the setting, discuss the research schedule, inform of the research protocol, and begin building a relationship with the teacher. On this visit, I met the administrators, office staff, and any additional personnel working with the teacher.

*Day Two*

The second visit began with the teacher signing a consent form. This meeting was scheduled as a training session for the think-aloud procedure and took approximately 45 minutes. At this time the teacher was given a hand held tape recorder and asked to continue practicing the think-aloud protocol.

A week later, after practicing the above protocol, the teacher was contacted and questioned about the process. At this point, the teacher was reminded of the importance of using the think-aloud for all planning processes that involved the five scheduled class sessions I would observe.

*Days Three and Four*

The third and fourth visits were two observations conducted for context and field entry and consisted of lessons previously planned by the teacher. My observations focused on the classes, facilities, equipment, and other elements that helped conceptualize the learning environment. This was my first opportunity to meet the students, inform them of my purpose, and answer their questions.

While days three and four entailed observations during the school day, the teachers were asked to spend a couple of hours each day, after school, for interviews. On day three, a biographical interview, was used to determine background experiences of each participant (see Appendix D). The second interview was conducted on day four and focused on the planning and reflecting practices of the teacher (see Appendix D). Additionally, time was allotted to answer any questions from the think-aloud procedure or any additional concerns the teacher had at this point. A practice session of the stimulated recall procedure occurred on either day three or four.

*Days Five, Six, and Seven*

Days five, six, and seven of my visits were the prime observations for the study. Each teacher selected one motor skill for the focus of these five consecutive lessons. Jake and Peg chose basketball dribbling and Debbie chose striking with the feet. Each lesson was taught to two 45-minute class periods and videotaped in its entirety.

At the conclusion of the instructional day, the teacher was reminded to think-aloud while reflecting on the two classes taught. This was in addition to any spontaneous reflection that had already occurred and been recorded. Think-aloud audiotapes were collected and transcribed on a regular basis. At the conclusion of the teaching day, the stimulated recall procedure was performed requiring approximately two hours. A copy of lesson plans and resources used for planning was collected daily.

*Days Eight and Nine*

The final two lessons were observed, videotaped, and supplemented with a brief interview to establish continuity (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990) with my analysis to this point. These inferences were based on the observations made each day as they related to the analysis of previous data. Following the teaching of the lessons and prior to the interview, the teacher was asked to think-aloud while reflecting on the two lessons taught. As in days three, four, and five, this was in addition to any spontaneous reflection that had already occurred. As on the previous days, a copy of lesson plans and resources used for planning and the think-aloud audiotapes were collected. A few days following the last observation, each participant was emailed a series of questions asking them to reflect on the experience as a whole. The participants were given the option of journaling or recording their responses. All three chose to audiotape.

### *Days Ten and Eleven*

After all data were collected and analyzed, an additional follow-up interview was conducted. The questions for the interview were based on the data analysis to this point and afforded an opportunity for clarity, elaboration, and confirmation of the data. The final interviews, as were all interviews, stimulated recall tapes and think-aloud tapes were transcribed and analyzed.

### *Day Twelve*

The purpose of my final visit was to provide the teachers a copy of all transcripts. They were asked to review them for any discrepancy and determine if there was any part that they would prefer not included in the written document. Each participant contacted me and expressed no concerns over the data.

## Data Analysis

The design of this study was a multiple case study, more specifically three case studies. Each case was analyzed and reported independently. Data analysis was used as an avenue to delve into the data in order to understand each teacher's content development decision-making. Two previous studies (Borko & Livingston, 1989; Graham, et al., 1993) were used to "shape the data collection plan" (Yin, 1994 p. 104). Further, the theoretical propositions of Borko and Livingston (1989) and Graham, et al. (1993) provided the initiative to examine the teacher's planning, teaching, and reflecting practices. These initial categories that guided the study also guided the analysis. The analysis, however, was not closed to these previously imposed categories as, in fact, other broad categories emerged.

Using inductive analysis (Patton, 2002), patterns emerged early in the data collection process and with repetition formed the "findings" for the study. The analysis was conducted

simultaneously with data collection and was an ongoing process. Through conceptualizing and questioning the data patterns, themes, consistencies and inconsistencies were identified within each case. There were the occasional data that did not fit into a pattern or theme. Although an exception, the data was informative and could not be ignored. To use Wolcott's (1994) words I made a conscious effort not to "oversystematize" so as not to omit possible intuitive interpretations. In fact, without the intuitive element, I feel much of the data might have been misunderstood and thus misrepresented.

Data analysis was an ongoing process that connected one visit with a participant to the next. Transcribing and coding followed each interview and think-aloud taping. The first read produced notes in the margins that indicated the participant's key thoughts and their context, my intuitive feelings or speculations, and questions to initiate further probing. Lesson plans were then assessed for disparity with the data.

Following my last observation and prior to a final interview, the first three videotapes were analyzed via a timeline. While conducting each stimulated recall interview I documented trigger words voiced by the participant or keywords of my observations that coincided with the minute it occurred in practice. This enabled me to later view the videotapes and transcribe minute-by-minute each of the three observations. Next, I juxtaposed the stimulated recall interview with my observation notes. This system allowed the categorization of types of task (informing, extension, refinement, or application) as well as when, why, and how often, a task was changed.

Think-aloud tapings and all interviews were coded a second time and placed in the major categories of planning, teaching, reflecting and two additional categories that emerged labeled constraints and individual. Subcategories (e.g. under the main category of planning: how, when,

where, and why), themes, and patterns were then identified for each participant. I searched for consistencies, inconsistencies, and contradictions to understand each individual and to connect one data source to another. This proved to be an avenue of triangulation and an aid in postulating questions for my final interview.

In an attempt to delve deeper into the data I tried several strategies that proved advantageous later in the data presentation. One approach was to construct a table listing each decision or change that occurred as well as when, where, and why it came about. Another illustration was to take keywords that generated around the constraint theme and write a poem. A further example was to take the background information and “words of the teacher” to create a concise portrait of each person’s previous experiences both in teaching and in life. A final strategy was to use data analysis as an avenue to experiment with how to best arrange a narrative using the verbatim words of the participants.

After completing the case studies, it was necessary to return for a final analysis across the three cases. While each case was about a unique individual, there were similarities. In an attempt to interpret the overall data, further analysis was needed to formulate the similarities and differences. The previous categories were used as well as the research questions to interpret and summarize the data across the three cases.

Through in-depth interviews and a variety of data sources, a peer review, and by placing a major focus on the participant’s voice, there was authentic representation of each unique individual. The cases are of the three individuals and therefore, are generalized only to the theoretical positions mentioned previously and not to populations of physical education teachers. The generalizations were based on the richness and thickness of the data collected and the context from which the generalizations occurred (Carter, 1993; Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995;

Merriam, 1988) for the purpose of a case study, according to Stake (2000, p. 448), is “not to represent the world, but to represent the case.”

Bassey (1999) summarizes how the data, whether from one case or multiple cases, if sufficient, can speak for itself and therefore be valid, reliable, trustworthy, and generalizable.

Sufficient data should be collected to be able to explore significant features of the case; to create plausible interpretations of what is found; to test for the trustworthiness of these interpretations; to construct a worthwhile argument or story; to relate the argument or story to any relevant research in the literature; to convey convincingly to an audience this argument or story; to provide an audit trail by which other researchers may validate or challenge the findings, or construct alternative arguments (Bassey, 1999, p. 65).

It is my belief that this study meets the above criteria.

### Subjectivities

My personal interest in this study came prior to my review of the literature. I am an elementary physical education specialist and prior to pursuing my doctoral degree I taught eighteen years of elementary and middle school physical education. During those years I was a cooperating teacher for several student teachers, served as a consultant for many school systems, presented at numerous conferences and workshops, and served on various professional committees. Many of my teaching practices and consultant ideas were inspired from the work of George Graham, Shirley Holt/Hale and Judy Rink. My interest in beginning a new career in teacher education came from the quest to aid preservice teachers and inservice teachers in how to develop the content rather than merely direct activities.

While pursuing my doctoral degree I had the opportunity to learn from many more scholars in the field of education and physical education through coursework, literature, and my involvement in research. This experience allowed me the opportunity to connect the research with my own practical knowledge developed from years of teaching in public schools.



My experiences proved to be both an aid and a hindrance to this study. First, it afforded me the opportunity to enter the teaching environments of these teachers as a colleague and not solely a researcher. A rapport was established almost immediately. While I was able to relate as a former elementary physical educator to many of the actions of each teacher, my observations and the resulting data quickly reinforced that we all are unique individuals within our teaching worlds.

Secondly, my familiarity with children and anticipation of their responses provided few surprises. However, as my focus was on the teacher, these observations expected or not, only provided opportunities for further questions. Finally, there were times I sensed the participants were leaving out valuable information as they assumed I knew the answers. I provided constant reminders for them to include details as if they were speaking to an audience that was not familiar. Given this, I can only surmise that little was omitted. In conclusion, while my experiences and expectations were a part of this study, I feel the data and my interpretations of the data represented authenticity.

### Data Presentation

Building upon the foundation established in the previous chapters, the following chapters will offer the transformation of my data into three case studies through description, analysis, and interpretation (Wolcott, 1994). The case that each chapter represents is not presented as simply “the data and the findings” but a series of data stories as told by the participant, by me as the observer, or by both. Each chapter begins with an introduction of the participant and the setting. The story that follows recreates segments of the teacher’s life. Next, the tale is told of how the teacher planned for a series of lessons, taught two classes, and shared his or her reflections. Through the telling, and later my interpretations, the results respond to the questions of how,

when, where and why each makes the many decisions they do. The final chapter provides the opportunity to merge the data for further interpretations and to address recommendations for teaching practice.

## CHAPTER 4

### CASE STUDY ONE: JAKE LOGAN

Jake Logan has taught 25 years with 23 being in elementary physical education. For the last 12 years, he has taught at Whit Elementary, a school that has always served primarily suburban middle class socioeconomic families. Presently, the student population consists of 46% African American, 39.9% European American, with the remaining 14.1 percent an even distribution of Asian, Hispanic, and multi-racial students.

Whit Elementary School is built into a hillside that appears to stretch a block long. In constructing the facility, the aesthetic value was an obvious priority as it is an attractive school shaped by a mixture of red brick and beige stucco adorned with unique windows and castle like towers. To either side of the school are rows of trees leaving one that passes by no view of what is behind or beside it.

If facing the school, well concealed to the far left is a fenced-in playing field and playground. To the right, again behind a dense row of trees, is a parking lot. At the rear of the parking lot sit two portable classrooms and the gym with all three connected to the back of the school building by a covered walkway. The gym has the appearance of a large machine shop or garage. On one visit, Jake laughed as he shared, “it [the gym] reminds me of my father-in-law’s old shop except his had a restroom and an air conditioner in it.” As you enter the gym and see the basketball goals, the machine shop image changes and becomes more the feel of a concrete play area that one day someone decided to surround with walls and a ceiling. Jake has made the most of the facility and shares that his main concern is the safety of the concrete floors. The walls are

decorated with many items including posters promoting fitness and activity, a white board for teaching, and chart paper listing Jake's expectations of the students while in the gymnasium. It was in this gym that I set up two video cameras and became a part of the setting for nearly two months.

I observed Jake teach third grade from 12:50 until 1:35 one or two days a week starting October 21, 2002 and ending December 10. For special area classes at Whit Elementary each third grade class was made up of the 20 or 21 children from one classroom teacher plus an additional six or seven from another class. In essence, a class and a third arrived for physical education for this one 45-minute block. The children attended physical education class once every six days. I observed the classes that came on day one and day two of the rotation (see Appendix E).

My first two observations were designed for the children and Jake to become accustomed to my presence. After the first day, it was as if I became a part of the wall and the children, other than a few exchanging a smile with me as they entered the gym, seemed to take no notice of me. I later discovered that visitors are common in Jake Logan's classroom explaining why I was not a novelty to the children. The next five lessons Jake taught skills used in the game of basketball with the major emphasis being on dribbling.

As Jake's story begins, entitled *Always the Teacher*, I will take you on a visit back to his childhood where he is already showing signs of wanting to teach others. The story continues with his early athletic experiences that later lead to many opportunities, the first of which is a college athletic scholarship. During his college years many events occurred that changed his life and eventually lead to him becoming a teacher. I will then reveal a little about his early experiences as a teacher and bring you up to date on Mr. Jake Logan the 25-year veteran teacher of today.

In the succeeding section entitled *Untie My Hands*, Jake assumes the story telling role and I become the narrator. The first section of the narrative is about his planning experience wherein he shares the many decisions made during the two weeks prior to teaching a series of lessons on basketball dribbling. On Tuesday, October 29 while teaching Ms. Ingle's third grade class the first lesson of the series, he communicates his observations, thoughts, decisions, and actions. The following afternoon, the story resumes as Jake and I view the videotape of the lesson taught to the next third grade class, Mrs. Simpson's. During this time he shares any differences in how this lesson was taught. Finally, the narrative ends with Jake reflecting on the lesson and revealing how he plans to progress into the next lesson.

In the last part of this chapter, in hopes that you now have an appreciation of Jake's decision-making, I share my interpretations. My analysis comes from not only the data presented but also additional data and pertinent literature to summarize how, when, where, and why Jake makes the many decisions he does.

#### Always the Teacher

School is out and the summer camp activities are in full swing. The local YMCA is packed on this warm June morning in 1954. In the main gymnasium, the pounding of basketballs overpowers the chatter of young children. On the first court, the eight to ten year old boys are playing a pick-up game. On the far end, about fifteen boys, dubbed "peewees" by the camp counselors, are shooting baskets. These five to seven year olds are struggling to get the ball to the rim of the full size goals. In this mass of "peewees" standing a foot above the rest is seven-year-old Jake Logan. As you move into earshot of the young group, you can overhear him helping a friend, "Bend your knees, and then jump as you shoot it. That will make the ball go higher." Jake could have easily used his size to intimidate others but this is not in his nature. In

fact, his leadership skills were often acknowledged and encouraged by Terry Jenkins, the “Y” director, who Jake greatly admired and respected. By the age of 12, Jake became a junior camp counselor at the YMCA and on weekend scouting trips helped the younger kids earn badges. Additionally, if you were in junior high at the same time Jake was in high school and attended his church, chances are Jake would be your Sunday school teacher.

Being the big brother of the family, Jake took on the responsibility of helping his younger brother, Tom, whenever the opportunity arose. Looking back, he remembers teaching Tom to ride a bike. And then, there was the time they pretended to be in the Olympics. Jake held a stick parallel to the ground and gave Tom detailed instructions of his interpretation of a high jump. Tom, always wanting to please his big brother, did just as he was told and jumped. As Jake looked down at his brother lying on the ground in pain but all right, he remembered that in the Olympics they landed on big soft crash mats.

When school was not in session, Jake could usually be found playing in his back yard or at the “Y” swimming or playing ball. During the school day, his favorite time was recess since physical education was not a part of the elementary school curriculum. The principal of the school, Mr. Dodds, always got a kick out of how hard Jake played at recess and how he would often stop playing early to do calisthenics and run laps around the playground. On occasion, he could be seen leading others in his “exercise routine”.

Remembering the conversation like it was yesterday, Jake recalls one specific afternoon when the students were filing out of school making their way home. Mr. Dodds stopped Jake and his mother to share his observations of recess, and commented, “You know Jake could probably make a good physical education teacher someday.” Once in the car, having listened to the

conversation Jake asked what she thought. He recalls her saying that she would be proud if he, one day, became a teacher.

Jake's active youth continued as he progressed through high school. For his sports performance he received nine letters in swimming, wrestling, football and track. From these experiences, he speaks of learning from several coaches and physical education teachers. He remembers a few educating him more about what *not* to do as a teacher or coach, while others served as positive role models.

### *The College Years*

As you would imagine, Jake's athletic ability landed him a scholarship in both football and track at the nearby university. Unfortunately, an injury that most would consider minor forced a change in his athletic career. After one year of football, he broke his right pinky in spring practice. Later that afternoon when Jake arrived at track practice, his coach, Jerry Simmons, was noticeably irate. This was not unwarranted since Jake was his top competitor in both the shot put and discus. Shortly after storming off the track, Coach Simmons returned and tossing a hammer at Jake's feet emphatically stated, "If you want to keep your scholarship, you better learn how to throw this." Jake not only learned how to throw the hammer, he became an All-American his junior year and qualified for the NCAA Division I Championship that same season. The following year Coach Simmons transferred universities and Jake followed. He continued working hard and was told he had potential to be an Olympian.

While he was pleased with his college sports accomplishments thus far, pursuing his undergraduate degree was just as important. His freshman year he knew he wanted to major in recreation and someday become a YMCA director like his childhood role model, Terry Jenkins. However, with the transfer his senior year, he discovered the new university did not offer a

recreation major. Returning to the conversation between his mother and his elementary principal, he decided to major in physical education.

The physical education department was segregated, as it was a couple of years before Title IX was enforced. In the men's department, the elementary focus was primarily playing games such as squirrels in the trees and duck, duck, goose and the secondary focus was team sports. A year and a half later, Jake graduated with the feeling he was not ready to teach. It was here that he was offered a teaching assistantship from both the men and women's departments to pursue his masters' degree. He chose the women's department in hopes of a new focus; plus, to be honest, the monetary offer was twice as much.

One semester into his master's degree, the two departments merged with the elementary focus going to the former women's department. Movement education was a buzzword in elementary physical education at the time and a few of his professors were learning all they could in an attempt to transfer it to their majors. Jake, not resistant to the new ideas, endorsed movement education believing it was good for kids. One day during an educational gymnastics class, an observant professor pulled Jake into the hall and said, "Jake, you know, you are kind of good at this. You really ought to consider elementary physical education not only because I think you will be outstanding, but because they are really looking for men in elementary." Her comment fueled Jake to want to learn more.

Since it was a new educational approach, workshops were offered across the country, preparing teachers in this "new physical education." Jake attended one such workshop at Bowling Green State, arriving at the end of June and returning home five weeks later; he was ecstatic about the experience. He shared with his wife, Rita, that for the first time he had been



around real teachers in the field and sensed how good it could be. He told her that it was “the most amazing experience” he had ever had and that he was “fired up and ready to teach.”

He graduated in 1978 with a master’s degree and a thirst for teaching. While he was being encouraged by a few of his professors to teach elementary, others encouraged him to extend his studies and get a PhD, with the premise being on completion he could return as a professor. It was at this time that he and Rita made the decision to move south. Jake continued training for the Olympics, took a job teaching elementary physical education, and simultaneously, pursued his doctorate degree at a nearby university. One year later, Jake realized elementary physical education was his career of choice and decided to suspend the pursuit of the doctorate. It was also at this time that Jake and Rita decided to start a family.

Everything seemed to be going Jake’s way professionally and personally. He was satisfied with his career, family, and his throwing. However, with the boycott of the 1980 Olympics, his years of training suddenly seemed futile. The 1984 Olympics seemed a long way off and Jake was advised that he had probably reached his peak. If he wished to compete at this level in four years, he had two options, take steroids or move to Europe to receive a higher level of training. Jake immediately refused the steroid option and took the idea of moving to Europe home to discuss with Rita. With a toddler in the house and another child on the way, together they chose to abandon the Olympic dream. A third option, however, materialized almost immediately with the discovery of the Highland Games where Jake started as an amateur and later turned professional. Life was good.

Who would have known that a broken finger could provide so many opportunities to travel, to do something he truly enjoyed and be paid for doing it? In fact, over two decades later, he still participates in the Highland Games, but in the back of his mind, he wonders what it

would have been like to be an Olympian. Now he coaches high school boys and girls in the shot put, discus, and hammer every spring and, who knows, maybe one day that dream will come true through one of them.

### *Honing His Teaching Skills*

For Jake's first year of teaching, he was in many ways just as new to school as the first graders that came to see him. Both the teacher and students were schooled that first year with Jake feeling he probably learned more. He frequently experimented as he attempted lessons pieced together from what he had learned during his masters' work and the movement education workshop. If you timed it right, you could walk in the gym and see all 6'2" and 270 pounds of Jake on the floor with the children ready to rise slowly like a flower budding in spring as he introduced the class to creative dance. The younger children were willing to try whatever he presented. However, he had a deal with the older students that if the lesson was not working, they could tell him and he would change to something else. Even though the kids were open and gave most things a chance, there were a few lessons they had to laugh about and tell him, "no way." Jake stuck to his agreement and changed the lesson. On reflection, he considered this first year as his true education and self-confidence builder. This year and the next few years were according to him "the years for honing my teaching skills."

During that first year, Jake spent a lot of his time writing elaborate lesson plans based on his college training. He saw the students five days a week and taught thirteen classes daily. Focusing on getting through each day as it came, he planned his lessons one day at a time with no real scope and sequence to the curriculum. Over the next few years, through trial and error, Jake began to find a pattern of successful lessons. He gained a feeling of ownership to what he was teaching and started to decrease the details written in his plans and spend more time

connecting lessons, thus building a progression. It was all beginning to make sense and he was feeling like a bona fide teacher.

*Mr. Jake Logan, The Teacher*

So, over twenty years later, what is Jake doing now? Well, as I climb the small hill leading up to Whit Elementary on my first day of observation, I read on the school marquee, “Congratulations Mr. Logan, Finalist for Fairfield County Teacher of the Year.” And, this was not the first accolade bestowed on Jake. His peers in the field of physical education acknowledged him for the state, district, and national teacher of the year in the mid 1990s. Not long after that, he was awarded the Disney Teacher Award.

These recognitions opened doors to many opportunities for Jake to travel around the country and share his expertise. He has and continues to be an invited presenter at teacher workshops and conferences and frequently serves as an elementary physical education consultant. His consultant work has proven to be an avenue to share what he feels is “the best way to teach elementary physical education.” I asked Jake to describe his teaching.

I teach PE the only way I know how to teach PE. I think that people would recognize it as the skill theme approach if it had to be labeled something. They are not going to see us playing dodgeball, duck, duck, goose, kickball, or anything like that. And, I know there are a lot of folks that don’t look at this approach as being fun. They think to the kids it would be boring doing skill themes. But, to me I don’t see the kids bored. I think they are wrong in that. We don’t have to have a game every day to be fun and to learn...this is my classroom and while there may not be a desk in it, it is my classroom and you are going to have just as much of a learning experience here as you would in math.

While Jake finds consultant work very rewarding, he often limits his travel due to his desire to be home with his wife and a house full of children that need his attention. Today, he and Rita have only four of their six children living at home but in the past there have been, at times, not only their own six children but also as many as six foster children. In fact, over a span of 15 years Jake and Rita have provided foster care to close to 150 children. While the stay of some was only a few hours, others stayed weeks, months, or years. In fact, two of their six children were adopted following foster care.

To say Jake loves working with children is obviously an understatement. During my time spent with Jake and his students, I felt the warmth, comfort, encouragement and humor he shared daily with his students. As I watched him, it was evident in his expressions and his interactions that this is where he is meant to be. He has been an elementary physical education specialist for 23 years now and says, “I have not yet reached my peak. I still have some ideas floating that I want to develop. I still think there is a lot of good stuff out there I haven’t explored yet and I love learning new things.”

### Untie My Hands

*Tuesday, October 15*

*4:00 p.m.*

*[School has been out for nearly an hour, but not for Jake. He is standing in front of a large homemade entertainment center also known as a multipurpose cart. The cart, painted Carolina blue and adorned with children’s handprints and painted faces, is cluttered with a typical day’s teaching supplies including tissues, writing materials, compact discs, cassette tapes, a small hand drum and a mallet. In the center of all of this equipment is a large stereo*

*system. It is here that Jake is preparing for future lessons by listening to a series of sound effects he hopes to find useful.]*

Breaking glass...a little harsh but might work. A car horn, then a drum roll...they might be useful. Oh, a bugle charge...actually I like the bugle charge. It could be a signal for changing when I do centers. The others might be used to spice up a few lessons.

*Wednesday, October 16*

*3:30 a.m.*

*[Jake, tossing and turning trying to go back to sleep, finally gives in to his thoughts, realizing he has too much on his head to get back to sleep.]*

Rolling over and trying not to wake my wife, I see it is 3:30 and I am not surprised. It is not unusual for me to wake up about this time just as if I had to or something. Of course, now that I am awake, I am thinking about school stuff. I am not sure what I am going to do following these dance lessons. Typically, I would just look at my yearly calendar that I map out in August, but this year is different and it is mainly due to my principal and the school plans.

While I try to be supportive, here it is mid-October and I have only made one curriculum decision on my own. The jump-a-thon and the sock-hop were both scheduled here at the first of the year as school fund raisers requiring me to teach jump rope and dance during two of these first three rotations. It is not that I don't want to help; it is just that it puts a wrench in my planning. Anyway, I don't know if I am going to teach gymnastics or basketball. Now, I am getting stressed just thinking about it so I am going to try to go back to sleep.

*4:30 a.m.*

Okay, I drifted off for a little while but am awake again. This is weird, Jake. You are lying awake worrying about what you are going to do two weeks from now with these kids.

Besides just the option of basketball or gymnastics, I could do a striking unit from small paddles to hockey sticks. And, I have to get in two more fitness elements to meet the fitness AKS.

*7:10 a.m.*

*[With email checked and the coffee brewing, Jake sits at his office computer at school.]*

Despite my restless night, I still have not decided where I am going next. I am looking at last year's plans, which honestly are not doing a lot of good since last year I saw my students once every four days and this year it is once every six days. It is so long in between seeing them that it takes what seems like forever to just complete one lesson with every class. We have been in school nine weeks and I have not even taught eight lessons. Looking at last year's plans, I was in the twelfth lesson by now.

When I was told the system was requiring a 45-minute planning period daily for every classroom teacher, I knew we were in trouble. I would see them less times but for a longer class period. I was offered an assistant in order for the kids to have physical education more often. The result, however, would be to have two or three classes in the gym at the same time. I have seen this in many schools in our system and honestly, not much teaching is going on. I do not want to be a recreation director or recess monitor. I am a teacher and I feel the only effective way to teach is one class at a time. Would they put fifty kids in a math class?

When I got my schedule, I started looking at what I was going to have to take out of my program. It was hard looking at what the kids were not going to be able to do. We no longer can do extended dance and gymnastic routines. Games are just for a few minutes at the end of some classes if we get to them at all. We pretty much have to move on if we are going to cover the curriculum, whether the kids get it or not. They miss out on the in-depth exploration and fun things I used to do when I had more time with my students.

The past few years I have gone by the calendar, not the skill level of the kids. I did not skip any of the areas, I just didn't teach them very well. I was really just exposing them to a lot. So, this year I have decided that less is more. What little we cover we will cover thoroughly. I know there is no way I can incorporate all the AKS this year but I think it is more important to do what we can and do it well. That is why I spent the first six lessons, or seven weeks, on throwing because they were not getting it in just three lessons. By the end of six lessons, I saw a big improvement so it was worth it.

7:15 a.m.

My coffee is done. Since I am still undecided, I am going to put this aside for now, have a cup of coffee and set up my equipment for the day.

7:25 a.m.

*[Jake is placing an instruction sheet on a cone near the entrance to the gym. It informs the students to jog or walk outside the orange line until the music stops.]*

I am trying to visualize in my head how many days I will actually have after the sock-hop and before Christmas break. I need to pull out a calendar and compare the number of days available to the number of days I would need to teach striking with paddles, move on to hockey sticks, and end with baseball bats.

In the past years I made a yearly calendar and made sure I covered all the AKS. That is why I am having such a hard time deciding what to teach next. Before, I had it all mapped out for the year. I knew where I was going and how to get there. But, this year, I am just not sure how long I am going to spend on different areas of the curriculum. Whatever we do, I am going to do it well and then next year we will only review and go into depth in other areas.

7:30 a.m.

*[He has returned to his computer and re-opened the document of last year's plans.*

*Beside him are the October and November monthly school calendars.]*

Looking at the October and November calendars, there is one interruption on November the sixth with a team planning block; another day fifth grade is out and, of course, Thanksgiving holiday. No surprise, the December school calendar is not out yet. Our principal is on a month-to-month calendar and still it may change. A week into October we were notified about a field trip planned for the fifteenth. This is frustrating to me because I like to have a plan and all of a sudden, a wrench gets thrown into it.

After pulling up 2001-2002 plans on the computer, I see that this time last year I was teaching striking and followed with volleyball. This year I am saving volleyball until after Christmas. I have a student teacher coming that plays on her university volleyball team and I am looking forward to learning from her. I still have not ruled out dribbling in basketball. I have a lot of kids dying to do basketball. So, I may, in fact, do dribbling and basketball the next six weeks and then move the striking progression to later in the year.

I just remembered we have the Santa Claus workshop to contend with the week before we are out for the holidays. That will take up about a third of the gym, so I should save centers for that day. Wow! All of these things that are thrown into the mix that make you really juggle.

Right now, I am leaning toward basketball, which means I will have to put gymnastics at the end of the year. From mid-November to March, local basketball teams use the gym so we cannot leave any equipment out. We can't even leave anything on the walls. So that eliminates gymnastics because it is too time consuming to pull that equipment out and put it away every



day. It looks like we will only do gymnastics once this year and I know that is going to be a big disappointment to a lot of kids.

*Thursday, October 17*

*4:00 a.m.*

*[Another restless night.]*

Waking up way too early again, I'm mulling over what pretest I should use for the third grade. I guess I can wait until I get to school, look at what they did last year in second grade, and decide on a pretest based on that.

*7:33 a.m.*

*[Sitting in his office sipping his morning coffee.]*

I am still leaning toward dribbling, but it is not set in stone. I will look into my archives later this morning and see what they [third grade] should know for basketball dribbling.

*8:50 a.m.*

*[After speaking on the school morning show, Jake is walking down the hall drinking a cup of hot tea hoping to relieve his sore throat.]*

I am pondering new and creative ways to do stop-n-go dribbling and dribbling games. Thinking back on the sound effects I was listening to the other day, there was a bugle charge and I think I will play some music and cut that sound into it. Then, every time they hear the bugle charge, they will stop or go. So, you play some music, dribble while you travel around, hear the bugle, and stop. When the music starts again, you go. Another idea is to take a game we used with throwing and catching that we called the tire game but I will substitute dribbling for throwing. We have already done it so they will be familiar with it. I will probably use that one day. I do not know where those thoughts came from. I guess from the basketball jar in my head.

10:50 a.m.

*[Back in front of his computer, Jake takes advantage of a break. The local high school physical education teacher has a group of her students working with the first graders.]*

The high school girl's basketball coach is supervising her students working with mine and that gives me a thought to talk to her about what her expectations of dribbling are when they get to high school. But, for now, I am scanning previous lessons I have stored on my computer since about 1993. I am trying to see if I can glean anything for dribbling and basketball.

Actually, I need to just delete a lot of this. So, I am going to spend this time to clean up my files.

*Sunday, October 20*

7:15 p.m.

*[Relaxing at home.]*

I have been sick most of the weekend and given little thought to next week's lesson other than to remind myself to check out PE Central website tomorrow.

*Thursday, October 24*

11:15 a.m.

*[On his lunch break, Jake takes a few minutes to sit down and pull up the PE Central website.]*

Most of my time recently has been on doing paper work for the district teacher of the year award and therefore, have not given a lot of thought to next week. I have made the decision that it is going to be dribbling and basketball for the rest of the semester. I am pulling up PE Central right now to see if they have anything new or different. I am clicking on dribbling and scanning through these to see if there is anything in here I can use. I am not having much luck here so I am going to go eat my lunch.

*After 3:00 p.m.*

*[The teaching day is over and Jake is back to the computer.]*

I think the first lesson is going to look very much like it did last year with the exception of changing the fitness warm-up to go along with our focus of muscular strength and endurance. I am still thinking on this one though and have made no decision.

I am checking out another website called Mike's Physical Education and have not found anything but there are a lot of good links and I am in the process of going through them now. If I find something I might use in the future, I put it in a folder and if not, I reject it. I have not seen anything yet that really speaks to me. I am specifically looking for dribbling or dribbling activities. I really have a pretty good handle on how to teach dribbling but I am always looking for that one activity that will enhance it. So far, I am not real pleased with what I am finding. I cannot believe all of these activities where people are sitting out or not everybody has a ball. That is too much inactivity. I can always rewrite them, but I am really looking for something that I can plug in nicely without having to rework it.

I am on a link now that goes to a web page from another state and as I read it, I do not understand how these people teach. They talk in levels and present it like a progression where level one is to dribble the ball with your right hand and then with your left. Level two is to dribble the ball with alternate hands and then level three is to bounce the ball with both hands and catch it on the return. That, my friend, is an easier skill than the dribbling in the other levels. AARRGGHH! I am frustrated with what is out there and worried if this signifies one reason physical education is in danger of losing any accreditation it ever had.

*Monday, October 28*

*7:15 a.m.*

*[Jake arrives at school, starts his coffee, and searches his computer files for dribbling lesson one from last year.]*

After finally making the decision to go with dribbling skills, I am making a few changes in last year's lesson one, starting with just changing the date on the lesson to October 29-November 6. That just blows my mind that it is going to take that many days to just teach the first lesson to everyone. I am scrolling down looking at the lesson and notice a miscue I need to change. Of course, I still need to come up with another warm-up and I will ponder that today. I want to do something besides centers. I am scanning the AKS movement competencies of demonstrating progress toward mature forms of striking, dribbling a ball with one hand and then the other, moving to the right and left and changing hands on a signal. My signal will be the bugle call that I found last week and I need to remember to work that out after school today or between classes.

I am thinking about a few things I need to remember to tell the kids such as do not shoot baskets and to put the ball between their ankles when I give the stop signal. I try to look at every aspect and even try to anticipate things that could happen. Okay, what else? Oh, the four cues I want them to know and that I will look for are finger pads, waist level, push and eyes up. So, the lesson is looking pretty solid and should be good to go.

I have a few more minutes so I am going to look through some old things I did before for strength. I think I will do this dice activity where I can put different exercises on one and various numbers on the other. We will call it "rolling for fitness" or "gambling for fitness", they will roll the dice and do the exercise that comes up on one, and the other will tell them how many they

have to do. That should take about three minutes. I am going to go with it and then I will try to come up with a different warm-up for the next lesson. It looks like I have until November 6, so that should not be hard [laughs].

*After 3:00 p.m.*

The last class is over for today and I am checking my equipment for tomorrow's lesson. I blew up several balls between classes today and still have three or four more to go and I need to check that all of the ones I blew up are in good shape.

I am giving this lesson one more look and replacing the dice warm-up for the pacer test I did last year. I have thought on and off today of how I am going to check attendance and still keep everybody active. I decided to have them come in and sit on the three-point line and I will call the name of two people who will come forward and roll the dice. I will continue until all have had a turn. I like to visualize the lesson and see the kids doing the progression, making the transitions, and pulling it all together.

I just came across some notes I made from last year's dribbling lessons and I wrote down that one game we played did not go so well. I guess I need to be ready to abandon that one. I don't remember why but that is why I write myself notes. I have to do that a lot more these days [laughs].

I know I plan differently than most people and a lot of people are overwhelmed that anybody with my experience sits down and writes such a detailed lesson plan. First, I probably would not do it if I did not have a computer. Secondly, I do a lot of cut and paste. The first year I did this was the hardest, but now it is easy. I like having it in this format so when people walk in the door to observe me, I hand them a copy and keep right on teaching. They can see learning is happening in my gym.

4:00 p.m.

*[Almost two weeks since he first gave thought to this series of lessons, Jake is standing at the entertainment center feeling content and prepared for tomorrow's classes.]*

I spent the last 20 minutes recording the songs with the bugle call. I really like the way it came out. I think it is going to be effective and very cool. I'm excited about that and hopefully the kids will like it. At the least, it will be something different. All the equipment is ready to roll out tomorrow. I think I'm set to go.

*Tuesday, October 29*

*[As Jake teaches Ms. Ingle's third grade class, he shares his thoughts, observations, and actions.]*

12:52 p.m.

*[Jake is standing in front of the entertainment center.]*

I have just dismissed Mrs. Johnson's fourth grade class and have just a couple of minutes to make a quick insert into my music before Ms. Ingle's class arrives. Several of the children in that class had not heard a bugle call, so I need to dub it on the front of the tape for a demonstration to help the remaining classes.

Without even looking away from the tape deck, I know the third grade class has arrived. They are their typical talking and laughing selves as most jog down to meet me while a few take their time in hopes of completing their conversations before I start class. A couple of students say hello and I return the greeting and ask everyone to have a seat on the green three-point line. Several are sitting close together and I ask them to spread out and allow more than self-space, as they will need it for our strength and endurance activity.

Glancing at the roll book on my desk, *[A small student desk is used to hold his daily lesson plan, roll book, and behavior notes.]* I call out for Shannon and Jarvis to come forward. As they approach I explain that we are doing an activity called rolling for fitness and give each of them a yellow foam stuffed die. Each vinyl side has a card inserted in a transparent pocket attached to the six by six inch surface. The six cards on the die Shannon holds provide a random number ranging from three to fifteen. Jarvis has the following three exercises, each repeated: crab-kicks, pushups, and curl-ups. I explain to them and the class that they will roll the dice and determine what exercise we do and how many. The roll results in seven push-ups and most of the students start right away as Jarvis and Shannon return to their places. Flashing back to last year, I am reminded when the students did these on their own some did the exercises too fast and others did not complete them. So, I stop the class and tell them we are going to count together. After seven push-ups, I call the next two names.

Randy and Sheila are up next and roll the dice. And, roll it does, as both of them bounce off other students. The students laugh but recover and are ready for the three crab-kicks. We have only done crab-kicks once before so I ask for a quick demonstration first and Bonita volunteers. In an attempt to keep it fun and interesting, I ask Darien and Steve to “come on down as they are our next contestants” to throw the dice. Darien takes it literally or, knowing him, he was hoping for the laughter achieved by the previous group as he throws his die into the air. At this juncture, I realize that I need to use the expression drop the dice and define drop. When the die returns to the ground, takes a bounce or two and lands the exercise curl-ups and the number seven is showing. During all of this I observe that Ontario, now in just a white tee shirt, has taken off his button-down shirt and is using it to hit Montel.

After Darien and Steve return to their places, I begin the count one, two, three...at the same time moving toward Ontario. Suddenly, Jamie screams out that he has a bug on him. I guess my yellow jacket friend from the last class is back. As I walk over to inspect, I give Ontario “the look” and take his shirt. I inform the class that there was a yellow jacket in the previous class and if they see it to let me know so I can step on it. I am thinking that if someone spots it I can get rid of it and not have to deal with it for the rest of the day. Wrong! As if desiring to take over my class, the yellow jacket appears resulting in about half the class scattering and screaming.

What was merely a minute seemed like an eternity before I got them back under control. Luckily, they bought into the same story we all tell kids that it will not hurt you if you leave it alone. After all my years of teaching, you would think I would know better than to tell them a yellow jacket had ever been in the gym. Oh well, another lesson learned. I continue the fitness activity until all have a turn. With the exception of having to persist in telling them to drop the dice, sending Ontario to time-out because he continues hitting the child next to him, the remaining warm-up time goes well. For the next class I really need to emphasize dropping the dice and maybe even demonstrate it. With all of the distractions, the warm-up lasts longer than I had planned. Tomorrow I will reduce the time and have the two that roll the dice stay up here and do the exercise rather than take time to return to their spots.

*1:07*

In order to get the students in a different mindset, I ask them to stand up, shake out their exhausted arms, and move over to where I have the equipment for today’s lesson. I select a couple of balls from the barrel and illustrate the equipment options. I have basketballs of various sizes and a few volleyball trainers in the barrel enabling students of different skill levels to have



access to appropriate equipment. After showing the options, I inform them that they may exchange the ball anytime they choose if they are not content with their choice. I placed the volleyball trainers in the mix of basketballs today with Valerie, Angie, and Emily in mind, as they may need a lighter ball. I proceed to introduce the lesson and clarify a few rules. I generally start a new unit discussing safety and management. For basketball, I have to provide safety reminders such as not pulling on the nets as our portable goals and wall goals are a little unstable. Today we are working on dribbling which will involve every child having a ball. A couple of management reminders are necessary. I inform them to place the ball between your feet on the stop signal and unless shooting is part of the lesson, no one is to shoot at the goals.

The initial task, designed mainly as a pre-assessment of their dribbling, is for each student to choose a ball and begin dribbling through the gym. It is difficult for kids to see the goals and not get to use them. So, I tell them that if we complete the planned dribbling activities that I will allow them a few minutes to shoot at the end of the class. The reward of shooting serves as a “carrot on the end of a stick” and therefore, becomes motivation to work hard and stay with the lesson. I then use it during the lesson by reminding them that any off-task behavior is decreasing their shooting time. It works.

I want to make sure everyone understands the directions so I ask for questions. Valerie’s hand goes up. She has already asked two questions and now has a third. Honestly, I hesitated to call on her the second time because she appeared still to be formulating her question when she was asking the first one. I generally make it a practice to just call on her once. Since everyone seems ready to go and because I have the sneaky suspicion that she really just wants attention, I decide to allow the class to get started. However, I announce to the class that if anyone has a

personal question or does not understand the directions to come to me while everyone else gets started. She gets a ball and joins the others.

*1:11 p.m.*

Everyone has a ball and is dribbling so I take advantage of the opportunity to go talk to Ontario. He says he does not understand why he was put in time out but I know he knows exactly what he was doing. I lay it out to him, inform him that if he cannot control himself he will return to the bench, and then, I allow him to join the class. The conversation with him takes much more time from the rest of the students than I want to. I stop the music but having not observed the dribbling, cannot provide feedback. I do complement them for quickly placing the ball on the floor.

I repeat the directions of dribbling in general space and encourage them to go at a speed where they can control the ball. The music resumes and they continue. With the frustrations of the yellow jacket and Ontario, I am not even sure what is next in my lesson so I go over and check my plans. When I turn around, I notice a few are throwing the ball up and catching it, one is spinning it on his finger, and two students are actually throwing the ball against the wall after every few dribbles. Because there are several off-task, I stop the music, share my surprise at what is going on, remind them of what they are supposed to be doing and start the music for them to continue.

Valerie and Emily are just standing in place dribbling and I'm curious if moving and dribbling is too difficult for them, I work my way over to check it out. On the way I observe Sandra, Jason, and Brad with good control and comment to them likewise. Passing by Jared, I attempt to steal the ball. He grins at his success of not allowing it. Allen is changing to get another ball. I think he wants to try every one in there. He is a new student and either that option

to change is novel to him or he cannot find the ball he really wants. Looking in the barrel, I find a new one that appears in good condition and offer that one to him. I finally reach the two girls and convince them to at least walk. I watch them a second and they are doing okay. Out of the corner of my eye, I see a ball roll by with Jeremy not far behind. I guess he needs to be reminded to slow down so he can control the ball. I cannot believe what I am seeing now! Ontario is pushing his ball into Ricky's back. He must want another trip to time-out. I am going to have to talk to Ms. Ingle and find out his situation. He has only been here three weeks and seems to be struggling at getting along with his new peers.

*1:16*

With Ontario back in time-out, I stop the music and ask the class to leave the ball and come and join me. I decide to question them about the cues from throwing we did about three weeks ago not only to review but also to get them thinking about what I mean by cues. They do a great job and remember all of them. I might be pushing here, but want to see what they remember from last year when we worked on dribbling. I am surprised and pleased they remember three of the four. And, with prompting, Valerie recalls the final one of push the ball. She struggles so much with the skills but usually has the cognitive. Just to have a little fun and to bring home the point, I demonstrate what a bad dribbler looks like and tell them they do not want to look like this. I ask them to tell me what I am doing wrong. They have no problem because I am doing nothing right.

After inquiring if they have ever heard a bugle call and discovering, like the last class, several have not, I push play on the tape. I was glad I had taken advantage of the few minutes between classes to dub that in. I explained the next task was to continue dribbling in general space and every time they heard the bugle call, they were to change hands and continue dribbling.

I really like to use preset music intervals whenever I can because it frees me to observe the students and concentrate on what I am doing rather than stopping and starting the music or having to provide a signal myself.

The crux of the lesson and the main AKS for third grade is on changing hands while dribbling and that is where I wanted to spend the most time. Taking a quick scan, I notice Emily standing by herself instead of moving; and, here comes Valerie with something to tell me. She tells me about her ankle she broke one time. I listen to her story and then attempt to help her with her dribbling because she is still struggling on pushing the ball down. She seems to have a real limp wrist and is not getting enough force behind it. Either that or her ball is low on air. I give her ball a few dribbles and decide to work with her on the wrist action. I feel sorry for her because she really does try. She understands what to do but cannot put it into her hands. Jeremy just dribbled past me and has this mischievous look in his eyes. He is sneaky and probably up to something, so I better keep an eye on him.

After taking a quick glance again at my lesson plan, picking up the foam cylinder to use for the next task, I notice several in the class have created their own activity. They are lining up at one end of the gym and on the bugle call racing to the other end. I decide to watch a few seconds just to see if they repeat it. They do and now half the class is joining in. While I secretly am impressed with the leadership skills and the creativity of the activity, I decide to stop the horse race and get them back on task.

We continue with the bugle call change and I observe several are dribbling the ball exceptionally high. While debating how much longer I want to go on with this task, I notice Allen is, once again, changing balls. Concerned more with the high dribbling, I stop the class and ask if anyone has noticed the biggest mistake we are making. Sandra's hand goes up quickly and

her response is right on the money. I demonstrate the chin-level dribbles I was seeing and follow by showing a good waist-level dribble. I had a decision to make here of whether we should go back to the dribbling and changing hands in order to allow them to focus on keeping the ball at medium level or move on to the next activity. I look at my watch, realize it is already 1:26, and decide to move on.

The bench behind me seems perfect for where I need to stand and face them for the next activity. I ask the students to be sure they all can see me, and the reply is positive. Pointing the cone to my left and to their right, I question them on which way they will dribble. They respond with East, not what I want, but not really a wrong answer. I do use those as directions quite often so it is understandable. I clarify with the options of right and left before getting the answer I am looking for and then question for the other directions. I remind them they will need to watch the cone and not their ball to be successful. Pointing forward with the cone they begin by dribbling backwards. I notice only a few are actually dribbling backwards. Most turn and dribble forward to the back wall. I remind a couple to keep the ball lower and see the rest are doing much better with that.

The focus of this last task is to keep eyes up which would happen if they watch the cone. Even though I do not stress it, I assume they will change hands as they change directions. However, only a couple does this. They do a pretty good job of looking up. I am tucking in the back of my head that next time I need to focus more on changing hands while changing directions as well as a little more work on keeping the ball below the waist. I feel they have worked hard so I pull them in for the closure and plan to reward them with some shooting time.

I ask for the four cues for dribbling and call on Kevin. He appears to be thinking but cannot come up with an answer. I ask him if he wants to phone a friend and he replies, "No."

Shonda has her hand up and when I call on her she says, “Step with the opposite foot.”

Reminding her that is a throwing cue and that I am looking for a dribbling cue, I call on Sandra confident she will get us on track. She responds, “Keep the ball at waist level.” Valerie’s hand is up and she repeats the “push the ball down” cue she so proudly remembered earlier in the lesson. John adds, “Keep your eyes up” and Shemika informs us, “Use the finger pads.” As soon as I call on Shemika, I notice Andrew has this sad look on his face and is obviously disappointed he was not called on. Since he rarely wants to volunteer answers, I feel bad for overlooking him. I decide to ask him which cue he was going to share and he smiles and says, “the finger pads.” I go back to Kevin who struggled with a response and ask him to name any cue again and he repeats, “Keep the ball at waist level.” I compliment all on a job well done and tell them they can go shoot at any basket.

Within fifteen seconds, I see three balls stuck in the portable goals and realize I forgot to show them how to get the ball out. The music stops and they respond by placing the ball down and listening as I quickly demonstrate the slight shake of the goal that releases a captured ball. The music starts; they pick up the balls, and are all shooting. Ricky comes up to me and tells me that he is going out for basketball. I tell him that is good and maybe this practice will help him. I need to go talk to Ontario again but first I make a note in my roll book of his behavior today. I share with him my disappointment in him today and that I expect better of him in the future. I decide with everyone shooting freely that it might not be a good idea for him to join in.

I take advantage of this unstructured time to talk to the kids, encourage them and give a few high fives. Valerie is struggling to get the ball in even the lowest goal so I go over and lower it one more notch. She says that is not low enough. I encourage her to give it a try and she shoots and makes it. I look at her and she laughs. I cannot believe Allen is changing balls again. I decide

it is time to address this problem, so I walk over and suggest he find a ball he is happy with and stick with it from now on. Jeremy is now shooting in the barrels where I keep the balls. Now, that I do not understand with all of these goals available. Here comes Valerie holding her face. My guess is someone's ball hit her. She verifies that is what happened. I touch her head and tell her today is October 29 and I bet it will be better by November 7. She laughs and skips off.

There is only about four minutes left in class and I think we need a cool down and one more chance to practice dribbling. I stop the music and tell them to dribble their ball as they walk outside the orange line. It is time for my kind of music, "Georgia on My Mind." This gives me one more chance to look at their dribbling and gives them the opportunity to calm down before returning to the classroom. I tell Ontario to join his class walking but I do not allow him a ball. Valerie stops and tells me something about a polar bear and mountain she visited. Who knows? I tell her she needs to continue practicing her dribbling with everyone else.

I position myself by the barrels so as they pass me I can ask them to put the balls away and walk one more lap before lining up. I see a loose ball over in the corner and ask Valerie to pick it up and dribble it to me. I am thinking of all people, she needs the practice. Valerie does not hear me so Emily picks it up. It looks like she needs the extra practice just as bad since she is dribbling the ball to me using two hands. I need to give her more attention next class. The class is in line at the door and Ms. Ingles arrives to escort them back to their classroom. I ask her to step outside and talk to me a minute in hopes of gaining something that will help me to better understand Ontario and his situation.

2:50 p.m.

*[The last class of the day is dismissed and Jake spends a few minutes reflecting before reporting to bus duty.]*

My biggest disappointment for today was in Ontario and his behavior. I do not like kids to miss out but he really backed me in a corner and I had no choice. I guess what was worse is that he did not last five minutes it seemed before he was bothering someone else. His teacher said he is really struggling in the classroom and, being a new student, has not yet found someone he can get along with. She informed me the family life was not the best of situations either. Hopefully things will improve for him and he can adjust here.

As far as the lesson goes, I did not get to a game I had planned. I have a tendency to over plan, so; I do not get discouraged if I do not do everything. But, honestly, I didn't see the skills were there for playing the game today. I felt good about the extension tasks so we may get to a game next time. The bugle call for changing hands went well, except I never expected to see the racing. I had to put a stop to that. As far as the students, Valerie, Angie, and Emily really struggled. Valerie is like that on most skills so that was really no surprise. I do need to make a point of giving her some extra help and possibly more time on the skills. Other than that, I think the lesson went well. Oh, of course there was the yellow jacket incident. I think I would rather just forget that [laughs].

*4:50 p.m.*

After watching the video of the lesson, I am disappointed in the lack of feedback I gave. While it was pretty well directed, it was sparse. I appeared to me more concerned with the music being right than providing appropriate feedback to the students. I have to be more aware of that in the next lesson. I like to use music and one reason I do is that it frees me to focus on the kids especially when it is pre-timed like in the dribbling today or when I do centers. It is time-consuming to prepare it but it is worth it when it allows me to concentrate on the students. It, in a



sense, is a management tool. But, it is also a motivator. I think the kids like it. They seem happier and more productive when I play it.

Watching the video of this lesson reminds me that I need to film myself teaching more often. There are so many things that you do not catch when you are out there teaching. You think things are going well and then you see the video and see what did not go so well.

*Wednesday, October 30*

*[It is 3:20 in the afternoon and Jake and I are watching the video lesson one, day two. As we observe how the lesson developed, he shares what was different from the previous day.]*

*12:56*

They came in and I asked them to spread out on the green line to make good use of all of the space. And, almost immediately...can you believe it...another bug problem. At least it was not as bad as yesterday. I took the daddy longlegs outside the door and that one was solved. I asked Sally how her day was going. I have to watch her all the time. She is so tiny and from my understanding, she is still treated like a baby by her mother. In fact, I have seen her curl up in fetal position if things get too loud in here. She dropped her head and told me she was having a good day.

*12:59*

I decided, as I said yesterday, to let those that roll the dice stay up here to save time. Yesterday it seemed to go much longer than I wanted it to. Donovan was doing a great job on his push-ups so I took the opportunity to give him some positive strokes and let him demonstrate. Generally, if I am lucky, that goes a long way and helps him stay out of trouble for the day. Andrea and Shontel were next and they both threw the dice. I stopped them and made them repeat it with a drop this time. I even showed them a drop. I did not want the problem to escalate

as it did yesterday. I really played it up more like a game show today because I knew this class would need that to stay focused. They yell and clap every time I called the names for the next contestants. On the last turn, Janice and Phil drop the dice and, glancing at the dice, I claim it is 150 crab kicks. They all moan and some yell, “no way.” I am caught as Janice corrects that it is just three.

*1:06*

This class was very talkative today. Of course, we are having red ribbon day at school and tomorrow is Halloween. So, I guess I am not surprised. I do wait them out once I asked for their attention. The students got each other quiet when they realized I was waiting on them. Once I had their attention, I went over the safety rules, explained the ball options, gave directions on the first task and informed them that getting to shoot today depended on them. I did explain how to get the balls out if they got stuck and suddenly, out of nowhere, Donovan asks about slam-dunking. Several joined in and many repeated the question. It was as if they did not want to take “no” for an answer. And, I am thinking what part of “no” do they not understand, especially Donovan who keeps coming back to it.

*1:11*

When I called them by birthday months to get a ball, I noticed Sally was still sitting. She told me she does not know when her birthday is. I responded that we are going to have to find that out for her and ask her to go get a ball. When I looked up over half the class was shooting at the goals. I obviously was not clear on the directions so I stopped the music and repeated them. This time they follow the directions and dribble through the gym.

Jim Clevenger from Sport Zone walked in and waited for me to get the kids moving again before approaching me. He wanted to take six kids outside for about 20 minutes to do a photo

shoot. This is not unusual as he comes about three or four times a year to take shots of kids in action with the equipment for the Sport Zone catalog. The children chosen have to have a permission slip signed and returned for their picture to be used. It is generally not a problem but he called yesterday and said he would be here at my last class today, not this one. He took a quick look at the kids and started choosing some. It was obvious he was having trouble catching them so I stopped the class and informed them of what was happening. He quickly chose seven and they walked out with him.

I called the class over to sit in front of me. During the short time they were dribbling, I noticed most of them had the ball real high. So, I decided to stop here and discuss the cues before we continued. When they sat down, Lisa asked me why Mr. Clevenger chose the ones he did. I hate this because I know they all want to be chosen. I explain it has more to do with what people are wearing like the warm-up suits most of them had on. I am not sure all of them bought into that answer. Changing the subject, I ask them about the cues and share with them my observation of the high dribbling. I over-exaggerated and demonstrated high dribbling. They laughed. I asked them to help me and they reminded me to keep it at my waist. I had them return to their balls and begin dribbling again focusing on the cues.

I felt they needed more time to explore before we started the task of changing hands. I was watching Sally and looking out for her pretty much the whole period because I knew she would struggle. I tried to give her some help but she does not talk to me. I do not know if it is because I am a male or if she just does not want my help.

Mr. Gentry, one of our assistant principals, walked in and wanted to talk to me about the teacher of the year committee visit. They want to observe me teach some time in the next two

weeks. I told him I would get with him after my last class. He wanted to talk about it then. While I welcome anyone in my class, did he not realize I was trying to teach?

*1:20*

They are dribbling much better so I stop them and compliment them on keeping the ball at waist level. I then play the bugle sound and inform them to change hands and continue dribbling every time they hear the sound. I really made a point during this extension time to give feedback to as many students as I can. Of course, when I talk to Sally she drops her head and moves away from me again. I notice her shoe is untied and ask if she knows how to tie it, she shakes her head. I take her over to the bench and attempt to teach her how. I doubt I was successful. I noticed John, Tabby, and Richard were really doing an excellent job keeping the ball at medium level and they even would put one hand behind them while dribbling with the other hand. I stopped the music and pinpointed them for the class to observe. I then invited the entire class to try it for a few minutes. I think I went a little longer with this than I did yesterday.

The next extension, to change directions as I point the cone, did not go as well with this class. They were not looking up and the result was bumping into each other or crowding each other. I stopped them a couple of times and reiterated the need to look up at the cone. I looked at my watch and realized it was 1:28 and I paused trying to decide if I want to work with this some more or let them shoot. I decide we need a little more practice. After about fifteen seconds, I let them go shoot.

I saw Sally was in a crowd and suggested she go to another goal. I told her I did not want a ball to hit her glasses. I make a quick change in the music and talk to a few more kids but then decide to take Sally to a goal by herself. I lowered it all the way in hopes she could make a few. But, it was like feeding the fish; all the slam-dunk dreamers came running over. I sent them away.

The students that left with Sport Zone have returned. I noticed he did take some of the better athletes from this class so maybe that is why this class, as a whole, appeared so low skilled. I told them to get a ball and join the class shooting. A few minutes later, we go into our cool down and then I dismiss them. You know, watching the video, I just realized I forgot to do a closure.

*2:50 p.m.*

*[Prior to watching the video, Jake, while walking back to the building for bus duty, reflected on the lesson.]*

I was really distracted today by Mr. Gentry and the Sport Zone people being in and out. I get frustrated when others take my time with a class. I think I did better with feedback today and that was the main focus for me today. As far as the lesson goes, this class was not as talented as yesterday's group and it took a little more to get it out of them. Donavan had a good day and that is unusual. I think the positive reinforcement I kept giving him helped. I spent a lot of time with Sally. She is one of those that needs the extra attention just to function. The kids that need the most help are the ones that are going to get it. With the schedule I have, I can only put on bandaids. The kids that are functioning at or above grade level are usually just "on their own." If I saw them more, I would be working to take them to the next level, too. There just isn't the time for that here. It really bothers me but I know that all I can do is work within the framework that is handed me.

*Monday, November 4*

*10:10 a.m.*

*[Jake's regular planning period today was changed to 10:10 due to team-planning meetings. He is looking over his lesson for tomorrow and making changes.]*

I talked to the girl's basketball coach and she said changing hands when changing directions was not near as important to her as them being able to use the opposite arm as a defense when dribbling. So, I am going to add that to the next lesson. In fact, I am thinking about what all we covered these six days, what I need to repeat and what I need to add. I think I will make a wooden shield tonight or tomorrow and have it for a visual. We will use the opposite arm to shield the defensive player. I will have a child moving around as if trying to steal the ball while the partner dribbles and shields. Additionally, I am going to look at playing either Octopus Tag or Dribble tag at some point in these lessons.

*1:25 p.m.*

*[It is day five of this six day rotation and Jake is teaching another third grade class the same lesson. He is standing on the bench doing the activity where they watch the cone and change directions.]*

The thought just came to me to ask the classroom teachers for the spelling words and I will put each word on a card, hold it up, and have them dribble while spelling the word. That is just another idea of keeping their eyes up plus they get extra practice on spelling.

#### Researcher Interpretations

This section will further interpret how Jake plans, makes in-action teaching decisions and reflects upon teaching. Additional data and interpretations, in conjunction with evidence presented in the data story will be used. Through the researcher's interpretations and the research process, this section will answer the questions of when, where, how, and why Jake makes the decisions he does. As with previous sections, each teaching process will be examined individually via the decision-making processes during planning, teaching, and reflection.

Literature pertinent to the discussion of Jake's case will be introduced to support the interpretations presented throughout.

### *Planning*

As was evidenced through Jake's story, planning is an important part of his teaching routine and is where he makes most of his teaching decisions. During the two months Jake and I collaborated, this was apparent. During the five observed classes, Jake made very few changes from his written plans during actual teaching. Once his plans were completed, Jake appeared to feel confident and therefore rarely saw a need to deviate from them. He noted, "I have put enough thought into the lesson that it is going to go pretty well like I expect it to...if something goes awry, I won't stick with it." In the event something unexpected occurred that caused the lesson to go askew, Jake first held himself responsible, as evident through the quote, "It could be a task I give the kids that they do not understand...or maybe I see a bunch of kids not on task. I have to assume it is my fault, not theirs." At this point, he clarified his intentions or changed the task. Jake occasionally did not complete the entire written lesson. This was not a surprise, disappointment or uncommon to him, as he often over-planned for classes.

Teaching, in general (Cole, 1988), and physical education, specifically (Behets, 1996; Dodd, 1994), occurs in a very unstable environment so plans are often curtailed. During the research process, this was apparent in Jake's teaching. There were evidenced times that he would choose not to progress to the next planned task because his students had not developed the requisite skills to move on or because time was limited. One example can be seen in Jake's reflections after his first lesson, when he noted, "I did not get to the game I wanted to play. I just didn't see the skill going on for the task ahead...the extension task worked pretty well so we will get to the game next time."

Planning is a very important part of Jake's day as a teacher. This explains why Jake has trouble understanding how anyone could teach without using plans, as he remarked, "I am not comfortable without a plan. As the saying goes, 'if you fail to plan, you plan to fail.' Without a plan you do not know where you are going, so you certainly do not know how to get there." The literature on teacher planning supports Jake's lack of understanding of teachers who do not use plans, since 'effective' teaching behaviors do occur as a result of planning (Byra & Coulon, 1994; Carnahan, 1980; Clark & Peterson, 1986; Clark & Yinger, 1979; 1987; Griffey & Housner, 1991). This is evident in the following comment Jake shared about the need for planning, "I have often thought that what really makes a good physical education program successful is the planning that goes into it. I have always been a little obsessive about that [planning] and I make sure that I am over-planned."

As noted, Jake has a specific planning routine, is very goal oriented, often over plans, pulls from previous experiences, and is confident when the process is complete and he is ready to "take the floor" and teach. These are all attributes highlighted within the planning literature. The interpretations of this case study also mirror many of the same characteristics of planning reported by Clark and Yinger (1979) and supported the notion that planning is an important concern prior to instruction by experienced teachers (Housner and Griffey, 1985).

#### *When and Where Jake Plans*

Most of Jake's planning occurred during his scheduled morning planning periods where he had access to his office computer. Jake would often arrive early to school, thus extending his planning time. In addition, he has been known to come in on a Sunday afternoon and spend three or four hours planning a theme or several sequential lessons. Of these planning practices Jake shared, "It is usually one long period of time and then several short sessions during the week."



Due to the fact he only sees each class once every six days he often has an entire week to plan for the next lesson, so his old routine of working on Sunday afternoons has become increasingly rare.

As noted in the research, formal planning is only one strategy that effective teachers use to prepare and plan for future lessons (Borko & Livingston, 1989; McCutcheon, 1980; Placek, 1984). In addition to formal planning, it was evident that Jake used more casual periods for planning. As acknowledged in his story, Jake would often experience insomniac moments and early wake-up times. He commented that although those moments were unwelcome, they often consisted of and consumed him with solving a previously unresolved planning issue. Occasionally, however, spontaneous planning was embraced as it helped him to pass the time on long trips. Jake noted, “I travel to the Scottish games and they are sometimes five or six hour trips...I put on a little James Taylor and start thinking about where things are going in my lessons.” McCutcheon (1980) also found that teachers use mental dialogues in thoughts about teaching skills and concepts and in anticipating potential behavior problems and instructional pitfalls. She referred to these thinking and rehearsal acts as mental dialogues. Mental dialogues were also a significant part of Jake’s planning. Several examples of mental dialogues that Jake displayed included,

...I look at every aspect that I can and try to plan for those things that could happen...I see these scenarios happening before me...those two thoughts just came to me...and I don’t know where these things come from...I guess from a little basketball jar in my head.

While Jake planned in both formal and informal settings, he also demonstrated thoughts of planning during teaching. He noted of this habit that, “while the lesson is happening the planning is coming on too...you are seeing stuff and thinking this isn’t working so where are we going next.” As Jake reflects on something not working, planning has to occur on the spot to

make the most appropriate change. While he admits this does not happen often, it does happen. It is evident Jake demonstrates reflection in-action (Schon, 1983).

Although Jake has a set planning period of which he takes advantage, there are spontaneous planning moments that occur at varying times and during teaching. Much of the research on teacher cognition confirms that planning occurs at spontaneous times and is not always in a written context (Borko & Livingston, 1989; Kneer, 1986; McCutcheon, 1980; Morine-Dersheimer, 1979; Placek, 1984).

### *How Jake Plans*

While experience has played an inevitable role in Jake's planning, he claims that his school computer has made planning much easier. In 1994 when Fairfield County School District first purchased computers for all teachers, Jake would record and save all his detailed lesson plans on the computer. While he commented about the time-consuming nature of the process that initial year, his diligence has saved a significant amount of time as he has continued to teach. Jake, in talking about this issue, commented, "Before the computer, every time you sat down it was almost reinventing the wheel...now, planning is so much easier. I have the AKS and the curriculum on the computer and can copy and paste out of them onto a daily lesson plan."

In addition to the consistency in content and structure, Jake also has a certain lesson plan format he follows starting with the date, grade, skill theme, both major and minor AKS, and equipment needed. The next section of his written lesson plan introduces a fitness activity followed by the development tasks. In a column opposite the tasks entitled Cue/Coaching he adds notes to himself that include focus, observation, and refinement cues, as well as the occasional explanation of an instructional task (see Appendix E). Jake felt that it was important to explain why he makes his plans so formal,

I know I plan differently than most other teachers... from talking to them or sending them copies of my plans. When I am asked why I still do planning this way, I tell them I need a security blanket if someone comes in to observe and asks what I am doing today. I can just hand it to them...instead of it looking like I just felt like it was a good day for basketball.

Over his teaching career, Jake has been bestowed numerous accolades. Due to this recognition, visitors are commonplace in Jake's classroom. This has influenced Jake's planning practices as he made a decision years ago to keep a formal written plan available to provide visitors. In fact, the first time I entered his gymnasium, Jake greeted me, handed me a copy of a formal lesson plan, and kept right on teaching. Although Jake used a computer and modified the previous year's plans, his planning procedures were not as simple as pulling up the lesson from the previous year and changing the date. Jake explains,

I usually take the skill theme I am working on whether it is dribbling with hands or whatever and start looking at the AKS and go from previous lessons and previous experiences like what I have seen at workshops and think might work. I see how they fit into the AKS and kind of put it into a progression.

Throughout the research process, it was apparent that the county's AKS were a major focus of Jake's teaching. When planning, Jake generally had the AKS, previous lessons on the same skill theme, and the system curriculum, as opened files on the computer as well as a copy of the monthly school calendar on the desk. To Jake the school calendar was an essential document in planning since he developed the physical education curriculum around the monthly events.

When Jake actually planned, he drew from past plans whether in writing or in his head. This supports Graham, et al.'s, (1993) findings that experienced teachers rely heavily on experiences, Morine-Dershimer's (1979) findings that planning is seldom fully reflected in teachers' written plans, and compounds the notion that experienced teachers' planning is often an integration of scripts (Borko & Livingston, 1989). After formulating and generating the initial framework, Jake would search physical education websites and subject appropriate books for

new ideas and additional information, noting that, “I am always trying to figure out a new way, just an extension task or an assessment idea generally... and to bring something new into it.”

As was evident in preparing for the lesson in *Untie My Hands*, the first planning decision Jake made was what to teach. During the research process, Jake spent just over a week deciding upon and making the necessary decisions to teach basketball skills for the six remaining lessons. Jake informed me that this is not a usual practice as he typically has a yearly plan. Through further discussion of his planning routines, Jake explained that this year he did not draw up a year plan based on the new teaching format and several administrative constraints. For example, one of the constraints Jake highlighted in designing a yearly plan was the problem that the school calendar was determined on a month-to-month basis and included several interruptions such as special events, field trips, picture day and activities that required use of the gym. In addition, two special event fundraisers, the sock hop and jump-a thon, influenced his curricular decisions for September and October.

A second factor that prevented a yearly plan was the top-down policy decision that flowed from the school board, which mandated a 45-minute planning period for all teachers in Fairfield County. The county mandate affected Jake’s classes on a number of planes including the number of days the children came to physical education and the time period. This was radically different since the previous year the students came to physical education once every four days for 35 minutes. Following the mandates, the students attended physical education once every six days for 45 minutes. Jake is very disturbed about the effects this new schedule will have on the physical education curriculum in the county and the implications the situation is causing in the schools. Jake shared his concerns,

This year I am thinking I might get through half a dozen AKS if I am lucky and really push. It is almost Christmas and I have covered throwing and dribbling...and, there are

about 20 AKS per grade level... Ultimately the kids are the ones missing out... I figured out that I have been going by the calendar and not by the skill level of the kids. I just stopped one day and said this is ludicrous. When I started teaching throwing I noticed their skills were horrendous so, we spent six lessons on throwing. There was a tremendous amount of improvement in that time... I have decided to just try the less is more approach. I think before I was really doing just a lot of exposure. Basically, whatever I decide to do I am going to try and do it well. So, this year I can focus on certain things and then next year review and see where they are and then focus on another skill a little deeper. It is just very disheartening to have them [the students] only once a week or now less than that. Some schools see them more often but they have two, three, or four classes in the gym at the same time and I don't see much teaching going on there. I do not want to become a recreation director or recess leader. I still want to remain a teacher and I think the only effective way to do that is one class at a time.

Despite the constraints influencing his planning, Jake was very diligent about the process. This was especially important given the limited time he had with the children. Therefore, through his planning Jake always attempted to get the most out of each lesson including keeping the children as active as possible throughout the lesson. In each and every class I observed, there was rarely a moment when each child did not have an individual piece of equipment and ample opportunities to practice the assigned task. Providing equipment options was a part of Jake's plans and he had certain students in mind that he believed would benefit from using alternative equipment.

I try to account for the worst skilled kids and the most skilled... I do not write anything for the remediation or enhancement but I do have or try to allow for variety. I may do that in the selection of balls because when we have out basketballs we will have playground balls and soft volleyballs as well so I can always, on the spot, make a suggestion for someone to try another ball... Sometimes they make the decision and other times I make the suggestion.

In addition to decisions made regarding the classroom environment, Jake often shared his thoughts on classroom management and decision-making regarding task transitions as an important factor in planning that is not displayed in his written plans. Through planning, Jake believed he prevented and anticipated discipline or management problems, including the time he spent talking to the students during instruction, thus allowing for more practice time. One

example of efficiency was in his decision to call roll as an avenue to provide every student an opportunity to roll the dice in the warm-up activity while at the same time taking care of managerial needs.

Music proved to be an important part of Jake's teaching and his planning routine. As he noted, "I use it because I think the kids relate to it and they seem happier and more productive when I play music." Therefore, since music is an important part of his curriculum, he often spent planning time preparing his music to match the lesson. This included trying to get the right piece of music or the desired intervals of music for each lesson. This is demonstrated well by Jake, who shared,

I use it [music preset in intervals] a lot as a signal or when I do centers. I like it because I do not have to think about changing the music or turning it off, hitting a buzzer, or blowing a whistle. I can concentrate on observing the kids and I know the music is going to shut off and come back on, so I do not have to worry about that.

Regardless of content and logistics, Jake's lessons that were observed within this study showed an obvious scope and sequence. His lessons progressed right into the next just as each task or activity progressed appropriately from one to another. In discussing these observations I inquired as to how Jake made these specific curricular decisions. The focus of the answer came mainly from Jake's knowledge of students and the content:

I do not outline the whole theme on paper but I think it is outlined in my head somewhere. And, that comes from years of experience where you just think about how a third grader should be able to dribble a ball and how they should look...you think about are they at 'precontrol or control level'? So, with the dribbling we start in personal space and move from there out and then to moving in between objects and around objects and then the objects are moving and that kind of thing. I guess basically I take it from personal space and move outward.

In listening to Jake describe a progression, it was as if he was visualizing it happening in advance and calculating all the potential circumstances. When I shared this, he replied, "That is part of the process to visualize the kids doing things."

While Jake's formal detailed plans are produced for the sake of visitors and therefore an external motivation (McCutcheon, 1990) that is deemed important by experienced teachers (McCutcheon, 1990; Neale, Pace & Case, 1983; Sardo, 1982), it is a rare occurrence for experienced teachers to maintain a daily formal detailed plan (Barrett, Sebren, & Sheehan, 1991; Borko & Livingston, 1989). His planning process mirrored the finding of other studies in that he attempted to build an obvious scope and sequence in his lessons that were based on his knowledge of students and content (Borko & Livingston, 1989; Graham, et al., 1993). When planning, he took into consideration the maximum participation of the students, use of potential and appropriate equipment, the range of skills, classroom management, task transitions, anticipated problems, and time efficiency. Many of these elements were discovered as a focal point in planning of Housner and Griffey (1985) and in a later review of the same data in Griffey and Housner (1991). How Jake plans appeared to coincide with research on teachers as far back as Yinger and Clark (1977, 1980) and Yinger (1979).

#### *In-class decisions*

In contrast to planning decisions and preparation, Jake actually made very few in-class decisions. He attributed this to the comprehensive planning routines previously discussed. However, when the need arose to make changes, Jake was very flexible and would make quick and decisive in-class decisions. In addition, the link between planning and in-class teaching was further demonstrated when, on occasion, Jake referred to his formal written lesson plan to "make sure he was on track" or "as a quick reminder." This occurred mainly during the first class he taught or when there were interruptions to his thought process by visitors or discipline problems. During, one class period I observed a bullet list of tasks on the white board that he later admitted

he often used as a kind of “cheat sheet”. It was written large enough that he could refer to it for the next task without walking over and viewing his plans.

In relation to the in-class decisions Jake would make during teaching, observational evidence demonstrated that decisions were often informed by his beliefs in teaching movement skills and concepts. He would discuss the learning cues with the students and, in turn, would look for the same cues while simultaneously checking for on-task behavior. His teaching appeared very goal oriented and followed a logical progression. Jake’s goal-based in-class decisions supported the findings of Borko and Livingston (1989) who also noted that experienced teachers are more goal oriented than inexperienced teachers. In addition, the lower skilled students in Jake’s classes consistently received more of his attention, closely followed by students that were perceived as potential discipline problems. This was evident when the same two or three girls in the first lesson and the one small girl in the second class were checked several times each class period (highlighted in Jake’s story). In addition, one or two boys were the potential discipline problems in each class that Jake constantly tried to “keep an eye on” or tried to challenge. When I inquired of this, Jake informed me that my observations were correct and he felt the scheduled dictated that he could only spend time with a few. He chose those most in need.

In answering the research question, “how often are tasks changed?” in relation to this particular case, there are no set answers and there was no evidence in Jake’s plan of when he would extend to the next task. The only consistency was in the warm-up or fitness activity that began each class as they lasted from seven to ten minutes. As far as the initial task, extensions, and applications, the timing varied. His decisions of when to change were typically based on



student understanding, success, and behavior. As Jake himself noted, “Basically, the decision to change tasks is based on the students’ reaction to my plans.” He later added,

I remember in college we had to write lessons that showed we were going to do this activity for three to five minutes and this one for five to seven and then, eight to ten. It didn’t take me long to figure out that maybe we would not finish this activity in three to five minutes and maybe we need to spend more time on it. Now, I just go by what the class looks like instead.

There were times Jake appeared to want to continue with a task but time constraints encouraged him to move on. One example was provided in the first lesson when he observed that most children were still dribbling too high but decided he needed to move on due to time issues. In addition, several constraints and interruptions, discipline problems and visitors affected his timing. For example, speaking with a student or visitor would distract him from the lesson and increase the time on the particular task in practice.

The way Jake planned influenced what decisions he made while teaching (Clark & Elmore, 1981; Smith & Sendlebach, 1979) and the more decisions he made in planning, the less decision-making he needed in teaching (Marx & Peterson, 1981). As did the teachers in studies of Borko and Livingston, (1989) and Leinhardt and Greeno (1986), Jake referred to his plans on occasion for reminders and was flexible to change if things were not going as expected. The focus of his lesson matched the intent of his plans (Marx & Peterson, 1981) as he observed for student understanding of the cues cognitively and physically while simultaneously observing for off-task behavior (Griffey & Housner, 1991; Housner & Griffey, 1985). Jake explained the consistent focus on the lower skilled students, but I speculate his background and natural care-taking personality might influence that choice as well as the constraints he shared. His changes from one task to the next in his planned progression were not based on a predetermined time plan but more on student understanding, success, and behavior (Graham, et al., 1993; Marx &

Peterson, 1981; Tan, 1996). The occasional time constraint and class interruption due to discipline or visitors were also determinants.

### *Reflection*

Reflection is seen as an imperative component of the teaching cycle and a must if a teacher is to continue to learn and improve practice (Graham, et al., 1993; Sebren, 1995; Yinger, 1977). In Jake's case, reflection was also an important component of his teaching. Jake believes that reflection is an ongoing process with him and related not only to teaching but also fed into his planning, as he noted, "I think all of my reflection relates back to the original plan. If something goes wrong, I need to look back at my plan." For the most part, his reflections occurred within the five-minute time between classes; "At that point you know if the lesson was flying or not and you know what aspect of it you blew...I look at what I could have done differently. For example, did I let that [discipline problem] go too far?" Reflection to Jake also affected his future lessons, "...because I am not going to make that mistake again."

Jake's reflections after the class were concise and related back to his planned instructional goals. The focus was typically on his lesson delivery, discipline concerns, specific students that were his focal point, and on interruptions by visitors. In addition, his reflections on lesson delivery were a mix of positive and negative responses with him consistently commenting on lesson timing and flow. He would also reflect on how he learned from what happened and would make a change in the next lesson, "I think switching the spelling words from the first to the last made it flow a little better...the lesson was put together more coherently today as opposed to yesterday." Or, he might learn, in general, for the future. "I think things went well other than the yellow jacket incident. You would think after all of these years, I would know better [laughs]."

Reflection for Jake also occurred during class. If students were struggling with one aspect of a skill, he made a note in his plans to focus on that specific cue in the next class. As he taught the same lesson for the six days, he made changes in the lesson as a whole and then input the changes to his saved computer copy. In Jake's story, he made many "reflections in-action." For example, he made the music change after discovering that many of the children had not heard a bugle charge and the flashback to the previous year reminded him to have the students perform the warm-up exercises together. On another day, in the middle of a lesson, he had the idea to use the spelling words for the children to practice as they dribbled and made a mental note to check with the classroom teachers for the words of the week. A final example was his decision to highlight Donovan (a potential discipline problem in Jake's story) in hopes that praise would deter his potential off-task behavior.

Jake considers himself a reflective teacher and shared that he does not understand how anyone could teach well if he or she was not reflective. Looking back through his years of experience, he shared, "...the reflection is more specific than it was before and is probably more often."

Jake's reflective practices were both in-action and on-action (Schon, 1983, 1987) as he relies heavily on his reflections for immediate change and for future planning (Graham, et al., 1993). His reflections appeared to focus on the same goals of his planning and teaching (Allen & Casbergue, 1997). While concise, he reflected on student understanding and contrary to the literature, also on his own teaching (Livingston & Borko, 1989).

### *Summary*

Throughout the time I observed Jake, it was evident that planning, an important part of Jake's teaching and ultimately where most of his decision-making occurred, took place in both

formal and informal settings. He followed a specific routine, was very goal oriented, often over-planned, pulled from previous experiences, and when the process was complete, felt confident and ready to teach the lesson. He took into consideration the maximum participation of the students, use of potential and appropriate equipment, the range of skills, classroom management, task transitions, anticipated problems, and time efficiency.

Due to his efficient planning practices, Jake made few changes while actually teaching the lesson. His decisions to change an activity or move on to the next task stemmed primarily from the students' response to his plans. Jake's reflection was concise and cycled to his planned instruction and, in a sense, was recycled for the next lesson. This practice tends to mirror the planning cycle introduced by Yinger in 1977.

## CHAPTER 5

### CASE STUDY TWO: PEGGY NOLAN

Peggy Nolan has been teaching 15 years, with 13 of those years in elementary physical education. She began her elementary teaching career many years after receiving her undergraduate degree due to her husband's job mobility and the decision to stay home and raise two sons to the point of school age. She has been teaching at Glasgow Elementary for nine years and has seen many changes in the school population both in the fluctuation of numbers and in the socioeconomic make-up of the neighborhood. The present school enrollment is about 780 as opposed to Peg's first year when the school was overcrowded with close to 1400 students. In those first few years, the community was comprised of primarily middle and upper middle class socioeconomic families with a free/reduced lunch percentage of less than 8%. Presently the school population is more representative of a combination of middle and lower socioeconomic status families and has a free/reduced lunch percentage of 35%. The school population is comprised of approximately 50% European American, 34% African American, 9% Hispanic, and the remaining 7% Asian, Indian, or multi-racial.

Glasgow Elementary School was built on a lot where many of the original trees still stand leaving the playground area well shaded with the appearance of a rustic camp nestled in the woods. Without the knowledge that a strip mall and large grocery store are just on the other side of the trees, the setting would seem somewhat surreal. Glasgow is a very large brick complex where additions have been made over the years connecting one section to the other via covered walkways.

The gymnasium, not unlike the one at Whit Elementary, is a large aluminum building with concrete floors. Pulling into the front or side parking lot it is the first building that you notice. The covered walkways that connect the rest of the school end several yards before reaching the door of the gym. On my first visit to Peg in September, I discovered how these “giant trailers” really hold the heat. She had the set of double doors on either side of the building propped open with large orange cones and a huge fan on full power, but the air still didn’t circulate. She was very concerned about the safety issue of not only the temperature but of having to keep the doors open in an era where it is recommended that schools keep all outside doors locked. Peg also shared Jake’s safety concern of the concrete floors. She commented to me one day, “It is sad to tell kids they cannot run in the gym because the floor is not safe.”

On that September afternoon, after teaching her last class, she invited me into her small cramped equipment room that doubles as her office. The confined area was a welcomed place to sit and talk as a window air conditioner unit cooled the room. I later was informed she purchased this comfort out of her pocket. Despite the refreshing temperature of her office, selfishly, I was relieved that I would start data collection with Peg in January.

I visited Peg again in early December to practice the think-aloud procedure and to confirm our dates for the interviews and observations scheduled in January. She was looking forward to the Christmas break and as I observed her last class of over 60 students crammed in the facility, I understood how her need for a break might go beyond that of a typical teacher. Peg had been dealt a rough schedule this year and was as she put it, “barely keeping my head above water.” She had two classes in the gym every period with the exception of a few situations where additional students from the self-contained Emotional Behavior Disorder (EBD) or the special education classes were included. Each period, as required, was 45 minutes in length with five

minutes between each. She used the brief scheduled break to catch her breath, regroup for the next class and to make quick equipment changes. The students came on a three-week rotation. Some classes she saw three times through the school year for a total of nine weeks and others she saw four times for a total of twelve weeks. The second or third time the students came to physical education they often were assigned with a different class (see Appendix F). It became a planning nightmare for Peg to decide what to teach and when to teach it. It was apparent that some students would miss out on certain parts of the curriculum.

My data collection with Peg Nolan began on January 8, 2003 and ended on January 29. I observed a double fifth grade class from 12:45 until 1:30 and then a fourth grade combined with a fifth grade EBD class from 1:35 to 2:20. As in the original plan of the study, the first two observations were designed to put the students and Peg at ease with my presence. The students at Glasgow, however, never got to the point of ignoring me. The first day Peg and I talked to the students about why I was there and we answered their questions. But, the inquiries did not end that day, as I became a part of their class for the next two weeks. Once we got beyond the first few minutes of waving and saying hello, however, they gave their attention to Peg and I was rarely a distraction.

The fifth grade classes were very interested in everything I was doing so I would turn the camera off and talk with them a few minutes at the end of class as they lined up to await their classroom teachers. Several of them called me by name and later in the day, if they saw me in the school building or out at dismissal, they would greet me. The combination fourth grade and EBD class was a different story. I would smile at them but had to try and not acknowledge them personally or they would wave to the camera repeatedly. As is common with elementary-age children, a few did not seem to understand they were not on television. It was as if they were

thinking that this could be their big break either for their basketball career or as a movie star. These moments were sporadic and did not seem to take from the flow of the class, for even cameras cannot compete with basketball.

After the two initial observations and interviews, I returned the following week and observed Peg teach basketball skills for five consecutive days with the major emphasis being on dribbling and ball handling. She shared with me her planning process both through an interview and by actually recording her thoughts as she planned and reflected on the five lessons. Her initial planning started after our consultation in December but it was Christmas break on a snowy morning back “home” on her farm in Ohio before she really pulled it all together. According to Peg this was when she typically plans for January lessons. As was the protocol for the research, she recorded the day, time, and place she was involved in any planning or thoughts pertaining to the lessons.

On January 13, Peg taught the first of her five consecutive days that I observed. After completing her teaching day, Peg recorded a quick reflection, and then we sat together and viewed the videotape of the two class periods I had observed. While viewing the videotape of the first class, she shared with me her thoughts and actions as she recalled them. While watching the next class, Peg explained only the changes made from the first lesson and why. If she had any additional reflections or thoughts later that evening she recorded them. This process was repeated for the next two days. Her planning and reflecting thoughts, however, were recorded throughout the week. Peg provided me with a copy of her daily lesson plans and task cards used in the lessons (see Appendix F).

Peggy Nolan who is a real “upfront” person that believes in telling it like she sees it, introduces herself and then shares her story in the first section entitled *Persevering Peg*. She



begins by sharing a few childhood experiences and reliving her college years. Then, she shares stories about her early teaching experiences before venturing into the recent years. She ends with a brief reflection of her career thus far.

The next section, entitled *Just Too Many*, Peg shares her experience in planning for the upcoming series of lessons and I become the narrator. She tells of the decisions she makes while planning and reveals her planning process. Throughout the day, Peg teaches two classes in each time period and is therefore provided a paraprofessional or teaching assistant. Peg introduces Betsy into the story at the end of her planning process and informs how they work together. Betsy Williams was an assistant for Kindergarten the previous year but due to the large numbers coming to the gym at one time, she was moved to physical education. She is not a certified physical education teacher but does have some experience in the field of recreation. Her role is to assist with equipment, management, and discipline. Peg shared with me that Betsy is good at analyzing skills and therefore helps in the learning process by giving students appropriate feedback.

The narrative continues as Peg teaches the first 45-minute lesson to 56 fifth grade students from Mr. Slotsky and Mr. Sergio's combined classes. As Peg teaches, she continues to share her observations, thoughts, decisions, and actions. After dismissing the two classes, she has a five-minute break before the next class. Later that afternoon, the story resumes as Peg and I view the videotape of the lesson taught to the combination Mrs. Remington's fourth grade class and Mr. Wilson's self-contained fifth grade Emotionally Behavior Disorder (EBD) class. During this time she shares any differences in how the lesson was taught to these students. Finally, the story ends with Peg reflecting on the lesson and revealing if the outcome of the class on this day will change her plans for the next day.

In the last part of this chapter, after you have had the opportunity to read about Peg's many decisions made while planning, teaching, and reflecting, I share my interpretations. As in the previous chapter, these interpretations come not only from the stories told but from additional data and pertinent literature as I surmise how, when, where, and why Peg makes the many decisions she does.

### Persevering Peg

My name is Peggy Nolan but I go by Peg. I am a mother of two fine boys, Andy and Mark, and a wife of 32 years to a very giving husband, Gary. What I mean by giving is that he does not inhibit my individuality. I am very independent and without that freedom, I probably could not be married.

I have high self-expectations and would even call myself hard nosed. I like things organized, put in their place, neat and clean. I am a hard worker and not one to tread water. You can tread a lot of water and get nothing done. You may stay afloat but you really don't accomplish anything. I am also a very active person and take care of myself by eating right and exercising. Fresh air and sunshine are vital to me. Having recently had a physical, at age 57, I am good for another 100,000 miles. In my free time I enjoy many hobbies, most requiring the use of my hands, such as cutting hair, woodworking, quilting, appliquéing and sewing. Relating my personality to cars, I am between a jeep and a jaguar. In other words I can range from here to there. I love to get down and grub in the dirt but you bring me my pearls and high heels and I am ready to hit the town.

### *Childhood*

Growing up, our family of two parents and 12 children, contributed greatly to the census in a college town of about 25,000. Born somewhere in the middle, I like to say I am the second

oldest of the bottom six. As a child, active could have been my middle name. Although my sisters were good playmates, I preferred to play with my brothers and the neighborhood boys. I wanted to do whatever they did and do it better. So, as you would imagine, I was referred to as a tomboy; today I would just be called an athlete. I had a reputation of being the best tree climber in the neighborhood and was, in a way, the leader of our playgroup. For example, when the guys wanted to get a game going they came to me to organize it. In the alley behind our house, I would generally start with a few practice drills and then we would play a game of stickball. I guess I was a teacher even as a child.

In a large family, growing up was not all play, as we were expected to do chores at home and out on our farmland. The house we lived in was an old four-story fraternity house near the university. My brothers slept on the top floor, the girls in the basement, and my parents' room and the living area made up the third floor. The second floor, consisting of four bedrooms and a large bathroom, was rented out to seven college students. My parents both worked long hard hours. Dad was a high school agriculture teacher, assisted in after school activities, and drove the bus for sporting events. By day, Mom would take care of any of us not in school and any neighborhood kids in need of care and by night, she cooked at a local diner. Later, when I was in Junior High and all of my younger siblings were of school age, she worked her way through college and became the university supervisor for housekeeping. We all helped with the cooking, housecleaning, and care taking of our younger siblings.

I preferred working outside and loved helping Dad on the farm. One of my fondest memories, and this will not be too exciting for most people, was Dad and I having races in the barn pitching horse manure trying to outdo each other. I remember the big blisters I would get on my hands, but I never let on about them. What made it so special was because it was just the two

of us. Those moments are rare in a big family. Another major job was bailing the hay and moving it into the barn. I did not weigh over 80 pounds as a child and the hay was close to 100 pounds. But, I figured if my dad could do it and my brothers could do it, I could do it. My Dad would brag on me and use it to challenge my brothers. Looking back, I think maybe Dad used that challenge to get the chores done quickly.

When possible those of us old enough took on jobs. At age seven, I started babysitting neighbor's kids as well as my younger siblings. I loved playing school with them and I always played the role of teacher by reading and doing math problems. We lived a short distance from my father's school and before I was of school age, the highlight of my day was for mom to walk us there. We would play on the playground and occasionally I was allowed to go in and watch my father teach. I thought this was the most awesome thing in the world to be able to teach and show people how to learn. I guess teaching naturally evolved from my background and I wasn't the only family member led toward teaching. In addition to my father and me, four sisters and one brother have or had careers in teaching.

Obviously, education was important in our family and we were all expected to excel in school. That was never a problem for me because I was like a sponge and soaked up everything I could. I just loved learning. In elementary and high school I had great teachers and I remember every one of them. However, the physical education teachers and coaches were the teachers I most related to. There was just a comfort level there and I seemed to have a lot in common with them.

Although I was very active in high school the 60s afforded girls no school sports; it was all for boys. They had football, soccer, basketball, and track, with the girls expected to be the majorettes and the cheerleaders. I did a couple of years of each; it was okay, but I knew there had

to be more. There was community girls' basketball leagues of which I participated with our team being coached by my P.E. teacher. Even with the few opportunities provided to me in sports, I was still known as the female jock of the school. What was offered in our physical education classes was even different as the boys and girls had separate classes. But, whatever we did I would shine above all the other girls. I was in seventh grade before I had physical education and I remember thinking our teacher was not very good. Now that I am a physical education teacher, I know she wasn't. She was not necessarily a "roll out the ball teacher" but I just never felt like she did much with what she had. She had plenty of equipment, wonderful facilities and good students but we did not do much.

My junior year we got a new physical education teacher and she was wonderful. I took PE as an elective my remaining high school years just because of her. She took advantage of all the things the previous teacher had not. We actually got to do gymnastics and dance. She taught me a lot about the importance of skills at any level and she taught me the importance of team play. Before, I had pretty much been a one-woman show in sports—she really motivated me.

### *College Years*

I look at the opportunities girls have now and wish we had the same. There were no intercollegiate girls' sports and, therefore no college athletic scholarships. We did have intramural and club sports under the commission of the Girls Athletic Association (GAA). In college, I immediately ran into some girls on these teams and discovered they had come from hometowns where more sports were available. I hooked up with them and felt I had found my niche. Mostly we swam and played field hockey. They asked me to join the GAA teams and I remember it was such a thrill to be included and for them to think of me as an athlete. Unfortunately, I could not commit to the offers since I had to work full time to get myself

through college. With such a big family, my parents could not aid us financially. I would work and save money to finance a semester or two, go to college until the money ran out and then quit and work a while longer. This cycle continued until I completed my degree. The semesters I was in school, I continued to work part time. Of course, back then, most people were doing that.

I wanted to be a teacher and was encouraged by both my parents to pursue this career; however, my mother had a certain kind of teacher in mind. She was under the impression that all females should be either home economics teachers or elementary classroom teachers and did not like the idea of me considering physical education. So, I went to a college a few hours from home and I never told my mother that I was majoring in physical education. In fact, I never told my father. I was in college, independent, and loving every minute of it.

I came home my first year for the Christmas holidays all excited about school and my new friends. My father, anxious to hear all about my first semester, joined me in my room as I unpacked. While I was talking and busy putting away my things, he noticed my little white shorts and blouses. He said, “You know, Peg, I am getting a little bit older but when I went to State, home ec majors did not wear white shorts and a white blouse to class.” I looked at him and kind of grinned. He returned the look, shook his head, and eventually gave into his own grin. He knew me. Then, he said, “Are you going to tell your mother or do I have to.” I quickly informed him it was not going to be me. My mother was disappointed and commented, “Well, you are not going to be able to do flip-flops when you are 40.” In honor of my mother, I did cartwheels the length of the gym on my 50th birthday. Despite the fact we lost her several years earlier, I am sure she was looking down and shaking her head.

I did not regret my choice of major and felt I had been a part of a quality college physical education [teacher education] program with good instructors. Although, we had large classes

they still took the time to get to know us and guide us. If they saw a weakness they would take you aside and in a constructive way help you to see it. There is one thing I did not get that I would have valued. I wish someone had taught us how to analyze skills. I had to learn it the hard way—through experience.

### *Early Teaching Experiences*

In my junior year in college, I applied for a job teaching youth tennis. Upon viewing my application, the recreation director offered me a job teaching elementary physical education instead. Through a Title I grant, money had been allocated to provide physical education to area low-income schools. Several seniors and I, the lone junior, were selected to pilot the program for one quarter. I accepted the position and taught in the morning while continuing my coursework in the afternoon. The program was a success and a few of us were asked to complete the school year. The salary was too good to turn down as I was struggling to make enough money to continue my own education. So, I put college on hold, took the position, and saved money knowing I would return.

For the remaining school year, I was assigned an additional school to my previous assignment. I taught at one school in the morning, drove five miles while I ate my lunch in the car, and taught at the second school in the afternoon. The children, many who lived in homes with earthen floors, came from poor mining or farming families. Several wore the same clothes every day and showed signs of malnutrition. You know, surprisingly, they rarely missed a day of school. The curriculum was provided and consisted mainly of gymnastics. We were supplied with mats, uneven bars, and other gymnastics equipment that the kids had never seen. While I was told what to teach, I was given a little leeway in how to teach. I learned as much as the kids did that year and they seemed to love coming to physical education class.

The grant only funded a one-year program so, I returned to school the following fall to complete my degree. A year later, I started my student teaching assignment at the local high school. While this was the first teaching experience for my peers, it was my second. I met my supervising teacher and I was excited about the upcoming experience. Three days later, I was informed that she was sick and would not be returning. The principal of the school, Mr. Dowdy, knew I had several family members that were considered top-notch teachers and hoped I would follow suit. He watched me teach a few days and was comfortable with what I was doing. I never saw the teacher again, but Mr. Dowdy came in daily and checked on me. I was on my own, to some degree, and I felt comfortable with what I was doing.

To this point, I had never really given much thought to what grade level I wanted to teach. When I graduated high school knowing I wanted to teach physical education, I think I envisioned myself teaching high school and supervising the cheerleaders or majorettes or maybe coaching a volleyball or basketball team. However, my experience with the Title I elementary program had me hooked and I knew elementary was where I wanted to be. Those sweet kids came into the gym and there wasn't anything we did they didn't like. Everything was new and exciting to them. They tried so hard for me and I was just a rookie with a lot to learn. It was a rewarding experience and sealed it for me—I wanted to teach elementary physical education.

Despite my desire to teach elementary physical education, it is not uncommon for job opportunities to control what level we teach or even if we are going to teach. When I graduated, physical education jobs were not easy to come by. My first year of actual teaching, as a certified teacher, was at a rural high school. I taught health and physical education to grades seven through twelve. I remember how important it was to stay a step ahead of those kids. My father had always told me that without classroom control you couldn't teach anything. I learned from



other members of my family and they pretty much told it like it was. I heard all of their woes and anguishes and felt like I had experienced their fights and battles. I think they prepared me well and I was confident to take on this new challenge.

I taught two years of high school, married, and then moved south with my husband. Five years later, we decided to start a family and I put my career on the back burner until my two sons were of school age. While I had enjoyed the time with my boys, I was ready to start back in teaching and really wanted an elementary position. By now, we were living on the outskirts of a metropolitan area, and although the school system was large, the only positions available were paraprofessionals. These positions were low paying and were described as teaching assistants to full-salary teachers. I was told accepting one of these positions or substitute teaching would get you a foot in the door. This door was pretty far away evidently, as I was a parapro for three and a half years and a substitute teacher for six months before securing a full-time teaching position.

I have always felt teaching was a calling for me. In all of my early teaching experiences, I received high recommendations and they served as reminders encouraging me to stick with it. I knew a position would open for me eventually. One day I was substituting for a fifth grade teacher at Glasgow Elementary and her class had a reputation of being a tough group. Several substitutes had come and gone and the children were pretty much out of control or I guess I should say in control. I knew it was going to be a challenge but I jumped in with both feet. I was teaching a math lesson on purchasing and was not exactly following the textbook. Instead, I used what I thought were better examples of things they could relate to such as records, tapes, clothes, sports equipment, and games. It was interesting to the kids and we were just clicking along. I did not even realize the principal had been standing in the door. At the end of the school day she told

me she was really pining to hire me. Then, she told me I was a natural—a born teacher—it was the ultimate compliment.

### *Recent Teaching Years*

I was actually hired a few months later at Glasgow Elementary for one semester as a parapro and then; the following year, 1993, I was finally a full time elementary physical education teacher. With an enrollment of approximately 1400 students, the kindergarten through second grade were housed in the old part of the school and the upper grades occupied a new addition and portable classrooms. I was assigned the younger children and unfortunately not given access to the gym. I taught outside in the parking lot when weather permitted and had an old book room for an indoor facility. The room, about 10' X 20', limited what I could teach and therefore forced me to be real creative. When I started the position I remembered the words of one of my favorite professors, "It is not always going to be easy. You won't always have gyms and equipment so you'll have to be creative." So, I continued to use my imagination and the children and I made the most of a bad situation.

Two years later, in 1995, a new school was built nearby, our school enrollment decreased, the upper grade physical education teacher transferred schools and the gym was mine. I had a paraprofessional assist me with the 50 to 60 children that were assigned to each time period. Once again I had to be creative due to the lack of equipment and space in relation to the number of students in each class. In 1998, the construction of another elementary school in proximity to ours resulted in a second major decrease in enrollment. This afforded me the best teaching opportunity of my career as I had approximately 25 students in each class. The students and I enjoyed this luxury for four years. All of that changed recently when our system made the administrative decision to provide a 45-minute planning period for each classroom teacher. I was

forced once again to teach double classes with space and equipment allotted for only one class to safely and effectively learn.

If my teaching philosophy was that physical education class is a place to come and play games I would not be bothered as much with the number of students and lack of equipment. I would still have the safety concerns but not the stress of providing students a quality program. I want the students to learn basic skills. I believe they will be more successful later if they have opportunities to learn skills in elementary school. With the skills they will be better prepared for game play in middle and high school or for after school sports. A local high school football coach supported this testament. He said, "You know Mrs. Nolan, I can tell when the kids come into my weight room at the high school which elementary school they went to just by the way they jump rope." I looked at him and thought he was putting me on. I asked him if he was kidding. He replied, "No, I know the good rope jumpers came from your school and I know you spent time teaching them." That was a nice pat on the back.

Although, my physical education program is largely based on skills, it is equally based on student success. If the children can feel some success in movement at this level in physical education and feel good about their bodies and what they can do, then they are likely to do this their whole life. My students know that as long as they try, I am happy with their effort. I do not put pressure on them by placing them in win-lose situations or in situations where they are not capable of some level of success. I also think to teach at this level it is important to know your kids. If you know your kids, you can get a lot out of them. I think this is just a basic part of teaching.

I do remember when I first started teaching I did not realize the importance of knowing the kids. It was my second year of teaching when this milestone occurred. I taught at a high

school in a small rural farming area and was assessing the kids on balance, running and strength. They all had wonderful balance even those I considered my lower-skilled students. I was amazed what they could do on the balance beam. But, they could not run for squat. They were not only slow; their running style was horrible. Their upper body strength was outstanding, however. This was not surprising because, after all, when school was out most of them went home to work on their farms. While I understood the results of the upper body strength test, I could not figure out the extremes on balance and running.

It was not until one Saturday when I went to town to run a few errands and afterwards drove to the school that I figured it out. In route, I saw several of the kids walking the guardrail where a bridge crossed the highway at a point where there was little or no shoulder. As I continued my drive I saw others walking the railroad tracks. A couple of them had basketballs in their hands and they were on their way to school to play. It all became clear; they walked this way to school everyday, thus unknowingly practicing their balance. This is when I realized the big picture—teaching requires knowing your students. It was then that I changed my plans and began to capitalize on their strengths. They were so excited about their success that I was able to gradually add to the curriculum in areas they were previously hesitant to learn. I realized they weren't the only ones excited. I guess students and teachers feed off each other.

When I think about education if we, as teachers, are not excited about what we do then the students probably won't be either. I like what I do and feel good about how I do it. When I get in with other physical educators, I am not one to verbalize that. I hear others talking about things they do and I think, "Sure, I do that." Or, sometimes I think, "I have been doing that for about five years now." So, I guess, in a way, it validates that the things I am doing are good

things. Some people like the adoration and want to be in the limelight, but that is not what I am about. The best recognition comes from my students and their parents.

As I look back over my career, I wish I had the money, the fortitude, the time, the energy, and had made the effort to get my masters and then, maybe, even my doctorate. I would love to teach at the university level and train new teachers. That opportunity was not available to me financially when I first started teaching. Then, I gave up my teaching to follow my husband. As soon as I got certified to teach in our new location, the company moved him again. Of course, then we were starting our family. If I had been single or had married in another era, I think I would have done things differently. I did put my family first and that is not a bad thing. I am real proud of the two boys we raised and the best thing I ever heard was when another teacher told me that if she had a son, she would want him to be just like Andy or Mark. As a parent and a teacher, that was the highest praise I could receive. So, I have no regrets I put my kids first. I am proud of them. But, as I think about it, I should have gone back for at least my masters. Being a strong and organized person, I could have done it.

### Just Too Many

*December 4, 2002*

*[It is 6:30 a.m. and having just arrived at school, Peg opens the door to her office/equipment room. In order to get into the room she rolls her cart or portable desk as she calls it into the gym. After placing her salad in the refrigerator, she moves two large boxes of balls and a dozen hula-hoops thus enabling her to get to the bookshelf. She begins searching through the books and sets a few aside. After glancing at the table of contents of several other books, she either places them back on the shelf or adds them to her pile.]*

I need to peruse a few books today. Just before a new unit I like to do this in order to refresh my memory of what I usually do and possibly find new ideas. *Children Moving*, I consider the best and I like to start with it. Two of the first three weeks after the Christmas holidays I am going to be teaching basketball skills and in order to determine a starting point for each grade; I want to review the proficiency levels the authors use. This one, *The PE Curriculum Guide*, has good lead up games that I might use later. I am turning down the corner on page 26 and setting it aside. *Ready to Use PE Activities for Grades Three and Four* and another in the series for grades one and two generally have good skill practice activities so I know I want to give them a look. I recognize a number of drills I have used before such as here on page 247 tapping the ball back and forth from one hand to the other. Most of these drills are not too difficult and will meet the needs of the lower grades; the fifth grade will need to do a few for a refresher. This book looks like it has all the sports in it but mainly covers rules and games. I won't need that one. Oh, this is always a good reference: *PE Survivor Guide*. I'm looking under basketball skills on page 156 and it starts with standing in your own space and bouncing the ball and catching before moving on to bouncing with two hands. These are good to start with and are just what I was looking for.

7:00 p.m.

*[At home, sitting on the couch, Peg has a couple of books out and is giving one a second look. The television is on; it does not have her attention.]*

Looking over George Graham's book, I am trying to refresh myself on what is expected at control level for basketball skills. Knowing my fifth graders as I do, I will have a range of abilities. A few will be at pre-control level, most at control, some at utilization and maybe even a few at the proficiency level. So, I am struggling at where exactly this particular fifth grade class

will be when we start basketball. I know I am going to have to start low to employ the skills of the lower level kids, but I do not want the students that will be in the utilization or proficiency level to be bored. I'm kind of in a quandary. I am going to put it aside for now and go for a workout.

*8:30 p.m.*

I am driving home from the fitness center and thinking maybe I could incorporate a few dribbling drills like teams use and better meet the needs of my more skilled boys. I think I will contact Coach Wilson at the high school and see if he can suggest a couple of drills that the kids would enjoy.

*Saturday, December 7*

*3:30 p.m.*

*[Peg is in her car having just left the school Christmas carnival.]*

I ran into Coach Wilson and asked him if he could share some basketball skill drills. I told him I was mainly focusing on dribbling and wanted to challenge my fifth graders. He responded favorably suggesting that I email him Monday and he would forward some ideas to me.

*Monday, December 9*

*5:30 a.m.*

*[The alarm goes off and Peg reaches over and hits snooze.]*

I am lying here in bed waiting to get up and recall that I need to email Coach Wilson when I get to school.

*Tuesday, December 10*

*11:45 a.m.*

*[Peg has just finished her lunch and is sitting in front of her office computer. A lesson plan book is opened on the desk next to her and she and the paraprofessional assigned to physical education, Betsy Williams, are talking.]*

I am looking at an old basketball lesson from my high school teaching and laughing with Betsy about how the lesson plan included showers. Of course, back then it was a part of the planned class period. I also used a skill pre-test and I might give a little more thought to doing that. I just got a beep on my computer. Coach Wilson responds that he is going to send some materials by his daughter tomorrow. She is a fifth grader here.

*Wednesday, December 11*

*3:20 p.m.*

I am sitting here in my office looking over the materials Coach Wilson sent me and honestly I think it is all above the heads of my students.

*Saturday, December 21*

*10:45 a.m.*

*[Peg is driving north to visit family for the holidays. She owns an old farmhouse “back home” in Ohio and plans to stay there for the two-week holiday break. She has been on the road since 5:00 a.m.]*

I am thinking a little about my basketball unit and am reminded that my nephew, Steve, coaches high school basketball. It might be fun to get some ideas from him. He will be pleased that I ask for his expertise on basketball.



*Sunday, December 29*

*3:30 a.m.*

*[Peg tosses and turns in bed, finally giving into the thoughts in her head.]*

I don't know why I am awake but the good news is I do not have to go to school this morning. Looking out the window at the beautiful snow, I am thinking I need to get my lesson plans completed for the next three-week rotation; but, it is the Christmas holiday and I am not quite ready to get going on it yet. Even though I have put very little on paper, I have tossed a few ideas around in my head. I am thinking about doing centers one day and using my high skilled students in a teacher role. Because the skill level in the fifth grade is so vast, I am struggling to find ways for the higher skilled to enjoy the unit.

*Friday, January 3, 2003*

*9:00 a.m.*

*[Ten books, copies of handouts from various workshops and basketball lesson plans from previous years are dispersed on a large oak dining room table. Peg, with a small stack of paper and a couple of ink pens, begins to put her thoughts into writing.]*

Looking out the window at about six inches of snow, I figure this is a good day to stay inside and organize my basketball unit. I have decided to start with dribbling and so far, most of my thoughts keep going back to the fifth grade and how difficult it is going to be to challenge their various abilities. I tend to plan towards the fifth grade. I think of everything I want them to be able to do in the way of skills and then I work backwards. I look at what I have planned for the fifth grade and then I think in terms of what I need out of that for fourth, for third, second, and down to first. That may be backwards but it works for me. I know skill wise what I want my

fifth graders to leave school with and the only way for me to do that is to work backwards and develop my unit from there.

Right now, thumbing through the book *Children Moving*, I glance at this one part where they talk about teaching skills. I highlighted it years ago when I purchased the book. It says, “Too often children know the rules for a game or the formation of a dance, but do not have the skills needed for successful and enjoyable participation.” I think that really says it all and is the reason I concentrate on the skills. I feel like the best things we can provide them at this age are the basic skills. Often when I introduce a skill theme, I will hear a child say, “Can we just play the game and not do this?” I respond by informing them that someday they will see that games change and the rules change but the basic skills needed to be successful do not change. So my goal is to give them a good skill base.

Starting my basketball unit, day one is going to be working on dribbling and ball handling. I will even start by making sure they are not striking the ball down with a flat hand. While I expect this with several of the younger kids, I will not be surprised if I see it with some of the older ones. We have a lot of new kids this year and I have been amazed at how low their skills are. I do not know if it is because of the programs they came from or if they just don’t spend any time doing it outside of physical education class.

*12:30 p.m.*

*[Back at the dinning room table, Peg is writing a first draft of her plan on paper. She writes in what she calls highlight form, only jotting down words or phrases to trigger her memory.]*

Most of the morning was spent looking at the materials I brought with me and reflecting back on what I typically do when teaching dribbling. After taking about an hour break and eating a bowl of homemade vegetable soup, I am ready to get back to work.

Starting with lesson one; I will begin as I typically do with playing one song and allowing the kids an opportunity to get some of the wiggles out. They have been sitting most of the day and generally have not had an opportunity to socialize. They can walk or jog as long as they keep moving. If it is a certain song they like, several will get in the middle of the floor and dance. Even though Betsy and I join them, we consider it their time and it is a relaxed time. Next, I will have them sit on their assigned spots and introduce them to our basketball unit sharing with them a little about the importance of skills needed in order to be successful in basketball. While talking about dribbling, I will break down the keywords I want them to know such as using your fingers and wrists to propel the ball to the floor. Some of them will need to focus on this.

I will let them explore a few minutes with dribbling and then we will bring in the concept of force. We will experiment with light force and hard force and then bring it back to the right amount of force needed to keep the ball at waist level. I expect some will have to track the ball still while most will be able to dribble fine without looking at the ball. I will probably do a follow-me drill and mix up the force a little requiring them to look up at me while dribbling. Then, we will go to using both right and left hand. Some will change automatically but others will stick with their dominant hand. All of these will be done in their own space.

For a little fun, I will challenge them to try to pick a stationary ball up by dribbling it into play, a trick I got from my brothers growing up. Some of the more skilled ones will like this challenge and will probably try it at home. Next, I will challenge them with a timed dribble just to see how long they can control the ball. While they are doing this, I should be able to choose

some of the best dribblers to use in my centers for the second lesson. I am going to let them be the teachers for the centers. This should keep them from getting bored and at the same time, they will be helping their classmates. They should have fun with that.

I got off track a little thinking about when I was going to pick my helpers for the centers. After the timed drill, I will have them move around the gym and dribble. We will adjust the speed based on how well they do. Some may struggle with this especially with the large numbers in the class. There may be a few chasing their ball all over the gym but that is okay. It is part of the learning process. That pretty much is what I have planned for the first day. I probably will go back and tweak it; but, for now, this sounds good. We will be starting out slow, see how it goes, and make changes during the lesson if need be.

Usually when I teach a skill theme, the first day is basic skill work, the second day I try to put the skills into centers for more practice, and the third day I put together different kinds of drills. Day four and five, if I go that many, are generally lead-up games that utilize those skills. So, that is where I am going with my basketball unit with a concentration on dribbling. Of course, this may change depending on how it goes.

For lesson two, I am thinking about having six centers set up and have the kids start out with a ball and take it with them as they move through the centers. I will probably be able to give them about five minutes at each center and will have Betsy watch the clock and blow the whistle when it is time to move on. One center will have to have a student with a strong voice do a follow the leader activity where he or she has them dribble high, low, and then just right at waist level. Another center might concentrate on dominant and non-dominant hand, and maybe one where we dribble without looking at the ball. That is going to be hard for some. Oh, and another one, even though I will not get to talk about it the first day, is getting that opposite arm up to

protect the ball. Maybe at that center I could have one student dribble and defend the ball. I don't know if they are ready for that so I will write that as a possibility and see how things go the first day. Let's see, centers five and six...maybe one can be dribbling around the body and maybe even through the legs. I will have to find some good teachers for that one. Then the last center could maybe be walking and dribbling or changing speed. Well, these are my rough draft thoughts and I will probably do a lot of tweaking as I start thinking more of the classes that I will be seeing these three weeks and the students I will be using for the teaching roles. It is 1:30 and I think I will put it aside for a while.

*2:30 p.m.*

Well, I tried to let it go but decided to look through a couple of other books. I found an activity in *The Great Activities Book, K-6 Physical Education Games and Activities* called "basketball bandit". I can use it for the center where I was going to have them hold their arm up and protect the ball. The idea of the game is just what I was thinking, having one partner dribble and defend the ball while the other tries to steal it. And then, they change places. Although it might be hard for some, it should still be an enjoyable center. This just gives me a good idea of what to call it and I am writing "basketball bandit" on my plans.

*Saturday, January 4*

*8:00 a.m.*

*[Back at the table, Peg is looking through a few more books, materials from workshops, and a folder labeled basketball.]*

Dribble tag...I think if I use some variations such as using non-dominant hand for the higher skilled, the kids would all enjoy this. I'll mark that down as a possibility for a lead up game for lesson four or five. I have been giving some thought to what lead-up games I have used

in the past. Teachers that have taught a few years have old standby activities that have worked well before. But, I find in our school we are having a lot of students move in and out—we're becoming a mobile community—and things that I did with fifth grade for several years I can no longer do with fifth graders this year. A lot of the new ones have not had the same experiences or skill development that my fifth grade typically had in the past.

Looking at a few things I have picked up at inservices, I came across an activity called “stare down” that will be good for a center. So, I will make some changes; put the dribbling at different levels and directions together as one center, and make “stare down” a center.

*5:30 p.m.*

I went shopping early today and stopped by to see three of my nephews. I was talking to the one in middle school that plays on the basketball team and asked him if he had done any dribbling drills that would be fun for my students. He described a game they did where they would get a few guys in the paint area and start dribbling. The idea was to be the last one left dribbling by keeping your dribble while making the others mess up. I like the idea and think I can make it work. Steve, the high school coach did not have anything I felt I could gear down to my grade school kids. Well, I think I am going to turn all of these thoughts off for a while and enjoy one more day on the farm before heading south on Monday.

*Tuesday, January 7*

*7:45 a.m.*

*[Peg and Betsy have everything set up for the first day back from the holidays and are sitting in the office discussing plans for the next week. Peg hands Betsy a copy of the written plans.]*

*Peg:* With day one, we are going to just do the basic skills of dribbling and ball handling. I want to emphasize fingers and wrist action. As teachers, we are going to make sure they are striking the center of the ball and then we will do some exploring with varying the force. Then I want to have them use both their right and left hand followed by looking at the ball compared to looking straight ahead. Next, we are going to do a fun little activity for them just to try some wrist action and pick the ball up off of the floor using a dribble. It will be difficult, but fun to try. Then we are going to time them with a stopwatch to see how long they can dribble and keep control. During this time, I want you to observe and try to choose some good dribblers because the next day we are going to let them lead the centers. This way you and I won't be locked into a center helping the kids and we'll be able to monitor students better.

*Betsy:* Right, that sounds good.

*Peg:* The last task for the day is called "in the paint". We will put them in groups where the idea is to stay in the paint under the basket and dribble kind of like dribble tag. They will dribble and attempt to knock the ball away from others while trying to keep control of their own. We will have to put tape down though to make two more areas because of the double classes.

*Betsy:* Okay, we can do that Friday.

*Peg:* On day two we will have six centers and have the good dribblers as the teachers. Day three I am still working on some drills and I want to include some shooting. It is so hard on them to have basketballs and not get to shoot. Then day four we may look at some relays as that is the only way they are going to get to dribble with speed because of the crowded situation. And, day five will be a dribble game or two.

*Betsy:* By day four they should be feeling more comfortable with dribbling and be able to handle that.

*Peg:* If you have any suggestions or ideas let me know and we can add to it or change something. And, you know, some of this may be too hard for the EBD class so we need to stay on top of it and make sure they do not get frustrated.

*Betsy:* Basically, like we have done all year.

*Peg:* You're right.

*3:00 p.m.*

I am sitting here at my desk making cards for the basketball dribble centers. I think it would be easier if they have little reminders written down of what their job is. Betsy is pumping the basketballs up and checking to see if they hold air so that, come next week, we will be in good shape.

*Friday, January 10*

*4:00 p.m.*

I am getting my things together to head home and am reflecting about the last couple of days. Usually, after the holidays, they come back ready to listen but yesterday they were out of control. So, this morning I started my classes and the first problem we had, I stopped and told them that we are going all the way back to August. We talked about the rules, discipline, and my expectations. I emphasized that we expect a certain amount of respect and cooperation from them as students. After that, every class did great and it ended up being a great day. We did not have anyone in time-out all day and I did not have to wait on kids to get quiet so I could talk and give instructions. I am hoping that Monday we pick up right where we left off today.

*Sunday, January 12*

*12:15 p.m.*

*[Peg is in her office at school.]*



I thought I would work a little more on my lesson plans and check the basketballs to see if they held air. I want to make sure I am prepared for the week. First, I need to find my stopwatch and put it on my cart. I am going to take a quick look at my notes and see if I need to do any tweaking for tomorrow's lesson. Actually, I think it looks good so I will transfer my notes to my lesson plan book.

On the timed dribble I do not want anyone to be eliminated. I do not like situations or games where kids are removed so, if they mess up I am going to ask them to hold the ball and find another student to observe. It should be less than a minute that they watch and maybe they can pick up some hints. I will see how that works. I would like to get them dribbling while moving in the gym and give them general space to do it in. However, with the crowd and the mixture of kids, I may have to go to a little more structure on that one and have them dribble outside the blue line in the same direction we jog or walk at the first of class. And then, if we have time, we will end with the "in the paint" activity. I feel good about this for tomorrow so I am going to set it aside and check the basketballs.

*3:00 p.m.*

All the basketballs are ready to go and in the cart to roll out. I took a quick glance at the lessons and feel good about tomorrow and Tuesday. I am moderately ready for Wednesday. I need to give it some more work but really need to see how the kids do tomorrow in order to decide what all I will do. That is it and I am heading home.

*Monday, January 13*

*12:50 p.m.*

*[Peg is standing at the door greeting the fifth grade students from Mr. Slotsky and Mr. Sergio's classes as they arrive. The children, having just come from the playground, are placing*

*their coats on hooks attached to the wall. In the middle of the gym stars are painted on the floor in seven rows of nine. The students walk in and have a seat on their previously assigned star. One child stops and talks with Peg about an injury.]*

With these particular classes we have numerous discipline problems and it does not help that they are coming in from recess. Normally, I have my classes come right in and start moving but we discovered last week that we need to have this group sit down, calm down, and “change hats”. Often they come in with injuries that occurred at recess and still discussing disagreements that they had in their kickball game or whatever else they played. Judd has just come out of a cast from a broken leg. I have a note from the doctor that I am not to let him participate until he is released. While Judd tells me he can participate, I have reminded him for three days that I need a note to allow it and I inform him as a fifth grader he needs to be responsible enough to remember a note from home. I am ready to start class and notice Jeremy’s hand and wrist are wrapped in an ace bandage. I inquire to what the problem is and he informs me his thumb is dislocated. I find it interesting that the wrist and hand are wrapped but not the thumb. He says he did not go to a doctor but his Dad told him it was dislocated. He insists that he wants to participate. As I do not have a note indicating that he should not, I suggest that he only use his left hand today and to be careful.

12:52

*[All the students are sitting on their stars and Peg is facing them introducing the unit. Behind her is a portable cart holding a stereo system, her lesson plan book, writing materials, a water bottle and a basketball. Off to her far right, against the wall, is a large bin full of basketballs of varying colors and sizes.]*

I introduce the lesson as the beginning of our basketball unit because if I say we are going to work on dribbling the next few days, being fifth graders, they would complain. I refer to Michael Jordan and relate that even the professionals work on skills. In order to save time getting equipment, I inform them to quickly choose a ball when I call their squad number. I suggest they choose a size that they think they can best work with, give it a couple of bounces and use that to see if it is a good ball, rather than choosing one that is a certain color or is decorated a certain way. I share with them that I expect fifth graders to be able to choose a ball and find a space to dribble and that they are not allowed to trade balls during class. I do not allow that because I think there is potential for them wasting too much time going back to the ball bin. As I call them a squad at a time I am frustrated at how long it takes with so many kids in here. I use squads this year only because of the large numbers in all the classes. When I call the last group, Randy comes up and says he has a splinter or something in his hand. I put on my pretend nurse hat and pull a small piece of glass out of his hand.

*12:55*

They all have a ball except Eric is still searching for that perfect one. I tell him to get a ball and join us. He is one I have to keep an eye on, as he is a potential discipline problem. Of course, there are three Eric's in here and all of them warrant watching. I am taking this time to see how well they dribble and see who needs help. Angelica is doing a real good job and I ask her if it is too easy for her since she is a basketball player. She smiles and lets me know it is. Several have to be reminded to spread out and make sure they are in their own space. Cameron is changing balls and I remind him that he has to keep the one he chose. A new girl whose name I am not sure of, informs me her old PE teacher told her to use finger pads. I let her know that was

right and we too are going to talk about that. Jared obviously needs the directions repeated since he is dribbling all over the gym.

*12:57*

I ask them all to stop and sit where they are. One is still bouncing the ball and I give him “the eye”. They know what the look means and nothing has to be said. I begin by informing the students that I was wrong about not putting basketball in the striking category we talked about earlier in the year. When we were discussing striking someone in this class mentioned basketball as a sport that had striking in it and I disagreed. I informed them that several books I was looking at over the holidays put dribbling in the striking category so they were right and I was wrong. I don’t know where I was with that thinking. Anyway, I move on to remind them of some of the basics of dribbling. As most of them feel they do not need the basics, I inform them that everyone needs a review. In fact, some new students may not have learned this. I continue and talk about hand position being in the center of the ball and that the fingers need to be spread where it almost looks like a spider. I should be able to see daylight between your palm and the ball as I come by and you should push the ball down contacting the ball only with your finger pads. I remind them that the wrist action is important to keep the dribble going and there should be a rhythm in dribbling. Directions are to return to their own space and dribble concentrating on the wrist and fingers but when they hear me whistle they are to dribble using hard force making the ball go high.

*12:59*

I am walking around looking to make sure they are pushing the ball and that no one is spanking it. I have a few girls that are doing that. I tell Jessie to dribble, not hit it. Then, let Eric King know he is doing a good job, pass by Omar and tell him he has big hands that this must be

his sport. He replies that it is. He struggles so much in the classroom; I know he appreciates a pat on the back. Travis is doing a good job and when I inquire if he plays basketball, he reminds me he is a tennis player. I whistle and they start dribbling with hard force. I prefer to whistle with my mouth since I can with little effort. I don't think it sounds as harsh as a regular whistle so I use it when I can. I am going from dribbling with hard force and then will change it in a minute to light force. The idea is that they will discover that the best is somewhere in between thus dribbling the ball with medium force at waist level. I am reminding Brook to dribble a little harder by asking her if she can make it go above her head. Bailey is throwing it instead of dribbling and Rickard is catching his so I give them quick suggestions. I just walk by and say good job to several. It is hard to give them all the feedback they need, but I do not want them to think I am ignoring them. We changed to light force and several went down on their knees rather than bending over. I told them while that might be more comfortable you usually don't stand on your knees in basketball. Of course, I did not mention that you usually don't dribble this low either. There goes Brent walking and dribbling. I remind him we are in our own space. He is itching to get moving. Seven boys have formed a circle and are trying to dribble in unison. I decide to leave them alone as they seem to be feeding off each other in a positive way. Some not so skilled boys in the group were getting a challenge trying to copy the higher skilled ones. Cameron who I spoke to earlier is new, and I need to find him and see how he is doing. There he is in a corner by himself. He seems rather insecure. I am going over to give him a little feedback; he needs lots of that.

I stop the class and ask them about dribbling with hard and light force in hopes they confirm medium force is what we need. They do, so I move on and add we are going to spend a

few more minutes dribbling with medium force and share with them that I noticed a few almost hitting their feet. I show them a stride position and recommend they try that.

*1:05*

I am walking around observing if they have the ball at waist height. I remind one not to dribble so high, another to stay waist or below and here is Jessie still not using her wrist. I tell Carla her dribble is looking good and suggest that Amanda push hers a little harder. Tammy needs to dribble lower and after informing her I stay with her until she gets it. She struggles for a while and then I add for her to bend her fingers more. She is getting it. I stop the class and share that they, overall, are doing a good job keeping the ball at or near their waist but that I also noticed several looking at the ball. I suggest we dribble a few seconds looking at the ball. Then, when I whistle they are to look at the wall and continue dribbling. Angelica looks confused and asks me if I said look at the ball. Her and a few boys around her look at each other as if I am crazy. Of course, they do not understand that some need to start with that and then they will understand they can dribble just as well by not looking at it. I just smile at them and tell them to start. I see Jessie has it too close to her so I tell her to put it out a little in front of her and I tell Hannah she is looking good.

*1:09*

They are doing a good job so I decide to get them moving right and left to see how they handle it. I whistle and then announce the direction I want them to go. Carrie is not using the center of the ball and it is getting away from her. She did well when we did soccer but is struggling today. Casey seems bored and is looking at the ceiling and anything else she can. She might feel a little above these first few tasks, but she is not so good that she does not need it. Allen and Megan are turning right or left and then dribbling in a forward direction. I correct them

and demonstrate sideways. They understand and adjust. My friend sitting out from the injured leg asks me to go to the restroom. I do not allow it unless it is obvious there is no way they are going to make it. They have to go back in the main building to use the restroom and I just feel safer keeping them all in here once they arrive. With double classes, it is easy enough to lose them in here. Amanda is really struggling and she has in almost everything we do in here since kindergarten. I try to keep her interested and bring her along as best she can.

*1:12*

They need to move and are doing a good job. With this many students I cannot let them go full speed. I decide it would be safer to have them dribble outside the blue line of the basketball court and we start by walking. I am watching them to see if they are, in fact, walking and there goes Nathan speeding by. After slowing him down, I observe to see if they are keeping the ball at waist level. I compliment Jamar on his control and remind Ella to use one hand and not two. Richard asks why they cannot use two and I inform him that is fine because I know he means only one at a time. I tell John to get it a little lower, Trey to keep it at his waist, and Steven to push it with his hand. Steven is a big strong boy but he has no energy and often has to be pushed a little. There are just certain ones I make a point to check on a regular basis. I know most of their names since the majority have been with me since kindergarten and were in single classes for every year except kindergarten. This year I am having trouble in the lower grades and with all the new ones in the upper grades because they just get lost in the crowd. I use a lot of sweethearts, honeys, and buds when I cannot think of their names. I like using their names and think you get better response from them if you do. I worry about the future if we continue these double classes.

The control is looking good so I tell them to increase their speed but not to go so fast they lose control. I am watching Kalem from Bosnia and he has very little control. We have several from Bosnia this year and my guess is basketball is not part of their culture since every one of them is struggling with dribbling. Of course, it could be that they are just struggling. I need to check into that. In order to add a challenge, I ask them to go in reverse and try dribbling backwards. For safety I tell them to go slow and look behind them and for control, I remind them to keep the ball lower. Eric D. is bothering Jamal. As I said earlier, I have to keep an eye on all three Erics. They aren't bad kids they just all three seem to look for opportunities to get into mischief. You give them an inch and they take a mile.

*1:20*

We return to bubble space and start the timed dribble. It really is not a contest but it gives them a goal to shoot for and it keeps it interesting. I have my stopwatch but decide the oven timer would be better so I ask Betsy to go get it for me. They do a good job and no one messed up so I repeated it with the challenge of the non-dominate hand. Only one lost her dribble and that was little Amanda. I just walked up to her and asked her to hold her ball and look at people around her for the last 30 seconds and see if she can pick up any hints from them. I do not like to do activities where they are eliminated so I thought she could take advantage of a learning opportunity by watching others. Walking around, I am seeing an improvement in the few that were having trouble earlier and compliment them for it. Daren is trying to get fancy and dribble through his legs. I give him a hard time because he messes up and he is humbled by having to hold his ball and watch others for about 15 seconds. His close friends are laughing about it but he joins them at his own expense. As I watch the class, I realize this is way too easy for them. I share my observation with the students and, of course, they love the compliment.



Looking at my watch, we have about eight minutes and I decide it is enough time to do our final activity. I tell them that the idea is to try and remain “in the paint” for as long as they can. I encourage them to attempt to make others lose their dribble while trying to not lose their own ball. If the ball is knocked away, they come back in. I suggest they use their opposite arm for protection. Only the regulation goals at each end have a lane marked so Betty and I used tape and made two more last Friday. I send Mr. Slotsky’s boys to one end, Mr. Sergio’s boys to the other, and the girls from each class to the taped boxes.

Jeremy wants to use his hurt hand to knock the ball from others but I advise him it might be best to just dribble his own ball so as not to hurt it worse. As I look around, I am not sure my directions were clear since several are just dribbling. So, I stop them and remind them to keep their dribble and try to steal the ball from others. The girls are mainly just standing around so I encourage them to start moving and try to knock someone’s ball away. A few make the effort. I announce to all to remember to keep the ball low and it will make it more difficult to steal. Angelica knocks away Anna’s ball and I compliment her hoping more of the girls will find that aggressive side. I continue to repeat keep it low. This is where they should see the importance of the medium force we have worked on most of the class time. It is so crowded from all of these kids; I guess I should have made six areas. They do well considering and none of them complain. Hannah is doing great and has all class period but she really does not assert herself. I think there is an athlete in there and I keep encouraging her. I don’t think she realizes her potential. These guys are really having fun and making it a good game. They are pretty aggressive. There is only about four minutes left in class and I want to pick my teachers for tomorrow so I ask them to stop and return to their stars.

They have worked hard today and their behavior was excellent so I compliment them on both. I explain to the class that we are going to do some dribbling centers tomorrow and we have been watching for a few people with good control to play the role of a teacher at a center. I chose three and then, asked Betsy to choose three. I feel good about our choices and am anxious to see how it will go, since I have never done this. Of course, I walk over and write it down because I might forget by tomorrow. Calling them by class and boys or girls I send them to put away the balls, pick up their jackets, and line up. I have to remind them not to shoot; that basketball goal is so tempting in route to put the balls away.

*4:15 p.m.*

*[Peg and I are watching the video of the same dribbling lesson repeated to Mrs. Remington's fourth grade class and Mr. Wilson's self-contained fifth grade Emotionally Behavior Disorder (EBD) class. As we observed the videotaped lesson, she shared what was different about the way she taught these students in comparison to the previous class.]*

This class does not come in from recess so we took the first few minutes to do a walk and jog. They had been sitting all day and needed to move a few minutes and socialize. We played one song and they had the choice of walking or jogging outside the blue line or dancing in the middle. Some of this group combined dancing and walking as they moved around the gym. They were ready to go.

This friend I was talking to, Lamar, has a real hard time taking responsibility and he forgot his tennis shoes. For safety reasons, our school rule is you must have tennis shoes. He knows that is the rule and was disappointed he forgot them. The first of the year he would have blown up and it would have taken a great deal of class time to deal with him. But, he seemed to have better control of his emotions and handled it. Here, I was walking with Craig. I have to

check his behavior thermometer every day. He told me he was having a pretty good day but as the class progressed, he pretty much entertained himself. Betsy and I both keep an eye on him but do not generally get on to him unless he is bothering others. Most of the ones that were walking with Betsy and I are in the EBD class and they need that extra pat and someone to listen to them for just a minute. I try to be warm and accommodating and it has worked with most of them so far. Last week they were so excited to get to come back to physical education class. It has been five weeks since they were last here so they needed to know that I had not forgotten them and that I enjoyed them coming into the gym.

At this point, I was walking with Cassandra. She is the daughter of the high school boys' basketball coach and I noticed that her skills were not too bad. I guess it is all the basketball she is around in her family. She seemed comfortable in basketball but generally, she struggles in whatever we do.

This class has fewer in it so management and things along those lines take less time. On the other hand, I often have to go into detail when giving directions, as they do not seem to grasp all the concepts. I try to break it up though since many of them have a real short attention span. Sometimes I have to plan totally different activities for them than I do with the other fourth and fifth grades. Speaking of attention span, we had been sitting maybe a minute and a half here and the second I said you are going to go choose a ball they looked that way and were ready to go.

I placed greater emphasis on using open fingers and asked them to pretend their hand was a spider doing push-ups. I knew there would potentially be several using their palm and there were five or six I had to remind to use finger pads and wrist. Jeff, Alicia, and Carla all three had to be reminded to stay in bubble space. As soon as we started dribbling with hard force, you could tell a big difference in this class compared to last. There were balls going everywhere; two

ended up on top of the storage room and one child busted his own lip using so much force. I think they got the concept that hard force means no control [laughs]. Luckily I keep ice packs in a small refrigerator so I took care of him quickly. At this point, Carla was once again doing her own thing. It seemed like every few minutes I had to get her back on task.

We started the light force dribbling and it was as if it calmed them down. I have to admit, with this class, my main goal was to keep them active and under control. I was analyzing their skills and helping them with technique but mostly I kept them safe and active. I wanted them to know if they were having trouble, it was okay, and we would just work a little harder. Because I was constantly checking to make sure they were on task, I really gave less specific feedback. But, honestly, my expectations were not high and I wanted them to be happy. They are just a different group.

Right here is where I saw Robbie bounce his ball off of Peter. When I asked him why he did it, he replied he did not mean to. I try not to set kids up to lie which is why I purposely did not ask him if he did it. I saw him hit Peter so that was not my question. I gave him another try at telling me why he did it and he repeated the same response. Then, I said, "I am going to ask you one more time Robbie and I want the truth." He replied, "I think I meant to and I am sorry. Do you think I should tell him?" I tried not to smile but it was cute. I replied, "If you really are, you should settle that with him." It reminded me of a time last week when something was going on with a couple of girls at one end of the gym. And honestly, with fifty something kids in the gym, I missed it. But, I walked over to them and said, "Now, what would you be doing that Mrs. Nolan wouldn't like?" They confessed all [laughs].

We went back to dribbling with middle force at waist height and I noticed a girl that was an excellent dribbler and I realized I had never seen her before. She must be new and no one

bothered to tell me. That is not unusual. I just hope today was her first day and she has not been lost in the crowd a few days. I would feel terrible. I asked Betsy and she had not noticed her either.

I went back and checked on the busted lip. It had stopped bleeding so I helped him up, gave him a pat and he was ready to get back in. I started to do the task where we go right or left and realized I had not had them practice dribbling without looking at the ball so I regrouped and did that task first. On my cart I had a note card with everything I was doing today and the order. Maybe I should have looked at it *[laughs]*.

I noticed Robbie was sitting behind the garbage can. He can't take much and every once and a while he finds a corner, stretches out, and rests. I had to get him going. It is usually two or three times a class period he decides to remove himself. Later, he messed up in the timed dribble so he went and sat down to pout a few minutes. I gave him a few words of encouragement and a pat so he joined us. I think he just needs a lot of attention like most of the kids in this class. It is hard to give it to them when there are so many in the class. I guess he has found the way to get his.

Jacob told me that Sharon pushed him and I laughed to myself because he is usually the one bothering someone. So, my response to him was, "I appreciate you telling me that and I am sure that is something you would not do to anyone." He had to think about that one.

Lamar, the child that forgot his tennis shoes stood against the side wall the entire class time. He was upset because he forgot his shoes and I attempted to go over and visit with him when I got the chance. Betsy and I laughed later because he never sat down. He is immaculate in his dress and is quite particular about them. He was not going to sit on the floor and get dirty. At the first of the year the custodians did not sweep the floor on a regular basis; it was nasty in here.

When I asked the children to have a seat, he would squat. It was his comfort zone and I did not draw attention to him for it.

I spent more time talking to them about protecting the ball before we did the “in the paint” activity. This class was struggling just keeping control of their own ball so I knew it would probably be too much of a challenge for someone to try and steal it and, they were all over the place when we dribbled in different directions. Based on their skill, they really weren’t ready for this but I knew they would enjoy it. I was able to mix up different people in the four areas and it was not as crowded as the last class. This class needed all the space I could give them.

When I had them put their ball away, I decided to call a squad at a time so there would not be too many at the bin. For this class, I think they did well today.

3:35 p.m.

*[At the conclusion of her teaching day while she and Betsy put away the equipment, Peg takes a few minutes to reflect on the lessons.]*

I felt good about today and it gives me an idea of where to go tomorrow. I think with the fifth graders the centers I have planned will work fine. But in retrospect, the class that comes next, the fourth grade and EBD classes combined is going to require me to bring it down a little bit. Their skill was not that good and the patience of most of those in that class, especially the EBD group, is much less than that of the fifth grade class. I need to give some thought to what centers I will keep. Right now I just want to get the equipment away and catch my breath. I will give it more thought after I have had dinner and time to relax. It’ll come to me.

6:45 p.m.

*[Later that evening, after a shower and a meal, Peg sits in her recliner making her final decisions about the centers for the second class.]*

I think we have chosen a good group to do the teaching tomorrow and I admit that I have no idea how it is going to go. It is not something I have done before so I am somewhat anxious. If it doesn't work, we will regroup and change it. There are a couple of centers that are repeats of today and I hope they do not get bored at them. I am going to cut out two centers tomorrow for the second class and I know for sure one will be the dribble between the legs center for a couple of reasons. One is that it will be too difficult for most of them and two, I do not know if I have a student that can do it well enough to teach it. What I will probably do is teach that skill to the class as a whole instead of in a center. I need to take out one more just because the attention span of this group is so short. I will wait and see how it goes with my classes prior to that one and decide then.

*Tuesday, January 14*

*[Peg and Betsy are sitting in the office discussing yesterday's lesson and the changes for today.]*

*8:15 a.m.*

*Peg:* After watching the video yesterday I was not happy with how much I was talking, especially to the fourth grade/EBD class. I guess I wish they could catch on faster so I would not feel like I had to be so detailed. I find with the double classes that if I don't take the time to make sure they understand, we start having discipline problems. I just take more time than I want to break it down and I honestly do not see how I can change that.

*Betsy:* I don't know either, because they really have to be shown what to do and have it explained to them.

*Peg:* Do you think I need to demonstrate more? Am I doing enough of that?

*Betsy:* I think what you are doing is fine.

*Peg:* I know they are anxious to get going and I am anxious for them to have some physical activity. Maybe I should not care as much if it is 100% correct with that class. I just know they need to be active sooner so I need to cut down on the talking some. I am going to have to give this some more thought. For today, I have made some changes for the centers in that class. I am going to take out center six and we will do it together as a class. I want to take out one more but am not sure which. So, if you could, as we observe the other classes today, help me select which center we should omit for them. I just think four is plenty for their attention span.

*Betsy:* Okay, I agree.

8:45 a.m.

*[Peg is doing a final check of her equipment set-up for the morning classes. As she rearranges a few things, she gives thought to her classes for today and is content with her plans for all except the fourth grade and EBD combination this afternoon. She feels confident she will know by lunch what to alter for them. With the last piece of equipment in place, she looks up and sees her first class at the door. She takes a deep breath and then, exhales. With a smile on her face she walks toward the door. A new day has begun.]*

#### Researcher Interpretations

This section will introduce further interpretations of the processes for which Peggy Nolan plans, makes in-action decisions and reflects on her teaching practices. In addition to the story, data collected throughout the research process will be used to examine the questions of when, where, how, and why she makes decisions. As with the previous case study, the areas of planning, in-class decisions, and reflection will be discussed in isolation. Additionally, when relevant, the existing literature will be used to frame the findings.



### *Planning*

As was evident through Peg's story, most of her teaching decisions were made while planning. During the research period, she employed a deliberate and thorough planning routine and was very organized. In general, her planning goals focused on building a progression within the lessons and then connecting one lesson to the next. She frequently commented about her planning, "When I teach a lesson my goal is to get them to the point of what I have planned for the next lesson." This practice coincided with the way teachers' plans influence future planning deliberations in previous studies (Clark & Elmore, 1981; Smith & Sendlebach, 1979).

Once her plans were completed, Peg appeared confident and rarely felt a need to deviate from them. On this issue, she expressed, "I have to have things organized up front. I like to know where I am going and what I am doing. The lesson has to have flow." Following her detailed planning, she expressed confidence that she was ready to "hit it". These planning attributes mirrored many of the same characteristics of planning identified by Clark and Yinger (1979), were evidence of how planning can be internally motivating (McCutcheon, 1980) and were often an important concern prior to instruction (Housner and Griffey, 1985).

### *When and Where Peg Planned*

Most of Peg's planning occurred during the early morning hours prior to school. With school starting at 9:00 a.m., it was not uncommon for Peg to arrive at school by 6:30 a.m. so that she could plan and organize. In addition, she occasionally came in on a weekend if she needed further access to books or wanted to check the equipment. However, more recently, since her kids are no longer living at home, she tends to plan at home. During the lessons observed for this study, she planned on her farm "back home" in Ohio. This was a typical practice for lessons that Peg taught following holidays. In discussing her holiday planning schedule, Peg noted,

In the summer months when I am at the farmhouse...I always have some kind of notepad that I am jotting ideas down as I think of the next year and things I want to do. By the time I come back in August, I have pages filled.

In addition to her holiday planning times, Peg utilized several casual periods of planning. No time was sacred for it was not uncommon for her to awake in the middle of the night and jot down ideas; ideas and thoughts that would often continue the next morning. For example, Peg described a typical incident, "Once I get up, dress, and have my breakfast, I am thinking about school...and it continues on the way to school." It was also common practice for Peg to think about planning during teaching. She often wrote these ideas and thoughts down in her plan book or verbally shared them with her parapro, Betsy, in the middle of a class or in the five-minute break between classes.

When Peg planned she often pulled from previous experiences but was always willing to try new ideas. Peg was aware that ideas for planning could be drawn from a number of different sources. In fact, she welcomed the opportunity to learn from others. In planning for the lessons taught during the research process, she spoke with the high school coach during an evening event at school and then later asked her nephews for ideas of activities relating to basketball dribbling. She believed that this was an essential element of teaching, noting, "If I am in a situation I think I can glean an idea, then that is part of my planning. You take advantage of those moments wherever you can find them."

Peg valued the opinion of others and enjoyed professional dialogue with colleagues and many of her colleagues were family members. As Peg is very close to her family she knows their strengths and welcomes every opportunity to learn from their areas of "expertise". Whether she was reflecting on things she learned from her brothers and uncles growing up or via a phone call to them on any given day, she knew they were valuable sources she could count on. The

compassionate side of Peg also knew that her young nephews who were participating in sports or beginning careers as coaches or teachers would be flattered by her inquiries.

Therefore, for Peg, planning and ideas related to her teaching occurred not only during set planning times but also at random times and through a myriad of sources. It was common practice for Peg, whether intentional or not, to have these thoughts at varied times both day and night. She noted, “I am not sure my planning ever really stops.”

Although planning for Peg appeared to be never ending, she primarily took advantage of the early hours before school to do her formal planning. Additionally, while relaxing on vacation and when in the presence of potential knowledge sources she took advantage of planning opportunities. These episodes tended to be spontaneous, for they occurred at varying times and even when teaching. Much of the research on teacher cognition confirms Peg’s planning practices (Borko & Livingston, 1989; Kneer, 1986; McCutcheon, 1980; Morine-Dershimer, 1979; Placek, 1984).

#### *How Peg Planned*

Peg’s planning process typically began with several days of organizing a theme or unit both mentally and in “highlight” form on paper. Prior to teaching the first lesson and throughout the unit she had a number of mini-planning times where she made adaptations based on additional ideas or after reflecting on the previous lesson in the progression. For the lessons observed during the research process, Peg initially perused a variety of books looking for new ideas, sorted information from other individuals, and referred to past teaching experiences that focused on the same skills. This consisted mostly of random and sporadic actions and thoughts rather than an assigned or set planning time (McCutcheon, 1980; Morine-Dershimer, 1979).

When it came time to document her lessons she began with a brainstorming session that searched for ideas of how to reach her predetermined goals. These ideas, typically formulated from past teaching experiences of the same or similar content, were linked with her focused theme and jotted down on paper. On this part of the process, Peg commented that, “I know where I want them to be and it is up to me to get them there. The question to answer in my plans is how I need to break it down to get them there.” On completion of the informal and cognitive aspect of brainstorming, she then returned to the books and her ideas gleaned from other people, at which time she would plug in suggestions. In Peg’s story this process occurred on vacation in Ohio. She sat at her dining room table with all of her materials nearby. It was evident when planning that she took into account more than just the content.

I take into consideration their prior knowledge. I take into consideration each and every class because the skill level is different. I also have to think about what equipment I will need and the space I am going to use. This year my equipment limitations have really influenced my planning. I was fine with single classes but there is a lot I cannot do this year because of lack of equipment.

Throughout the study, it was noticeable during her planning that she was concerned about challenging her fifth grade students. In addition, she spoke of adjustments that she needed to make from one class to another. This was even more evident by how she anticipated potential problems with specific students that needed the task to be extended or modified to better suit their individual needs. This was all done while keeping in mind her stated lesson focus and the progress expected of the students in order to be ready for the next planned lesson. If the students did not progress as expected, she simply adapted the plans for the next lesson. This practice occurred twice during the study.

Peg’s actual written lesson plans primarily consisted of a series of bullet points or, as she called it, “highlight” form which were transferred from her scratch notes to her lesson plan book.

Occasionally she would use “trigger words” on an index card that she kept in her pocket or on her portable cart in the event that she needed a reminder. She claimed, “I write these out and jot down more notes to myself now that I am older and the classes are harder.” During the observed classes she never used the card but commented about its availability. Pegs planning practices mirrored those of experienced teachers in a study by Livingston and Borko (1989) wherein they typically included sequencing of lesson components and content while none prepared formal written lesson plans.

In general, most of her thoughts were never transferred from “mental planning” to writing. She commented,

I don’t write down that much. I may make the occasional note to myself about a class but for the most part, when that class walks in, I remember. When I see their faces, I know what I have to do different for them. I think that comes from being a teacher that has taught a few years.

These thoughts coincide with McCutcheon’s (1980) idea of “mental dialogue”.

The decision of what to teach had been an issue of concern for Peg the entire academic year. She openly admitted that this was one of the first years in her teaching career that she had not developed a yearly plan and had to just take it a session [three-week rotation] at a time. These complications in her planning are a result of the Fairfield County planning period mandate that has caused havoc in her planning and teaching routine. She sees her classes for three weeks and then may not see them again for three or sometimes six more weeks. She had yet to come up with a system that worked for long term planning with this schedule. In discussing her difficulties Peg stated,

This year is hard because I do not see the same classes in the same routine. I see a class for three weeks...and then they come back with a different class so I cannot repeat lesson plans. It is new every time a group comes in. For example, this class coming in has had striking but the one that is coming in with them has not. So, in order to get this class caught up I have to repeat the lessons with the other or do something totally different. I honestly don’t know where I am. My planning has been difficult. I felt I had quality planning when I had a two- or

three-day rotation and I was accomplishing something. Now, I feel like I barely keep my head above water.

The schedule situation was obviously a huge source of frustration for Peg, a teacher that wanted to provide the best program possible for her students. Her focus even with the large class sizes was to meet the needs of each student—something that was evident in every observed lesson. This was further demonstrated by the fact she knew almost all of the children's name that entered the gym and their individual personalities. She shared with me the main reason she knew them so well was because she had them in the previous grades in single classes. As she stated earlier, she feels knowing kids is an important part of teaching and instrumental for motivation and, in turn, success. Her concern with this schedule is that she will not be able to know the kids, not even their names.

Peg's planning started with the decisions of what to teach and continued with the formulation of the goals and the skill breakdown needed to accomplish these goals. Her planning process typically consisted of several unstructured moments of mental planning and eventually became a sit-down session of brainstorming the lesson content and transferring her ideas onto paper. She continued by perusing books and taking ideas received from others to add new ideas to her own. These practices are similar to evidence discovered in additional research (Berliner, 1986; Borko & Niles, 1982; Housner & Griffey, 1985; Sardo 1982; Warner, 1987) wherein experienced teachers were more selective in their use of information and able to incorporate more instructionally relevant material thereby creating their own unique, yet purposeful plans.

#### *In-class decisions*

Peg rarely deviated from her plans. As she noted, "I typically stick with it and make few changes. I feel good about it because that is what I want the kids to know. It is my plan."

Although she used her plans as a strong teaching foundation, she was flexible enough in her

teaching to make changes if the situation called for it. In support of her ability to modify her formal plans, Peg stated, “If I see children struggling with a concept or skill then I make that change.” Peg declared that the changes are usually class specific since it may not be necessary to change at that particular point for every class. In support of her beliefs, she provided the following example,

I had a class this morning that was not getting the concept...so I tweaked it a little bit and then had to tweak it again. Finally, I just had to change the activity totally. I just put it aside and went on with something else. I did not change it with any other class, but I had to with that one.

This same practice of making change based on student performance and understanding was demonstrated by experienced teachers in Griffey and Housner (1991) and coincides with the experienced teachers in Graham, et al., (1993) wherein plans and teaching were tailored to meet the needs of particular classes.

As noted under planning, Peg rarely, if ever, referred to her written lesson plan during class time. She shared that she typically does not refer to them except when she has the occasional “brain dead moments when I get stuck.” However, she did keep her lesson plan book open on her mobile cart, in the event she needed to reference them or make a note. Typically, when teaching day one of a new theme she confessed, “I have been known to have it [a note card with bullets of the lesson] in my pocket.”

Peg’s decisions regarding what to observe during class were often based on the keywords she shared with the children during the introduction of the lesson or when introducing and changing a task. She noted that, “I want them to be well-rounded. I want them to understand the skills and be able to tell me, for example, what are the different ways to strike.” This was primarily linked with the goals and objectives that Peg had set for the immediate lesson as well as those she set for her students to attain before leaving her after grade five. She felt strongly

about providing her students with core skills, which was evident when she made comments like, “I get all nervous and jerky when I see the rare fifth grader throwing and they are not stepping with the opposite foot. We have been doing that since kindergarten.” Peg’s goal-based decisions supported previous research that experienced teachers are very goal oriented (Borko & Livingston, 1989) and consider objectives prior to determining activities (Stroot & Morton, 1989).

Due to the increasingly large numbers in Peg’s classes, safety was always a major concern. This was largely due to the number of students in the facility and the concrete floor. As she taught, she would often scan for potential situations that could result in injury. In exploring this further in an interview, Peg commented, “My major impetus is safety. I just worry about keeping them safe with that many in a class.”

In addition to safety hazards, Peg would observe for off-task behaviors and the potential situations where children needed a challenge, a pat on the back, encouragement, or just acknowledgement of their presence. I was amazed at how she made a connection with almost every child despite the fifty plus in the class. She appeared to know the kids well and thus stayed “one step ahead of those that needed it,” therefore preventing possible discipline problems. She also enjoyed aggravating or teasing a few and often worried if there were certain ones she had not spoken to during a class period. During an observation, one particular incident stood out. During an activity called “dribble tag” a child passed by her with a sad look on his face. She noticed it and commented [out loud therefore it was on the video] that he must be upset he has not been selected as a tagger. A few minutes later, she worked her way towards him, put an arm around him and asked what was wrong. Correct in her assessment of his feeling, she assured him



that while he might not be chosen today, that there would be other tag games. She gave him a hug; he seemed satisfied and joined in the game.

Of the two classes I observed, her in-class decisions were quite different. The focus of the fifth grade class appeared to be skill acquisition with a constant desire to challenge them. During the stimulated recall interview she noted, “The double fifth grade class...their skills are higher and they push me...I can feel that adrenalin pump...I know we are hitting it hard...they push me and I like that.” When the combination fourth grade and EBD class that followed entered the gym, it was as if Peg put on a different hat. She was calm and tried to keep the atmosphere relaxed, making student success the main focus. She made the appropriate connections with certain students, thus keeping potential emotional outbursts to a minimum. Additionally, based on a comparison of the observations, I noticed changes in the way she presented the keywords; she was much more detailed in her directions and her instructions. Her lesson focus tended to be more about on-task behavior and trying to provide the opportunities for success. Peg’s feedback was not as specific to the skill cues as it was with the fifth grade. In this class she mainly gave “pats on the back” and an occasional suggestion for task improvement. In discussing the class, she reflected, “I guess that is the interesting part of my schedule in that it never gets boring...each class is an entity in itself. I truly do have to teach differently.”

In answering the research question of how often tasks were changed there was no set answer. As far as the initial task, extensions, and applications, the timing varied. Her decisions of when to change were typically based on student understanding, success, and behavior. She commented, “My decision to change tasks is based on the students’ progress and, if time allows, we get to everything I have planned.” Off-task behavior was rare in Peg’s classroom during the study and, when it did occur, she first assessed her instruction. During our review of a video, she

commented on a situation noting, “Several were off-task so I stopped class and repeated the directions. It is obvious I was not clear.”

The way Peg planned often accounted for the few changes that had to be made in class (Clark & Elmore, 1981; Marx & Peterson, 1981; Smith & Sendlebach, 1979). As with the teachers in Borko and Livingston’s (1989) and Leinhardt and Greeno’s (1986) research, Peg referred to her plans on occasion for reminders and was flexible to change if things were not going as expected, even if she needed to create something on the spot. Her changes from one task to the next were not based on a predetermined time plan but more on student understanding, success, and behavior (Graham, et al., 1993; Marx & Peterson, 1981; Tan, 1996). The focus of her lessons matched the intent of her plans (Marx & Peterson, 1981) as she observed for student understanding while simultaneously observing for off-task behavior (Griffey & Housner, 1991; Housner & Griffey, 1985) and, in this case, the specific needs of the children.

### *Reflection*

Peg believed that reflection never stops, “I would say I reflect about every minute of every day. I don’t think you can be a teacher and not reflect.” She said that her reflection occurred when in the act of teaching and after the class is over while awaiting the next class. At night after dinner, she often reflected back on the day. Peg shared questions and thoughts that typically occur in her reflections:

Did they get it and were they successful doing it? I look at the majority of the kids and see if they were able to do it...then, did they enjoy it? Can we move on to the next step...usually what I have tentatively planned for the next lesson? That is what my aim is. When I am working on day one I am shooting for what they need to be able to do to be ready for day two and do they have what I needed them to have. It does not always happen. Last, I reflect on discipline and behavior. If things did not go well, then I need to do something different in my planning.

Reflections that occurred during class also resulted in Peg making an on the spot change or maybe just a note in the plan book for the future. She even had her own coding system to denote a great lesson or one that needed to be “trashed”. After the dismissal of her last class, I asked Peg to record a quick reflection. This was part of the protocol, as I wanted her thoughts before viewing the video. Following seven 45-minute class periods where the numbers varied from 43 to 66 in a class, she was exhausted. Her first reflection was typically a sigh of relief that she had survived another day. After refreshing herself with a Diet Coke she briefly reflected on whether the students were ready for the next day, how well they did that day, and ended with plans to give more thought to it all later in the evening.

Peg’s frustration of her schedule and the effects it had on her decision-making and ultimately the children was riddled throughout the data. Peg, an obviously fit person, one afternoon shared how she feels at the end of the school day compared to the previous year and reflected on the difference in her teaching.

I have noticed this year when I go home I am exhausted. Last year and the years before when I went home and I was into something. I know I am a year older but it should not make this much difference. Last year’s schedule was a cakewalk compared to this one. I really felt I did some of my best teaching. I got through the skills and got the kids where I wanted them to be. I felt real good. I was proud of what I saw. But, I am seeing a backslide with the skills this year. But, then again, it is the numbers. There are just too many. It is the kids that ultimately suffer.

In general, Peg considered herself a reflective teacher and shared that reflection has helped her to become a better teacher. Peg noted, “I think I have always been a reflective teacher. It makes you a better teacher in that you improve if you think about it and make changes, tweak it, and throw out things that did not work.” Peg demonstrated reflective practices both in-action and on-action (Schon, 1983, 1987) and relied heavily on her reflections for immediate change and for future planning (Graham, et al., 1993). Her reflection, though very succinct, focused on

the same goals of her planning, teaching (Allen & Casbergue, 1997) and student understanding (Livingston & Borko, 1989).

### *Summary*

During the three weeks I spent with Peg it was obvious she was well organized and had a strong work ethic. In order to maintain order in her teaching, she felt planning was key and therefore, the majority of her decisions were made prior to the act of teaching. Planning for Peg appeared to be ongoing and consisted of both spontaneous planning moments and structured times. She primarily took advantage of the early hours before school started to do the majority of her planning with the exception of the occasional holiday and weekend for extended planning. Peg had her own planning routine, was very goal oriented, planned differently for each class, pulled from previous teaching experiences, and welcomed the opportunity to learn from others. Colleagues, family members, and books were secondary resources tapped on a regular basis. When her plans were complete, she felt confident and ready to teach the lesson.

The way Peg planned often accounted for the few decisions she had to make in class. When changes were necessary, she focused on providing the students opportunities for success. In her teaching, she was student-focused, warm, and compassionate. At the same time she was, as she termed it, “a no-nonsense teacher” in that she wanted and maintained order and control. She was firm and consistent about her expectations of the students and rarely did they challenge her. These attributes along with her humor created a comfortable learning environment for the students. Peg proved to be a very reflective teacher, matched her reflective thoughts with her planned goals, and relied on them to determine future direction.

## CHAPTER 6

### CASES STUDY THREE: DEBBIE PETERSON

Debbie Peterson has spent her entire fourteen-year career as an elementary physical educator in Fairfield County. The last eight have been at Johnson Elementary located in a community that is comprised primarily of white and blue-collar workers and a community that boasts of its international population, which includes 28 spoken languages. The racial make up of the school is in itself a testimony to the community's diversity with the population consisting of 54.5% European American, 14.5% African American, 13.5% Hispanic, 12.8% Asian, and 3.7% multi-racial.

Standing on a 13-acre lot, the brick school building stretches as deep as it does wide and is guarded by a circular driveway located at the front of the school which accommodates visitors and buses. To the right of the complex a large parking area begins and extends down a hill and behind the school. At the base of the hill and adjacent to the parking area is a playground, a play field approximately the size of regulation football field, and a wooded hiking trail.

Entering the front of the school, just past the main office begins a maze of hallways. In order to assist you in finding your destination, the hallways are given unique names printed on green "street" signs extended from each hall entrance or intersection. After passing the cafeteria and several corridors, on the right is a sign entitled "Fitness Lane" indicating the route to the gymnasium. Johnson Elementary is one of the few elementary schools in Fairfield County that has the luxury of the gymnasium being connected to the main school building. Due to school renovations in 1997, which included adding 22 classrooms and two computer labs, the

elementary school now is home to one of the largest gymnasiums in the county. The renovations were in part due to the growth of the community and the need to accommodate 1100 students.

The gym itself is constructed in brick and is framed by a less than forgiving concrete floor. Upon entering the gym, it is evident that this area is used to sell and promote physical activity. The walls are decorated with posters serving as reminders of the benefits of fitness, working white boards reveal the instructions for the day and the gym rules are posted in clear view. Life size cutouts of children align one wall promoting various modes of physical activity. In the far left corner is a large climbing wall that extends three-fourths of the height of the gym and about one-third of the wall's width. Adjacent to the wall, gymnastics mats are stacked over six feet high. A large curtain is positioned in the middle of the floor that, when closed, allows the facility to be divided into two teaching areas. The separation of the gym usually occurs in the event of inclement weather.

At the far end of the gym is a set of double doors that lead outside, down a long flight of steps and to the playground. Past the playground is the field area used primarily as an outdoor teaching facility. Encircling the field and playground is a four-foot fence. Debbie and her teaching partner, Laura Carlton, alternate the use of the gym with the outside field area thus allowing for better use of the teaching space. For this study, the observations with Debbie were conducted outside in February 2003. During the time of my research with Debbie the weather was cooperative and she was able to teach outside, as planned, every day but one.

The physical education schedule created by administration at Johnson Elementary places three classes in the gym every time slot with the exception of one period when four classes are combined. The classes that are assigned to each period are not always the same grade level. Some periods Debbie teaches two classes and other periods, just one. The children come to

physical education three days of an eight-day special class rotation. Debbie and Laura find it easier to refer to each class visit as day one, two, or three. It is a very complicated schedule in that of the first two days of the eight-day rotation every class is on day one in physical education but by the third day some students are attending class on day one where another may be on day two (see Appendix G). Just as it is difficult to explain, it is even more difficult to plan and teach. The result is often that some students will have the same lesson twice while others may totally miss out on a lesson.

Due to the complication of the schedule, for the purpose of this study, Laura taught the double classes and Debbie taught the single class for the two periods observed. The two teachers made this decision prior to our meeting on November 13, 2002. On this day we confirmed the dates for the planned interviews and observations and practiced the think-aloud procedure. Due to a charity fundraiser event, Jump Rope For Heart, they were having at the end of January, my initial observations and interviews had to take place at the first of December, a full two months before I would return. Between the dates of February 3 to February 21, I observed five lessons denoted on the schedule as days three, seven, and eight. For each day, I observed a third grade class followed by a fourth grade.

I learned of Debbie's planning process through interviews and the think-aloud procedure where she audiotaped herself as she planned for and reflected on five lessons. Her initial planning began immediately after my visit in November and was later revisited in January. On February 3, Debbie taught the first of her five consecutive lessons on striking with feet. At the end of her teaching day, as did Jake and Peg, she recorded a quick reflection of her day and then we viewed the videotape of the two classes. While watching the video of the third grade, Debbie shared her thoughts and actions. Immediately afterwards we viewed the video of the fourth grade

class and this time she explained the changes made from the previous lesson. This process was repeated for two more visits with her planning and reflecting thoughts audiotaped throughout the month. Debbie provided written copies of every stage of her planning plus any assessment sheets used (see Appendix G).

In the narrative that follows, entitled *The Advocate*, Debbie's passion and professional dedication are revealed as most of her thoughts relate to teaching. Beginning with the influences of her childhood play and sport experiences and then progressing into her high school experiences she recalls the varied influences and experiences in her life that drive her ardor of today. Debbie then examines her teacher-training program and continues with her early teaching years. She closes her story as a true advocate would by promoting the physical education program she and her teaching partner, Laura Carlton, have at Johnson Elementary as well as sharing her concerns regarding the future of physical education.

In the next section, entitled *Searching for the Perfect Lesson*, Debbie reveals her planning thoughts as she prepares for the sequence of five lessons, and I become the narrator. It is here that she brings to our attention the decisions she makes, the resources she uses, and the planning process as she experiences it. She continues to communicate her observations, thoughts, decisions, and actions as she teaches the first lesson to Mr. Atchley's third grade class. Following a five-minute break, which is primarily used to return one class to the building and pick-up the other, she repeats the 45-minute lesson to Mrs. Lander's fourth grade. Just as in the previous case studies, Debbie and I watch the video and she shares any differences in how the lesson was taught. Finally, the narrative ends as she reflects on the lesson and reveals how her plans may change for the next class in the series.



In the last section of this chapter, after discussing Debbie's planning, teaching, and reflecting decisions I will share my interpretations. As with Jake and Peg, my analysis derived not only from Debbie's stories, but also from additional data and pertinent literature. Finally, I will summarize how, when, where, and why Debbie makes the decisions she does.

### The Advocate

#### *Always the Athlete*

At nearly forty years of age, I am still pretty athletic and enjoy sports. I am presently involved on both soccer and tennis teams. Also, I enjoy camping and hiking as well as adventurous opportunities like rock climbing, rappelling, and scuba diving. I know my desire to do outdoor activities is a carryover from childhood and appreciate that my parents exposed my siblings and I to different experiences.

As a child I was very active and during the school year remember coming home, doing my homework, and jumping on my little purple bike to find someone to play with. My younger brother would occasionally join me but my two older sisters had no interest in sports or playing outdoors. I was usually successful in rounding up enough neighborhood kids for a game of kickball or street stickball. If not playing ball, my buddies and I loved to venture into the neighborhood "forest". I remember it would be light out but we could go into these dark, dense woods where we could hardly see. It was great for games of hide-go-seek and kick the can. The woods were full of these huge rocks and really cool trees for climbing; I loved the challenge of seeing how high I could climb.

During the summer months my siblings and I went away to camp. I remember occasionally getting home sick but there were always so many sports and activities going on that

I would soon get over it. I liked being busy and having something to do every moment and camp provided that.

Organized sports were a part of my life at an early age. I was about six when I started playing fast pitch softball and I continued playing until the age of 18. I also played church league basketball in my upper elementary school years and upon entering high school, at grade eight, I played basketball, volleyball and tennis. I really liked the feeling of sports. I especially loved the excitement of being around people, the cheering, the feeling of success, and the fact my teammates, more often than not, depended on me. When I played sports I always gave it my all. I got pleasure from scoring points and winning—winning was always fun. Of course, we lost our share too. I was never a bad loser but when we lost, I always critiqued myself about what I could have done differently. I preferred team sports and never competed in individual sports. Even in tennis, I only wanted to play doubles. I probably would have been too hard on myself in individual sports. The teamwork, camaraderie, and social aspect were what attracted me to team sports.

There was a mutual respect between my coaches and me. They probably appreciated my hard work and how I always listened to what they said. I respected their age and knowledge of sport and as a result, we got along well. I was a good athlete and would say I was and still am above average in about every sport I play or have played. I chose to play a variety of sports as opposed to excelling at one in particular and am thankful I still have the skills to play so many. I guess you could say that sports have always been my niche, an avenue, if you will, to keep me healthy and in good physical shape. I love to play so I guess I am still just a kid at heart. In fact, my love for play and sports was one factor that influenced my decision to become a physical education teacher.

### *Career Choice*

I knew as early as 16 years of age that I wanted to be a physical education teacher when I was given the opportunity to be a part of a program where high school juniors and seniors worked with area elementary school students. The elementary schools did not have physical education so we visited during their recess time and organized games and activities. The idea of the program was to encourage certain high school students to consider teaching as a profession. I was the lone sophomore asked to participate and am still not sure why. Well, maybe it was because I got along with all of the teachers, was real athletic and they saw my potential.

The physical education teachers I had in high school seemed to really care about students and appeared to enjoy working with us. They were not only good with us, but also seemed to get along well with their colleagues. Looking back, I know my physical education teachers had a positive influence. I would go so far as to say they were my role models. I really admired them and thought they had their act together. Based on my memories of a variety of sports and dance units, I think their program was strong. I can honestly say that the early teaching experiences with the local elementary kids, the influence of my physical education teachers, along with my love for sports and kids made me want to be a physical education teacher. In fact, I never considered any other career.

### *Teacher Training*

In the fall of 1982, following my senior year in high school, I enrolled at a nearby university and remained faithful to my ambition. I was fortunate that I did not have to work while I was in college since my parents had the ability to pay for my education. Therefore, I was able to take a full load every semester. In my spare time, I was involved in the physical education

major club and tried my hand at a new sport, rugby. I enjoyed the game so much I ended up playing all four of my college years and even took on the role of captain the last three.

While I enjoyed college, I was somewhat disappointed in the physical education teacher education program. The university I attended was primarily research based and I honestly felt trained by professors that had never stepped foot in an elementary gym. Later, through experience in teaching, I discovered there were so many things about teaching that I had not learned in college. I know some things you can only learn by experience but I resented the fact there were important things they did not teach us. Maybe my expectations were too high of what I would obtain with my degree. But, you know, if I were going to be a surgeon I would not want a guy or gal that has never performed open heart surgery teaching me how to do it.

On a positive note, a few of the professors did encourage us to get involved in our state physical education association. We attended conferences as a group and were exposed to the notion of professionalism early. I liked meeting people at the conferences and became motivated to become a presenter myself. In fact, several of us presented a session my senior year and I continued presenting for many years to follow. The exposure to our professional organizations has provided me with a lifetime of learning. I still attend state conferences, nearby workshops, and occasionally the district and national alliance conventions. When I go to conferences, I try to get something from every single session that I can take back and use with my students. In addition to attending conferences, the publications I receive keep me up-to-date and offer new ideas. Some of my college friends did not like being told they had to go to conferences, but I am thankful it was a requirement.

*Gaining Confidence*

My first year out of college there were no job openings locally in physical education. So, I substitute taught and volunteered at a school close to my home called Norway Elementary. At the same time I started working on a master's degree in exercise science. The following year I was hired to teach physical education at Norway. I remember that first year I was so meticulous about everything and was anxious about doing a good job while at the same time very insecure about the responsibility. My lesson plans that year were extremely detailed and consumed a lot of my time. Of course, I was still pursuing a master's degree and that only added more stress. Luckily, the lady I shared the gym with, Carol Hicks, had been teaching for about nine years and was a great mentor. I still appreciate her to this day.

I remember taking advantage of the opportunity to learn from Carol and from others. I even observed classroom teachers in order to learn about their management and organization. There was a lot of trial and error in those early years. I experimented with management, discipline, and even the way I presented my lessons. When one thing did not work, I would try something else. My student teaching and my first years provided learning opportunities you cannot read in any book or have in any college course. I truly believe the practical experience is where you learn the most. It is really a day-to-day living experience of how you react or respond to different situations.

When I think of my early years of teaching, it was all about gaining self-confidence. Many times over those first years, I doubted myself as a teacher. Finally getting a hold on management relieved some insecurities and stresses. In my first few years, I did a lot of yelling; I thought I had to in order to get the students' attention. It took four or five years before someone suggested using a musical instrument like a tambourine or even a whistle. I did not and still do

not like using whistles but I have since discovered many ways to get the attention of a class and to wait on them to be quiet rather than yell above them. This particular delayed learning experience resulted in polyps developing on my vocal cords, which now limits my ability to project my voice.

In addition to learning from others and from my own experiences, there was one book I found helpful. In my first few years of teaching, I referred to *Children Moving* simply because it made sense. I would take suggestions from the book and relate them to my own sports experiences in order to build skill progressions. My knowledge and skills from playing so many sports really aided my teaching of elementary physical education since the curriculum primarily consists of basic movement skills that can be used in different sports. At some point in those early years, it all started coming together.

Another boost to my confidence came from my experiences presenting at conferences and workshops. I believe if you can present in front of your peers you can do anything. It became routine for me to volunteer to present at workshops, inservices, and conferences. I was even asked to present on some occasions. I will never forget how honored I was when a representative from another state asked me to present at their state conference and they actually paid my way and paid me an honorarium.

An additional avenue that has continued to encourage me is the support of my administrators. In my career, I have taught at only two schools and have been fortunate to have principals for the most part that respected my physical education program and me. I have only had one conflict and that was my last year at Norway Elementary with a new principal who felt physical education was equivalent to recess. I have to admit her attitude prompted my transfer to Johnson Elementary School.

*The Recent Years*

I love what I do. I look forward to coming to work each day and with 985 sick hours accrued; it is obvious I don't like missing. I have come a long way in my fourteen years and am looking forward to at least that many more. I am in my comfort zone and really like where I am professionally, what I have accomplished, and what I hope I have provided thousands of kids. One of my proudest moments came a few years back when I was recognized as the state physical education teacher of the year. That was something that I thought never in my wildest dreams would happen and it put me in a category with literally hundreds if not thousands of teachers nationwide.

In comparison to other physical education teachers, I would like to think I am above average. On a scale of one to ten, I would say I am a seven and there are some tens and some twos out there. I think I am closer to a seven because I give a lot to the kids and am very proactive. I like trying new things and continually try to be developmentally appropriate. By developmentally appropriate I mean to provide the children with maximum participation and try to do what is best for them as individuals. I could not rate myself a nine or ten because I believe there is always room for improvement. If I were a ten why would I go to the conferences, read the journals, and email other people for ideas. However, I do think I am a quality teacher and it does not come from winning awards or listening to compliments from other people; it is just the way I feel. I believe I provide my kids a pretty darn good physical education program. I want my kids to brag about their physical education program, not about me, but about what they do in P.E.

I try to make my program as fun as possible believing in total participation. My vision is that all kids are always active and that is why you will not see us doing things like duck, duck, goose or kickball. I want kids to be excited when they come to class and if it is boring, they will

not want to return. So, I try to put myself in their situation whether they are athletic like me or the other extreme. I think about if I were low skilled, what could a teacher do to meet my needs and make it exciting for me. I want the students to feel good about themselves and to know what they can do to be both active and healthy.

When I think about the skills my teaching partner, Laura, and I teach, we primarily focus on throwing and kicking. We also want them to know about fitness and what makes their bodies healthy. But we really just touch on fitness since they get more of that in middle school. We start each year with cooperative activities and working in self-space. The first nine to eighteen weeks we do a lot of centers and a lot of independent type work. We then start working more in partners and in small groups. Closer to the end of the year we are ready for group games and more strategy situations. We do cooperative activities and things requiring communication throughout the year. I have never really broken it down but I would say we do 50% skill work and 50% games.

I really feel communication skills are important since they are always life skills. I try to do a lot of things where they have to make decisions and communicate with a group in order for an activity to work. I try not to make all the decisions for them. I think we, as adults, often make too many decisions for kids. I want them to figure things out so I frequently answer their questions with questions inviting them to think. As they get older, they get better at communicating. It becomes intrinsic and they become better listeners, appreciate and get along better with others, and show good sportsmanship. I think these skills are so important in life and will carry over into their personal relationships and professional careers.

What I really love is when you see that the kids appreciate physical education and know that you are teaching them something. I did not get physical education until I was in eighth grade



and it is neat knowing these kids are getting a quality program starting as early as age five. I am thrilled to provide that. To see that look of “I did it” on their faces is monumentally what keeps me coming back.

When I think of what I do, I am proud I have chosen to be a physical education teacher. I stay with this profession because I love kids and I know deep down in my heart that physical education is important. I have to believe that what I do has an influence on children and carries over into their middle school, high school, and adult years. Laura and I believe that we make a difference and feel our program is about developing the whole child. That is why we try to teach across the curriculum incorporating other subject areas wherever possible. In doing this, our intentions are not just to support the other areas but we believe that is how you help children to become well-rounded individuals.

Ultimately, I would say I am a true advocate for physical education and take every opportunity to promote its importance. However, I admit I have some worries about the continuation of physical education and that worry has prompted me to pursue my doctorate degree in administration in order to keep my bases covered. I hope that those in positions to determine our fate are conscious of the need for physical education in our schools. Personally, there is a lot of teaching that I have left to do and a lot more I want to give to the kids before I am done.

### Searching for the Perfect Lesson

*Thursday, November 21, 2002*

*9:38 a.m. [Two sets of oversized double doors are propped open revealing the office/equipment room that extends the length of Johnson Elementary School’s spacious gymnasium. Debbie is sitting at one of the four desks in the office planning for future lessons.]*

*While it is referred to as a desk, it is actually a small table that accommodates a computer and printer yet still provides ample space for a few books and her writing pad. Directly behind Debbie is another small desk that houses a second computer for her teaching partner, Laura. In the center of the office against the wall that backs up to the gymnasium, are two traditional, wooden teacher desks. There is a four-drawer filing cabinet between them creating cubby-like work areas. Debbie and Laura have personalized their “space” by placing pictures of family and friends on their desks as well as the wallboards above them.*

*On the opposite and adjacent wall, built in shelves expand the length and width of the room creating an L-shaped sea of well-organized equipment. Every inch of space is used to store the abundant amount of equipment shared by the two teachers. While there is plenty of room to move around the office, crates, barrels, and boxes all housing additional supplies take up much of the floor. The multitude of equipment would satisfy the dreams of many physical education teachers and Debbie admits it makes her planning easier in comparison to her early years of teaching when equipment was lacking.]*

I am planning a series of lessons on striking with feet and, as usual, I am jotting down on paper any and all aspects of striking that I want to try to cover in the upcoming four to six lessons. I typically do a brainstorm session like this while jotting notes on a piece of paper: foot control, dribbling, place kicks, punting, passing while stationary, and passing while on the move (see Appendix G). I am trying to recall all of the different striking skills involved when I play soccer. I need to look at trapping or stopping the ball with feet and other parts of the body. I am also thinking a little about different warm-ups. I like to begin lessons with a warm-up that pertains to the area of the body that is going to be used during that particular lesson. We often do the traditional warm-up where the students jog a lap or two. I will probably start with that. After

the first lesson, in order to review, we will probably do warm-ups based more around the skills that we worked on the lesson before.

*[Debbie stands and walks over to her other desk and picks up a folder.]*

I wanted to take a quick look at the Fairfield County AKS's. They are kind of like our curriculum guide. I want to have it for a resource to look back at second grade to see what AKS's these third and fourth graders should have met in the area of striking with feet before they reached third grade. For the second grade it is really general and states, "understanding the use of force and speed related to the movement, smooth and jerky movements, and relating to self, to equipment, and others" (see Appendix A). We want the students to understand the concept that keeping the soccer ball close to their feet will mean better control so hopefully that has carried over from second grade. Flipping over to the third grade curriculum, it emphasizes demonstrating progress toward mature forms of striking. That is pretty general. It continues with how they need to understand and explore different pathways and directions pertaining to dribbling or striking with the feet. It talks about effort qualities and I know there are some activities I do where we discuss kicking a ball soft versus kicking it hard. The fourth grade curriculum for striking with feet is similar to the third but extends into more body awareness by understanding where the body is in relation to the ball, objects, and others. Fitness is a big part of the curriculum and with soccer being so cardiovascular we will get a lot of fitness in.

Continuing with lesson one; after our warm-up lap, I will lead them in some stretching while I introduce the lesson. That is always a good time to talk about what we are going to do and ask some review questions from the previous year or previous lessons. It gets their mind off of stretching and keeps it from being boring. I do not like to waste a lot of time talking because I want to get them moving right away. I will start the actual lesson with the children getting a ball

and dribbling while traveling in the field area. I will have them do this just long enough for me to assess their ability levels. I will then ask them to continue focusing on good ball control and keeping the ball within two to three feet of their body. Next, I will add dribbling and trapping on signal. There is an activity similar to *Red Light/Green Light* that you can do with soccer balls. On the signal red light they will trap the ball quickly and on green light continue.

I decide to get online, pull up the PE Central website, and see if they have anything updated on kicking and striking. I am on the upper elementary grade lessons and there is a section on kicking and punting. Here is an idea recommended for grade three to five called *Dot Stops*. I believe I have done something similar to this. After assessing their skills it might be good to go to this for dribbling and trapping practice. The spots I use will depend on the skill of the students. I will use poly-spots for the higher skilled and Olympic rings or hula-hoops for the lesser skilled. The idea will be to scatter them and have them dribble and stop on the spot or in the ring. Then I will challenge them with a timed dribble of trapping in or on the spots. The idea is for them to compete against themselves, not each other.

So, lets see; now I have the warm-up, stretching, just dribbling, dribbling and trapping, and *Red Light/Green Light*. Of course, the entire time I will be assessing them to see if they need more attention. If need be I can do *Dot Stop* with the higher skilled students and spend a little extra time with the students that still need work on trapping and control. There is another activity I would like to try called *Move to the Front* and I am jotting that down in rough draft plans. I have used it before but it has been a while. Maybe only the higher skilled kids will be successful with this one. They all get in small groups and form a line with each person having their own soccer ball. It is a follow the leader activity and on a signal, the last person moves to the front and takes over as leader guiding the group in different directions. It will be a good endurance

activity too. Time permitting; I would like to do that because it really encourages good ball control, changing direction, and using different amounts of force. I will end the lesson as I typically do of pulling everyone in, putting away equipment and reviewing using a question/answer session. I sometimes have a student do a demonstration if needed at this point. Then, I like to give them a little insight as to what we are going to do the next lesson. Okay, that is lesson one. I am going to print a copy of *Dot Spots* and keep that as a resource.

Now, for lesson two, I plan to do a dribbling type warm-up. I will use the directions of north, south, east, and west so I can bring in more of the overall curriculum into the lessons. I may bring back a quick *Red Light/Green Light* or *Dot Spots* to review the trapping and control. I need to make sure they have control of their ball before we move on to passing with a partner and passing on the move.

Looking back at the PE Central website, I just came across an activity called *Sharks and Minnows, Soccer Style*. I am familiar with the game in a swimming pool. It looks like this would be a good activity for students to practice dribbling and shielding the ball while others attempt to steal a ball from someone else. It would emphasize dribbling and trapping as well as protecting the ball. Force and effort concepts will come into play as well. It is written more as a partner activity where one child is the minnow trying to protect the ball and the other is the shark trying to take it. I will give this one some more thought. For now, I will print it and put it aside.

Depending on where we are skill wise and how much we progress, I am planning on moving into some of the other skills that are aspects of kicking or striking with feet. We will get into more force and effort and, of course, using the correct part of the shoe or foot. I will start with stationary passing with the option of passing to a partner or at an object like a cone or field marker. Passing to a person will probably be better to begin with in that they might experience

more success. After all, the person receiving the pass does have the ability to move from side to side in the event not every single pass goes right to the partner. They might not reach the same level of frustration they would if they were kicking it at a cone. A cone is much smaller and if it doesn't hit the cone or it takes 20 tries the students might become frustrated. I do not want them to feel like they are not reaching some level of success. So, I will choose to use a person first as a target and then move to an activity that requires a little more skill like a small stationary object that they really have to concentrate on hitting or knocking over with their ball.

Looking over lesson two; I have warmed up with dribbling across the field while staying in their own space, looking out for other people and their soccer balls, using directionality, a quick game of *Dot Stop* or *Red Light/Green Light*, and an activity called *Sharks and Minnows*. Then, we move right into some stationary passing with a partner. I am looking back on PE Central for an activity idea for passing the ball to an obstacle that may also involve dribbling at the same time. That would allow us to revisit the things that we've already worked on.

Okay, here's one: *Obstacle Soccer*. Every student will have his or her own ball and some type of object. On the website, they recommend a cardboard cylinder or a plastic bowling pin. I know for a fact that those are difficult items to keep balanced on the grass, especially with the dips, valleys, and rough spots on our field area. I usually use what we call field markers, which are like small cones, and they could be the kicking targets. This is also an idea that can be used indoors if the weather is inclement. Every student has placed their obstacle, their cone, or their bowling pin, or what have you in general space and every student dribbles around all the different objects, not just their own. They do not suggest this, but you can move right into where the students actually try to knock the cone over with their ball. It does not really involve the kind of passing that I thought, but we'll see if we need that. We may need to spend more time on just

passing with a partner or passing to an obstacle trying to knock it down. I would end lesson two working on those skills. It is 10:05 and I am going to stop since I have to go teach a class.

*11:15*

I am back at the computer table with all my notes spread out. I talked Laura into taking part of this class for me so I could continue working on these lessons. It occurred to me that in lesson two I planned the *Dot Stop* activity for striking with the feet and *Sharks and Minnows* and then I went into passing with a stationary target followed by passing on the move. I talked about doing obstacle soccer next. But, that is more dribbling with control and will be jumping ahead of passing. I do not want to back track so I am probably going to put the passing off. I am making a change in my notes to do the passing after the obstacle soccer.

We have kind of a professional library here in our P.E. office and I am walking over here to look at *Becoming a Master Teacher: Teaching Children Movement Concepts and Skills* and see what kind of ideas they have in here on striking with feet. We have used this book numerous times and have a lot of pages flagged. I see some good ideas on stations or centers for kicking and a section on just a kicking review. My students have commented that they like working with centers, so I'm going to try and create some centers for one of my later lessons. They will serve as a lead up to playing a mini soccer game. I am going to put this kicking review and these center ideas aside and come back to them later.

Moving on to lesson three; I will start with a partner warm-up where they pass the ball to a partner who is stationary and then progress to passing to a moving partner. That will work for moving without the ball and is a good lead up to one of the concepts of the game of soccer. So ultimately we would want to get them proficient enough to put their skills together and play a soccer game. I am not talking 11 versus 11 but more like 3 versus 3 or 5 versus 5. Next, they will

work in partners passing the ball back and forth while demonstrating trapping with the foot. I will expect them to show good control using the inside and outside of the shoe to pass the ball. Then, I am going to have everybody get two field markers and their own ball and space out on the field placing their cones about three feet apart. After the field is set up into several mini goals, they will dribble around and push or shoot the ball through each set of goals. I do not really have a name for this activity but I have used it before. I feel like this is about where I need to do this because they are now controlling their ball.

What I would like to do next is have them put together all the skills of dribbling, passing, ball control, force and effort in a particular area or what I call a grid. I saw this demonstrated at a recent P.E. inservice where a group of four students set up a square grid using four cones with the size of the grid determined by the kids. The less skilled children that have very little control may want the square bigger. The activity is set up where two people are offense and two people are defense with the defense trying to get the ball. Any time there is a change of possession or a team kicks it out of bounds the other team becomes defense. If for some reason that doesn't change very often, then I will use a signal to get them to change, so that the same team does not always have control of the ball. This will be a great fitness activity as well as good for putting together all the skills that we would have worked on up until this point.

Time permitting there is one more activity called *Ghostbusters Soccer* I would like to do. I remember a colleague telling me about this activity and I believe there may be a description of it on PE Central website. I am back on the lesson idea website for grades 3-5 and here it is, *Ghostbusters Soccer*. Let's see, it says it is good for practicing dribble, passing, and some goal keeping skills. Cones are placed all along the perimeter of a playing area with the cones representing the ghosts and each has a ghost keeper, or a goalie guarding the cone. The other



students are dribbling the ball around trying to kick their ball and hit a cone. I feel like this would be a good activity because now they have to aim their ball at a much smaller object than in our previous practice. So up until now we worked on dribbling, some place kicking, passing to a stationary target, passing while moving, dribble keep away, and trapping.

In lesson four I will do a warm-up with dribbling on the move and depending on how the skill level is at that point, have students partner up, choose a ball, and as they jog their warm-up lap, pass the ball back and forth. Now we are getting the cardiovascular by doing the traditional lap, but we are adding the passing on the go to it for more practice. I would like to move on to some punting, kicking the ball in the air, and some shooting on goal. Of course, then I could expose them to goal keeping. When they kick the balls, I encourage them to kick lower than the top of the cone mainly so we are not chasing the balls in the parking lot all day and so people are not getting hit in the head and the face with the soccer balls.

After our warm-up and stretching, I review kicking the ball with more force and from a greater distance away from the goal. I will have a student demonstrate or I will demonstrate shooting on goal. In groups of four students, they will get two cones and one ball, find their own space, place the cones approximately ten feet apart from each other and have each child take turns being a goalie while the other three take turns kicking the ball. I would like to do that for about five to seven minutes. Then, incorporate passing on the move and shooting on the goal. There is an activity that I have done before which seems to be successful called *Never-ending Soccer* that I picked up at a P.E. conference. That is probably going to last another four or five minutes. The students typically get tired when they do this game since there is constant movement with everyone involved in jogging, kicking, dribbling, or shooting on goal.

After I do the shooting on goal, I would like to talk to them about punting. Step, drop, and kick are some key words that I use. Again, I will use a student to demonstrate as well as myself. I would like to begin with the punting in this lesson where they just stand opposite a partner and they practice their step, drop, and kick. And their partner can retrieve the ball or try receiving it with their hands. The more skilled students will be shown different ways to trap a ball that is coming high in the air with different parts of their body; like a chest trap, a leg trap, a knee trap, or a foot trap. And, something new I would like to try with punting is each student would get a cone or a field marker and as they punt to their partner, their partner marks the spot that the ball hits the ground first with the cone. I want them to realize what they are doing differently to get the ball to go farther. For example, what part of the shoe are they using, the laces, or their toes?

Time permitting, we will play a fun lead-up game that I have done in the past and students ask for called *Goal Line Soccer*. I mark off a gigantic area with cones and there is a safety zone in the middle. There is no punting from the middle zone and the students are trying to punt the ball over the other team's heads and cross their goal line. As all my students pretty much know, I do not keep score in any activities. They know that my rule is that all the games always end in a tie. That takes a lot of pressure off of them and me, plus it is another way to promote sportsmanship.

That is a lot of activities for one lesson. We will see how the students progress and whether we need to explore some of these activities in lesson five, or if we can make it through everything planned in this lesson. And, of course, I will end lesson four with a review, a little bit of show time, and brief them on what might be happening in lesson five. At this point, we have covered most of the original skills that I wrote on my notepad: place kicks, dribbling, punting,

passing while moving, trapping, and shooting at the goal. What I would like to do on lesson five is start with a warm-up where the students get their own ball and practice dribbling. I believe that is fundamental to the game of soccer.

I would like to have three mini soccer games set up. If I have between 20 and 24 students in class and have three games in class that means six teams. I would have three to four people per team and could create a mini round robin tournament. I would allow each team to choose a name of a country because soccer is international as a sport and this would encourage them to associate soccer with a country like the one they do in the World Cup or the Olympics. We would all rotate and play three-minute games stressing the sportsmanship and the importance of moving the ball, moving away from the ball, moving without the ball and of not being a ball-hog. I think I will use a warm-up where the students have the opportunity to practice for five or six minutes or any type of soccer skills that they think they need in order to play in a mini soccer game. These soccer games, if they are three or four minutes long, should carry us close to the end of the class. At the end, of course, we review. We can talk about what helped their team to be successful and the importance of sportsmanship.

The last thing I need to do is write down what I refer to as “rainy day/Plan B” indoor activities. I would like to still concentrate on the striking with feet, keeping in mind that I will have half of the gym and will need to keep the noise down. Our curtain lowered in the middle helps the visual distractions but not the noise level. Some of the activities already planned I know we can still do indoors such as *Ghostbusters Soccer*, *Dot Stops*, *Sharks and Minnows*, a little bit of shooting on goal, and dribbling. Theoretically, we could still work on passing to a stationary target and the more higher-skilled students could work on passing to a moving target. So, those are some rainy day ideas I am jotting down.

Glancing through a handout book from a recent PE inservice, there are two activities that I would like to try that would probably be better indoors if I need them. One is called *Heading in Pairs* where you give them deflated playground balls or soft indoor soccer balls. You talk about the fundamentals of heading a soccer ball, allow them to practice tossing a ball back and forth to each other to head, and then progress to how many times they can head the ball back and forth. Another activity, which we did practice at the inservice and was really neat, is called *Soccer Tennis*. You set up little mini nets. They actually use their feet to pass the ball to teammates on their own side and then they have to use their feet to pass it over the net. I guess it is really more like volleyball but with juggling skills in soccer.

*Friday, November 22*

3:30 p.m.      *[With the teaching day completed, Debbie returns to her notes and computer.]*

I am looking over my notes for the five lessons I planned yesterday. I have been thinking that I have an awful lot of information I want to cover and I do not think I will get to everything. Of course, I would rather over-plan than under-plan. I am going to go back through my notes and put it in outline form to assure that I am meeting all the same skills that I originally planned to cover. Then, I will type my lesson plans, or agenda, on the computer and work off of that. I typically transfer my brainstorming notes into a little more order and then save them on a disk to refer to later.

*Tuesday, January 28, 2003*

1:25 p.m.      *[During her planning time, Debbie is sitting at her desk looking over her plans for the next week.]*

I have not given thought to the kicking lessons since before the Christmas Holiday as we have had all kinds of things going on. I am sitting down trying to revamp some of my lessons. I

just got back from a conference at Jekyll Island and got a lot of good ideas and I want to try some of them in my kicking lessons. One thing I want to focus on the rest of the year is to get my students right into an activity. Instead of doing regular warm-up laps, that I think kids might get bored with, I am going to try a warm-up called *Pit Stop Run*. It is done in pairs and we will do it for about five minutes, stretch, and then get right into a review of dribbling, trapping, and controlling a soccer ball.

For lesson two I might double the length of laps they run in *Pit Stop Run* or add another warm-up that involves playing cards and directional cards of north, east, west, and south. I saw a presenter do a warm-up activity involving hula-hoops and I may try to implement that. I am also in the process of creating an assessment sheet or a skill task card that they can use with a partner. One person will dribble while the partner watches and has a card with a scoring rubric on it. They can do some check-off categories like “always,” “almost always,” “sometimes,” “almost never,” or “never.” They will look for things like, is the person controlling the ball, are they keeping it within a few feet of their body, and are they keeping their head up and things like that.

I plan to create something along these lines before Monday, but I am not sure when we will use it or how time consuming it will be. We will just have to see how things go. I am not a fan of kids spending a lot of time with pencils in their hands when they should be moving. So, that is where I am right now, I hope the weather will warm-up a little bit, and we will avoid rain. Those, of course, are things I worry about that I really have no control over.

*Wednesday, January 29*

*3:00 p.m. [With the last class completed, all equipment away for the day and the equipment for tomorrow already set-up, Debbie is making a few more changes to next week's lessons.]*

Laura and I have been working on Jump Rope for Heart with our students but my mind is on some things I am reconsidering for my kicking lessons. Looking at the weather forecast for next week, we may be inside. We will have to play that one by ear, as usual. Laura and I were talking about putting all three classes together and doing some kicking with all of them. We will have two different grade levels combined but everything should go fine.

There are a couple of things I want to add to my lessons. One is to let students dribble paper cups with their feet. It may be a slightly higher skilled activity because the cups do not travel in a straight line. This may be advantageous to the kids that want a challenge. I am still trying to figure out where I can place *Soccer Tennis* into a lesson; maybe lesson two or three.

*Monday, February 3, 2003*

*[As Debbie teaches Mr. Atchley's third grade class, she shares her thoughts, observations, and actions.]*

*11:00 a.m.*

*[It is a sunny February morning with temperatures in the forties and a light northerly wind. Most of the 21 third grade students remember there is always the possibility physical education class will be held outside and are prepared with coats, jackets, or sweaters. Debbie meets them in the hallway beside the gym and has them turn around facing the outside door. They walk out the door and follow the sidewalk adjacent to the gymnasium before descending the fifteen steps that lead to the playground.]*

*The children are visiting with each other and Debbie as they pass the playground. Three adults stand and talk as they supervise what appears to be about seventy or eighty first grade children. Many are climbing on the play structures while others are busy with a game of chase or in the midst of imaginary play. A small section of the four-foot chain fence surrounding the*

*playground and field area appears to serve as the outdoor coat rack as it is covered with the coats and jackets shed by some of the first graders. As Mr. Atchley's class turns the corner of the fence that begins the field area, many of them remove their coats and place them on the fence.]*

As we pass the first grade students, I am glad to see that the teachers have them outside. It is rumored they are trying to eliminate recess in Fairfield County and I think that is such a shame. Our principal has a rule that they cannot have recess the same day they have physical education. To be honest, I am not sure if it is her rule or the superintendent's. Either way, I think this is sad because kids need that unstructured playtime even if all they do is sit and play in the dirt. They need their time just as adults need a break. Besides, I know there is a lot of research out there about the benefits moving and creative play has to learning. Some of the teachers avoid recess on cold days so I am glad to see them out having a good time. It is worth the noise and distraction it sometimes causes when I am teaching out here. We deal with it because it is best for the kids.

I ask a student if anyone is absent as my quick way of checking attendance. I remind them if they chose to take off their jackets to lay them on the fence rather than sling them, something I seem to repeat every day. As I pull them in I ask them to stand next to a partner for our warm-up. I notice several are squinting so I move to the other side positioning myself toward the sun. Most of them quickly choose partners and I inform them that I appreciate how quickly they followed directions as I hand one of each twosome a scarf. One child, Abby stands alone. I place her with a couple making a group of three.

I try to keep the group close and focused. It is hard sometimes with the distractions from the playground. They are doing a good job though. I begin by telling them we have one large muddy spot left on the field and point to where it is asking them to avoid it. As I start explaining

the *Pit Stop Run* warm-up activity, I ask how many watch NASCAR and know what the pit area is used for. I am surprised at how many are so familiar with it and, though unsolicited, several are naming their favorite racecar drivers. Pointing to the cones I am using to mark the “track”, I explain the boundaries for running. I add that one partner is to wait in pit row for the other partner to run around the track and hand them the scarf. I remind them for safety to stay back in pit row so a “car” will not hit them. Two guys are talking so I give them a second to get quiet before I continue.

Letting them know that we will do this for three or four minutes, I add they should pace themselves and jog, not run. I give them the option to power walk as well. Knowing how kids love to race, I remind them it is not a race just practice to see how they do individually. I try not to make it competitive because I think they get enough of that. Rather than announce, “On your mark, get ready, get set, and go” which encourages them to race, I say, “Go when you are ready.” Abby starts running right down the middle of the field and I have to remind her to go around the cones. On her way around, she cuts back through the middle. Maybe I should have walked to each cone and pointed them out to the class, but she still would have been confused. Everyone else seems to understand my directions.

I try to encourage them to keep moving and as they look tired, I remind them they can power walk. I may have the track too big for this age group. Third graders typically want to run the whole time; I should have thought about that and made the track smaller. The kids waiting their turn in pit row are sneaking in closer and closer to the track. For safety, I remind them to step back. They are starting to wear down so I stop and ask them to come on in. I think I went a little longer than I meant to, but they seem to have enjoyed having a different warm-up.



Before stretching, we check our pulse rate and I ask them to open and close their hand the same speed they feel their heart beating. We talk a little about the pulse and use the carotid artery for a checkpoint in the lower grades. I do not really get into having them count until fourth grade. As we stretch and cool down, I ask them if our heartbeat will speed up or slow down. Several respond with, “slow down.” The last stretch we do is just up on our toes as high as we can reach. I notice and comment that their balance has really improved since the first of the year. I compliment them on how well they did with the warm-up and tell them we are ready to start with soccer dribbling.

We worked a couple of days on striking with the feet at the first of the year and, of course, in previous years. So, I ask them to share what they think we should focus on when dribbling. One of the girls responds, “We should keep it under control.” I react by asking, “How do we do that?” Someone else says, “By keeping it close to our body.” I use my hands to demonstrate a span of approximately three feet and ask if that is a good distance not to go beyond. They agree it is. I add the importance of keeping our head up so we can see where we are going.

I instruct them that once they choose a ball they are to dribble it to the far fence and back until they hear the whistle to stop. Instead of just allowing everyone to get a ball at the same time, I avoid collisions by calling them by birthday months. Sometimes I use color of shoes, hair length, or whatever pops in my head at the time. I do this because it creates a safe environment and it also teaches them patience and trust. They are starting to trust that there is a ball for everyone and I think trust has a lot to do with getting respect. Plus, they don’t push forward because they know they are all going to get a ball. It also makes them listen because they are unsure of what I am going to say next.

*11:11*

As the students dribble, I am walking among them observing their dribbling for control. I am trying to determine if they listened to the cues that we just talked about. Specifically, I am watching where the ball is in relation to their feet and trying to determine if they are kicking and looking up rather than watching the ball the entire time.

I do not like having my back to students and I am usually conscious of it. In this case, I feel walking in the middle will allow me the opportunity to turn and see all of them and because everyone has a ball, there should be no problems. I am not comfortable though so I work my way to the outside. I remind one little guy, and honestly I cannot think of his name, to keep his ball closer to his shoes and tell the same to Riddell as he passes me. Andrew is looking good with his control and I comment so. I share with another gal that I like the way she is looking up as she dribbles. I make a general announcement to those in earshot to remind them to try and push with the outside of their feet. I encourage them to try a little fancy footwork. Someone is squatting down on the ground and when I ask him what he is doing, he replies, "Cleaning my shoe." I think he found the muddy spot so, I take this opportunity to remind them to avoid the one muddy spot even though I pointed it out less than ten minutes ago.

Some are ready for a challenge so I encourage them to increase their speed. I keep looking at their faces to see if they are flushed and breathing too hard. Several are showing signs of fatigue and I realize I need to make some changes in the warm-up in the next four lessons because I think that is what tired them out. These are children that are not used to moving a lot and I need to consider those. I decide to stop and call them in to me. I feel good about what I am seeing most of them do with their dribbling. They do a good job of coming in and listening and I comment on how a few of them are really showing me they are ready to listen by placing the ball

between their feet. I try to compliment those doing what they are supposed to in hopes those that aren't will catch on and follow suit.

I want them to think about the cues again so I invite them to do a self-check in their head as I pose three questions, "Was the ball no more than three feet from your body? Were you practicing using both feet? Were you able to keep your eyes up and see where you were going?" I acknowledge that I saw most of them doing that but I did notice a few kicking the ball hard and then chasing it across the field. I follow with, "Would that work in a game?" A few respond, "No." I ask, "Why not?" and Steven volunteers, "Someone would steal it."

*11:16*

My next questions are about trapping and they seem to remember why we use trapping in soccer. One guy responds, "To stop the ball" and then Alexis says, "You trap it if someone is trying to steal the ball from you and then you go another direction." I am thinking she knows her soccer. I tell her that is a good answer and she is right. When I ask the class how many have heard of the game *Red Light/Green Light*, most say, "yes". I tell them there is a version for soccer where they dribble to the far fence and when they hear the whistle, it means red light and they are to trap the ball. On the next whistle, it means green light and they go again. Little Stacy asks, "What do we do on the yellow light?" I am laughing inside and hope the smile does not give it away as I tell her that we do not have a yellow light in this game. I asked them to spread out in their own space and I start the activity.

Again, I am looking for control with quick traps and I notice, while blowing the whistle every few seconds that they are doing well. I am conscious of staying on the perimeter and looking in at them so everyone is in sight. It gets a little more challenging as some have made it to the fence and are turning back. I remind them on the next "red light" to watch for others

because now we are traveling both directions. I suggest to a few that they need to slow down so they can quickly trap the ball. I watch for about a minute and say nothing. I wonder sometimes if I talk enough to the kids and give them enough compliments because I think kids need constant feedback and then other times I wonder if I should just be quiet for longer periods than I do. I try to be constructive with my feedback. I do make a lot of general statements that apply to everyone whether they are doing it or not. It will hopefully reinforce those that are doing it right and make those that aren't think about it. Sometimes I think I need to talk to more individuals. I guess this is just an example of critiquing myself.

*11:19*

I pull them back in and compliment them for a good job. I am looking for someone to help demonstrate and ask if anyone has ever played on a select soccer team. No one raises a hand so I choose Steven as I know he is high skilled and will help with this next task. I borrow Steven's ball and show them a pullback move that is used to change direction. I remind them that someone earlier said you use a trap to stop the ball and change direction and this was another way to do the same. Trying to relate it to a game situation, I ask Steven to come at me and try to take it. As he does, I do a pullback hoping they will understand how it is helpful in a game. I decide to let them try it where they are standing, as it is a new skill. With the exception of two boys, it looks as though they understand. As I walk over to help them, I send the others out in the field with directions to do a pullback and change directions every time they hear the whistle.

As I move around, blowing the whistle every few seconds, I am impressed at how well they are doing. This is the first class I have ever tried these higher skilled activities with. I guess I have never really had the time to take it to this level. There is no reason I should be doing the same thing with third graders that I do with first graders. As I walk around I notice and comment

to several that they are doing a good job. I let Steven know that I admire his fancy footwork. I ask the class as they dribble and I move, “Do you think this would work in a game?” I remind Joel to work on his control.

*11:23*

I bring them back in and introduce one more move used to avoid a defensive player. I use Steven again to help demonstrate. I ask them what they think we should call this move where we shift our bodies to the other side of the ball, shielding our opponent, as we go another direction. One child says shield and another says switch-a-roo. Several agree and like switch-a-roo. I am sure there is a technical name for the skill but they enjoy having the opportunity to name things. So, for today, it is a switch-a-roo.

The kids are really working hard and I think enjoying the challenges. One reason might be how often I am changing the activity. They are staying focused and do not appear bored. Sometimes I tend to let activities go too long. You can usually tell when it has gone on too long by their faces and their behavior. Some lessons are more conducive to quick task changes. When I do game-like activities, we obviously stay with it longer.

Again, when they hear the signal, they are doing a switch-a-roo before continuing their dribble. “Good, you are looking sharp. Make sure you turn all the way around and get behind the ball. Some of you might want to try it with your non-dominant foot.” Our next challenge is to attempt the pullbacks and switch-a-roos with the cones serving as stationary opponents. I explain to them that if they are successful we will be ready to use our skills against a real opponent. They are excited and think they are ready. To me this is a logical progression. The cones are scattered in one section of the field area and on signal they begin dribbling toward a cone and use one of the new skills to change directions. I encourage them to use their traps if the ball gets away from

them. Joel is moving awfully slow. I really struggle with motivating him. He and his buddy, Marco, hardly move. I think it is a situation where sometimes when they are by themselves they work harder than they do when the two of them get together. I do not think they are real active kids during their own time. I ask a kid what time the special [special area class time] ends and she tells me 11:40. I know that is terrible when we have been in school for over six months and I still forget what time each class ends [Laughs]. It is now 11:30, which is plenty of time for the last two activities.

For the next activity, I keep my promise and let them try and keep the ball from an opponent by using trapping, pullbacks, and switch-a-roos. Or, they have the option of continuing the same task if they do not feel ready for this challenge. Once they have a partner, I notice a few higher skilled have matched up with some not so skilled so I try to find a way to say if one person dominates, let the other person have a turn. I tell them if you are better skilled than your friend and the friend has not been able to get the ball from you for a while, then give your friend a chance to start with the ball. They seem to get the point. That reminds me that when I do the grid work in this series of lessons, I need to put the higher skilled together. I will try to put the ones like Steven, Bryan, and Alexis together so they can challenge each other.

There goes Joel and Marco again and actually they are trying to challenge each other but I encourage them to pick up the speed. That reminds me I need to make a note on Joel's behavior today. His teacher wants comments on how he is doing each day. I am going to walk over and do that now before I forget. *[From a little red wagon against the fence, Debbie picks up a clipboard with her class roll, extra paper for notes, and an index card where she has brief lesson plan notes. She makes her notation and then returns to the kids.]*

Watching these kids I realize there are a handful of children that have probably never been exposed to these skills and it is neat for me to see them doing the skills or at least trying them. It is times like this when I really wish I had more time with the kids and could learn more about them. And, I mean time in single classes, not double or triple. I might know better how to motivate them if I knew them better. Like Abby, for example, who gets confused often. She was the one that did not understand the boundaries in our warm-up activity today. She is a challenge to motivate and to help understand things. Now, she wants to know where the shade is. Of course, there is not a tree anywhere in the field area.

*11:35*

I call them in for our last activity and it is obvious they are tired since they sit in the grass to hear the directions. They have had quite a workout today. The last challenge is to dribble the ball through as many of the mini goals as they can in one minute. I ask them which is more important: speed or control. Bryan responds, "Both." I inform him that he is right, ask is one more important, and a few others say, "Control." I tell those that do not have a ball to get one and I give the signal to go. As they are dribbling, I encourage a few to use their pullbacks if they need to turn quickly. It has been about a minute so I stop and ask how many traveled through more than five goals. It appears all hands are up. I ask for more than ten and several hands go down.

I challenge them to repeat the task and try to beat their own score but joke with them that they have to start over at zero and they cannot count by two's or five's. As they dribble, I encourage a few to speed up a little. I admit, I cheat and stop it five seconds early with the hopes they will have the feeling that they did improve. They do not have to know I did that. I think they

did well with this, but next time I may decrease the size of the goals to make it more of a challenge. I think this distance was good for their skill level today.

As usual, I end class by having them put their equipment away, get their jackets, and line up. I let them know that I was real impressed with how hard they worked today and what a good job they did. I asked them why they think they improved on the last challenge and Jenny says, “Because we used control.” I share what we will do next class period as a way to whet their appetites and give them something to look forward to when they return. I tell them I have a check sheet I want them to use and watch a partner do the skills when we revisit dribbling. We are going to work on passing to targets, people, and then people moving. Steven asks, “Are we going to play a game?” I responded, “Yes, that is what we are working toward.”

In all actuality, we may start with something we finished with today. We may use a skill we worked on for the warm-up, or we might do *Pit Stop Run* again but I will move the cones closer. I really do not know yet as I still need to think it through based on how they did today. One thing I am noticing is that they are tired and had a good workout. There may be a few that struggle going up the steps as we return to class. They are all carrying their jackets instead of wearing them. I glance at my watch; it is 11:42 and I have run over a couple of minutes. One of the luxuries of having five minutes between classes is I am not keeping a class waiting because I went beyond the class time.

*[It is 4:00 in the afternoon and Debbie and I are sitting in her office watching the video of the class that followed Mr. Atchley's. As we observe Mrs. Lander's fourth grade class of 23 students, she compares the two lessons.]*



11:52

In the warm-up, I think I made it a little clearer this time on where the pit row area was and I even walked over and demonstrated where I wanted them to stand. I do not think I made it real clear to Mr. Atchley's class. This class did much better about staying in what we deemed "pit row" and it made me feel better safety wise. I started the fourth grade off with one lap just as I did the third grade but, after I felt they had the concept, I increased it to two laps. I felt two laps would help them build endurance even though I did give them the option to power walk if they needed to. I expect more out of my fourth and fifth graders physically. They know we have a fitness test at the end of the year and we are trying to help them build their endurance. They also understand the concept of building endurance and pacing themselves at this age.

None of the kids in pit row complained about waiting too long so it was probably the right amount of time for them to rest. In fact, when I picked the class up their teacher told me they were real talkative today and I noticed it coming down the steps. However, after a few turns, I thought they were unusually quiet while waiting in pit row. I assume it was because they were getting tired. I watched their faces to judge because I knew they would need quite a bit of energy to complete the rest of the class. When I stopped the warm-up, I decided at that moment to skip the stretching and move right into our skill work. The only reason was that I wanted more time on the skills. I guess I should have had them stretch. I had them actually count their heart rate for six seconds and then put a zero on the end. We discussed their results and compared them to a healthy fitness zone.

11:58

They were able to share the cues learned from previous experiences with kicking. With the last class, I stretched my arms out demonstrating the greatest distance their ball should be

from them when dribbling, but with this class, I asked them to spread their arms as wide as possible in hopes they could better understand the distance. They obviously could as they dribbled to the fence and back with excellent control. In fact, their skills were so good that I decided to skip the *Red Light/Green Light* trapping activity and move right into the pullbacks and switch-a-roos. I think some of them were amazed that they were able to do these things since we have never done them before. I did throw in one more skill that was not planned when one of the higher skilled girls showed me a move she learned in soccer practice. I demonstrated it to them but do not think I did a real good job of explaining it. It was a tough one to explain. A few of them got it even though we just tried it right in our own space for a few seconds. It was something I wanted to let them try since she suggested it but I did not expect them to master it. When possible, I allow them to share ideas and I do have to admit that I have learned from them.

*12:10*

We practiced the pullbacks and switch-a-roos using the cones as opponents for only about a minute. They were doing such a good job I wanted them to have more time with the challenge of a real opponent in a more game like situation. In order to create a challenge that the fourth grade needed, we played a keep-a-way type game with half the class trying to maintain possession of their ball while the others tried to steal the balls.

As I pulled the class in, I was not sure how I was going to divide them. A quick glance indicated that the class was pretty much half boys and half girls so that seemed the most efficient way to divide them for our next activity. The girls started with the balls and the boys were told to try and steal it from them. I included a rule that if you could successfully do a switch-a-roo or pullback and change directions away from your opponent then the opponent had to leave you and go chase someone else. If a defensive player successfully took a ball, they were to kick it back

and then go after another person. It actually went a lot better than anticipated. I did have to participate some when I saw a few standing around unchallenged. Our space was a little more limited since Laura had her class on the other half of the field. She had two classes out and actually both her group and mine did a good job of staying in their area and focused.

*12:17*

At the completion of this activity, I pulled them in and asked about the strategy they used to be successful. Part of our curriculum in Fairfield County is that in grades four and five we are to bring in strategy and see if the students can combine the rules, the skills, and cooperation in order to be successful in game-like situations. That is why you see me include game situations more in fourth grade than in third. My goals in this lesson were to try and get them to the point they can play the game and use some different footwork, strategy, and passing.

The next task I changed only by decreasing the width of the goals. I informed them they were doing too good for goals that were four feet wide. I showed them how I wanted them to change the goals to about two feet by demonstrating with one set. They quickly changed the other fourteen sets and we did the time dribble through the cones two times. I looked up at Laura and since she was not lining up yet I thought I will take time to do one more thing. I was ahead of schedule and knew if I could go over the directions quickly, they could spend a couple of minutes on one last activity. I felt like they were where they needed to be at the end of this lesson and the next challenge would be to use one of the evasive moves they had learned to turn and pass the ball. This would lead right into the next lesson. They were getting tired and this would not be as active as the previous tasks. They have had a great workout and I wish I could give this to them every class.

12:24

I quickly get Chris, a highly skilled soccer player to help me and ask everyone else to get a partner. Chris and I started about 10 feet apart and I turned and dribbled away from him, did a pullback and then passed the ball to him. As I performed the skill I verbalized dribble, touch, touch, touch, pullback, turn, and pass. I asked Chris to repeat the task and pass it back to me. Just to make sure they understood the key words I had them verbalize dribble, touch, touch, touch, pullback, turn and pass.

I had fun doing this lesson today and I was actually looking forward to it. I love doing these kinds of things with them. In fact, I want to get in some juggling for the higher skilled ones. There was a lot of stopping and starting in the lesson. They had a good workout and that kind of workout is good for kids. They need more of it.

*[We turn off the videotape and Debbie chooses to continue reflecting.]*

4:58 p.m.

After watching the video, I admit I was not looking at many individuals. I was looking more at the general picture. If I could do this lesson over, I would try to focus more on each child. I do think it is important to recognize all of them and try to use their names as much as possible. Typically, I see Atchley's class twice in eight days and Lander's only once. I am surprised I remember the names I do. I definitely knew Chris's name. It is usually the higher skilled ones and the real low skilled ones I know. I hate not knowing the average child. That just kills me and I know I would if I could see them more and in single classes.

*[Following her last class of today and prior to watching the videotaped lessons Debbie had her own reflection time.]*

2:55 *p.m.*

I thought everything went fairly well today and according to plan. I got everything done I had originally planned to do and was able to do a few extra things. I think that was due in large part to the kids just doing a good job listening. I was able to stay focused on what I was doing and did not get sidetracked, which I have a tendency to do. I felt I was able to progress through everything quickly. The warm-up I chose to do was new and not having done that before the kids were fairly winded; that was a good thing. However, it took longer than I had expected so I had to modify the length of time that all of my other activities lasted. It worked out fine though.

The kids were exposed to a lot of different things and I felt good about that. One thing I had on my mind the whole time was there were a few individuals that just weren't as highly skilled, which obviously you have in every class. I was trying to think of how I could get them a little more motivated. Maybe it had a lot to do with how tired they were and that they do not have the same endurance as some of the other kids. Or maybe they just have a lack of interest in kicking and that is fine. I have to understand that not everyone loves kicking and soccer. Other than that, I felt the lessons went fine. I pretty much did what I needed and wanted to do, and prepared them for the next lesson.

*Thursday, February 6*

7:00 *a.m.*      *[Debbie is sitting at her desk looking over her lesson plans.]*

I am thinking about some changes for my second lesson for the third grade. I will probably begin with *Pit Stop Run* again but I might make it two laps with the square a little smaller. I think the kids enjoyed doing that but we may have done it a little bit too long. I do not want to use all of their energy. After stretching a little bit I am going to start by dribbling away from a partner and doing as I finished their first lesson working on pullbacks and making quick

passes to their partner. I will then have them dribble with something more challenging like plastic cups. I saw someone doing that in a session at Jekyll Island a couple of weeks ago. Next, I will do *Dot Stops* requiring them to work on control. There is an activity I will try called *Sharks and Minnows* that should be challenging for them. Then, I will see what kind of changes I have to make for the fourth grade.

7:45 a.m.      *[Standing by her desk, Debbie shares a recent conversation with Laura while glancing at Monday's plans.]*

I just talked to Laura and depending on what the weather is going to do for lesson two, we may have to be inside. We will keep the classes separate and pull the curtain in the gym. I will continue working with just the one class on my half of the gym. I should be able to do everything I would have done outside but with less space. We will just have to wait and see what the weather is going to do on Monday.

*[The weather, in fact, did force Debbie and Laura to share the gym for lesson two on Monday. Debbie, however, did not have to make many changes in her plans other than how to adjust to the limited space. She did substitute one activity for another but that was a practice not uncommon throughout the series of lessons.]*

### Researcher Interpretations

This section will introduce further interpretations of the processes for which Debbie Peterson plans, makes in-action decisions, and reflects on her teaching practices. Additional data and analysis, in conjunction with evidence presented in the data story will be used to answer the questions of when, where, how, and why Debbie made the decisions she did. As with the previous case studies, the areas of planning, in-class decisions, and reflections will be discussed

in isolation. Literature, when relevant to the discussion of Debbie's case will be used to substantiate the findings.

### *Planning*

The planning Debbie used throughout this study provided evidence that many of her decisions were made prior to teaching. Her initial planning occurred almost three months prior to the actual teaching of the lessons and took place sporadically over a two-day period. She used her scheduled planning time, an actual class time while her teaching partner taught her class, lunch period, and after the last class of the day to organize her plans. In general, her planning goals focused on how best to teach the skills and concepts that would lead to quality small-group game play. She built a skill progression for each individual lesson and then a progression across the five lessons. From lesson to lesson the progression began by focusing on individual control, shifting to partner work, and ending with small-group game-like activities.

Debbie's planning process was as internally motivating as it was for teachers in a study by McCutcheon (1980). She was driven by her passion for the importance of learning in physical education and her need to be organized. She shared her reasons for planning, "I plan because I want to be organized. I want to know that I can move through things progressively. It is a subject area that I feel strongly about. It is not just a free time or play time." Her preparation for lessons encompassed more than the skill progression, "I also have to plan for safety and for different ability levels." She also took into account both short and long term planning, "I plan in order to make sure I cover what the kids need to know before moving on to the next lesson and I even think about what they need in order to move on to the next grade." Previous research in planning found that teachers' plans influence future deliberations (Clark & Elmore, 1981; Smith & Sendlebach, 1979).

In this study, Debbie continually altered her plans up to and during her teaching. The initial changes were mainly because of a professional conference she attended the previous week where she gleaned a few new ideas. Though not put in writing until after the lessons were taught, she continued to make changes prior to and during her lessons that veered from her original plans.

#### *When and Where Debbie Plans*

The majority of Debbie's planning occurred in her school office before the students arrived, during her assigned planning time (two 45-minute periods per week), during lunch, and following her last class. She gives credit to her organizational abilities that aid her in efficient time use, "Because Laura and I are so organized, we get a lot done during the day. We both like to get to school early and we often work right through lunch." Her desire to leave work at school motivates her to accomplish this task, "I am trying to do more of my planning at school. I try not to take as much home for various reasons. Plus, I am more focused here [at school]." Debbie admits that despite her efforts, planning thoughts do occur away from school. She shares how she occasionally has thoughts in the middle of the night, "There have been times when I wake up and think about something. I keep a notepad by my bed and I have been known to write down an idea or a game that came to me on a whim."

Planning, according to Debbie, is non-stop and goes beyond what is written down or even thought about in advance. "I consider setting up equipment as planning. I am thinking, 'Do I need to move these mats because my first class is kindergarten?' or 'How many cones do I take outside?' This type of planning is constant." These actions mirror those of teachers in a study by McCutcheon (1980) wherein mental dialogues were used in anticipating needs and potential problems.



Debbie's initial planning is a structured process that generally requires a few hours of reflection and searching for new ideas. Her plans, however, are altered several times following the initial planning process and are not actually complete until the lesson is taught. Debbie admitted it was typical for her to make last minute decisions and changes. On occasion, due to sharing the teaching facilities with another teacher, the decisions are controlled by the weather. She shares other variables that promote last minute planning decisions, "I changed my warm-up today and it [the decision] was simply based on I wanted to do something different." Other times the decisions were made right before class as a different idea was formulated at the last minute or during class based on the actions of the students.

In summary, planning was ongoing with Debbie. Although she took advantage of long planning periods at school to do her formal planning, there were moments throughout the day including while actually teaching, that she altered her plans. Typically, these changes were not written until after the lesson was taught. The plan changes were a part of her mental planning and her desire to provide her students with the best learning experience she could.

### *How Debbie Plans*

Debbie's planning process for teaching skill themes began with listing the skills, concepts, and strategies she deemed necessary to teach that particular theme. She then added skill practice activities and small group games that she had used in the past to accomplish these. Then, as she put it, "I draw in the new stuff." In addition to her own experience teaching the same content, Debbie mentioned several knowledge sources for finding new material or for refreshing her memory of previously used activities. These sources included ideas from recurring dialogue with her teaching partner Laura, the PECentral website, books and journals, conference proceedings, and her own sport experiences. During the course of the study, she changed or made additions

the week before teaching the lessons based solely on activities and warm-up ideas she gained while attending the Share the Wealth Conference at Jekyll Island the previous weekend. The resource she used most often, however, appeared to be her own playing experience and knowledge of sport. She explained,

A lot of it for me is just thinking about what it takes to do the skill. I have enough knowledge having played sports for such a long time. I may not be an expert on any one thing but I know an average amount of information about a lot of sports. I would rather be that way as a teacher...especially when it comes to planning... than to know everything about just one sport. I feel well rounded by knowing a little bit about a lot of different things...And, at the elementary level where you just need to teach the basics, I can take my personal playing experience and break down the skills I learned when I played the sports.

After completing her brainstorm session and search for new ideas, Debbie handwrote her plans. They consisted simply of a list of skills and activities in a daily format (see Appendix G). Each lesson started with a warm-up activity and then followed with the remainder of the skills and activities to be taught each day. It was evident she was building a progression within each lesson and from lesson to lesson. The second lesson, for example, began with a review of skills learned in the previous lesson. Included in the plans were notations of instructional and observational cues. Occasionally, there was evidence of how she integrated aspects of the academic curriculum. Her lesson writing practices were similar to experienced math teachers in a study by Livingston and Borko (1989) wherein they typically included sequencing of lesson components and content while none prepared formal written lesson plans.

Debbie later typed these plans in the same informal format (see Appendix G) and saved them on her computer. Debbie's form of written plans met her needs despite the lack of fine details. While it was evident first in her think-aloud planning and later in her teaching that she had set goals and objectives she wanted to achieve in each lesson and in the series of lessons, there was no evidence of written objectives in her plans. This finding adds to the controversial

literature of whether there is evidence supporting how much time, or even if teachers devote time, to objectives in planning (Goc-Karp & Zakrajsek, 1987; Housner & Griffey, 1983; Peterson, Marx, and Clark, 1978; Placek, 1984; Sardo, 1982; Stroot & Morton, 1989; Twardy & Yerg, 1987).

As identified by McCutcheon (1980) experienced teachers use a great deal of mental planning and Debbie was no exception to this. Throughout the study she verbalized in her think-aloud and in casual conversation evidence of (a) her lesson focus, (b) equipment needs, (c) organization of the activities, (d) individual skill differences, (e) use of demonstrations, (f) challenging students through the psychomotor, cognitive, and affective domains, (g) bringing in other areas of the curriculum, (h) learning cues to accompany the skills, (i) providing many opportunities for success, (j) concern over amount of activity time, (k) consideration to safety, and (l) providing the opportunity for enjoyment. Additionally, she would have to adapt the lesson based on single classes versus double classes for, as she put it, “You can do a ton more with a single class than you can with a double.” This supports Morine-Dersheimer’s (1979) findings that all aspects of planning are seldom fully represented in teachers’ written plans.

Debbie’s next dictation of plans was to categorize the content (example: striking with feet/dribbling) and place it on her eight-day calendar. The calendar served as a teaching schedule depicting when each lesson would occur in the rotation. Then, prior to teaching the lesson, she wrote brief notes on an index card or on the back of her roll sheet. She explained why, “I don’t remember everything so I will use a little cheat sheet from time to time just to remember rules of games or the order of things. The older I get the more notes I write to myself”. Her final written plans transpired only after the lesson had been taught, when she handwrote any changes or

additions that came about prior to or during the teaching of the lesson. She then saved the document as a reference for future teaching (see Appendix G).

As Debbie gave thought to her early years of teaching, she recalled that detailed, formal, written lesson plans were a part of her life. She appeared to flashback to the days of taking several books home and spending hours planning. While she agreed that formal plans have their place in the early teaching years, she expressed that once you gain experience the detail involved in that type of planning is only necessary if required by an administrator and to leave for substitutes. Her views on when there is a need for formal, written lesson plans match those of experienced teachers in three studies (McCutcheon, 1980; Neale, Pace, & Case, 1983; Sardo, 1982). She was confident in her planning techniques and how they worked for her. She stated,

If I had to [write detailed lessons], I would do it. It would take a lot of time. The way I plan now I do not think I am slighting my students, my program, or myself at all...I just feel more confident now and I have more knowledge...if anybody came in here I would still know what I am going to do tomorrow whether it is in my head or written down.

Debbie gave credit to years of teaching experience as to why her planning can be informal and efficient. She used the following analogy to express these thoughts,

I think it is like anything you do repeatedly. For example the more ceiling fans I install, then the less I have to read the directions...I can now put a ceiling fan up and not have to second guess what bolt goes where because I have done it so many times. Teaching, in a sense, can be the same. The more I teach the different activities the less I have to recall, plan, or think about. You just automatically know...it is just experience and time...it is one of the advantages of having taught awhile.

There was, however, an index card with a bulleted list of her plans available for reference on Debbie's clipboard. She referenced what she called her "cheat sheets" only a couple of times during the entire time of this study. It appeared to be there only for security or for those rare moments she needed to be reminded where the "bolt" went.

In a case study by Borko et al., (1986) the teacher in question planned for the year, the unit, the week and the day. A similar case study by Yinger (1980) identified the same types of plans with the addition of a term plan. As evidenced above for each specific lesson, Debbie begins with a theme (or unit) plan, an eight-day rotation plan (analogous to weekly), and then narrows it down to her daily lesson plans. However, prior to developing a theme or unit, she and Laura started the school year by mapping out a yearly plan. Part of this process included referencing the Fairfield County Academic Knowledge Sources (AKS) to aid in goal setting. She shared how she uses the AKS, “I look at them for yearly planning and then refresh my memory on occasion. I might, for example, reference what does a second grader need to know when it comes to striking before they move on to third grade.” While admitting it is subject to change, the yearly plan has proven a helpful resource and guide for them. Just as was evident in the description of her planning, there is a progression depicting the scope and sequence they intend to use for the year. Debbie describes the process,

I think about the whole PE curriculum. I look at all the skills that I think are important and begin with those they will need the whole year. For example, at the first of the year we typically do a lot of communication and cooperative things and then try to keep that going all year. I also incorporate fitness right away. I move on with different skills starting with individual tasks. Then, I progress to partner activities such as can they strike the ball back and forth. Finally, closer to the end of the year we do more group games involving strategy. We do not stick with the same skill for very long but we do revisit it a couple of times in the year.

The summary of how Debbie planned began in August with a sketch of the curriculum to be covered in the upcoming school year. Referencing the yearly plan, she progressed through the year as she constructed her theme or unit plans. Next, she organized the theme into an eight-day rotation plan resulting in three daily lesson plans. Her written plans concluded with a reminder note card that bulleted the tasks, activities, and cues for each lesson. Her written plans may appear sketchy to some, yet they met Debbie’s needs. Despite her simplistic written format,

Debbie gave a lot of thought to her lessons. Initially she brainstormed ideas. Next, she referenced other knowledge sources. Then, she built a progression of tasks and listed the presentation order. Debbie made good use of mental planning in that she consistently planned aspects of her lessons that never touched paper. The planning of her lessons appeared to be a continuous and spontaneous process. She made constant changes before and during the teaching of the lesson as she searched for the best way to reach her students' needs.

### *In-class Decisions*

Debbie made several in-class decisions and often deviated from her written plans. These changes were designed to better the lesson or as she put it, "The general picture is still there...I change because I want every lesson to be perfect and I have to believe those last second changes make the lesson better." Research on teacher cognition confirms that planning occurs at spontaneous times and is not always in written context (Borko & Livingston, 1989; Kneer, 1986, McCutcheon, 1980; Morine-Dersheimer, 1979; Placek, 1984). Debbie's spontaneity was ongoing and it was evident she was comfortable making decisions on her feet. Every lesson I observed provided evidence that Debbie's decisions made in action were different from her previously written plans. She made several changes during the instructional time, but they were always congruent with her original objective. The first observation as described by Debbie in *Searching for the Perfect Lesson*, however, vastly diverted from her written plans. Debbie responded to the changes,

I had some ideas and, honestly, it was just thinking on my feet. I remember saying to myself, 'Why have I not thought about that before now? I play soccer and I have seen people do this [the pull-backs and switch-a-roos]. Why shouldn't I teach it to these kids?' It [the idea for the addition] just popped into my head or I saw a child do one and thought, 'I am going to have everybody do that.'

As mentioned earlier she believed these changes were to make the lesson better and in turn, the experiences for the children better. Debbie explained why these decisions are occasionally made,

I have to make modifications sometimes as soon as I see the kids start moving...it is often me reacting to their reaction of whatever my directions were. It could be because I do not know how quickly they will catch on or if they are going to get bored with it. I have to look for safety issues...I watch their fatigue level. Maybe I have over-challenged them and need to go back or I need to challenge them more. Maybe I simply come up with a better idea. There are truly several reasons for making decisions on my feet.

Many of the in-class decisions in her data story were managerial and aided in the flow of the lesson or were reactionary to the situation. She shared the following decisions during the stimulated recall interview: (a) the point where she relocated due to the sun in the students' eyes; (b) the thought to practice the skill in place before spreading out; (c) the decision to go boys against girls as she had not previously planned to do this activity and therefore, had no plan for grouping; (d) the time she made use of a suggestion by a student and allowed all to attempt the new skill; (e) when she decided to participate based on several students standing around in the take-away game; (f) the decision to forego stretching in the second class to allow more time for skill work; and, (g) the need to provide an additional activity into the fourth grade because there was still time remaining when the "planned" lesson was complete.

Another example of changing her mind or arriving at a different decision came in the days between lessons. At the end of each class she spent a few minutes sharing with the students what they would be doing the next class meeting. However, when the next lesson occurred rarely would it involve the activities of which she had previously informed the students. She commented later that this was not unusual for her and that occasionally the students questioned her on it. She confessed that between the two lessons she would give the progression more thought and therefore, surmise a better way to present the material.

The way Debbie taught the third grade class, compared to the fourth, differed. However, none of these decisions was evidenced in her written plans. She did verbalize in her planning think-aloud that she would use the first task as an assessment of where to go with each class. An initial change did occur based on her observation of the fourth grade students' successful dribbling in the first task. Due to their success, she decided to relinquish the next two activities used in the previous class. This concern with making in-class decisions to facilitate motor skill acquisition parallels the practices of the experienced teachers in previous research (Graham, et al, 1993; Griffey & Housner, 1991; Housner & Griffey, 1985). Other changes she made were subtle such as the distance of the goals or the amount of laps on the warm-up. She chose to challenge the fourth grade students more with questioning and provided them opportunities to draw from previous experiences, a teaching strategy used by many experienced teachers (Chen & Rovegno, 2000). She placed more emphasis on fitness by reasoning that they could cognitively understand it and they were anticipating a second fitness test the following month. The third grade did not participate in the biannual fitness tests. There was no evidence of grade level changes in her written plans or think-aloud recordings.

When Debbie observed the students, her focus was on the skill cues she had initially discussed with them. Her feedback and assessment matched these cues as well. Most of Debbie's comments were general to the class while only a few individuals received specific feedback. She was concerned that her inability to know all of the students' names inhibited her desire to call each by name. She gives blame on this issue to how infrequently she sees the classes and how they often attend physical education with another class. She shared her desires for this to change to a better teaching schedule in the future.



Though not written, during the think-aloud protocol, Debbie did verbalize how long she anticipated staying on certain tasks. The initial tasks and extensions were typically practiced for less than two minutes each, with more time allotted on application tasks involving partners or small groups. Her decisions about when to change tasks were primarily based on student success. She shared, “I felt they had the skill level for what I was doing so I was able to progress quickly through some tasks.” In her reflection following the first observation, she commented that the success of the lesson partially was a result of her changing activities often, therefore preventing boredom and encouraging the students to stay focused. She admitted that this lesson, unlike others, was conducive to quick task changes. Her response in answering the research question of “how often are tasks changed” is that it varies from class to class and with the content of the lesson.

Debbie’s in-class decisions that diverted from her plans were based on the response of students, safety, the need to provide challenges, the observed success of students, the timing of the lesson, and new ideas she conceived while teaching the lesson. Experienced teachers are typically comfortable making occasional lesson changes based on student understanding and performance (Borko & Livingston, 1989; Graham, et al., 1993; Griffey & Housner, 1991; Housner & Griffey, 1985; Leinhardt & Greeno, 1986). Debbie’s quantity of in-action changes from her plans exceeded the term occasional, however. She appeared confident in her knowledge of content and students to modify her plans and make decisions in action. It was as if she followed her intuition as opposed to her original plans. According to Cole (1988), experienced teachers seem to “receive clues” to change tasks or strategies as some teachers seem to “just know” when something is not working or does or does not feel right. In Debbie’s case these

clues were often thoughts of her own playing experiences that she had not previously considered using with her students. It just “came to her” while she was teaching.

According to Allison and Pissanos (1994), teachers interpret classroom events and make decisions based on perceived input and experiences, and these decisions guide their teaching. In order for a teacher to be successful and confident at making spur-of-the-moment decisions or improvising, the teacher must have an extensive network of interconnected, easily assessable schemata. Additionally, he or she must have the ability to select particular strategies, routines, and information from these schemata during actual teaching (Borko & Livingston, 1989).

Debbie’s knowledge of subject matter, knowledge of students’ abilities, as well as her ability to generate and select alternative activities or strategies appeared to provide her the confidence to make changes and veer from her plans on a regular basis. Experienced teachers in the study by Griffey and Housner (1991) sporadically exhibited these same practices.

### *Reflection*

Reflection for Debbie occurred during class and at the end of her teaching day. During this study, as with the other two participants, she was asked to record her reflections prior to our viewing the videotaped lessons. The purpose of this was to prevent the viewing of the tape from affecting the lesson reflection. In an interview prior to my observations, she revealed that she typically reflects in her car on the way home. The protocol of the study itself, therefore, eliminated her routine. When we discussed it in a follow-up interview, she commented, “I had not thought about it until you asked. I guess it is because I did it [reflected] on the tape recorder immediately when the day was done, so I did not do it in my car.”

Initially Debbie’s reflections provided an opportunity for self-critique. In comparison to previous research on reflective practices, this is a practice more typical of novice or immediate

teachers (Allen & Casbergue, 1997; Livingston & Borko, 1989). In the data story, most of her reflections began with such phrases as: (a) I should have, (b) I think I, (c) I am not, (d) I need to, (e) I wonder if I, (f) I try to, (h) I guess I, (i) I tend to, and (j) I was not. As the study continued, her reflections became more like that of most experienced teachers (Allen & Casbergue, 1997; Livingston & Borko, 1989) in that she was more student-focused and referred back to her plans and objectives.

As evidenced by the many changes that Debbie made in class, she used reflection in-action (Schon, 1983, 1987). Additionally, she took observations about one class and connected them to planning for future classes as is common in experienced teachers (Graham, et al., 1993). She commented on this, “A lot of times it is not just reflection but it is in combination with planning.” Her perception supports Yinger’s (1977) cyclic model of teaching. She often referenced previous teaching and her own sports experience in her planning, a practice that is promoted by reflection (Sebren, 1995).

Debbie did not consider herself a very reflective teacher. She revealed in our final interview that she had been more reflective than normal due to the protocol of this project. According to Bolt (1996), Gore (1990), and Rovegno (1992) some individuals are more inclined than others to be reflective. It is also believed that some skills for reflection can be taught and therefore, encouraged (Allen & Casbergue, 1997; Byra, 1996; Tsangaridou & O’Sullivan, 1994). If, in fact, the research and Debbie are representative, then the participation in this project itself might have aided Debbie in becoming a more reflective teacher. Of course, her ability to verbalize her reflections might lead one to believe that she may have a different understanding of the meaning of reflection. Therefore, if we heed the definition giving by Kruse (1997) wherein

he defines reflection as meaning simply a dialectic process of thought and action, then Debbie's self-critique is inaccurate. For she, in fact, appeared to be a very reflective teacher.

### *Summary*

During the span of time I spent with Debbie it was evident she was passionate about her program and a true advocate for physical education in the schools. Her decision-making practices of how to best meet her teaching goals were ongoing as she diligently searched for the "best" way to present the curriculum. She made use of many knowledge sources to aid the search. The primary resource she used was her own sport experiences, as she often referenced those past and recent episodes. Debbie believed her own knowledge of and experiences in sport helped her to be a better teacher.

Her planning practice began as an extended, structured affair but was followed by sporadic moments wherein she would rethink her plans. This resulted in her making several changes prior to and during her teaching. Her plans were never "set in stone" and she frequently made subject-matter decisions while teaching. Based on my observations, her knowledge of content was one of the main reasons she was comfortable making so many in-class decisions, and therefore did not have a need for detailed plans. In fact, there were times when I questioned if the amount of initial planning she did was typical or if the study itself forced her to plan and reflect more. She alluded to this in a follow-up interview confirming my suspicion.

Her reflective practices during and after a lesson varied. Initially her focus was more a self-analysis. Debbie once said, "I can be my worst enemy or my best friend" and that was evident in her youth and adult sports participation as well as in her teaching. Later, the focal point became assessing for student understanding and attainment of learner objectives. With the

completion of the lessons, she appeared confident that she and the students had accomplished her original goals.

## CHAPTER 7

### INTERPRETATIONS AND DISCUSSION

This study was undertaken to identify the content development decision-making of three elementary physical education teachers. It was a quest to discover how often tasks or learning experiences were changed in a typical lesson as well as what informed the decisions of when, why and to what extent tasks are changed. In addition, how and when Jake, Peg, and Debbie made these decisions were investigated. This final chapter begins with a summary of the interpretations in response to these research questions. The literature on teacher decision-making that framed the study focused primarily on planning and teaching, and in a few studies, reflective practices. In reviewing the three cases, it was obvious that the data went beyond the questions and the related literature. Therefore, after responding to the research questions, I will identify the commonalities and differences, relate the interpretations to the literature, and make recommendations regarding teaching practices.

Prior to comparing the three case studies, I would be remiss not to first convey the individuality of the three teachers. For the case studies do, in fact, depict three different and unique elementary physical educators. They have lived and are living differing lives both in school and out. Each brings to the gymnasium unique experiences, beliefs, values, and passions that contribute to their individuality as teachers. Though all teach kindergarten through grade five, the environments and conditions in which they teach vary.

### Response to the Research Questions

The first question, *what informs the decision of when, why, and how often a task is changed*, was primarily answered by each individual's pedagogical content knowledge. As was evident in the data stories, most of these decisions were made in planning based on perceived needs of the students and in anticipation of student responses. The amount of time that would be spent on a task was not documented or mentioned in the planning process by the teachers. This decision was made during teaching as they all seemed to just have a "feel" for when to change or they based their decisions on observed student responses. The decision to change a task occurred because the teacher deemed it was time to move on, whether due to time limitations or simply because the students were ready for an extension or application of the task.

The next answer to the question of *what informs the decision of what to change a task to* primarily came from the teacher's content knowledge. All of these decisions for Jake and Peg and most for Debbie were made in planning. These thoughts began for each teacher by reflecting on experiences of teaching the same or similar content and then were supported by additional resources such as books, journals, other teachers, own playing experience, and conference proceedings. The next step was to build the content by sequencing the tasks from simple to complex within a lesson and to continue the progression from one lesson to another. Peg and Jake then returned their focus to the review of the upcoming lesson and continued this practice after each lesson was taught. They appeared confident in their detailed planning thoughts and little, if any, change occurred while teaching. Debbie's decisions of to what to change a task, however, continued into her teaching as she observed the students. When she made a decision to change a task, it was made "on the spot" and based primarily on a reflection to her playing

experiences. At that juncture, she formulated what she deemed better tasks than were previously planned. Therefore, several of her decisions were made in-action.

A final element that informed the decision-making of these three unique individuals was the workplace constraints. While the typical teaching environment of physical education is complex (Behets, 1996), all three participants experienced constraints that further complicated the teaching environment, their content developing decisions and, therefore, the quality of their teaching. These constraints were in some cases consistent among all three teachers and in others isolated, consisted of the safety of the teaching facilities, lack of equipment, overcrowded classes, lack of time with students (30-45 days a year), and inadequate scheduling practices by administrators. While these constraints affected the decision-making of each teacher differently, the common theme was that each teacher made every attempt to persevere and provide the best learning experiences they could in spite of the conditions.

The answer to the final question, *how and when these decisions were made*, was found during planning, teaching, and reflecting. Each teacher began the process by making decisions about what to teach and what their goals were for the series of lessons. Next, they reflected on experiences of how they were going to best conduct the teacher-learning process. All teachers valued planning as a necessary process and each had a unique routine. For all three, part of the planning process included ongoing mental dialogues. In planning as in teaching, all three had obvious objectives for the lesson and included refinement cues for observation and assessment. While teaching, each individual had some form of quick lesson reference that included a bulleted list of tasks. During the act of teaching, all three participants were student-focused first and then content-focused.



Reflection appeared to be never ending, as each teacher spoke of reflection not simply being a post-teaching exercise but that it was part of their planning and teaching thoughts. They spoke of reflecting on (a) past teaching and playing experiences to aid the planning process, (b) what was actually happening in class to determine if it warranted a change at that moment or for the next class taught the same lesson, (c) what was happening in a class and how that would alter their tentative plans for the next lesson to the same class, and (d) after teaching they reflected about how the teacher-learning process transpired in regard to meeting their objectives. In essence, content development decision-making for Jake, Peg, and Debbie was an ongoing process that eliminated any perceived boundaries between planning, teaching, and reflecting.

In reviewing the three cases, data interpretation went beyond the research questions to reveal additional insight into teacher decision-making. Without losing the individuality of Jake, Peg, and Debbie, I will discuss the common decision-making themes that emerged as shared patterns of planning, teaching, and reflecting. In focusing on the consistencies, I have not overlooked the differences that exist among the three teachers for they too have significant implications for teacher education and inservice teachers.

### Commonalities

Despite the uniqueness of the individuals and the varying teaching environments, there were more similarities than differences when it came to making decisions about content development in planning. In the actual teaching of the lesson, more differences than commonalties manifested as the individual teachers interacted with the content and the students. All three teachers were reflective prior to, during, and after their teaching. These reflections were used to make changes or bring new ideas to the next lesson or, on occasion, to the same lesson. Their reflective practices were ongoing and became a part of their planning process.

*Planning Decisions*

All three teachers were adamant that planning was important to quality teaching and that some form of planning routine is a practice needed by teachers regardless of experience level. They each expressed that they always have goals and objectives for their teaching and they have a need to be organized in their thoughts of how to reach these goals and objectives. Most of the planning was done in a set planning period during the school day as well as “on and off the clock” time before and after school. All three began the unit or theme with an initial long period of planning followed by several short increments to revisit and make adjustments. Each had a routine planning process although they were unique to the individual.

Though most of the planning process was typically done at school, all three testified that thoughts appeared in their head at sporadic and odd times. Each admitted being awakened at night unable to return to sleep until the question or idea was resolved. Ongoing mental dialogues of planning existed for all three teachers with most of these thoughts never reaching paper. These thoughts on any given day might have included use of potential and appropriate equipment, different student’s needs, different class needs, use of space, classroom management, task transitions, maximum participation for students, the range of skills to accommodate, anticipated problems, and time efficiency.

Plans were typically made either in writing or mentally of the entire progression of lessons. Their plans showed evidence of skill progression within and across lessons. However, all three admitted these were just outlines as each lesson was determined by how well the previous lesson progressed. All three teachers over-planned and were not surprised if not all planned activities could be completed. Every teacher included skill cues in their plans that would be an element of focus for the students as well as for their own observation and assessment.

When planning, they all started by reflecting on their own prior experiences teaching the same content. Then, several outside resources were reviewed to bring in potential new ideas (i.e. websites, books, journals, conference proceedings, other teachers). All believed in the need for a yearly plan or map. Due to changes brought on by the planning period mandate that altered all of their schedules, Debbie was the only one with a yearly outline this year. Jake and Peg both shared that they had yearly plans in previous years but felt this particular year was more trial and error given the uncertainty of their schedules. Debbie shared that her scheduled had changed very little this year. The school system's Academic Knowledge Sources (AKS) were a reference point for all three participants. Each individual, however, used the source in a different manner.

### *In-class Decisions*

There were a few common themes when it came to in-class content development decisions. Each teacher provided a learning environment complete with compassion and humor where the students were the focus followed by the learning of skills. The question of how often learning tasks were changed was a common theme with an unpredictable answer. Each shared that they did not actually plan or write down an amount of time to spend on a task for these decisions were determined by student response. All agreed that some tasks were conducive to quick change but others, such as applications, warranted more time. They each based decisions to move on, to skip tasks, or to change a task completely on student response, class time limitations, or just their own opinion of how long students needed to spend on any one practice activity. If several students were exhibiting off-task behaviors, all three teachers shared that their first response was to look at how they had delivered the information before giving blame to the students. Safety was a concern of all three teachers and each used preventive measures and scanned for potential problems on a regular basis.

When presenting, observing, providing feedback, or assessing tasks, all three teachers were goal oriented and focused on the cues and concepts that matched the objectives of their lessons. For assurance, each teacher had some form of what they termed a “cheat sheet” for a planning reference during a lesson. Jake used a copy of his actual formal teaching plan or he wrote the list of tasks on a white board. Peg and Debbie had an index card with the tasks and, if necessary, the cues listed. This index card was in a pocket or located where it could be quickly accessed.

### *Decisions Made Through Reflection*

Jake, Peg and Debbie exhibited attributes of reflective teachers. Reflective thoughts were ongoing, and were therefore, pre-action, in-action and on-action. All three shared that their reflections were used to promote change while actually teaching a class, for another class being taught the same lesson, and for the next lesson with the same class. They considered reflection a key part of their planning. In fact, they all used the reflective thoughts of one lesson to go back and fine tune or completely change the next pre-planned lesson of the series. In their initial planning stage they reflected on lessons from previous years that contained the same or similar content.

The reflective thoughts during and after a lesson were in alignment with their originally planned and taught objectives. The thoughts were of both student achievement and teacher accomplishment. An interesting note is that the research protocol itself required the participants to reflect prior to watching the video. This requirement added an element that might not have occurred at that particular time every day. The idea was to gain their thoughts prior to viewing the videotaped lesson. Following the viewing, all three provided additional reflective thoughts

inspired by the lesson observation. This happened automatically with all there teachers and was not a requested part of the research protocol.

### *Constraints*

A common theme riddled throughout the study was made up of elements that are out of a teacher's control: teaching constraints. Teachers' actions are often constrained by the environment or by external forces such as a required curriculum, administrative scheduling within the school, administrative mandates within the school system, and community use. Some of the constraints were the same for all three teachers while others were individual to a school. Regardless of the specific constraint, each in some way affected the content development decisions made by Jake, Peg, and Debbie.

The key element that occurred the year of this study was the implementation of a 45-minute mandated planning period for all elementary classroom teachers. To enforce this mandate, school principals changed the special area teachers' schedules to accommodate the planning periods. It appeared that little regard was given to the needs of the children or the needs of each special area. Physical education was the most affected, for administrators deemed that the size of the teaching facility could accommodate more students. The result at Glasgow and Johnson were two to three classes in the gym at the same time. At all three schools there was a reduction in number of days students received physical education and/or there was inconsistency of classes that accompanied each other on any given day. These circumstances controlled planning; each teacher had to determine what curriculum would be taught and what would be eliminated. Additionally, this constraint limited the learning experiences and individual attention that the students received. Two teachers in the study were carrying such a heavy load to

accommodate the mandated planning period that they were not provided this “mandated” planning period.

Disparity of funds in the system was another constraint that affected primarily Peg. While Jake and Debbie had an abundant amount of equipment, Peg had very little and most of what she had needed replacing. She claimed she got by with the limited amount with single classes but now that two or more classes are in the gym every period there is not enough equipment for the children to have adequate practice.

The teaching facilities were a constraint of all three teachers primarily due to the danger involved with the concrete flooring. Often the decisions they made in planning and in teaching were influenced by the constant safety concern. It was rather sad to hear them tell the students they could not run in the gym. An additional consideration that each teacher had to take into planning was when community groups would be using the gym. The facilities were all used by outside sources such as scouts and sport leagues. All equipment would have to be removed from the gym during these times. For example, the decision of when to teach gymnastics was determined by the availability of the gym, as the teachers did not wish to move the large equipment daily.

During my observations, it was common for school administrators and others to make unannounced visits, thus interrupting class, to talk with Jake. Between the interruptions, announced and unannounced special events that altered the schedule, and the unresolved school calendar, Jake stayed frustrated in both his teaching and planning process. The schedule inconsistencies created by the mixture of classes that came at the same class period each day for Debbie or each rotation for Peg was a planning problem for which they had no remedy. These constraints made it very difficult for all three teachers to plan and teach as they desired.

## Differences

Thus far, I have addressed the commonalities of the three teachers. While there were several content development decision-making practices that were similar, there were a few that were common only in two of the teachers or that were unique in all three individuals. These are addressed in regard to their planning, teaching, and reflecting practices.

### *Planning*

Debbie and Peg began their planning process by brainstorming ideas on paper. Most of these came from past teaching experiences and, for Debbie, many came from her own playing experiences. Jake avoided this step of rethinking content by referring to previously saved lessons on the computer taught the prior year. Debbie and Peg outlined the five lessons connecting one lesson to the previous lesson in order to have an idea up front of how the unit or theme would progress. Jake, on the other hand, planned lesson-by-lesson trusting his lesson sequence of the previous year. Jake's lessons were saved on his computer in a formal format and were ready to print in the event of any visitors. Peg and Debbie preferred their style of jotting notes and ideas on paper. Peg later transferred these to her lesson plan book while Debbie transferred hers to her eight-day calendar. Jake denoted objectives on his formal plans while Peg and Debbie only verbalized their objectives.

In planning, Peg was the only teacher that either included, in writing or recorded during her think-aloud process, her thoughts about how the lessons would be taught differently to the two individual classes. Once their plans were complete, Peg and Jake felt confident in them and seemed to relax, as they were ready to teach. Debbie, however, continued to alter her plans right up to and during the teaching of the lesson.

*In-class Decisions*

Jake and Peg felt their lessons were solid, and having given them so much time and thought ahead of time were confident in where they were going in the lesson. Jake and Peg based any changes made during class on unexpected responses made by the students. These were rare and usually had more to do with transition and management than with the planned tasks for the lesson. Debbie, however, changed her plans daily. Many of these changes were made at the last second or even during class as she observed her students perform the given tasks. These changes, according to her, still focused on the same content but were simply better ideas that just “came to her”. She appeared confident in her content knowledge to make last second adaptations.

The individual differences in the three teachers were most obvious in the ways they focused on students. Debbie’s primary focus was on challenging the students in order “to take them to the next level”. She planned to get them to the point of playing small group games in the last lesson. Based on her reflection of the five days they were successful. From my observations, I would concur. Through her questioning of students and the responsibilities she bestowed on them, she had an additional, underlying goal of teaching students to think and communicate. This was evident in every class I observed.

Peg’s teaching environment appeared to be a comfortable place for all 50-plus students that attended each class period. Even with the large numbers, she attempted to communicate with each individual and worried about the ones she did not get a chance to “touch base with”. To summarize, when Peg was in action, she anticipated discipline problems and who needed a challenge, had a sense of which behaviors to ignore and which to stop quickly, took time to find out how their day was going, and sincerely cared about each and every one of them. She wanted the students to be successful and provided encouragement aiding the students in believing with



practice that they were going to be able to do the skill. She appeared to have a sense of how to approach each child and in this case, each class. The first class I observed was a talented group from two fifth grade classes and she diligently worked to provide enough challenges for them. The following class was a combination fourth grade and an emotional behavior disorder class. It was as if she became a different person when they entered. Her demeanor completely changed as she adjusted to their needs. The focus became small steps toward success with challenges only as needed.

Jake had a basic routine of presenting a task, demonstrating it if necessary, and then having the students perform the task. Once they were active, he scanned the group to make sure all were on task and therefore understood his directions. He then looked for the location of his potential discipline problems and occasionally made sure they knew he was aware of them. Then, for the rest of the time on a task most of his focus would be on the two or three individuals that were the lowest skilled or had the neediest personalities. He did venture away and provide feedback to others, especially his potential discipline problems, but he always returned to these same individuals. While his class focus was movement skill development, he knew with the limited amount of time he had with the kids that he could only expose them to the skills. By focusing on the lower skilled he could only hope that average skilled or above would practice more on their own.

### *Decisions Made Through Reflection*

The recorded post-lesson reflections by each teacher were brief, referred back to the original objectives, and focused on student learning. Additionally, Peg made minor assessments of herself in regards to talk time while Jake was concerned about his lack of feedback. Both of these reflections occurred only after watching the video. Early in the study, Debbie critiqued

herself about several aspects of her teaching often countering with a defense of her actions. Her reflections became more student-focused as the observations continued. I can only infer that she became more comfortable with me and the research protocol for her later reflections appeared to align with the others. Jake and Peg both shared that they felt they were reflective teachers and that through their reflections they have become better teachers. Each responded with the idea that one can only learn from their mistakes. Debbie, at first, said that she was not very reflective. Later, she voiced a different opinion of herself and confirmed she was a reflective teacher.

The protocol of the study required Jake, Peg, and Debbie to record a reflection before viewing the videotape. Knowing this, the actual typical location and time for post-action reflection might not have occurred. The responses of how they routinely reflected after teaching could only be shared in the interviews. Jake shared that he generally reflects between classes and sometimes after the last class. Peg prefers to end her day, relax a while, get in a workout and have dinner, before reflecting on the day and giving thought of any need to regroup for the next day. Debbie likes to give thought to her day on the ride home. She shared that due to me forcing her to reflect at school, she actually heard the words to songs on the radio for a change.

All three shared that some reflection takes place both in planning and teaching. There was evidence of pre-action and in-action reflection recorded on their think-aloud tapes and recorded during our stimulated recall interviews that followed each lesson. It was apparent through many facets that Jake, Peg, and Debbie are reflective but have unique ways and times of reflecting prior to, during, and after teaching.

#### Links to the Literature

The intention of this study was to exemplify the decision-making of three individuals and does not claim to generalize to the population of elementary physical education teachers. The

findings, however, do relate to theories formulated in previous physical education research on teacher decision-making (e.g. Graham, et.al, 1993; Griffey & Housner, 1991; Housner & Griffey, 1985; Sebren, 1995) and in general education (e.g. Allen and Casbergue, 1997; Borko & Livingston, 1989; McCutcheon, 1980; Sardo, 1982; Yinger, 1977; 1980). The majority of the above listed research and others on teacher decision-making was a comparison of inexperienced to experienced teachers.

There were many links between Jake, Peg, and Debbie and the experienced teachers in previous research on teacher decision-making. In regards to planning, all valued the need to plan and each had their own unique routine (Berliner, 1986; Borko & Niles, 1982; Housner & Griffey, 1985; Sardo, 1982). Planning did not just occur during set planning periods but at several other times before and after school as well as away from school (Borko & Livingston, 1989; Kneer, 1986; McCutcheon, 1980; Morine-Dershimer, 1979; Placek, 1984). Some of these were just thoughts or lesson rehearsals that occurred at spontaneous times and were never written down. McCutcheon (1980) coined these as mental dialogues while Borko and Livingston (1989) referred to them as an integration of scripts for teaching activities. In talking with the teachers in this study, I discovered there were many details of the lesson they discussed that were not included in plans. Morine-Dershimer (1979) called these mental plans and claimed they are much more comprehensive than written plans. Jake was the only teacher to use formal written plans and claimed he did so primarily for the visitors into his classroom. Debbie and Peg had their own written version of plans. All three teachers had brief listings of activities and cues readily accessible for teaching, as did the teachers in a study by Smith and Sendelbach (1979). They were simply a list of things to remember.

Peg, Jake, and Debbie all followed a similar curricular approach to developing the acquisition of motor skills. When planning and teaching, they relied primarily on a rich repertoire of tasks and activities that were tested over the years with many classes (Borko & Livingston, 1989). They often anticipated critical problems that could occur in a class and created a contingency plan (Borko & Livingston, 1989; Housner & Griffey, 1985; Yinger, 1987). Due to their knowledge of content and students' abilities, they were able to generate and select alternative activities or teaching strategies to keep the lesson on the planned content (Griffey & Housner, 1991; Housner & Griffey, 1985). This practice was particularly obvious with Debbie. Peg and Jake primarily stuck with their plans and made few instructional changes while teaching (Marx & Peterson, 1981).

All three teachers were child centered and tailored their teaching to each particular class (Graham, et al., 1993). By observing each teacher instruct the same classes for five consecutive lessons, I was able to observe several episodes when classes were taught differently based on the characteristics of the class or even the attitude of the class for that day. This was an obvious practice of Peg on a daily basis as she planned and taught what she termed two extremely different classes. She tried to "get a feeling" of the attitudes as the students entered the gym. This was crucial to her teaching especially for the emotional behavior disorder class. While not evident in her plans, Debbie's teaching activities and strategies varied based on the students' psychomotor responses and cognitive level as she taught a third grade followed by a fourth grade. There were occasions that she made adjustments based on the "motivation level" of the students for the day.

Learning cues were an essential part of the planning and teaching of Jake, Peg, and Debbie. They presented the cues as refinement "clues" for the students, used the cues for

observation, feedback and assessment, and implemented changes based on these cues. These changes typically resulted in an extension or application of the task (Rink, 2001). All three teachers were concerned with facilitation of motor skill acquisition and developed the tasks based on the needs and responses of students (Graham, et al., 1993). When planning a progression of tasks and later observing the students in action they often made content development decisions as they reflected on previous teaching of the same or similar content (Allison & Pissanos, 1994; Graham, et al., 1993).

Reflection occurred in-action, on-action (Schon, 1983, 1987) and pre-action for Peg, Jake, and Debbie as they reflected on previous teaching to plan (Clark & Elmore, 1981; Graham, et al., 1993), while teaching to make changes “on the spot” or later, and after teaching to evaluate the lesson and plan the next or future lessons. These actions closely followed Yinger’s (1977, 1979) model of planning. As did their teaching, their reflections were in relation to the original goals and objectives determined in planning (Allen & Casbergue, 1997). Tsangaridou and O’Sullivan (1997) termed the day-to-day reflections that focus on the context of teaching and that are situationally driven as microreflection and the type of reflections that inform teacher’s practices over time resulting in changes in classroom practice and professional development as macroreflection. Through my observations and interviews, it is safe to say that Jake, Peg, and Debbie all used both microreflection and macroreflection. Additionally they each appeared open-minded to alternative possibilities, considered the consequences of change, and were passionate about putting new ideas to practice, all attributes needed to be truly reflective (Dewey, 1933).

#### Recommendations for Teacher Educators

The inquiry into the content development decision-making of Jake, Peg, and Debbie opened doors into the practice of teaching. Through the process of describing, analyzing and

interpreting the data, my daily observations, as well as casual discussions with the three teachers, several recommendations came to mind for teacher educators who train our future physical educators. While this study has initiated much thought about improving teacher education, some recommendations are based on my opinions derived from years of teaching in the public schools, supervising student teachers, and communicating with teacher educators.

First, it appears we should continue to focus on the importance of goals, objectives, and specific learning cues. To add to this practice, we should encourage the understanding of how each has its place not only in planning, but also in teaching, assessing, and reflecting. As was evident throughout the study, planning was valued as key to effective teaching. It appears a planning routine, though unique to each teacher in this study, was apparent and in no way resembled the planning practices most often incorporated in teacher education programs. Perhaps teacher educators should place greater emphasis on the importance of planning and address the need for a planning routine. Just as there are many learning styles, there should be many acceptable planning styles. As opposed to presenting one way of planning, teacher educators might suggest a variety of planning routines in hope of encouraging each individual to discover an approach that works best for him or her.

Teacher educators need to match the instruction of how to plan more closely to that of the “real world” teaching environment and working conditions. For example, some teacher educators require preservice teachers to include in their plans exactly how long they will stay on each task. This practice could potentially encourage rigid, robot-like teaching. Training preservice teachers of what specifically to observe in students that would promote change might encourage practices that are more effective. Additionally, preservice teachers need to understand that the type of task (e.g. informing task, extension, or application) also informs the time decisions.

Though all three teachers in this study have 14 years or more teaching experience, after reflecting on their own knowledge from past teaching experiences, they were drawn to other sources to supplement their planning and teaching. Repeatedly they perused books, referenced pertinent websites, conversed with colleagues or others in related fields, referenced conference and workshop proceedings or experiences, and reflected on their own athletic experiences. It appears that the stronger the knowledge base, the more a teacher has to “pull from” when planning and “respond with” if spur of the moment change is needed when teaching. For preservice and inservice teachers the need for using many knowledge sources would only benefit their teaching practices and in turn, student learning.

Though the need for detailed written plans were part of the lives of all three participants in their early teaching, each responded that after the first year of teaching, they placed more emphasis on mental planning and reduced the written detail. As was evident in the study, mental planning did not occur during set planning periods solely, but occurred often and at odd times. On occasion, these thoughts were welcomed as they passed the time on trips but other times they were unwanted as they could invade the mind and limit sleep. Perhaps we should give more credence to the mental planning done in the car to and from work, or even in the shower, for these thoughts are crucial to teaching and should be recognized as modes of effective planning. Teacher educators should investigate ways of examining mental planning to better understand the thoughts of preservice teachers that may not reach the paper. One avenue might be through a recorded think-aloud as used in this study

When making recommendations based on the data, the individual differences in the three teachers must not be ignored. The student learning provided evidence that all three were effective; however, each had their own unique way of presenting the content and responding to

students. There are teacher educators and administrators who appear to have a “textbook vision” of an effective teacher and therefore, fail to recognize what experiences an individual brings to teaching. Each preservice teacher that enters a teacher education program comes equipped with his or her unique and individual perspective of a physical education teacher. Many, at this stage, have aspirations of the influence he or she will make in the world of education. Perhaps we should investigate ways of better understanding these perspectives and thoughts of the preservice teachers so as not to discourage individuality as we guide them toward effective teaching practices.

In looking at the reflective practices of these three individuals, it is obvious that reflection is not just a moment to sit and think about one’s teaching but a key component of the teacher-learning process. A statement made by Posner (1985) reveals the value of reflection, “We do not really learn from experience as much as we learn from reflecting on experiences” (p. 19). Therefore, inservice and preservice teachers should be encouraged to give thought to past lessons and experiences when planning. We should address the idea of reflection occurring during a teaching episode as well as afterwards. Additionally, we should encourage that preservice teachers engage in dialogue with others as means of reflection. In summary, we should look at a broader definition of reflection.

The use of a think-aloud process and videotaping inclusive of a stimulated recall interview were excellent methods within this study and could serve as teaching tools for reflection both for the preservice and inservice teacher. All three teachers admitted that this study encouraged more reflective practices than they might typically do in a day. During the viewing of the videotaped lessons, each recognized aspects of the learning experience that had previously



gone undetected, thereby extending their reflections. All mentioned that they should include in their teaching the use of videotaping to aid in assessment of both learning and teaching.

### Closing Thoughts

This study has revisited an area of inquiry that appeared to have its origin with Jackson in 1968, reemerged again in the late 70's and 80's as research on teacher cognition, before fading again in the early 1990s. This study has made a fresh attempt at understanding the decision-making processes that contribute to teacher effectiveness and potentially opened the door to more inquiry on the relation of the planning and reflecting practices of teachers to student learning. Based on a research platform developed by Housner and Griffey (1985) and Griffey and Housner (1991), this study expanded the research on teacher decision-making by examining elementary physical education teachers in the natural teaching environment. In addition, it built on the work of Graham et al. (1993) by observing the teachers over an extended period.

This inquiry provided evidence that there are no distinct boundaries between the acts of planning, teaching, and reflecting. For Jake, Peg, and Debbie the three processes were mutually dependent. All expressed the belief that they would not be effective teachers without viewing the processes as complimentary to each other. While speaking of Jake, Peg, and Debbie I would be remiss not to once again point out the uniqueness that each brought to their teaching. Their personal values, beliefs, and life-experiences played a big part in their decision-making.

While the focus of this study was on experienced elementary physical education teachers, a parallel study with experienced teachers in any content area might reveal the same "findings". In giving thought to further research, I would recommend future researchers to take this line of inquiry into other content areas and levels of teaching. Additionally, it would be beneficial to examine the decision-making process of teachers at different stages of experience. The data

collection techniques proved effective in gaining insight into the “natural teaching environment”. I would encourage future research to go beyond the use of only one or two techniques.

Many universities, in an attempt to improve teacher education programs, are diligently searching for pedagogy specialists with teaching experience in public schools. As these individuals are few and far between, a final thought for future research in teacher education is to conduct more research in the schools with inservice teachers. The results could bring their “real life” experiences into the literature as an avenue to inform teacher educators and, in turn, preservice teachers. To conduct research in the schools can be a challenge, but it is a challenge we must accept if we truly want to prepare effective teachers.

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APPENDIX A  
FAIRFIELD COUNTY (PSEUDONYM)  
ACADEMIC KNOWLEDGE SKILLS/INDICATORS OF ACHIEVEMENT  
GRADE THREE AND FOUR

# Third Grade

## Physical Education

S T AKS (star) / Indicator of Achievement (diamond)

### Physical Education (Reference Code: 3PE)

#### A - Fitness

- ★ participate in developmentally appropriate health-related fitness activities: cardiovascular endurance, flexibility, muscular strength, muscular endurance, body composition (QCC, CE) (3PE\_A2002-1)
- ◆ 1a - participate in developmentally appropriate health related fitness activities the components of a health related fitness test (e.g. FITNESSGRAM)
- ◆ 1b - describe the benefits of physical fitness
- ◆ 1c - identify one activity associated with the following components of health related fitness: cardiovascular endurance, muscular strength and endurance and flexibility
- ◆ 1d - maintain continuous aerobic activity for a specified period of time
- ◆ 1e - count a resting heart rate
- ◆ 1f - demonstrate non-ballistic stretching techniques

#### B - Movement Competencies

- ★ demonstrate mature forms of locomotor and non-locomotor movements utilizing equipment and/or partners (QCC, CE) (3PE\_B2002-2)
- ◆ 2a - move in a variety of ways using mature locomotor patterns in relation to a partner or objects
- ◆ 2b - move in a variety of ways using non-locomotor movements in relation to a partner or objects
- ★ demonstrate a variety of balances alone or with others (QCC, CE) (3PE\_B2002-3)
- ◆ 3a - demonstrate an inverted balance
- ◆ 3b - demonstrate symmetrical and asymmetrical balances
- ◆ 3c - recognize and demonstrate balances or hangs using a variety of inverted shapes
- ◆ 3d - move smoothly from one balanced position to another in a variety of ways
- ◆ 3e - balance a variety of objects (stilts, balance boards)
- ◆ 3f - balance in a variety of positions using different bases of support and directions
- ★ demonstrate three primary characteristics of an overhand throw (QCC) (3PE\_B2002-4)
- ◆ 4a - throw showing side to target
- ◆ 4b - throw showing stepping with opposition
- ◆ 4c - throw showing arm back
- ◆ 4d - throw showing follow through
- ◆ 4e - throw as far as possible using smooth overhand throw
- ★ catch a thrown ball (QCC) (3PE\_B2002-5)
- ◆ 5a - move in different directions to catch a ball thrown by a partner
- ★ demonstrate steady beat using locomotor and non-locomotor combinations (QCC) (3PE\_B2002-6)
- ◆ 6a - keep a steady beat while using locomotor and non-locomotor movements
- ★ demonstrate combinations of transferring weight (QCC) (3PE\_B2002-7)
- ◆ 7a - transfer weight from one body part to another in a variety of ways
- ◆ 7b - step into transfers of weight from feet-to-hands over low equipment or apparatus
- ★ demonstrate progress toward mature forms of striking with hands, feet, and implements (QCC, CE) (3PE\_B2002-8)
- ◆ 8a - dribble a ball in self-space using one, then the other hand
- ◆ 8b - dribble while moving to the right or left
- ◆ 8c - dribble and change direction at the signal
- ◆ 8d - run and kick a ball that is moving slowly toward and away from self, using the instep
- ◆ 8e - use the inside or outside of the foot to slowly dribble a ball
- ◆ 8f - dribble while changing pathways and directions at the signal
- ◆ 8g - bounce and then strike a small object to a wall or across a low net using an underhand motion with a lightweight paddle or racket
- ◆ 8h - bounce and then strike a small object using a forehand motion with a lightweight paddle or racket
- ◆ 8i - strike a softly pitched ball with a bat as far as possible
- ◆ 8j - dribble a wiffle-type ball with a hockey stick and change directions and pathways at the signal
- ◆ 8k - strike a self-tossed ball using a two handed overhand volley
- ★ jump repeatedly a self-turned rope (3PE\_B2002-9)

#### C - Movement Concepts and Principles

S T    **AKS (star) / Indicator of Achievement (diamond)**

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- ★ incorporate effort qualities into a movement sequence (QCC) (3PE\_C2002-10)
  - ◆ 10a - create a four part sequence that incorporates three effort qualities (i.e., space, time, force, flow)
- ★ utilize relationships of self to equipment and others (QCC, CE) (3PE\_C2002-11)
  - ◆ 11a - mirror and match the movements of a traveling partner
  - ◆ 11b - use matching or mirroring and meeting or parting to design and perform dance or gymnastic sequences with a partner or small group
  - ◆ 11c - use relationship strategies to show simple offense and defense
- D - Personal and Social Responsibility**
  - ★ demonstrate acceptable behaviors in a physical setting without reinforcement (QCC, CE) (3PE\_D2002-12)
    - ◆ 12a - identify appropriate choices when picking a partner or group
    - ◆ 12b - use courtesy when other students are asking or answering questions



# Fourth Grade

## Physical Education

S T AKS (star) / Indicator of Achievement (diamond)

### Physical Education (Reference Code: 4PE)

#### A - Fitness

- ★ participate in health-related fitness activities and assessments using the FITNESSGRAM (QCC, CE) (4PE\_A2002-1)
- ◆ 1a - count a resting and exercising heart rate
- ◆ 1b - demonstrate pacing skills to keep the heart rate in the target heart zone
- ◆ 1c - describe the purpose of each health-related fitness assessment component
- ◆ 1d - interpret the results of their FITNESSGRAM scores
- ◆ 1e - identify physical activities related to each component of physical fitness
- ◆ 1f - participates in physical activities outside of class

#### B - Movement Competencies

- ★ exhibit combinations of locomotor patterns (QCC) (4PE\_B2002-2)
- ◆ 2a - demonstrate the ability to combine locomotor movements such as walk, hop, jump, or leap, hop, jump
- ★ demonstrate static and dynamic balances incorporating directional changes and various movement levels (QCC) (4PE\_B2002-3)
- ◆ 3a - demonstrate traveling on a beam forward, backward, and sideways
- ◆ 3b - demonstrate static balances at low, medium, and high levels
- ◆ 3c - demonstrate a balance while traveling and changing directions and levels on low or medium level equipment
- ★ demonstrate mature throwing and catching skills (QCC) (4PE\_B2002-4)
- ◆ 4a - catch a ball, tossed by self or others, at low and medium levels
- ◆ 4b - move to catch an object in a small group (2-on-1) keep-away situation
- ★ create and demonstrate movement sequences to a common steady beat (QCC, CE) (4PE\_B2002-5)
- ◆ 5a - create a locomotor movement sequences such as walk, jump, hop, hop, and be able to repeat it four times (16 counts)
- ★ design and perform sequences involving rolling and weight transfer (QCC) (4PE\_B2002-6)
- ◆ 6a - transfer weight in various ways off low equipment or apparatus (beam, bench, or box), starting with hands on the floor
- ◆ 6b - use balances to move smoothly into and out of different transfers of weight
- ◆ 6c - travel into a spring takeoff, and then transfer weight from the feet-to-hands onto low to medium level equipment or apparatus
- ◆ 6d - transfer weight onto low to medium level equipment or apparatus by placing the hands on equipment and springing off from two feet (land on hands and feet)
- ★ demonstrate progress toward mature forms of striking with hands, feet, and implements (QCC) (4PE\_B2002-7)
- ◆ 7a - dribble and change from one speed to another at the signal
- ◆ 7b - dribble and change the pathway at the signal
- ◆ 7c - dribble while keeping the ball away from stationary opponents
- ◆ 7d - dribble in a group in a bounded area without losing control of the ball or colliding with others using hands then feet
- ◆ 7e - dribble and then kick the ball to a large target area from a distance of choice using the inside of the foot
- ◆ 7f - continuously volley a lightweight ball with a partner 10-15 times
- ◆ 7g - strike a small object with a forehand motion to a wall or partner 10-15 times consecutively
- ◆ 7h - bounce and then strike a small object using a backhand motion with a lightweight paddle or racket
- ◆ 7i - strike a wiffle-type ball along the ground to a stationary partner using a hockey stick
- ◆ 7j - volley a lightweight ball, bump pass
- ★ jump and land for height and distance (QCC) (4PE\_B2002-8)
- ★ design and perform a jumping and landing sequence with or without equipment (4PE\_B2002-9)

#### C - Movement Concepts and Principles

- ★ demonstrate smooth transitions from one shape to another (QCC) (4PE\_C2002-10)
- ◆ 10a - use transitional movements such as pivot-turns, jump-turns, spring-steps, etc.
- ◆ 10b - transfer weight to a new shape smoothly, without jerky, unnecessary movements
- ◆ 10c - demonstrate the use of extensions in personal space by performing an action or movement that extends extremities far away or close to the center of the body

S T AKS (star) / Indicator of Achievement (diamond)

- ★ analyze and describe body awareness concepts used within movement skills (QCC) (4PE\_C2002-11)
  - ◆ 11a - analyze and describe specific body awareness concepts as they relate to specific movement skills
    - ◆ 11a1 - describe what part of your hand is used to dribble a ball
    - ◆ 11a2 - analyze what your body is doing when you roll sideways, forward and backward
    - ◆ 11a3 - describe the arm position and action of overhand and underhand throw, and underhand throw
    - ◆ 11a4 - analyze the use of your arms and legs during a vertical jump
    - ◆ 11a5 - describe the position of your hand when you catch a ball
  - ★ create relationships by using self and equipment with others (QCC, CE) (4PE\_C2002-12)
    - ◆ 12a - demonstrate body shape in the air
    - ◆ 12b - create sequences using over, under, around, in front of, and behind concepts
      - ◆ 12b1 - create a sequence on a low apparatus
      - ◆ 12b2 - create a sequence with streamers
      - ◆ 12b3 - create an obstacle course
    - ◆ 12c - create shapes together with a partner; match shapes, contrast shapes, mirror shapes, and move over, under, and around your partner's shapes
    - ◆ 12d - create movement sequences with a partner or in small groups that demonstrates: meeting and parting; unison and contrast; leading and following; and matching and mirroring
- D - Personal and Social Responsibility
  - ★ demonstrate and identify the purposes for activities while following rules to games and using game-play etiquette (QCC, CE) (4PE\_D2002-13)
    - ◆ 13a - demonstrate and identify proper safety equipment for various recreational activities

APPENDIX B  
PARTICIPANT QUESTIONNAIRE

### Participant Information

Thank you for agreeing to be considered as a participant in this study. Please fill out the following information. Your name and personal information is required only for contact purposes and will be kept confidential.

#### *Contact Information*

Name:

School:

School Address:

E-Mail address:

School Phone:

Grades:

Home phone:

#### *Teaching Experience*

Number of years teaching:

Number of years at present school:

Number of years teaching elementary physical education:

#### *Teaching Schedule*

What is your class schedule (time and grades) in the afternoons?

Average number of students in class?

Do you have an indoor facility?

Do you share the facility with another teacher?

or paraprofessional?

#### *Curriculum*

Which of the following best describes the *main* focus of your curriculum? Please check only one as I am asking for just the main focus.

Physical Fitness

Developing Motor Skills (Kicking, throwing, striking, catching, etc.)

Games and Activities

Sports

Other (please explain)

Please describe your class format for either grade 2, 3, 4, or 5 (choose one). In other words, explain how the class begins, how the lesson is developed, and how it ends. Be general in your description.



APPENDIX C  
INFORMED CONSENT FORM

### Consent Form

I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to participate in the research entitled “Teacher Cognition in Elementary Physical Education”, which is being conducted by Tina J. Hall, under the direction of Dr. Paul Schempp in the Department of Physical Education and Sport Studies (Ramsey Center, University of Georgia, Athens, 30633, Telephone (706) 583-8705). **I understand that this participation is entirely voluntary**; I can withdraw my consent at any time without penalty and have the results of the participation, the extent that it can be identified as mine, returned to me, removed from the experimental records or destroyed.

I understand the following points:

- 1) The reason for the research is to analyze teachers’ thinking during the planning, teaching, and reflecting processes.
- 2) The benefits that I may expect from it are: To contribute to the teaching profession through my involvement in research, the opportunity to reflect on my own thought processes during teaching, and to have the good feeling of knowing I was able to help a graduate student with her research. Additionally, each teacher will receive a minimum of a \$200 honorarium, a hand-held tape recorder, a phone card (in the event a long distance call needs to be made to me), and a meal at the conclusion of the study.
- 3) The procedures are as follows:

I will teach, as part of my regular teaching day, a total of thirteen classes over a seven-day period that will be observed by the researcher. In addition I will audiotape in a “think-aloud” procedure my planning and reflecting thoughts, participate in a stimulated recall on three occasions after school, and participate in three separate interviews on three occasions after school. I understand this project will take approximately 20 hours of my time outside of a school day over the time period required to complete the seven observations (i.e. in a two-day a week program physical education program, the data collection would take four to five weeks). I will provide the researcher with any written lesson plans I use as well as additional documentation used in planning.

- 4) No discomfort, stresses, or risks are expected during this research.

- 5) The results of this participation will be confidential and will not be released in any identifiable form without my prior consent unless otherwise required by law. My name and any details that might identify me will be changed in any written reports in order to protect confidentiality. All videotapes, audiotapes, transcripts, and field notes will be kept in the possession of the researcher for up to three years at which point they will be disposed of.
- 6) The researcher will answer any further questions about the research, either now or during the course of the project and can be reached via e-mail (hallt@arches.uga.edu.) or phone at home 706-583-8705, or at work 706-542-4210.

I understand the procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant/Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Researcher /Date

Please sign all three copies of this form. Keep one and return the others to the investigator.

-----  
The Institutional Review Board oversees research at The University of Georgia, which involves human participants. Questions or problems regarding your rights, as a participant should be addressed to Chris A. Joseph, Ph.D., Human Subjects Office, The University of Georgia; 606A Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center; Athens, GA 30602-7411; Telephone (706) 542-3199. Email address: IRB@uga.edu

APPENDIX D  
INTERVIEW GUIDES

## Biography Interview Guide

### Teaching Experience

- How many years have you taught elementary physical education?
- How many years have you taught at this school?
- Do you have any additional teaching experience in other subjects or at different educational levels?
- Tell me about your first year of teaching.
- Do you remember any expectations you had entering your first year of teaching?
- Share something you remember learning at the undergraduate level that helped you the most in your first year of teaching.
- Tell me how you developed from your first expectations to reality.
- Have there been any monumental episodes that helped you evolve as a teacher?
- What changes have you experienced over the years in teaching.
- (Children, community, parental support, public attitude, administration, scheduling)

### Educational Experience

- What year did you obtain your undergraduate degree?
- Have you obtained or pursued additional degrees? If so, where, when, and why?
- If not, is another degree in your plans?
- When did you know you wanted to become a physical education teacher?
- Tell me about additional influences that affected your decision to become a physical educator.
- What were your own experiences in elementary physical education?
- Middle School or Junior High?
- High School?
- What experiences do you take part in that help you to grow professionally?
- Do you belong to any professional organizations?
- What, if any, physical education literature do you read?
- Do you attend physical education workshops or conferences? Tell me about a conference or workshop you attended that benefited your teaching.

## Philosophy

- Tell me about your physical education program.
- What do you want your students to know when they leave you in the fifth grade?
- What do you want them to value?
- What do you want them to physically be able to do?
- What do you see as the role of physical education in elementary education?
- Has this always been your philosophy? If not, why and when did it change?
- Are there constraints that keep you from teaching what you feel needs to be taught or the way you feel is best for children?
- Speculate on the future in regards to the effects of current trends and issues in education. Speak from both a personal and a professional point of view.

## Planning and Reflection Interview Guide

### Planning

- Why do you plan?
- Tell me how you plan for a lesson?
  - What materials do you generally have available?
  - Is there a specific time? Place?
  - Is this scheduled time the only time planning occurs? Tell me about other times you plan or think about your lesson?
  - How much time during the school day do you give to planning?
  - How much time out of the school day would you say you give to planning?
- What do you take into account when planning?
- How much of this goes into writing?
- Are you required to turn in a formal written lesson plan to anyone?
- Do you have a different plan for every grade? Every class?
- How many lessons ahead do you typically plan/
- Do you teach by units or themes?
  - Tell me about how you plan for this unit or theme?
  - Once you plan the unit or theme does it ever change? Why or why not?
- Do you have a yearly plan?
- Once you have planned your lesson, does it ever change? Why or why not?
- Over the years have you seen a change in your planning practices?

### During Teaching

- While teaching a lesson, do you typically stick to your original plans?
- If you change, what typically promotes the change?
- During class do you refer to your lesson plan in the form you described above? If not, is there any form that you do make reference to?
- Do you ever have a plan “B”?
- Do you ever make changes from one class to the next? What promotes that change?

### Reflection

- Tell me about your personal evaluation of a lesson.
- How does your reflection on a lesson relate to your original planning of that lesson?
- When and how does this evaluation take place?
- Do you make any form of written notations or these evaluations?
- How do these evaluations affect future lessons of the same class?
  - Of another class of the same grade level or lesson content?
  - Of the same content area to be taught later in the year or next year?
- Over the years have you seen a change in your reflective practices?



APPENDIX E

JAKE LOGAN'S TEACHING SCHEDULE, PLANS,  
AND ASSESSMENT PIECES

### Jake's Teaching Schedule

|             | Day 1    | Day 2    | Day 3    | Day 4    | Day 5    | Day 6    |
|-------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 8:25 –9:10  | Planning | Planning | Planning | Planning | Planning | Planning |
| 9:15-9:45   | K-A      | K-B      | K-C      | K-D      | K-E      | K-F      |
| 9:50-10:35  | 2-A/G*   | 2-B/G*   | 2-C      | 2-D      | 2-E/G*   | 2-F      |
| 10:40-11:25 | 1-A      | 1-B      | 1-C      | 1-D      | 1-E      | 1-F      |
| 12:00-12:45 | 4-A      | 4-B      | 4-C      | 4-D      | 4-E      | 4-F      |
| 12:50-1:35  | 3-A/G*   | 3-B/H*   | 3-C/H*   | 3-D/H*   | 3-E/G*   | 3-F/G*   |
| 1:40-2:25   | 5-A      | 5-B      | 5-C      | 5-D      | 5-E      | 5-F      |

Note: Each number represents the grade and each letter a teacher. The \* signifies that 1/3 of another class attends with the assigned class.

October 29- November 6, 2002

GRADE 3

LESSON PLAN

**SKILL THEME:** Cardiovascular fitness and Striking

**MAJOR AKS:** Fitness 3.1 Describe the benefits of physical fitness.

Movement Competencies 3.14 Demonstrate progress toward mature forms of striking with hands, feet, and implements.

3.14a Dribble a ball in self space using one, then the other hand.

3.14b Dribble while moving to the right or left.

3.14c Dribble and change direction at the signal.

Active/Healthy Living 3.20 Identify the physiological signs of moderate physical activity.

3.20a Identify the pulse.

**MINOR AKS:** Fitness 3.2 Participate in developmentally appropriate health-related fitness activities (cardiovascular endurance, flexibility, muscular strength, muscular endurance, body composition). Fitness 3.4 Identify one activity associated with the following components of health-related fitness: cardiovascular endurance, muscular strength, and endurance and flexibility.

Equipment: Large playground type balls. Basketballs, cones.

Fitness Element: Move cubes with strength exercises

**TASK**

**CUE/ Coaching**

Take attendance and record

on class sheets as we do the warm-up.

Students line up on start three point line

and as I call their names they come forward

and toss the dice to determine the exercise.

What are the benefits of being fit?

3.1, You participate in activities and have fun doing it.

What type of fitness are we working on.

3.4 Muscular strength, and endurance

Get a basketball and begin dribbling. When the music stops put the ball on the floor near you.

Begin dribbling with hands.

3.14

Do not shoot baskets!!

Have students get a basketball and begin dribbling skills.

Note students having a lot of trouble.

Have students stop dribbling and put the ball between ankles.

Does anyone remember the cues

You are looking for these cues.

we used last year?

On the signal-Dribble a ball around the gym using one, then the other, hand.

Dribble while moving to the right or left.

Shoot the ball to the goals. Be careful.  
Walk on orange line to cool down.

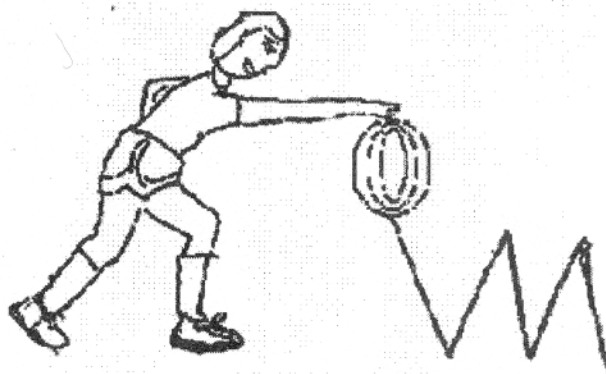
You may dribble a ball as you walk.

Finger pads. Waist level. Push, don't hit, the ball. Eyes up over the ball.

3.14c Have students face leader and the leader standing on a bench points left or right and the class follows. Use opposite hand to dribble with each time you change direction.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Dribbling a basketball assessment



Circle or color the child who is dribbling correctly. What are some tips or cues you would give to the child who needs more practice?

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### **Basketball Dribbling Checklist with Rubric.**

Parents,

We have been working on dribbling a basketball for the last several lessons. This is an assessment of how your student is doing based on my best judgment. I encourage you to watch your child doing this skill at home and ask them to give you the cues that make a skilled dribbler.

| <b>Dribbling</b>          | <b>CRITERIA</b>  | <b>CRITERIA</b>   | <b>CRITERIA</b>  | <b>CRITERIA</b>  | <b>Points</b> |
|---------------------------|--|---|--|--|---------------|
|                           | <b>1 Point</b>   | <b>2 Points</b>   | <b>3 Points</b>  | <b>4 Points</b>  |               |
| <b>RUBRIC:</b>            | <b>Middle School</b>   | <b>High School</b>  | <b>College</b>   | <b>Professional</b>  |               |
| <b>Head Up</b>            | Consistently keeps head down, looks at ball or hands when dribbling. | Head up some of the time, but generally head down or looking at ball. | Head is up most of the time with few exceptions.             | Head is up all of the time when dribbling the ball in a variety of situations.       |               |
| <b>Ball Under Control</b> | Student loses control of ball after one or two dribbles.             | Student can keep ball under control some of the time.                 | Student rarely loses control of ball, but occasionally does. | Student does not lose control of the ball when dribbling in a variety of situations. |               |
|                           |  |   |  | <b>Total:</b>  |               |

The AKS for this skill is: Movement Competencies 3.8 Demonstrate progress toward mature forms of striking with hands, feet, and implements.

3.8a Dribble a ball in self space using one, then the other hand.

3.8b Dribble while moving to the right or left.

## APPENDIX F

## PEGGY NOLAN'S TEACHING SCHEDULE AND PLANS

## PEG'S TEACHING SCHEDULE

|             | Jan. 8-28      | Jan. 29-<br>Feb. 14 | Feb. 18-<br>March 7 | Mar 11-28 | Mar31-<br>Apr 25 | Apr 28-<br>May 16 |
|-------------|----------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------|------------------|-------------------|
| 9:00-9:45   | 2A/2B          | 2C/2A               | 2D/2E               | 2B/2C     | 2E/2D            | 2A/2B             |
| 9:50-10:35  | 3A/3B<br>+3LD  | 3C/3D               | 3E/3F               | 3B/3C     | 3F/3E            | 3A/3B             |
| 10:40-11:25 | 1A/KA          | 1B/1C               | 1A/KA               | 1B/1C     | 1A/KA            | 1B/1C             |
| 11:55-12:40 | 1D/1E          | 1F/1G               | 1E/1D               | 1G/1F     | 1E/1D            | 1G/1F             |
| 12:45-1:30  | 5A/5B          | 5C/5D               | 5A/5B               | 5D/5C     | 5A/5B            | 5C/5D             |
| 1:35-2:20   | 4A /5EBD       | 4B/4C               | 4A / 5EBD           | 4B/4C     | 4A /5EBD         | 4B/4C             |
| 2:25-3:10   | 5E/5F +<br>5LD | 4D/5G               | 5E/5F +<br>5LD      | 4D/5G     | 5E/5F +<br>5LD   | 4D/5G             |

Note: Each number and "K" represents the grade and each letter a teacher. EBD (Emotionally Behavior Disorder Class) and LD (Learning Disorder Class).



# Basketball Unit -

Basketballs - various sizes

## Day I - Dribbling

~~Even timer for 10~~  
Stop Watch - major  
Whistle -

Dribbling - If you're not adept - Basketball will be difficult

\* Use Fingers + flexed wrist action

Where do you strike ball? Center

How much FORCE do you use?

A LOT

VERY LITTLE

JUST RIGHT - to waist level  
& not too close to feet!

### DRILL -

listen for key word - students in  
Bubble Space

HARD FORCE

LIGHT FORCE

JUST RIGHT

RIGHT HAND - HARD FORCE

LEFT HAND - " "

\* TRACK THE BALL

\* NO EYES ON BALL

DRILL - With ball on floor - strike it until it is  
bouncing.

### Challenge - (Stop Watch)

standing in bubble space - how long can  
you dribble. Winners will be tomorrow's  
teachers! (Centers)

### In THE PAINT - Challenge

#### DRILL:

All moving in same direction - dribble  
& walk. (R-hand L-hand) Reverse. Chg  
Speeds

Date 1-13-03

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <p>Notes</p> <p>Beams<br/>Balance Boards<br/>or mats.</p>                           | K | <p>Jo is working with them on<br/><u>Balance.</u></p>   |
| <p>Diferent sizes<br/>of balls or<br/>basketballs</p> <p>Whistle<br/>Stop Watch</p> | 1 | <p>Basketball Unit - (Choose ball carefully)<br/>Introduce unit<br/>Dribbling - (in "Bubble Space")<br/>EXPLORE striking a ball down<br/>Spread fingers open<br/>Cup fingers<br/>Strike w/ <u>HARD FORCE</u><br/><u>light FORCE</u><br/>* Strike Middle of Ball - keep bounce to waist<br/>Track w/ eyes<br/>Dribble &amp; don't look<br/>Walk &amp; Dribble (fwd &amp; bkwd)</p> |
|   | 2 | <p>Use Non-Dominant Hand.</p>   |

3

Notes

Just Basketball

(Same as previous classes.)

\* Add - With ball dead on floor - using 1 hand, strike until you can get it dribbling. Working on arm & wrist strength.

4 or 5

(Same as previous classes but add:)

When striking with HARD FORCE -  
LIGHT FORCE -

DRIBBLE FROM WAIST

Right Hand - Hard Force  
Light Force  
From Waist

Left Hand - Hard Force  
Light Force  
Dribble from Waist

DRILL - Dead Ball Bounce.

\* Challenge - by Group (timed) How long can you dribble?  
Encourage students who are out to monitor others - pick up hints

DRILL - Dribble & walk

Use R-hand

L-hand

In The Paint - Challenge

~~5~~

\* Pick 6  
Good dribblers  
for tomorrow's  
centers.

5th

Angeline  
Carly  
Douxin  
Shirley  
Anthony  
Josh

5 4 EBD

Alex Kylie  
Ryan  
m. H



Dead Ball Drill

Striking 4 HARD FORCE

LIGHT FORCE - WAIST

MOVING LEFT & RIGHT

CHANGE HANDS

Timed Challenge - Dribble

Strike & Walk

Challenge - In the paint

APPENDIX G

DEBBIE PETERSON'S TEACHING SCHEDULE, PLANS,  
AND ASSESSMENT PIECES

## DEBBIE'S TEACHING SCHEDULE

|             | DAY 1 | DAY 2 | DAY 3 | DAY 4 | DAY 5 | DAY 6 | DAY 7    | DAY 8 |
|-------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|----------|-------|
| 8:25-9:10   | K     | K/K   | 2     | 2/2   | K     | K     | K/K      | 2/2   |
| 9:15-10:00  | K/K   | 2     | 2/2   | K/2   | K/K   | K/K   | K        | 2     |
| 10:05-10:50 | 1     | 1/1   | 2     | 2/1   | 1     | 1     | 1/1      | 2/2   |
| 10:55-11:40 | 1/1   | 3     | 1/1   | 3     | 1/3   | 1/1   | 3        | 3     |
| 11:45-12:30 | 4     | 3/3   | 4     | 3/3   | 3     | 3     | 4/3      | 3/3   |
| 1:00-1:45   | 4/4   | 4     | 4/4   | 4     | 4/4   | 4/4   | Planning | 4/4   |
| 1:50-2:35   | 5     | 5/5   | 5     | 5/5   | 5     | 5     | 5/5      | 5     |

Note: Each number signifies one class in that grade with "K" representing kindergarten.

Striking:

dribbling (control)

place kicks

penalty

"headers"

passing (stationary & moving)

"soccer tennis"

trapping (feet & other parts)

shoot at goal

Warm-Up:

Day 1 → traditional laps

Day 2 → dribbling

Day 3 →

Day 4

Day 5



100

Striking w/ Feet

~~Really~~ Rainy day (97%)  
→ Soccer tennis  
→ Header game

## Lesson 1

Warm-up laps x 2

Stretching

Dribbling / traps / place kicks: ① Dribble across fld, trap on whistle

② Everyone takes 2 cones or fld. markers, puts them about 5' apart - how many goals can you dribble through? ③ Red light/green light

## Lesson 2

Warm-up: dribble across field - touch fence - use directions (N, S, E, W)

Dribbling: ① Dot stops (use hula hoops) ② 1 vs. 1 dot stops (shanks & minnows) (hula hoops - less skilled)

③ Passing - stationary partner, cone, fld. marker ④ Passing - on the move (never ending soccer)

⑤ Obstacle soccer

## Lesson 3

Warm-up: Pass on the move w/ partner

① Dribble across fld ② Everyone takes 2 cones; space them about 3' apart. Kick at goals (inside part of shoe). Not too hard. More push than kick.

③ Grids: 2 vs. 2 then change team you're playing against.

④ Discuss & show passing

⑤ Ghostbuster soccer (1 goalie in front of 1 cone, 2 kickers must dribble & pass & try to knock cone over - if kicker knocks cone over, they become goalie.)

Closely: Review Lesson 4

Warm-up: 1 trap then kicking on the move w/ partner. Stretching

Review kicking at goal

① Review passing ② Never ending soccer & shoot out each person's goal.

③ Passing - stop, drop, kick → to a partner. ④ One person has a cone - as 1 person passes other person puts

⑤ Cone where ball hits the ground the first time. ⑥ Mont spot ball hits w/ small cone.

⑦ Goal line soccer - Review - Showtime

## Lesson 5

① Warm-up: Get their own ball, practice dribbling,

passing, passing in general space (w/ or w/out partner)

② 3 mini-goals

how important was clearing

"Headers" "Soccer tennis"

24 3-4/team



## Video #1

Warm-up: Pit stop run  
Stretching

Review: dribbling, traps, ball  
control, force/effort

Dribble across fld. - trap on  
whistle

Dribble through cones - 3' apart

Red light/green light - still  
moving, event w/ last person

Move to front - 3-4 people -  
on whistle, last person  
go to front  
↓

## STRIKING WITH FEET

### Lesson #1

Warm-up ~~laps~~ <sup>in grass</sup> X2, stretching

Review dribbling, traps, control, force / effort

Dribble across fld., trap on whistle

Everyone places 2 cones / markers about 3' apart - how many goals can you dribble through - timed? Did you knock any over?

Red light / green light: dribble - on signal trap ball - if still moving, move back even w/ last person

Move to the front: small group (3 - 4) does dribble follow the leader - on signal - last person dribbles to the front of the line and controls the speed of the line

Review: tomorrow - more dribbling, trapping and passing to a still partner and a moving partner

### Lesson #2

Warm-up ~~lap~~ X4, stretching, dribble across fld. - touch fence - use N,S,E,W

Review dribbling, control

Red light / green light

Dot stops by self (4TH)

1 vs. 1 dot stops - sharks and minnows (use hula hoops for less skilled)

Obstacle soccer - travel arounds cones and markers (zig zag, curved, straight)

Review passing to stationary partner

Passing on the move (never ending soccer)

Closing: review passing - tomorrow more passing on the move, kicking at goals

### Lesson #3

Warm-up: passing on the move w/ partner, stretching

Review shooting at goals - keep ball low, under control

Everyone places 2 cones / markers around fld. about 3' apart - use more push then kick to get ball through goals

Everyone get across from a buddy / partner - practice kicking ball through one goal - if you make it, take 1 step backwards - if you miss it, move closer 1 step

\* Grids: 2 vs. 2 then change team you're playing against

Ghostbuster soccer: 1 goalie in front of 1 cone, 2 kickers must dribble and pass and try to knock cone over - if kicker knocks cone over, they become goalie - if not, switch goalie on signal

Closing: review kicking on goal, passing on the move, moving without the ball



#### Lesson #4

Warm up lap w/ a partner while kicking on the move (grassy area), stretching  
Never ending soccer and shoot at goal  
Review punting - step, drop, kick  
Punt to a partner, trapping off a bounce  
Goal line soccer w/ 2 teams  
Showtime: juggling  
Closing: review punting, juggling - tomorrow will be 3 vs. 3 or 4 vs. 4 mini-soccer games (round robin tournament) - each team picks a country name

*Handwritten notes:*  
→ Grids (2 vs. 2) 3rd grade (2 vs. 3) 4th grade  
(keep away)  
soccer tennis →  
→ Kick at goal  
use feet to juggle ball over net

#### Lesson #5

Warm up: dribbling, passing, trapping, punting w/ a partner  
Stretching  
Mini-soccer games (round robin) - each team has a country name - each game approx. 4 - 5 mins. long  
Review: what helped your team to be successful? How important was sportsmanship? Did you have fun? Do you feel you got some good exercise?

*Handwritten notes:*  
Never Ending Soccer - (warm-up)  
World Cup Friendly Tournament

#### Rainy Day Ideas (gym)

Dribble obstacle course  
Scooter soccer  
Juggling  
Trapping  
Headers w/ a partner  
Soccer tennis  
Passing

*Handwritten notes:*  
Grids  
dribble plastic cups

Dribbler: \_\_\_\_\_

Watcher: \_\_\_\_\_

Directions: Watch your partner dribble the ball around the cones and through general space for a few minutes. Check off which skills you see your partner doing and how often.

|  | Always | Almost<br>always | Sometimes | Almost<br>never | Never |
|--|--------|------------------|-----------|-----------------|-------|
| Uses soft, controlled<br>kicks.              |        |                  |           |                 |       |
| Keeps ball within 3 feet<br>of their body.   |        |                  |           |                 |       |
| Keeps head up and<br>watches out for others. |        |                  |           |                 |       |
| Comments:                                    |        |                  |           |                 |       |