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# Historical Perspectives in CSPAP:

## Examining One PETE Program's Story

BRENT HEIDORN , BRIAN MOSIER AND PETER STOECKER 

## Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program

A comprehensive school physical activity program (CSPAP) is a multicomponent approach that aims to provide opportunities for students to meet the nationally recommended 60 min of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity per day and for students to be well-equipped to be active for life (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2015). The CSPAP model consists of five components: (a) physical education (PE), (b) physical activity (PA) during the school day (e.g., recess), (c) PA before and after school (e.g., bike to school day), (d) staff involvement (e.g., staff wellness challenge), and (e) family and community engagement (e.g., family fitness nights). The CSPAP model has been recognized as a national framework for PE and PA for youth (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2017). Figure 1 illustrates the five component areas, with PE as the cornerstone.



**Figure 1.**  
The five components of a comprehensive school physical activity program

## Physical Activity Leader

For a CSPAP to be successfully implemented, individuals need to be well trained in understanding how to lead multiple school-based PA promotional efforts (Dauenhauer et al., 2018), ideally by a designated school physical activity leader (PAL; Castelli & Beighle, 2007). There are multiple viewpoints on the specific skills and knowledge that a PAL must possess to be able to lead a successful CSPAP initiative. Common skills include training school staff and teachers how to integrate PA before, during and after school (Beighle & Moore, 2012; Heidorn & Centeio, 2012); providing community members and families information about the benefits of PA and hosting community PA events (Cipriani et al., 2012); and serving as the main point of contact for PA promotion (Carson et al., 2014). PALs can learn and acquire these skills (i.e., *PAL Learning System*, SHAPE America – Society of Health and Physical Educators, 2018), but recently there has been an effort by some physical education teacher education (PETE) programs to integrate coursework/training to prepare future physical educators to take on the role as a PAL.

## University CSPAP Training

Due to the multiple responsibilities of being a PAL, some PETE programs have recognized the need to integrate CSPAP training within their undergraduate and graduate curricula (Carson et al., 2017). In 2017, JOPERD published a special two-part feature that examined how university programs integrate CSPAP training into their PETE programs. The special issue described 11 programs, highlighting their specific approaches to infusing CSPAP within their undergraduate and graduate coursework. This article will examine one of the programs (University of West Georgia) highlighted in the two-part special feature and provide a historical and in-depth look at the various strategies that have been integrated over the past decade in regards to preservice teacher CSPAP training. The purpose

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of this article is to provide insight into specific educational strategies and techniques other universities can adopt when training preservice teachers to help increase the physical activity of students and other key stakeholders (staff, parents, community partners) in the K–12 setting. In addition, this article describes additional ways of increasing physical activity on a college/university campus. Content here can be used to help preservice teacher candidates recognize and practice CSPAP-related efforts for effective implementation of a schoolwide health initiative and for PETE programs to help increase physical activity in a variety of settings, using the CSPAP model.

## Institutional Landscape – The University of West Georgia

The University of West Georgia is a regional comprehensive public university in the southeastern part of the United States. The total enrollment is nearly 14,000 students from 39 states and 74 countries. The University of West Georgia offers programs at the undergraduate through the doctorate level with a diverse faculty and student population. The department that houses the PETE program resides in the College of Education (COE). The COE is accredited by the Southern Association of College and Schools and offers high-level technological support, mentoring for new faculty, assistance seeking external funding, and opportunities to work with graduate students at all levels.

Within the PETE program, there are six pedagogy faculty members, two of whom are administrators who teach part-time in the program. In a typical academic year, there are approximately 80 undergraduate candidates (not including graduate students) in the PETE program, with about half of the candidates enrolled in upper-level professional content courses. Candidates are enrolled in the program using a cohort model with new admission occurring each fall semester. Though each cohort is unique, the program has proven to be quite diverse in gender, race and experience. This also includes, but is not limited to, candidates who are involved in university-related activities (traditional), adults who have returned to school to finish a degree (nontraditional), and others who are heavily involved in coaching at local middle/high schools and recreation departments. It is common for the program to have full-time candidates working part- and/or full-time positions to support their financial needs. Many candidates work (and volunteer) in activities specifically related to the field (coaching, after-school programs, etc.).

## UWG PETE Program and CSPAP

The PETE program has been closely involved with implementing CSPAP related programming since before the conceptualization of the model. The concepts of increasing PA among K–12 students, faculty and staff and exploring additional wellness opportunities within the local community are some of the primary efforts within the program. Helping preservice teacher candidates gain the knowledge, skills and dispositions for developing and maintaining a CSPAP within their future K–12 learning environment has been a constant focus within the program. In addition, several years ago, the PETE faculty instituted the CSPAP Program Inventories, developed by the former National Association for Sport and Physical Education. The CSPAP Program Inventories (i.e., survey) was developed for use within each K–12 level: elementary, middle, and high school. The UWG PETE faculty used the inventories as learning tools for preservice teacher candidates within multiple courses in the program. Candidates began exploring ways to further develop PA opportunities in future K–12 programs. As a result, it appeared that motivation for CSPAP programming significantly increased among the faculty and preservice teacher candidates, evidenced by increased levels of physical activity among PETE candidates, additional volunteer opportunities in local schools and communities, and enhanced emphasis (questions, discussions) among candidates in classroom and field-based experiences.

As the PETE faculty members continued exploring the need for sustained CSPAP efforts within the program, faculty members instituted an action research project to be completed by the teacher candidates during the student teaching internship (the final semester of their undergraduate degree leading to initial certification as a health and physical education teacher). The concept of using an action research project within the CSPAP framework has been further described in previous publications (Mosier & Heidorn, 2013; Heidorn & Mosier, 2017). Based upon adherence to the specific

project requirements during the student teaching internship, all candidates initially earned a grade based upon the quality of their efforts and project completion. To prepare candidates for the action research project, the faculty members reviewed CSPAP literature, summarized the related content for the teacher candidates, and mentored them as they began developing and/or maintaining one or more components (in addition to quality physical education) within the current curriculum at their local school placement. During this initial experience, the faculty members learned a few key concepts. First, teacher candidates needed earlier CSPAP learning experiences built within the PETE program, prior to the student teaching internship. Prior knowledge would be helpful at the beginning of the project. Second, it was not appropriate to expect teacher candidates to perfect the CSPAP initiative or flawlessly implement one or more components. This effort would likely be a work in progress. Third, some local schools had numerous and diverse PA opportunities previously taking place on-site, whereas other schools had minimal additional PA opportunities for the K–12 students. The initial needs assessment (i.e., survey) was a critical component.

Ultimately, a primary goal of the CSPAP action research project was to help preservice teacher candidates be as informed as possible about CSPAP efforts so they might continue promoting PA among their students in K–12 schools. A secondary goal was to instill the concept of a PAL, someone in a local school who could, with the help of other stakeholders, truly lead and sustain PA efforts. A culminating event of the project requires candidates to present their analysis, results and discussion in a poster presentation format to their peers, cooperating teachers, PETE faculty and K–12 school administrators. Upon successful completion, the candidates earn a certificate that is later reflected on their academic transcript (see the Power Up for 30 section within this article).

In addition to the action research project, PETE faculty members were highly involved in national initiatives to assist with the CSPAP framework and strategies, to help train other leaders (at the university



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and K–12 levels) and to continue promoting PA efforts in related ways. Research efforts soon followed, including continued involvement at the local, state and national levels. Currently, the PETE faculty members continually inform teacher candidates of the tremendous opportunities in K–12 schools related to CSPAPs, plus the significant concept of being positive role models. Those two concepts (increasing PA and role modeling) are clear emphases within the PETE program—a program focused on the *National Standards for Initial Physical Education Teacher Education* (SHAPE America, 2017).

It is hoped that additional CSPAP knowledge, skills and dispositions can be learned and further developed or continued within the PA community of leaders. Reflecting on the past may provide a glimpse of the possible CSPAP opportunities on a college/university campus, with the potential for tremendous outreach to increase PA among K–12 students and, most important, lifetime PA. Therefore, the purpose of this article is to address many CSPAP-related initiatives that have taken place through the efforts of PETE faculty and preservice teacher candidates within one PETE program.

## PETE Program CSPAP Modeling on the University Campus

Even though the CSPAP model was designed to be implemented in K–12 schools, the PETE faculty modeled CSPAP-related activities on the UWG campus. Conducting and simulating CSPAP-related initiatives within the PETE program and the department in which

the program is housed have included some of the most productive and meaningful CSPAP-related efforts for candidates to observe and apply in their future practice as a physical educator and PAL. Nine specific examples are described below.

**Quality Physical Education in the Program.** As previously mentioned, the PETE program focuses on the *National Standards for Initial Physical Education Teacher Education* (SHAPE America, 2017). The PETE faculty promote effective teaching opportunities through research-based best practices (i.e., set induction, task presentation, maximal practice time, instructional feedback, assessment of student learning, closure), engage candidates in deliberate practice through skill development sessions (i.e., 200 min of organized skill development opportunities each week) and seek to increase PA efforts when possible (i.e., various after class modified games, PA during leisure time, walk-and-talks, etc.). The basic tenets of the program's philosophy have been described elsewhere (Heidorn & Mosier, 2017). The PETE faculty recognize the primary need for candidates to learn and practice quality physical education and, in particular, how quality physical education might be significantly different from their most recent secondary school experiences. In addition, candidates need to be fully immersed in a quality teacher preparation program, equipping them for leadership in K–12 schools. The PETE faculty believe this happens by connecting the national standards to all experiences embedded within the program. Candidates also learn about advocacy efforts related to developmentally appropriate practices, opportunities to learn and standards-based assessment among K–12 students. Therefore, the PETE

faculty emphasize quality physical education as much as possible, model best practices in skill development sessions and provide learning experiences that enable candidates to gain the knowledge, skills and dispositions needed for successful implementation in K–12 schools. The biggest challenges, perhaps, are related to transforming the minds of candidates, helping them understand what quality physical education can be, and helping them develop the confidence to maintain quality in their future programs, even in adverse circumstances.

**Physical Activity Requirement Among Candidates.** For several academic years, all preservice teacher candidates participated in required PA outside of class. In addition to regular coursework and content-related assessment, a percentage of the candidates' final grades in the Skills and Strategies sequence of classes included completion of the PA requirement. Each week, candidates logged their PA efforts on a system of points and submitted the documentation to the program coordinator. Points were tallied each week and documented (with PA feedback) for the candidates, while also reminding the candidates of the requirement during each class session. These efforts led candidates to an increased level of PA each week, and other significant positive outcomes were evident, including new knowledge to use when implementing a similar requirement (see Heidorn, 2016; Heidorn & Centeio, 2012).

**After-Class Recreational Opportunities.** Every semester PETE faculty and preservice teacher candidates voluntarily participated in modified game sessions connected with activities taught in the Skills and Strategies sequence of courses. Faculty driven, these sessions were held immediately after the required Skills and Strategies course (e.g., Net/Wall Games) offered at the time. This resulted in high participation rates among the candidates each week as faculty members and students simply played the games practiced in class. These opportunities not only increased PA among the candidates but also helped to further develop their skills. Faculty members participated in the games as well. This helped foster additional rapport with the candidates, demonstrated role modeling of physical activity, and increased enjoyment and morale in the program.

**Open gym Opportunities.** The PETE program is located in a beautiful, state-of-the-art facility where all content and skill-based classes are held. When not observing or teaching in local schools, the candidates typically spend six or more hours in the facility each weekday. Throughout the day during various transitions, or before skills courses, several candidates can be found playing basketball or other sports during their leisure time. Most recently, many candidates started playing table tennis before and after classes using a table and equipment provided by the PETE program. These candidate-driven opportunities further increase PA during the school day.

**Coaching Involvement by Faculty and Students.** Consistent with many PETE programs, every cohort includes several candidates who volunteer their time in after-school athletic programs. The coaching experiences gained often springboard candidates into future job opportunities in local K–12 schools, in addition to providing chances practicing the pedagogical skills learned in the PETE program. As a bonus, these candidates increase their PA levels in tremendous ways each week, remaining on their feet for two or more hours each day. PETE faculty consistently encourage all candidates to network with local teachers, enhance their coaching skills and increase their PA using this approach. As a result, many candidates have secured full-time teaching positions with after-school coaching opportunities in baseball, basketball, football, softball, soccer and volleyball at the recreational, middle and high school levels. As these and similar volunteer opportunities continued to emerge, the PETE faculty

members began documenting efforts by implementing a professional involvement requirement. This required that all candidates participate in at least 10 h of professional involvement (e.g., teaching, coaching, other) outside of class time each semester. Many of the professional involvement opportunities included activities consistent with CSPAP efforts (e.g., leading running clubs, volunteering at road races, assisting with after school recreational programs, etc.).

**Varied Abilities.** For more than a decade, PETE faculty and preservice candidates have been involved with increasing the physical activity patterns of students with varied abilities. Each spring semester, candidates are required to plan, participate and reflect on multiple experiences related to the Special Olympics. The candidates work with local K–12 Special Olympic athletes as they prepare for competition in sports such as gymnastics, track and field, soccer, bocce ball and basketball. The preservice teacher candidates provide extra opportunities for K–12 students to practice their skills. The PETE program also works the local Special Olympics event(s) as part of the curriculum and, most recently, candidates have assisted at the Special Olympics State Games. These efforts help increase PA among K–12 students in before- and after-school opportunities. The PETE program also sponsored a 1-day event each year, partnering with university students to advocate for disabilities awareness efforts on campus. The university students formed a student organization called The Achievers. This collaboration led to the annual Disabilities Awareness Day on the campus. Held in a popular meeting place, stations were available for all participants including seated volleyball, wheelchair basketball and beep kickball. Local K–12 students with disabilities came to the university and participated in the activities as well.

**CSPAP Content Knowledge.** For several consecutive years, preservice teacher candidates were required to write one-page themes (200 words or less) on a variety of position papers and topics from assigned readings. Each semester, this assignment included one or more CSPAP-related themes, developed from CSPAP literature, the AAHPERD website (now SHAPE America), and in-class discussions. These themes helped provide meaningful knowledge of CSPAP related to K–12 programs and brought additional awareness and steps for successful CSPAP implementation in K–12 schools. Currently, the assignments are not used at this time. However, concepts specifically related to CSPAPs are assessed throughout the program. Beginning with the course "Introduction to Health and Physical Education" and extending into each of the three physical education methods courses, candidates are assessed each semester on their knowledge of CSPAP and related content. The PETE program also incorporates a culminating exam where CSPAP content is included. Candidates must successfully pass the exam in their final semester (the student teaching internship).

**Monitoring Faculty and Staff Physical Activity.** PETE faculty were committed to a team-oriented PA program during four consecutive academic semesters. The PETE faculty monitored PA levels through a competitive points system among all departmental faculty and staff members who chose to be involved. Participants tracked and documented their efforts each week according to their PA minutes and energy expenditure. The excitement in the department increased, and faculty and staff began exercise plans and consistently participated in "walk-and-talks." Many participants continued their PA efforts when the program stopped. A similar initiative has since been developed and became more widespread within the COE and on the UWG campus under the umbrella of employee wellness. Many faculty and staff members received activity monitors to help track PA efforts. As participants complete certain milestones, they qualify

for additional discounts on a variety of products and services, plus \$100 toward their insurance premiums. In addition, the campus now includes “Wellness Walk Wednesdays” and other efforts (e.g., lunch seminars) to increase PA among faculty and staff. For example, all faculty members in the COE have access to the fitness lab and the campus recreation center, both complete with a variety of cardiorespiratory and other fitness machines and free weights. Many faculty and staff members take advantage of this opportunity before the workday, at lunch and at the end of the day. On numerous occasions over the years, accountability groups have been formed, and faculty and staff workout sessions are common. Faculty and staff also have free access to participate in one or more physical activity classes offered in the department each semester. These continuous efforts to increase PA on the campus is a prime example of staff involvement.

**UWG Lab.** The UWG lab was established in 2018. The lab was developed for additional experiential- and community-based learning opportunities for the PETE and Health and Community Wellness programs in the College of Education. The mission and structure of the UWG Lab is built around four essential components: education, service, leadership and advocacy (Biber et. al., 2018). The efforts related to the essential components facilitate a culture of health and well-being among students, faculty, staff and the members of the surrounding community. The *education* component includes activities such as Lunch N’ Learns about wellness topics, a Diabetes Prevention Program, first aid/CPR training and cooking demonstrations utilizing a 10-person cooking cart. Recently funded research has examined university student PA levels, opioid prevention and out-of-school-time PA programming. The *service* component is directly connected with the education component. Examples include health coaching, biometric screenings, fitness assessments and worksite wellness packages for local businesses. The UWG Lab also incorporates Exercise is Medicine On Campus, a program developed by the American College of Sports Medicine offered for college students who need guidance in changing health behavior. The *leadership* and *advocacy* components are led by the UWG Lab Council, which includes community leaders from the local hospital, Chamber of Commerce, school systems, businesses, faith-based organizations, elected officials, and faculty, staff and students. Council meetings include discussions of community health and wellness needs and potential projects for the coming years. Since its inception, the UWG Lab has been and will remain student centered. All initiatives related to the lab provide experiential- and service learning-based opportunities for students to learn and participate in professional activities (Biber et. al., 2018).

## CSPAP Beyond the Campus, Extending to the Local, School and Professional Communities

As described above, many of the CSPAP opportunities connected with the PETE program have taken place on the university campus. However, significant efforts have also developed into CSPAP opportunities in local settings. This section describes six different opportunities.

**Scholarly Works.** Since the conceptualization of the CSPAP model, one or more PETE faculty members have presented on a CSPAP-related topic at a state or national conference each semester. In addition, local, state and national articles and other documents have been published. PETE faculty members have been afforded numerous opportunities to review, develop and edit several position papers and other nationally based works related to CSPAP. This

includes a recent review of a published text available for PETE programs. These combined services and research-based efforts help keep the PETE program apprised of current issues and practices taking place throughout the country, which in turn helps inform the preservice teacher candidates.

**Professional Development.** A significant effort extending beyond the campus includes several years of professional development efforts in local K–12 schools but also in various states throughout the region and other parts of the country. Most of these professional development workshops and sessions, led by PETE faculty members, include one or more presentations focused on CSPAP-related concepts, including quality PE, increasing PA and strategies for leading CSPAP within K–12 schools. Some sessions have been sponsored by SHAPE America, state associations or other national initiatives. In addition, significant efforts have been devoted to the development and implementation of Power Up for 30 trainings in the southern region.

**Power Up for 30.** Understanding the positive effects of PA on academics, attendance and behavior, the College of Education is preparing future teachers by equipping them with the skills needed to incorporate PA into daily class activities. PETE faculty worked with the state Department of Public Health and a large nonprofit to develop the Power Up for 30 Physical Activity Specialist Certificate for the university’s elementary education and physical education preservice teacher candidates. Power Up for 30, a statewide training offered to elementary and middle school teachers and staff members, reviews strategies and activities to empower schools to include at least 30 min of PA throughout the school day, including before, after and during classroom instruction. Faculty members provide instruction on the components of the Power Up for 30 model (CSPAP), and by earning the “Power Up for 30 Physical Activity Specialist Certificate,” they graduate with the skills and resources needed to implement PA in their classrooms. Preservice teacher candidates are able to practice the Power Up for 30 skills during their required practicum and internship experiences in elementary and secondary schools. This partnership with learning experiences fosters PA sustainability efforts for dozens of local schools in the southern region.

**Quality Physical Education in Local Schools.** As previously mentioned, quality PE is the focus of the PETE program, as well as the cornerstone of a CSPAP. Leading a quality PE program in a local school is the PETE program’s goal for all candidates. Therefore, it continues receiving the most attention in the program, including significant efforts related to the planning, teaching and reflection cycle. All candidates are expected to plan quality lessons, teach according to best practices, assess student learning, and reflect upon their personal and professional growth as a future educator. The primary methods for practicing the above skills occur in partnership with PETE faculty, university supervisors and cooperating (mentor) teachers in local K–12 schools.

**After-School Programs.** The PETE program has promoted professional involvement among the teacher candidates. This aspect of the program helps prepare candidates for additional “duties” beyond the normal teacher workload, while at the same time instilling a passion for helping others seek physically active lives. One area of emphasis includes candidates having opportunities to work with youth in after-school programs, such as local boys/girls clubs, running programs and walking clubs. Many of the teacher candidates seek part-time jobs in this realm, while also making a difference in the lives of others.

**Before-School Programs.** In collaboration with one local school, PETE faculty members implemented a morning fitness club in

connection with the elementary physical education methods class. Prior to the practicum experiences (which begin at 8:05 a.m.), candidates volunteer in the local school to provide PA opportunities for students in an open gym environment. These experiences last for 30 min before the school day begins (7:30–8:00 a.m.). Candidates assist students with jumping rope, tag games, and skill development in a variety of content areas.

## CSPAP – Future Directions

Future CSPAP-related directions will continue incorporating efforts that have been successful, as well as new initiatives focused on building a healthier university campus and providing meaningful PA leadership opportunities for preservice teacher candidates. Primary examples include tracking PA efforts among K–12 and university students, leading professional development sessions for physical educators in K–12 schools and districts, and developing, implementing and evaluating PA programming in partnership with external funding opportunities. In addition, the physical education graduate degree program (MEd) requires coursework related to health, physical education and physical activity promotion. Students in this program are encouraged to take on the role of PAL within their school and develop one or more CSPAP-related interventions.

Increased efforts and external funding awards have helped build infrastructure in the UWG Lab, acquire physical activity monitoring devices, hire PA specialists, and develop additional opportunities for university students to lead before- and after-school PA programs in local districts. These efforts are providing students with opportunities to conduct research with faculty members. Research interests focus on the impact CSPAP has on adolescents' PA behaviors, stemming from the need for research addressing this student population. Specific outcomes include (a) secondary students' PA behavior, (b) feasibility and sustainability of before/after-school PA programming, (c) the impact a PAL has on CSPAP implementation and effectiveness within a school setting, and (d) the influence a before/after-school PA program has on physical and mental health of secondary students. Even with the increase in research efforts related to CSPAP, the focal point of the program is developing quality physical education teachers by providing them with research-based pedagogical knowledge and skills for effective teaching and leadership within their future setting.

## Conclusion

The purpose of this article was to provide an in-depth review of a PETE program and how it has in the past or continues to incorporate CSPAP within its curriculum and extracurricular programming. There are various ways to provide students with meaningful experiences that prepare them to gain confidence and take on the role of a PAL once they graduate. The PETE program faculty members believe it is important to find creative educational experiences (outside of the classroom) that allow for student growth and development. Though not all PETE programs can implement every single CSPAP-related effort identified here, it is critical to make sure that students are provided experiences outside of the traditional classroom. This will help

them continue to grow and learn how to become a champion for physical education and schoolwide PA promotion.

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