

ARTICLE REVIEWED

'Skinny Little Mexican Kid': Life History of a Latino Immigrant Preservice Physical Education Teacher

Gaudreault, K. L., Vasquez, M., Mellor, C., Mason, E., & Lucero, A. (2023). "Skinny little Mexican kid": Life history of a Latino immigrant preservice physical education teacher. *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education*. Ahead of print.

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THE PROBLEM

Within physical education teacher education (PETE) programs and kinesiology-based higher education departments, individuals of Latin American origin are rare or underrepresented (Columna et al., 2018). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2020), 79.3% of teachers are white and only 9.3% are Hispanic. Given this great disparity in the teaching profession, there is a need to understand how to recruit and train Latinx students to PETE programs and support them to be successful future educators.



Research Summary

This study was guided by the occupational socialization theory and focused on the phases of acculturation and professional socialization. Purposeful sampling was used to select one participant who was an immigrant Latino preservice PE teacher. Data collection included interviews, critical incident accounts, and artifacts. Twelve interviews, each ranging from 11-60 minutes, were conducted, recorded and transcribed. Additionally, three critical incident accounts about race, ethnicity and culture were collected. Photographs were also used to describe the participant's personal experiences. The interviews were analyzed, and the two themes of acculturation and professional socialization emerged.

Conclusion

The participant described various life experiences that shaped his decision to enter a PETE program. During his childhood, he moved several times, and sports became a way for him to make new friends at new schools. As he entered middle school, he experienced both high- and low-quality PE instruction as well as effective and ineffective PE teachers. The participant recalled how a university professor's enthusiasm for teaching motivated him to continue his program. He also described his primary focus on teaching, not coaching. Lastly, the participant described the feeling of wanting to belong. Since he moved a lot throughout his childhood, the feeling of belonging was prevalent throughout his life.

Key Takeaway

The experiences shared by the participant bring a greater understanding of what it is to be a male immigrant Latino preservice PE teacher. His childhood experiences shaped his decision to pursue a career where he could be active, and his professional socialization encouraged him to pursue a PETE program. This information is insightful for PETE faculty and programs who want to recruit Latinx students.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Columna, L., Hodge, S. R., Samalot-Rivera, A., Vigo-Valentín, A. N., & Cervantes, C. M. (2018). The Hispanic experience in physical education teacher education programs: A qualitative study. *Quest*, 70(2), 256-274.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/00336297.2017.1371048>

National Center for Education Statistics. (2020). *Race and ethnicity of public school teachers and their students*.

<https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2020/2020103/index.asp>