

Health-related fitness: Preservice physical educators attempt the model

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This study aimed to explore and describe the perceptions held by 11 preservice teachers regarding Health-Related Fitness as they learn to teach within the mode during an early field experience to middle school pupils. Research questions included: (a) what are preservice teachers' perceived characteristics of a quality teacher and healthy teaching environment, (b) what issues do preservice teachers consider critical from their teaching? and (c) what are preservice teachers' conceptions of teaching Health-Related Fitness? It was hypothesized that issues at the beginning of the early field experience would be more self-centered (i.e., class management, preparation, curriculum and pedagogical content knowledge) and become more student-centered toward the end of the early field experience (i.e., joy of student achievement, developing relationships). Most preservice teachers and middle school pupils ultimately "bought in" to Health-Related Fitness by the culmination of the early field experience and preservice teachers did, indeed, become more student-centered towards the end of the experience. This exploratory study suggests that preservice teachers learn their conceptions of teaching Health-Related Fitness from a variety of different environments, contexts, and leadership figures. These personal experiences teaching Health-Related Fitness manifest themselves in preservice teachers' personal understandings of how Health-Related Fitness content should be practiced in physical education. Physical education teacher education faculty can facilitate preservice teachers' self-exploration through introspective and reflective practices.