Pedagogical Content Knowledge in Athletic Training Education: A Qualitative Case Study

Payne EK; University of Nevada, Reno.

**Context:** Previous research in athletic training education focuses on student learning styles and the clinical education component. What is lacking is how educators blend their content knowledge in the domains of athletic training and pedagogical knowledge to instruct students. **Objective:** The purpose of this study was to investigate how one athletic training educator (ATE) strived to blend his content knowledge with his pedagogical knowledge to provide effective instruction to his students. The research questions guiding this study were: (1) How does Dr. Berry teach his undergraduate athletic training courses, and (2) Why does he teach that way. **Design:** The study was designed as a case study to allow for the intensive examination of Dr. Berry’s teaching. **Setting:** This research was conducted in an educational setting. Berry is currently the athletic training education program director at Saginaw Valley State University. **Participant:** The participant was David Berry, PhD, ATC, EMT. Berry’s educational background and professional experiences made for a unique participant in this case study. Berry may not represent the typical ATE, but other ATEs may be able to relate to and learn from his experiences. Berry’s previously published reflection on his teaching showed his willingness to examine his teaching. **Data Collection and Analysis:** Data sources included interviews, videotaped teaching lessons, course syllabi, curriculum vitae, field notes, and memos. Interviews were transcribed verbatim and a three-phase coding approach was used to analyze the data. Throughout this process, memos were written about the emerging ideas and additional reflections about Berry and the interviews. Trustworthiness was ensured through triangulation of the data and review of the themes with an expert in qualitative research. **Results:** Two themes emerged in the data: (a) Berry’s mindfulness of the personal development of his students and (b) Berry’s mindfulness to how his professional practice affects his students. **Conclusions:** The findings demonstrated that, to Berry, teaching is much more than the delivery of the required content during class. He is also preparing his students for the profession of athletic training and to be responsible individuals, no matter what careers they pursued after graduation. Berry is as an educator and mentor. His reason for teaching was simple, to help his students improve both personally and professionally, and caring about his students success and development helped drive his decisions about his teaching. Several areas of further research are warranted upon completion of this study including the use of multiple case studies to examine the teaching of several ATEs and longitudinal studies on the reflection of ATEs in the classroom setting. This case study may help ATEs understand how and why one ATE teaches the way he does. **Word Count:** 435