

Becoming a physical education teacher



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Teaching physical education provides a number of challenges that are constantly changing (Goodlad and McMannon, 2004). In the demanding role, an effective teacher of physical education must aim to ensure that all pupils receive equal guidance, regardless of age and ability. In addition, it is often the case, that such guidance must be tailored to the individual needs of pupils in order to see pupils fulfil their potential (BASES, 2010). It is this demanding nature, challenges and potential rewards that the teaching role brings which inspires me to get involved in such a career.

Despite my desire, becoming a teacher of physical education is becoming increasingly more difficult. Places on PGDE University courses are more limited than ever before, whilst permanent jobs within Scotland are becoming a rarity. Due to limited availability of permanent jobs, universities and employers are now looking for candidates with better credentials than ever before.

I will now look more closely at the positive and negative aspects of my credentials in relation to the needs of a career in teaching physical education and how I am progressing toward my career aspiration. By evaluating my credentials I will look to justify my chosen area of development. Finally, I will look at how my forthcoming placement can help me improve my chosen area of development and therefore progress toward my career aspiration.

In order to see where I currently sit in terms of fulfilling the entry requirements and criteria asked of my desired career path, I carried out a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis (Cottrell, 2003). This allowed me to evaluate both the positive and negative

aspects of my credentials, in turn, helping me to decipher an area which I felt needed more work and attention. I decided, as a result, that I require more experience within the secondary school environment. More specifically I need to familiarise myself with, the new curriculum which is currently being employed within schools throughout Scotland, entitled: Curriculum for Excellence. The area of development described was decided taking into account the SMART-F target setting acronym which stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time bound and Flexible (Cottrell, 2003).

In order to justify my choice area of development, I will now analyse my strengths and weaknesses in relation to the current needs and requirements attributed to the role of a physical education teacher.

According to BASES (2010), employers of physical education teachers will typically request the completion of relevant teaching programme. This usually comes in the form of a relevant undergraduate four-year course in addition to a one year postgraduate Diploma of Education (PGDE) completed after your degree. This is certainly the case for all council schools in Scotland.

In order to get a place on a PGDE course BASES (2010) suggest the normal requirements would be the completion of a relevant undergraduate degree at 2: 1 level. All places offered in Scottish universities also require SQA Higher English at level C or above to be attained. In addition, university course leaders may also place additional conditions when offering course places. The most common of these conditions is the gaining of teaching and school based experience before joining the course.

The gaining of relevant coaching qualifications may also be highlighted if areas of weakness or gaps in relevant subject knowledge are identified.

Other useful skills include: good and adaptable communication skills, reliability, friendliness, team-working skills, enthusiasm, motivational skills and patience.

In relation to these requirements my SWOT analysis makes clear that there are elements of criteria I am placed well to fulfil and others I need more work on. On a positive note, I have already attained a level B in SQA Higher English. I have also already received a general degree in sports coaching. Although a general degree alone will not be enough to gain a PGDE course place, I do believe a 2nd Class Degree is achievable and more likely to gain entry. However I have noted I don't believe I have the ability to achieve a 1st Class Degree which may affect my chances, if other candidates are able to achieve this level.

In addition to my Degree and Higher English, I have also gained an SFA Level 1 Early Touches Certificate which is a relevant qualification to the physical education teaching profession. Although I consider this one of my strengths, the lack of other relevant qualifications may also be considered a weakness.

Furthermore, other skills which BASES (2010) note as important such as communication and team working skills are aspects which I believe to be my strengths. Another strength which I believe to be particularly important is my I. T. Skills. Donnelly (2002) highlights the ever growing impact that information technology is having in the teaching profession, suggesting that learning and teaching will be centred around technology.

Conversely, it is also clear that, of the important additional conditions that may be applied to PGDE course places, secondary school based experience is a particular weakness of mine, having only completed one placement. Most of the teaching experience which I do have has been gained through my initial school placement provided by Active Schools and these focused solely on Primary Schools. Although the primary school placements provided me with a good grounding in terms of teaching experience. The need is apparent in terms of gaining experience with secondary school aged children. I think it is also important to note that not only is it important to become experienced with the varying ages of children in secondary school, it is also important to become aware of the varying levels of maturity displayed by children in secondary schools. I myself can remember fellow pupils of the same age from my time in secondary school that were far more immature. Gaining experience in both areas will enhance my knowledge and ability in terms of delivering appropriate content and displaying a certain teaching style to certain groups.

Tying with my lack of experience, another weakness which is detailed in my SWOT analysis is my lack of knowledge and experience of the new curriculum being employed within Scottish education: Curriculum for Excellence. Scottish education is currently undergoing radical change with the introduction of a “ 3-18 forward looking, coherent, more flexible and enriched curriculum providing Scotland’s children and young people with the knowledge, skills and attributes needed for life in the 21st century” (LTScotland, 2010). Having received advice from universities where I may

potentially gain a PGDE place, the importance of gaining knowledge and an understanding of the new curriculum cannot be underestimated.

Having addressed some of my main strengths and weaknesses it is important to look at how the opportunities listed in my SWOT analysis may help me in realising my career aspirations, along with addressing my area of development.

The most valuable and relevant opportunity listed in my SWOT analysis is the twenty four hour placement provided by Abertay University. The nature of the placement is to be solely decided by myself, which will allow me to arrange a something which is completely relevant to my needs. I will be looking to place myself within a secondary school, preferably a school which is proactive in their approach to Curriculum for Excellence. This will allow me to work on many of the issues identified such as, gaining experience of secondary school environments along with developing an understanding of the new curriculum. Furthermore, it will also provide me the opportunity to build my knowledge in relevant sports which I don't have qualifications in.

In conclusion, I believe that I have chosen an appropriate area of development in relation to my career aspirations based on the strengths and weaknesses identified in my SWOT analysis. Due to the difficulty of acquiring both PGDE places and permanent P. E. teaching jobs the importance of using the opportunities identified to gain the experience of secondary school and new curriculum cannot be underestimated. It is essential that I strive to improve myself, particularly in the weak areas identified, if I am to fulfil my career aspirations.

References

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