During the last decade of the twentieth century and the first decade of the twenty-first century, the number of students taking physical education (PE) in high schools decreased from 75.8% to 64.3% (National Physical Activity Plan Alliance [NPAPA], 2016). The most recent statistics (NPAPA, 2018) indicate that only 52% of high school students take PE one day a week, and only 30% have PE five days a week. Clearly, our programs are frequently challenged and marginalized. High-stakes testing, increased requirements in other academic areas, budgetary concerns, and negative stereotypes are a few of the reasons for challenging PE requirements.

Now it is time to become proactive, to promote our programs and prevent the challenges that have led to program reductions in the past. To do that, we must have evidence to support what we do. In this article we present a dozen reasons that can be used in support of conceptual physical education (CPE) programs at the secondary school level. The authors make the case that implementing CPE programs will help physical educators gain the support of all stakeholders, including students, parents, teachers, administrators, school board members, and community members.

In the pages that follow, the authors define CPE, present a dozen reasons for implementing CPE programs, and offer suggestions for implementing CPE programs and overcoming barriers within secondary school settings. Finally, suggestions are provided for implementing a CPE/FE course in PE teacher education (PETE) programs.

What Is CPE?

A quality PE curriculum uses a variety of programs to meet its overarching objective of promoting lifelong physical activity (PA). In 2012 SHAPE America – Society of Health and Physical Educators recognized fitness education (FE) as one important type of program (SHAPE America, 2012). A committee of SHAPE America members developed a framework of objectives for FE and defined FE as “a subcomponent of the total PE program, focusing on helping students acquire knowledge and higher-order understanding of health-related physical fitness (PF), the product, as well as habits of PA and other healthy lifestyles, the process, that lead

Charles B. Corbin (chuck.corbin@asu.edu) is professor emeritus in the College of Health Solutions at Arizona State University in Phoenix, AZ. Pamela Hodges Kulinna is a professor in the Mary Lou Fulton Teacher’s College at Arizona State University in Mesa, AZ. Benjamin A. Sibley is an associate professor in the Department of Recreation Management and Physical Education at Appalachian State University in Boone, NC.
CPE is an early type of FE, and it is distinguished from other FE programs such as Physical Best (Conckle, 2019; National Association for Sport and Physical Education [NASPE], 1999) in that CPE programs use a textbook and classroom sessions as well as activity sessions to meet PE and FE objectives. CPE programs were first introduced at the college level in the 1960s (Corbin & Cardinal, 2008; National Association for Sport and Physical Education [NASPE], 1999) and at the high school level in the late 1970s (Corbin, Kulina & Yu, 2020). CPE programs have the same general objectives as FE programs (see above); however, they are typically more comprehensive, focusing on all five of physical education’s national content standards (see reason 2). CPE features the learning of self-management skills (e.g., self-assessment, goal setting, self-planning, self-monitoring) to help students in becoming well-informed consumers capable of making good decisions in the future (Corbin et al., 2020, p. 33). Fitness for Life is the most common name for CPE, but a number of other titles are also used, including but not limited to: Personal Fitness, Concepts of Physical Fitness, and Health-related Fitness. Readers interested in more information about the history of secondary school CPE are referred to Corbin et al. (2020).

A Dozen Reasons for Including CPE in Your Program

Reason 1. CPE programs help students be physically active. Being physically active is an overarching goal of PE and physical literacy (PL) as well as America’s 2018 Guidelines for Physical Activity (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [USDHHS], 2018). The most recent content standards for PE (SHAPE, 2014) indicate that students who meet the outcomes for five basic standards are considered to be physically literate (see Reason 2). PL is defined in many ways, but a recent review noted that “the overarching focus on lifetime PA is common to all” (Corbin, 2016, p. 19). The most recent Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans also emphasize the importance of PA for people of all ages, indicating that “regular PA is one of the most important things people can do to improve their health. Moving more and sitting less have tremendous benefits for everyone, regardless of age, sex, race, ethnicity, or current fitness level” (USDHHS, 2018, p. 2).

Research studies also indicate that PA is good for the brain (e.g., improved concentration and attention, executive function) and that there is a positive relationship among fitness measures and variables such as academic achievement (American College of Sports Medicine [ACSM], 2016). Also, regular PA is associated...
Reason 2. CPE programs help students meet national content standards as well as standards established by individual states. In 1992 (NASPE, 1992), a committee of SHAPE America members was appointed to answer the question, “What should students know and be able to do after completing a PE program?” The committee issued a report, and this report stimulated the development of national content standards for PE. The most recent standards describe specific outcomes for becoming physically literate through PE (SHAPE America, 2014). As noted earlier, a taskforce of SHAPE America members has also created an instructional framework for PE programs (SHAPE America, 2012) that includes specific benchmarks for achievement and that complements the PE content standards. Many, if not all, state content standards are based on the SHAPE America PE standards/outcomes and FE benchmarks. State and local school districts judge program effectiveness on the basis of a program’s ability to meet these outcomes and benchmarks. Current CPE programs provide descriptive tables (Corbin & Le Masurier, 2014; Le Masurier, Lambdin, Sibley, & Corbin, 2018) that show how CPE programs can help students meet all of the PE content standards/outcomes and FE benchmarks as outlined in the SHAPE America documents.

Reason 3. CPE programs have historically adhered to an established and effective program philosophy that provides for individualized student learning. Simply put, a philosophy is your way of viewing things around you. Effective educational programs are typically based on a philosophy or point of view. The HELP philosophy has served as the basic point of view for CPE and other PE programs for several decades (e.g., Fitnessgram®, Physical Best, Fitness for Life). The philosophy features Health for Everyone for a Lifetime in a Personal way (Corbin & Lindsey, 1979). The HELP philosophy focuses on meeting the personal needs of each and every student with the intent of promoting health-related PF through lifelong adherence to PA programs. The HELP philosophy, on which CPE and FE programs have been built, has served students well over the years.

Reason 4. CPE programs help students to achieve higher-order objectives that guide them toward becoming good consumers, problem solvers, and decision makers. In an earlier section a case was made for CPE as an agent for building PL, specifically for promoting lifelong PA. The word literate means being educated or cultured (Literate, n.d.). A literate person is one who has “learned to learn” (Ennis, 2015). Bloom (1956) suggested that students should be challenged to achieve beyond basic knowledge. Higher-order learning, as proposed by Bloom and others, includes the ability to understand, apply, analyze, evaluate and create. In the 1980s several physical educators proposed that programs, especially secondary school programs, should focus on helping students to learn higher-order objectives (Corbin, 1987; Pate & Corbin, 1981; Pate, Corbin, Simons-Morton, & Ross, 1987). The stairway to lifetime fitness, health, and wellness was developed to illustrate how learners in PE can move from being dependent to becoming independent decision makers (autonomous). The most current version is illustrated in Figure 1.

Initially, students are dependent on us as teachers. Students often lack content knowledge and benefit from teachers using a direct teaching style that helps them to participate as directed. Learning to understand and apply concepts and principles and to use self-management skills (e.g., self-assessment, goal setting, self-monitoring, self-planning) helps student analyze and evaluate their own behaviors. The ultimate goal is to help students to become independent and autonomous problem-solvers capable of making decisions that enhance fitness, health and wellness throughout life. The stairway to lifetime fitness, health, and wellness has served as a model for CPE in an effort to promote higher-order learning, to help students “learn to learn,” and to help students achieve a level of independence (autonomy) resulting from the practice of adhering to self-directed healthy lifestyles. Green (2014) referred to this as the “PE Effect” or the effect of PE on influencing out of school

Figure 1. The stairway to lifetime fitness, health, and wellness

PA behaviors. Ennis noted that knowledge, including higher-order knowledge, has led to the creation of transformative curricula, such as CPE, that change student lives and promote a lifetime of activity (Ennis, 2017). Also, as noted in the initial statement in this section, the higher-order learning that results from CPE provides a foundation for learning in other PE classes that follow, whether required or elective.

Reason 5. CPE programs are based on sound learning theories that help students to become motivated and confident in their ability to be active throughout life.

Research in educational psychology has resulted in the development of learning theories that guide the development of quality education programs. Accordingly, a number of theories that provide a foundation for CPE programs are described here. Because space is limited, only a few can be discussed here. More details about theories that underlie CPE are available at https://www.human kinetics.com/AcuCustom/Sitename/DAM/168/1-Theoretical_ Basis.pdf. Among the theories that inform CPE programs is social cognitive theory. It emphasizes the importance of developing self-efficacy (confidence that is situation-specific such as when playing basketball) and positive expectations for teachers and students. For example, if the outcomes of the health behaviors are valued, it leads to a positive change in the health behavior. This provides a foundation for building higher-order learning, promoting confidence and intrinsic motivation (self-motivation), and promoting the “PE Effect.”

Self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000), which emphasizes the importance of autonomy and intrinsic motivation, also provides a basis for CPE. Autonomy is an ultimate higher-order learning objective (see Reason 4), and intrinsic motivation is central to achieving the goals of CPE. The health belief model is a model for health behavior change (e.g., Whale Conley et al., 2018) that features several factors including: (1) the belief that a health problem will have harmful effects, (2) the belief that a person is susceptible to the problem, (3) the belief that the perceived benefits of changing a lifestyle will prevent the problem, (4) the belief that overcoming barriers to the problem will solve the problem, (5) the belief that a person is ready to make a change, and (6) the confidence (self-efficacy) that he or she can do what is necessary to solve the problem. Both self-determination theory and the health belief model emphasize the importance of self-efficacy, self-motivation, and the belief that these factors can help in overcoming barriers to change. Accordingly, self-management skills (e.g., in-class activities, goal setting, and reflections) are regularly practiced in CPE programs to promote changes in health behaviors, such as becoming more active, eating well, and managing stress.

The transtheoretical model (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1983), more commonly known as the stages of change model, uses elements of several theories. It postulates that health behaviors do not change all at once. Change typically occurs in five stages, from precontemplation (not thinking about change) to maintenance.
(achieving change and maintaining it). The model also emphasizes the processes of change such as self-assessment, goal setting, self-monitoring, and self-planning, all self-management skills emphasized in CPE.

Finally, it is important to recognize that teachers have different value orientations (value different styles of teaching). Ennis and others have identified several different value orientations, including disciplinary mastery, learning process, self-actualization, ecological validity, and social reconstruction (for more information, see Zhu & Chen, 2018). CPE programs can be designed to help teachers of all value orientations meet their prioritized student outcomes to help students “learn to learn” (e.g., Science, PE, & Me! and the Science of Healthful Living; Ennis, 2015).

Reason 6. CPE programs complement Comprehensive School Physical Activity Programs (CSPAP), FE, and other programs that promote health-related fitness and lifelong PA.

Many FE programs, including CPE, use the SHAPE America instructional framework that includes specific achievement benchmarks (SHAPE, 2012). The FE programs that are commonly employed in the United States include Physical Best, FitnessGram® (assessment/educational materials), President’s Youth Fitness Program (PYFP), and CSPAP. In general, all FE programs have similar objectives. Based on author involvement, FE workshops such as those conducted by Physical Best have been attended more frequently by elementary than by secondary teachers over the years, while CPE workshops are more frequently attended by secondary teachers. FE programs at the elementary level that lead into CPE programs at the middle and high school levels make CPE more effective because the students have a base knowledge of health-related fitness content. FE programs can also concurrently work with CPE programs to include health-related fitness activities and knowledge in PE.

While each program has its unique characteristics, a general overview of each is provided. Physical Best is a comprehensive FE program that focuses on integrating active lessons during PE (NASPE, 2011). FitnessGram® and the PYFP include fitness assessments with ancillary education programs ([http://www.cooperinstitute.org/fitnessgram; https://pyfp.org/how-it-works](http://www.cooperinstitute.org/fitnessgram; https://pyfp.org/how-it-works)). These fitness assessments use criterion-based standards that complement lessons and students’ goal setting related to components of health-related fitness. The CSPAP program is a different type of approach that supports increased PA opportunities across the school day, including a quality PE program (as well as before/after school opportunities, during school PA opportunities, staff programming in PA, and community programming in PA; [https://www.shapeamerica.org/csap/what.aspx](https://www.shapeamerica.org/csap/what.aspx)). CSPAP programming can work hand-in-hand with a CPE program. For example, the CPE program leads students to increase participation in other CSPAP components at their school (e.g., before or after school activities) as well as propelling students toward reaching their nationally recommended goal of 60 minutes of PA each day.

Reason 7. CPE programs complement other quality PE programs and provide a strong foundation for a quality PE. CPE is one of many program models for use in secondary schools. Examples of other popular program models are Sport Education (Siedentop, Hastie, & van der Mars, 2019), Cooperative Learning (e.g., Dyson & Casey, 2016), Outdoor Education (e.g., Gilbertson, Bates, McLaughlin & Ewert, 2006), Adventure Education (e.g., Prouty, Panicucci, & Collinson, 2007); Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility (e.g., Hellison, 2011); Sports, Play and Active Recreation for Kids (e.g., Baranowski et al., 2010); the Science of Healthful Living (middle school level only, e.g., Ennis, 2015); Teaching Games for Understanding (e.g., Butler & Griffin, 2010); and the Health Club models (e.g., Houston & Kulinna, 2014). The various program models offer a variety of complementary approaches to planning a comprehensive quality PE program that focuses on promoting lifelong PA and the adoption of other healthy behaviors. As such, CPE programs do not compete with other innovative high school programs. Rather, as noted previously, CPE programs provide foundational information for use in other parts of a quality PE program.

Siedentop, Hastie and van der Mars (2019) indicate that secondary PE programs can have dual or even multiple curricular themes. For example, CPE and Sport Education can complement one another. When these two models synergistically coexist, students learn important fitness concepts during sport education “seasons” as they acquire sports skills and learn how to play a sport. CPE can also provide a foundation for sport experiences, and in turn, participation in sport may enhance the learning of CPE concepts. Similarly, CPE programs can complement the other curricular models listed above and can be integrated with more traditional sports-based PE programs.
Reason 8. CPE programs provide for academic connections that benefit students in other subject matter areas and provide opportunities for social-emotional learning. As noted in Reasons 1 and 2, the primary goals of PE are to help students to become physically literate and meet the outcomes for each PE content standard. In accomplishing these goals, however, PE can help students to make “academic connections” to other content areas. For example, vocabulary terms with definitions and “academic connection” features (e.g., use of metaphors in PA) are provided to benefit learning in language arts. Writing assignments in portfolio worksheets offer opportunities for writing across the curriculum. Special features and portfolio worksheets that require math skills are provided. In addition, a wealth of information related to the various sciences (e.g., physics, anatomy, physiology, kinesiology) is included within CPE programs.

CPE programs also help students learn self-management skills that benefit social-emotional learning (SEL). Among the many self-management skills highlighted in CPE are skills for healthy living that enhance autonomy and competence (e.g., self-assessment, goal setting, self-planning, relapse prevention), self-awareness skills (e.g., self-motivation, managing time, managing stress), and relationship skills that promote a sense of belonging (e.g., communication, social support, empathy, leadership, conflict resolution). The focus on SEL helps students to achieve outcomes outlined in national PE standards, in meeting objectives advocated in Hellison’s Teaching Physical and Social Responsibility Model (Hellison, 1995), and in meeting the goals of the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL, 2019).

Reason 9. CPE programs provide opportunities for assessment and accountability. Quality PE programs are designed to help all students meet learning objectives based on educational standards (see Reason 2). The goal of assessment is to determine if students have met these learning objectives. Two common forms of assessment, formative and summative, are described in the paragraphs that follow.

Formative assessments help students learn by providing them feedback related to their performance during the learning process. When conducted during a unit, formative assessments provide information about progress the student is making and help identify areas in need of improvement. Examples in CPE include periodic quizzes during a unit, projects, group activities, self-assessments of fitness and skill, and worksheets.

Summative assessments are designed to evaluate student learning at the end of a unit or course. They provide information to students, parents, teachers and administrators indicating the degree of student learning and growth. Examples in CPE include tests at the end of units or a course, demonstrations (e.g., skills and fitness assessments), reports on projects (e.g., creating an exercise video or computer slide presentation on a fitness topic), and portfolios containing accumulated worksheets and other assignments (e.g., program planning skills, self-assessment results, quiz results, project results, demonstration reports).

Reason 10. CPE programs work! When PE programs are challenged, we often cite the presence of a variety of issues among youth, including, but not limited to, the high incidence of overweight and obesity (the obesity epidemic), the lack of skills needed for lifelong PA, failure to meet health-related fitness standards, sedentary lifestyles (excessive screen time), and failure to meet national PA guidelines (NPAPA, 2018). In defense, educators argue that PE classes taught by well-trained teachers can increase in-class activity, an argument the authors can support (Corbin et al., 2020). However, claims that PE provides the above-mentioned benefits are often made with limited supporting evidence.

CPE is a type of PE for which there is more direct evidence. Results of a series of longitudinal studies, Project Active Teen (PAT), indicated that CPE programs can be effective in promoting out-of-school PA long after participation in a CPE class (Kulinna, Corbin, & Yu, 2018). Students in the PAT studies took a yearlong CPE course in which they used a textbook and had classroom sessions one day a week. In addition, they participated in activity sessions that complemented the classroom sessions and performed integrated traditional PE activities. Teachers were trained in CPE methods and participated in regular inservice education during which detailed lesson plans were provided. Results of the PAT studies showed that students taking CPE as freshmen were less likely to be inactive and more likely to meet physical activity guidelines than freshmen who took traditional PE (TPE). This was true when the students were juniors and seniors in high school (Dale, Corbin, & Cuddihy, 1998) and several years after graduation from high school (CPE (Dale & Corbin, 2000). A follow-up study conducted 20 years after the CPE students graduated from high school showed that the CPE students were more active and less likely to be totally inactive than national peers and maintained high levels of PA 20 years after graduation (Kulinna et al., 2018). In addition, “about 56% of respondents indicated that they remembered content from the class, 50% indicated that they still used the information, 47% indicated that they found the class useful after graduation, and 92% indicated that they currently consider themselves to be well informed about PF and PA” (Kulinna et al., 2018, p. 3).

Over the course of the three PAT studies, 50 tests for statistical differences were conducted, and of these 12 were significant—all in favor of the PAT groups. The authors of the most recent PAT longitudinal studies suggested that CPE “can be a vital part of a total quality PE program that promotes lifelong PA and complements quality traditional PE programs” (Kulinna et al., 2018, p. 5). The findings of the PAT studies are consistent with results of studies at the college level showing increased PA among CPE participants (for details, see Corbin & Cardinal, 2008).

CPE at the middle school level has also been shown to result in increased knowledge and out of school PA (Wang & Chen, 2019a). Two years after taking either CPE (experimental group) or multi-activity PE (controls), group differences in PF/PA knowledge and out-of-school PA were determined. Those taking CPE had higher knowledge scores and greater participation in PA outside the school. In a separate article Wang and Chen (2019b) made the case that PF/PA knowledge is an underlying pathway to participation in out-of-school PA. Research findings from other studies support the Wang-Chen hypothesis. They demonstrate a positive relationship between PF/PA knowledge and participation in PA (Chen, Liu, & Schaben, 2017; DiLorenzo et al., 1998; Thompson & Hannon, 2012). Other studies show that CPE programs can improve PF/PA knowledge (Brynteson & Adams, 1993; Kulinna et al., 2019; Rider, Imwold, & Johnson, 1986; Wang et al., 2017). Several researchers have provided evidence that students at the secondary level lack PF/PA knowledge and hold misconceptions concerning healthy behaviors (e.g., PA, PF, nutrition). Collectively, the research findings suggest that high school students lack PF/PA knowledge, that CPE can improve it, and that the resulting knowledge improvement is one reason for the active lifestyle benefits of CPE.

Evidence matters! And the evidence supports CPE. Including CPE in your program provides you with ammunition that puts
your quality PE program on a proactive footing and helps head off challenges to your program.

Reason 11. CPE programs can enhance teacher self-esteem and PE program reputation. Over the years the authors have conducted numerous workshops to help teachers implement CPE programs. Conversations with teachers after they have implemented CPE programs reveal an unexpected finding. Teachers in successful programs reported that after implementing CPE, the status of their programs improved, especially when efforts were made to inform other teachers about the CPE program. More than a few teachers have reported that other teachers hold them in higher regard when they see the student text and hear what students are learning in CPE. Teachers also reported that they are more often asked for advice on PF and PA by other teachers, who increasingly see them as experts on these topics. Several teachers reported being asked to speak to civic groups after word got out about the information being taught in CPE programs. Especially important is the feeling expressed by teachers that students are more likely to see them as experts when teaching CPE. As perceptions of teachers improves, so does the reputation of the program.

Recently, a CPE elective (Fit for Life 2) was created as an academic elective in the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD). The University of California (UC) requires prospective students to complete approved electives as a condition of admission. The SFUSD Fit for Life 2 course is one class, along with classes in other academic areas, that meets the requirements as an approved elective (SFUSD, 2019). In the SFUSD, Fit for Life 2 can be elected after completing the required freshman CPE class. The inclusion of Fit for Life 2 in the SFUSD is one example of how CPE can improve academic credibility and enhance the reputation of PE teachers and PE programs.

Reason 12. CPE programs have the support of the medical and public health experts and this leads to teacher support. With the accumulation of scientific evidence that PA has many health benefits, experts have called for a public health approach to PE (for details, see Corbin et al., 2020). This approach has the support of medical and public health experts and has provided a boost for CPE. Dr. Jeff Boone of the Boone Heart Institute in Colorado was an early supporter of CPE. He suggested that the benefits of CPE can be substantial. He noted:

the staggering cost of medical care today mandates that preventive interventions receive the highest priority during the formative years of growth and development... In most school systems, students are not provided with the information necessary to make intelligent decisions regarding their PF. However, if this curriculum for FE is added to PE courses, students who are becoming young adults will be able to engage appropriately in a program of healthy exercise with specific guidelines and directions. (Boone, 1983, p. 515)

Scholarly organizations such as the National Academy of Kinesiology (American Academy of Physical Education, 1983) support the inclusion of CPE in school programs, and, as noted below, many states have regulations supporting CPE programs. Florida was an early leader, but many other states have followed their lead. Jahn, Kulina and Corbin (2010) asked state PE coordinators about CPE and found that of the 32 states responding, 11 (34%) had CPE courses at the high school level. The research evidence indicates that after implementing CPE, 70% of teachers reported CPE objectives to be either very important or important (Wilking & Corbin, 2002). Johnson and Harageones (1994) reported similar teacher “buy in” among CPE teachers. These results suggest that over time teachers accept CPE programs and become committed to their objectives.

Suggestions for CPE Implementation

Schools interested in CPE programs can benefit from the experience of those who have implemented programs. Corbin and colleagues (2020) have described many suggestions for helping those interested in starting a CPE program (see also Kulina et al., 2018). Some of their suggestions are listed in Table 1.

Helping Teachers Overcome Barriers

The authors of this article have had considerable experience conducting workshops designed to help teachers implement CPE programs. Feedback from teachers during the workshops, and in conversations after program implementation, suggests that there are some barriers that must be overcome. Some of these barriers are described below.

The Physical Activity Question. In CPE students spend some days in the classroom. “How can we justify having students in a classroom when so many students fail to meet national PA guidelines?” This is a question we frequently hear. Here is our answer. An overarching goal of PE programs is to promote lifelong PA. To be sure, taking time from PA to be in a classroom reduces PA on classroom days. However, CPE is not meant to be all of PE; rather, it is one part of PE conducted for a limited time period with a limited number of classroom days. The evidence indicates that time spent in CPE yields more PA later in high school and later in life, more than compensating for the time lost in PA while the students are in the classroom. If, in CPE, we can teach students self-management and consumer skills that will help them to be active throughout life, the limited classroom time in CPE seems well worth it. The research findings support this idea (Corbin et al., 2020; Kulina et al., 2018).

Expanded Teacher Workload. Students complete assignments such as portfolios containing worksheets, quizzes, projects, and so on. Assignments must be graded, and that takes time. Also, teacher preparation is required, especially when programs are new to a school. However, the assignments and assessments promote student accountability and over time provide justification for CPE programs with stakeholders.

Lack of Content Knowledge. CPE programs require several kinds of knowledge. Teachers must know what to teach (common content knowledge) and how to teach it (specialized content knowledge). Those new to CPE may be threatened by lack of either kind of knowledge, especially as it relates to CPE. As noted earlier, there are benefits to gaining the knowledge necessary to teach CPE. Professional development programs and/or taking a college class (see the next section) can help teachers overcome this barrier. For additional details concerning barriers to successful implementation of CPE programs, see Corbin and colleagues (2020).

CPE and PE Teacher Education Programs (PETE)

One way to overcome the barriers to implementing CPE in secondary schools is to prepare teacher candidates in university health and PETE programs using the CPE model. Some colleges now include courses in their teacher preparation curricula that incorporate CPE and FE programs (e.g., Arizona State University,
If your school or school district mandates online learning in all
• Consider an elective CPE program.
• Consider a pilot CPE program.
• Provide in-service for CPE teachers.
• Seek student “buy in.”
• Commit to national and state content standards. See Reason 2.
• Use the CPE evidence to gain the support of parents, administrators, and school board members. Make all stakeholders aware of CPE plans prior to implementation. Keep them informed at all stages of implementation.
• Maintain program fidelity. For a program to be successful it must be faithfully implemented. Stick to the plan.
• Seek student “buy in.” Researchers indicate that there may be initial resistance to new program implementation and CPE programs are no exception. They indicate, however, that most students become supportive. One of the most important factors is teacher attitude toward CPE. If teachers communicate the value of CPE, student acceptance is more likely to follow. Adhering to the HELP philosophy and emphasizing an individualized approach go a long way to student program “buy in.”
• Get access to resources. Successful programs need adequate resources that are often limited for physical education programs. Effective CPE requires student texts, a classroom, and teacher support materials. Use the reasons outlined above to make the case for getting the resources you need. Presentations to groups (e.g., PTO, civic groups) can result in financial support for resources.
• Provide in-service for CPE teachers. The chances of a new program being successful is dependent on teachers’ feelings of confidence and competence in their abilities to carry out the program. In-service programs, including available online programs (see www.fitnessforlife.org), help teachers feel able to carry out CPE programs successfully.
• Consider a pilot CPE program. Some schools have found that conducting a pilot program with a limited number of students can provide a starting point for implementing CPE. If this approach is chosen, begin with one or two classes. Advertise and seek enrollment of interested students.
• Consider an elective CPE program. If your school district does not require physical education for all students, consider offering the class as an elective. Many colleges no longer have required physical education, but virtually all of them have an elective CPE class (Corbin & Cardinal, 2008). Even if you have required physical education, if CPE is not part of the regular program, consider offering it as an elective.
• If your school or school district mandates online learning in all subject matter areas, consider offering an online or hybrid CPE class. CPE (fitness and wellness) classes are the most common physical education online classes. If you decide to offer an online class consider the recent guidelines offered by SHAPE (2018).

Table 1. Suggestions for Successful Implementation of CPE Programs

- Begin with a plan. Involve teachers and student representatives in planning and make use of available resources to provide lesson plans and other materials prior to implementing programs.
- Commit to an inclusive philosophy. A common philosophy that is articulated to students, parents, and other stakeholders is helpful in driving program success (see Reason 3).
- Commit to national and state content standards. See Reason 2.
- Use the CPE evidence to gain the support of parents, administrators, and school board members. Make all stakeholders aware of CPE plans prior to implementation. Keep them informed at all stages of implementation.
- Maintain program fidelity. For a program to be successful it must be faithfully implemented. Stick to the plan.
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- If your school or school district mandates online learning in all subject matter areas, consider offering an online or hybrid CPE class. CPE (fitness and wellness) classes are the most common physical education online classes. If you decide to offer an online class consider the recent guidelines offered by SHAPE (2018).

Appalachian State University, The Ohio State University), and advocates have offered presentations at national meetings to outline ideas for implementing such courses (Welk et al., 2015; Sibley, Brusseau, Le Masurier, Mitchell, & Corbin, 2018).

There are many advantages to using a CPE model in a PETE program. First, teacher candidates need adequate content knowledge of PA, health-related fitness, and other healthy lifestyle factors (e.g., nutrition, stress management). As has been described above, CPE provides an effective structure for teaching the key concepts in a classroom setting and reinforcing those concepts with PA sessions. Second, participating in a CPE course allows PETE students to model healthy behaviors, increasing their efficacy for teaching healthful living to their students. PETE students who do not model healthy behaviors may alter their behaviors as they teach healthy lifestyle concepts in CPE. Finally, exposure to appropriate pedagogies for teaching CPE/FE is important for PETE candidates. Not unlike the teaching of psychomotor and sport skills, CPE programs have their own unique pedagogical content knowledge, and there are many strategies and considerations specific to CPE that teacher candidates will want to learn and practice. Participating in a CPE course in the teacher preparation curriculum allows students to learn both the content and the pedagogy of teaching that content simultaneously. Specific topics recommended in such a course are listed in Table 2.

Ideally, students taking a CPE class in their PETE studies will be given opportunities to practice and develop their skills utilizing a CPE instructional model. To build student skills, several key learning activities are recommended.

Teaching Sample Classroom Lessons. Most PE teacher candidates receive little to no training or practice teaching in a classroom setting. Therefore, it is imperative that they learn and implement appropriate classroom teaching strategies with CPE/FE content. Lesson planning, management, guided and independent practice, and technology integration methods are examples.

Teaching Sample Activity Lessons. Teaching activity-focused lessons is more familiar to PE teacher candidates than classroom teaching, but CPE activity lessons are significantly different from predominately sports based lessons. CPE activity lessons reinforce all PE standards but are more focused on reinforcing and experiencing concepts related to health-related fitness and PA than traditional programs. Activities lesson plans are included for all types of activities in the PA pyramid and biomechanical principles that aid students in skill learning are covered, but psychomotor learning and practicing of correct skill techniques is limited in CPE. CPE does focus on performing exercises correctly (e.g., muscle fitness, flexibility, stress reduction) and provides the opportunity for learning and practicing other skills such as self-management skills. In addition to these skills, lessons emphasize learning in the cognitive and affective domains and experiencing activities that promote development in these areas. Teachers, therefore, may want to focus their attention and teaching behaviors more on these outcomes.
Summary and Final Comments

CPE programs have been successfully and widely implemented in colleges and secondary schools throughout the U.S. and worldwide over the past half-century. In addition to providing reasons for the inclusion of CPE, the authors discussed suggestions for implementing CPE programs, barriers to success, and suggestions for a college class in CPE for PETE students. Evidence was provided to show that CPE can be effective in meeting the overarching goals of PE and PL — promoting PA long after the completion of school and can enhance the perceptions of the PE programs. As previous authors have noted, “When implemented with fidelity, CPE and companion FE programs have, and can in the future, play a significant role in promoting lifelong PA and play an important role in providing quality PE for secondary school students” (Corbin et al., 2020, p. 52). Our dozen reasons for including CPE in quality PE programs provide documentation for being proactive advocates rather than waiting to defend the inevitable challenges to our programs.

References


Table 2.
Topics for a CPE Course in PETE Programs

| - CPE Program Philosophy and Theoretical Foundations |
| - Physical Education Content Standards, FE Benchmarks, and Physical Literacy Overview |
| - Overview of CPE/FE Content Knowledge (e.g., common content, specialized content) |
| - Methods of Presenting Classroom Content (e.g., use of AV, classroom discussions) |
| - Methods of Presenting CPE/FE Activity Session Content |
| - Overview of Available Programs (e.g., Fitness for Life, Physical Best) |
| - Overview of Student and Program Evaluation (e.g., tests, portfolios, projects, workbooks) |
| - Integrating CPE/FE with Other Physical Education Programs (e.g., Sport Education, Traditional PE) |
| - Integrating CPE/FE with Whole-of School Programs (e.g., CSPA, PYFP) |
| - Using the Web and e-books in CPE |
| - Online CPE: Pros and Cons, Guidelines for Implementation (SHAPE America, 2018) |

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