



Unlock Research Research for Physical Educators

Research Journal of the Month
JULY 2003

Journal of Teaching in Physical Education.

Only a few of the more than 1,000 subscribers who now receive their quarterly issues of the *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education (JTPE)* with its sharp cover, clean text format, and obviously professional level of editing, will remember the little green-covered introductory issue with which it all began in the Spring of 1981. The journal was the brainchild of two young professors, Michael W. Metzler (then at Iowa State University), and Mark S. Freedman (then at Rutgers University). Their professorial careers began just at the moment when a new area of inquiry was reaching full flower in education – research on teaching – and they launched JTPE for the simplest of all reasons: "because it seemed to be needed." That rationale proved to be more than just prescient, because despite the fact that its progenitors knew little about the operation of a research publication, their energy and intelligence gave physical educators everywhere a gift of inestimable value – the right journal, at the right time, with the right leadership.

Perhaps I should have added "at the right price," since a year's student subscription in 1981 cost the princely sum of \$10 (institutions were charged \$20, and individuals \$15). Despite many changes, of which the fact that libraries now pay \$172, individuals \$49, and students \$33 is among the more obvious, the primary focus of the journal has remained steady. The masthead statement of purpose that Metzler and Freedman designed 22 years ago has changed little because they got it right the first time.

The *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education* is published to present a forum for discussion and research articles focusing on teaching and teacher education in physical education. The JTPE is intended to serve students, teachers, teacher educators, and administrators as an outlet for scholarly communication on teaching in our field. The content of JTPE is limited only to those articles which relate directly or indirectly to teaching physical education.

The two decades closing the 20th century were a time of burgeoning productivity for research on teaching and teacher education in physical education, and surely 90% of that activity found its way onto the pages of JTPE. If you wanted to know what questions attracted the attention of scholars, what forms of inquiry were prominent, which institutions sponsored serious programs of research, who were the promising new investigators, where academic disputes had warmed up, and how research-based knowledge was accumulating – JTPE was the corporate memory, the vehicle for exchanging ideas, the venue for setting new agenda, and the place for laying down landmarks. That remains true today. Although other journals occasionally do print important contributions to the literature in this area, JTPE remains home base for those who study teachers, teaching, curriculum, and teacher education in physical education.

The high and consistent level of editorial quality is a function of several factors. First, with the structure of co-editorship, new appointees have time to serve a valuable apprenticeship before assuming primary responsibility for the journal. Second, since 1984, JTPE has been included among the Human Kinetics list of journals, and that association has added the strong editorial and production resources of a highly successful publishing house. Third, the Editorial Board meets for direct consultation (now alternating between the annual meetings of the American Educational Research Association, and the American Alliance for health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance), makes significant policy decisions, includes a preponderance of active researchers, makes frequent (and repeated) use of former editors and particularly skilled reviewers, has international representation, gives younger scholars significant responsibilities, and has nurtured a tradition of high expectation for journal quality. Fourth, and finally, the editorial process and journal management are now greatly facilitated by full implementation of the requirement for electronic submission of all manuscripts.

In turn, the relatively high level of content quality is a function of submission rates that allow genuine selectivity. Under those conditions, the journal's cadre of skilled peer reviewers can go beyond the task of merely accepting and rejecting manuscripts, to a role that allows them to work with editors and authors to produce substantive improvements in the report as finally published.

The tradition of including a thematic monograph (with Guest Editors) in most JTPE annual volumes has been continued, allowing useful opportunities to collect research reports, reviews, and essays that can yield more comprehensive views of research and curriculum projects, the fruits of particular research methodologies, or the contributions of distinguished scholars. In addition, the journal provides recognition of excellence through the annual Exemplary Paper Award, recruits monographs through review of proposals, and actively solicits "In-Response" papers that continue the conversations initiated in previously published items.

The style of presentation for research reports continues to be oriented toward a readership consisting primarily of researchers, scholars, and graduate students. The nature of the subject matter, the dispositions and professional backgrounds of contributors, the considerable number of more accessible descriptive and qualitative studies, and the inclusion of more discursive reviews, essays, and responses, however, all work to make the pages of JTPE more open to use by other audiences. The Editorial Board has continued to encourage submission of integrative reviews, as well as essays that offer analysis of issues in both education and research methodology. Reports employing a wide variety of research approaches have been welcomed in JTPE, as have articles representing vantage points well outside the positivist mainstream of empirical research.

The future holds some interesting possibilities for the journal's continued evolution. Long holder of a formal "endorsement" from the Curriculum and Instruction Academy of the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE), JTPE now has forged an additional alliance with the Association Internationale des Ecoles Superieures d'Education Physique (AIESEP), the international association for physical education in higher education. An infusion of new subscribers from the large and diverse AIESEP membership base should yield a wider world perspective and encourage more frequent inclusion of research reports and reviews from other countries.

JTPE can be found in the serial collections of most college and university libraries. Among the some 20 retrieval systems in which it is indexed are the *Physical Education Index*, *Current Index to Journals in Education*, *Current Contents/Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *Education Index*, *Social Sciences Citation Index*, *Psychological Abstracts*, and *Sport Discus*. An author index appears in the 4th issue of each volume (usually in July), statements of editorial policy and instructions for authors appear in most issues, and, of particular interest to those considering submission, the Guidelines for Peer Review of Research-Based Articles was last published in January, 2000. Subscriptions are available at the Human Kinetics website <http://www.humankinetics.com>

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