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**Perceived needs, concerns, and problems of beginning physical
education teachers**

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Middle Tennessee State University, 1993

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Perceived Needs, Concerns, and Problems of
Beginning Physical Education Teachers

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Graduate Faculty of Middle Tennessee State University
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Perceived Needs, Concerns, and Problems of
Beginning Physical Education Teachers

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ABSTRACT

Perceived Needs, Concerns, and Problems of Beginning Physical Education Teachers

Paula Jo Dohoney

The researcher's intent was to identify and examine the problems, needs, and concerns of beginning physical education teachers, grades K-12, specifically. The review of related literature indicated that most studies conducted on the problems of beginning teachers encompassed teachers of various grade levels and subject areas.

Personnel directors identified 94 beginning physical education teachers in the state of Georgia. Further investigation concluded that only 68 teachers were in their first year of teaching. The researcher sent surveys to each of these beginning teachers, 57 of which completed and returned their surveys.

The survey instrument contained questions regarding biographical data, as well as 40 potential problem areas that were to be ranked according to the severity of the problem experienced. Also included within the survey was an opportunity for the beginning teachers to express their opinions regarding their teacher preparation.

An analysis of the results ranked the 40 problem areas by percentage of teachers who experienced each problem. Some of the problems experienced by the beginning physical

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education teachers were unique to their discipline.
Beginning physical education teachers also were more
vulnerable to some problems than beginning teachers in other
disciplines.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The unexpected trauma and anxiety experienced by most beginning teachers during their transition from student to teacher is often referred to as "reality shock" in educational literature. Reality shock is defined by Veenman (1984) as "the collapse of missionary ideals formed during teacher training by the harsh and rude reality of everyday classroom life" (p. 143). This "collapse" appears to be among the reasons beginning teachers leave the profession within a few years of being hired. According to Schlechty and Vance (1983), approximately 50 percent of teachers who enter the profession leave during their first seven years.

In 1987, Bolam discussed the large amount of research that exists on the transition beginning teachers make from being students to experienced professionals. Research designed specifically to determine the needs, concerns, and problems of beginning physical education teachers, however, is limited. Gage (1977) contends that for research in education to be effective, it must be relative to a specific discipline, rather than drawing general conclusions that can be applied to all fields. Perhaps if the areas of concern for beginning physical education teachers could be determined, teacher-preparation programs might prepare

students to make the transition from the role of student to professional more easily.

Statement of the Problem

The problem is to determine the perceived needs, concerns, and problems of selected beginning physical education teachers during their initial months of teaching.

Hypotheses

Teacher-preparation programs in physical education do not adequately address the needs, concerns, and problems most beginning teachers experience.

Some problems experienced by beginning physical education teachers are unique to their area of specialization.

Definitions

The following definitions are used in this dissertation:

Beginning teachers--teachers who are in their first year of teaching.

Teacher-induction program--new teacher orientation to familiarize new teachers with operations at various schools.

Teacher-preparation programs--required classes for teacher certification taken at the university or college level.

Limitation of the Study

This study was limited to 56 first-year physical education teachers (grades K-12) who began teaching in the state of Georgia, fall term, 1992.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to identify the perceived needs, concerns, and problems of beginning physical education teachers. Because some problems experienced by beginning physical education teachers were unique to their discipline, recognition of this should be given in teacher-preparation and teacher-induction programs in physical education. This restructuring would better prepare the beginning teacher for the transition from the role of student to professional.

CHAPTER 2

Review of Literature

Some teachers experience minimal problems during their first year of teaching, and this experience helps substantiate their belief that teaching is the appropriate profession for them. Ryan et al. (1980) indicated "these are the blessed few" (p. 4) because often the first year of teaching can be difficult. Gage (1977) suggested that research in education should be relative to specific fields in academia. Although numerous studies have focused on the problems, needs, and concerns of beginning teachers in general, research specifically designed to measure the concerns of beginning teachers in physical education is limited (O'Sullivan, 1989).

Beginning teachers often complain that their preparation in college courses focused too much on theory and lacked relevance for everyday classroom experiences (Hoy & Rees, 1977; Marso & Pigge, 1987; Ryan, 1970; Veenman, 1984). Wendt and Bain (1985) believed that new teachers needed to be aware of the "gap" that exists between what school theoretically should be and what it actually is. According to research done by Huling-Austin, Odell, Ishler, Kay, and Edelfelt (1989), teaching is a difficult and complex series of behaviors, and the learning of these behaviors is not easy. This idea was reinforced in a study

by Camp and Heath-Camp (1991). According to Shulman (1987), the mastery of teaching could be the most difficult of all professions. The problem, as Ryan (1970) suggested, is simply that presenting a theory does not ensure that a neophyte teacher has the complex behavior patterns necessary to make that theory work in a classroom. For example, a beginning teacher may eliminate discussion from his or her repertoire of teaching methods, not because that method is inappropriate, but because that teacher has problems managing students during discussions. The ramifications of a teacher's first-year experiences can determine the level of success that teacher is able to achieve over an entire career. Ultimately, however, it is the student who suffers from a teacher's difficult transition from college student to professional.

Veenman (1984) and McDonald and Elias (1983) identified numerous studies on the problems, needs, and concerns of beginning teachers in general. Gordon (1991) concluded that studies that prioritize these problems, needs, and concerns typically rank the same items at the top of each list:

- (1) managing students (by far the most prevalent problem,
- (2) obtaining instructional materials, (3) motivating students, (4) evaluating student progress, (5) communicating with colleagues, (6) communicating with parents, (7) acquiring information about school, (8) planning for instruction, (9) using effective teaching methods, and

(10) dealing with differences among students (Behets, 1990; Dropkin & Taylor, 1963; Gordon, 1991; Huling-Austin et al., 1989; Piercy & Klass, 1990; Ryan, 1970; Veenman, 1984; Wendt & Bain, 1989; Wey, 1951). Despite the differences in the characteristics of beginning teachers within research studies, the results are remarkably homogeneous.

McDonald and Elias (1983) offered one reason for the difficulties experienced by beginning teachers. They claimed that many of the beginning teachers are simply unprepared for the demands and realities of teaching. "The new teacher all too often enters the classroom with a degree in one hand and a freshly issued teaching certificate in the other, with an unrealistic view of what he or she is capable" (Ryan et al., 1980, p. 6). According to Marso and Pigge (1987), this unrealistic view of teaching is referred to as reality shock in educational literature. Veenman (1984) defined reality shock as "the collapse of the missionary ideals formed during teacher training by the harsh and rude reality of classroom life" (p. 143).

Deal and Chatman (1989) asserted that the impact of the reality with which a teacher begins the first day of school typically sets the tone for the days and years ahead in his or her professional career. Crow (1991), Hayes and Kilgore (1991), and Huling-Austin et al. (1989) agreed with Deal and Chatman's assertion that the successes and failures of the first year of teaching influence the teacher's professional

development. During the first year of teaching, beginning teachers develop skills which are necessary for their development as professionals. Those skills may include instructional skills, relationship skills, and time-management skills. The beginning teacher would develop various instructional skills to be used with students whose abilities and behaviors differ significantly. Relationship skills that develop are used by the beginning teacher to develop effective relationships with education professionals, community members, and students. The development of time-management skills would be used by the beginning teacher in scheduling the unfamiliar requirements of a new profession. The impact of that first year of teaching influences the professional's development of teaching behaviors.

It also influences whether or not the teacher will continue in the teaching profession. Huling-Austin et al. (1989) reported that approximately 50 percent of teachers leave the profession during their first seven years. Schlechty and Vance (1983) estimated that 30 percent of those who leave do so during their first two years. What appears most disturbing about these numbers is the indication that the most promising and academically capable leave in the greatest numbers (Harris & Collay, 1990; Schlechty & Vance, 1981). It appears that unanticipated problems experienced during the first years are among the

primary reasons teachers leave the profession. Although first-year teachers have observed various teachers and the conditions in which those teachers work, "the first year of teaching is a shock" (Ryan, 1970, p. 171). This shock often leads to the high drop-out rate of many qualified beginning teachers.

Educational researchers are not unaware of the reality shock experienced by most beginning teachers. Studies by Lagana (1970), Marso and Pigge (1987), and Bain and Wendt (1990) illustrated the tremendous distance between the beginning teacher's unrealistic perceptions of and the realities of teaching. Their studies also listed at least three reasons for this: (1) the beginning teacher's preconceived ideas about teaching, (2) the isolation often experienced by new teachers, and (3) the failure of teacher-preparation programs to provide realistic teaching situations. These three reasons do not appear to be the only determinants, but for purposes of this study, they will be the only ones discussed.

Ryan (1986) and Wendt and Bain (1985) pointed out that the beginning teacher's preconceived ideas about teaching often result from overfamiliarity with the teaching profession. Ryan asserted that most beginning teachers have scrutinized teachers and teaching methods over an estimated 16-year career as students. Wendt and Bain believed this overfamiliarity with teaching may cause an unearned

confidence on the part of the beginning teacher. Often what looked easy from the student's viewpoint is entirely new and beyond his or her capabilities as a beginning teacher.

A second reason for the gap between the beginning teacher's conceptions of teaching and the realities of teaching may be found in the isolation often experienced by new teachers. Causes for this isolation may be physical, social, or professional. Physically, new teachers are often assigned the least desired or most isolated classrooms. Traditional gatherings and conversations may socially ignore new instructors. Beginning teachers sometimes isolate themselves professionally in hopes that no one will discover the difficulties they may be experiencing in their classrooms.

Huling-Austin et al. (1989) reported that in at least 31 states teacher-induction programs are implemented or planned in an attempt to alleviate the problem of new-teacher isolation. Ryan (1986) demonstrated the need for these teacher-induction programs by describing the typical introduction of a new teacher to his or her more experienced colleagues. According to Ryan, the neophyte then often disappeared within the school, struggling alone to master the art of teaching. Gordon (1991), Houston and Felder (1982), Newberry (1978), and Ryan (1979) claimed that new teachers are frequently too intimidated to ask for assistance and experienced teachers are not likely to offer

it. Unfamiliar routines, schedules, and expectations can leave new teachers feeling confused and threatened.

A third reason for the gap may be in the failure of teacher-preparation programs to provide realistic teaching situations from which the aspiring teacher can learn. Ryan (1970) charged that "teacher preparation tends to deal with what ought to be going on in schools, rather than what is actually happening" (p. 185). This preparation for the ideal teaching situation exists not only in required college courses, but also in student-teaching experiences. Although most colleges and universities have increased the time requirement for student teaching, the inadequacies of the student-teaching experience must be acknowledged and explained to the potential teacher. "It is unreasonable to expect that student teaching can accomplish the awesome task of preparing a neophyte for full teaching responsibility in ten weeks" (Ryan, 1970, p. 169). At best, it is an opportunity to experiment with various teaching skills, but in a controlled environment. Typically, the student teacher simply presents lessons to students who already have an established pattern of behavior (Ryan, 1986). Student teachers do not have the experience of establishing class rules; yet after being hired, they will be expected to establish and enforce these rules, usually without assistance. Huling-Austin et al. (1989) agreed with Ryan that "even a superb student teaching experience lacks the

completeness and the realism of a first teaching job" (p. 2).

In an earlier study, Lagana (1970) described what would later be referred to as the reality shock beginning teachers often experience during their first year of teaching. Lagana administered the Minnesota Teacher Attitude Inventory to measure teachers' attitudes toward the teaching profession. The findings showed that during student teaching, potential teachers' attitudes were even more positive than they were when they entered the teacher-preparation program. However, during the first four months of their initial year of teaching, their attitudes took a steep negative drop. That change in attitudes has been called "the curve of disenchantment."

Behets (1990); Crow (1991); Gordon (1991), Odell, Loughlin, and Ferraro (1987); Ryan et al. (1980); and Veenman (1984) have conducted studies identifying the needs, concerns, and problems of beginning teachers. There is agreement among investigators that, while there are a number of problems associated with teaching at any level of experience, problems tend to be more pronounced for the beginner. Huling-Austin et al. (1989) and Ryan (1970) stated that one reason beginning teachers encounter these problems is that the leap from college student to first-year teacher is so wide that the problems faced by first-year teachers are intimidating, if not devastating. While many

of the researchers listed managing students or classroom discipline as the most serious and most frequently occurring problem for beginning teachers, Veenman (1984) found a study which disagreed. Lagana (1970) reported 83 percent of beginning elementary and secondary teachers experienced problems with student discipline. Frech and Reichwein (1977), however, reported that only 12 percent of beginning physical education teachers listed those problems.

O'Sullivan (1989) stated in her study of the struggles of two beginning physical education teachers that management of the students or classroom discipline was not mentioned as a significant concern of her subjects. According to O'Sullivan, their concerns included the establishment of relationships with parents and colleagues, the expectation of student learning in the gymnasium, and the failure of teachers to communicate about a student's medical problem. Their greatest concerns, reported by O'Sullivan, were gaining respect for themselves as professionals among students, parents, and colleagues and fostering respect for physical education as a subject.

One of the central themes in the theory of reality shock is that an inexperienced individual is placed in a teaching situation and expected to perform like a 25-year veteran teacher (Huling-Austin et al., 1989). In fact, Gordon (1991); Kurtz (1983); and Romatowski, Dorminey, and Van Voorhees (1989) identified that the responsibilities

placed with a beginning teacher often tend to be greater than those responsibilities given to more experienced teachers. They report that beginning teachers typically are given the worst teaching assignments, largest classes, most difficult students, poorest working conditions, and extra school-related duties more often than are experienced teachers.

Another theme identified by Marso and Pigge (1987) is that if these areas of difficulty are appropriately addressed during teacher-preparation and early in-service training, all of these concerns experienced by beginning teachers could be reduced. O'Sullivan (1989), however, noted the lack of relevant in-service opportunities for beginning physical education teachers. Because of this lack of opportunity, the beginning physical education teacher is more vulnerable to the problems and concerns other beginning teachers encounter.

Although beginning physical education teachers experience many of the same problems as other beginning teachers, beginning teachers in physical education may be particularly vulnerable to problems in certain areas. One example would be the increased potential for teacher isolation. This isolation may be physical in that it is not unusual for the gymnasium to be completely separate from other teaching stations. This situation may lead to further social isolation of the new physical education teacher.

Other contributing factors may be that the beginning teacher is the only physical education teacher at the school or may divide his or her teaching time between schools. A second example is the likelihood that more school-related responsibilities will be given to the new physical education teacher. Most beginning physical education teachers are expected to occupy the dual role of teacher and coach. Coaching typically emerges as the primary role for most physical educators because of the importance of athletics in society. This emergence was illustrated in a statement by Bain and Wendt (1990): "Principals frequently attend athletic events and rarely visit the physical education program" (p. 33). When primary emphasis is placed on coaching a sport, teaching a class may become a secondary responsibility. Piercy and Klass (1990) related that physical education teachers who are coaches rely more on the support of the community than most other teachers. They indicated that this difference may lead to a greater need for these beginning teachers to receive more help in working with the community than other teachers. Teacher-preparation, orientation, and in-service programs should be relevant to the areas of concern for each beginning teacher, but as O'Sullivan (1989) added, in-service opportunities and orientation programs were "irrelevant for a physical educator" (p. 233). The identification of the need for a study which specifically identifies the problems and

concerns of beginning physical education teachers confirms Gage's (1977) belief that for research in education to be effective, it must be relative to a specific discipline.

Ryan (1986) concluded that the problems experienced by many beginning teachers have far-reaching consequences. Each problem has an effect on the teacher, the manner in which the material is presented to the students, and ultimately on the students themselves. Ryan's conclusion that the "students are the primary victims when beginning teachers fail" (p. 7) should provide the needed motivation for college-preparation programs, administrators, and veteran teachers to do all that is necessary to ensure the successful transition of beginning teachers into competent and aspiring professionals.

CHAPTER 3

Data Collection and Analysis

The research procedures used to determine the perceived problems, needs, and concerns of beginning physical education teachers are divided into the following sections: (1) instrumentation, (2) identification of the subjects, (3) data-collection procedures, and (4) analysis of collected data.

Instrumentation

The researcher validated the survey instrument by selecting 10 physical educators with five or more years of teaching experience to evaluate the questionnaire and determine the modifications needed.

The survey instrument has three distinct divisions. In part I of the instrument, demographic data were obtained on the characteristics of the beginning physical education teachers. In part II, data on particular concerns of these teachers were collected. The subjects responded to the statements in part II on a 1- to 5-point Likert scale, with numerical values assigned for each possible response: 1 = no problem, 2 = little problem, 3 = substantial problem, 4 = severe problem, and 5 = not applicable. In part III of the survey, beginning teachers were asked to express their opinions regarding their teacher-preparation programs.

Subjects

The subjects who participated in this study were 56 physical education teachers who began teaching in the state of Georgia, fall term, 1992.

Data-Collection Procedures

In August of 1992, the researcher wrote letters to all public school personnel directors in the state of Georgia, requesting them to furnish lists of physical education teachers who were hired for the 1992-1993 school year. Only those teachers who were in their first year of teaching were asked to participate in the survey.

In October of 1992, the researcher called the beginning physical education teachers to introduce herself, to explain the purposes of the study, and to confirm that the 1992-1993 year was his or her first year in the teaching profession. In November of 1992, the researcher mailed the instrument accompanied by a cover letter with directions for completing the survey. Participants were given four weeks in which to return the survey. The researcher assigned a coded number to each instrument in order to identify nonrespondents. After four weeks, in December of 1992, nonrespondents were mailed a second letter, requesting that the completed survey be returned.

Data Analysis

The researcher analyzed demographic data from the survey by calculating percentages. Analysis of data

pertaining to the perceived needs, problems, and concerns of beginning physical education teachers and opinions regarding their teacher-preparation programs was also calculated with percentages. A subjective analysis was done when percentages were equal.

CHAPTER 4

Analysis of Data

Characteristics of the Population

In August of 1992, the researcher wrote letters to all public school personnel directors in the state of Georgia, requesting them to furnish lists of physical education teachers who were hired for the 1992-1993 school year. The researcher mailed 187 requests, and 145 (78 percent) were returned. Those personnel directors who returned the requests identified 94 beginning physical education teachers.

In October of 1992, the researcher contacted each first-year physical education teacher to introduce herself, to explain the purposes of the study, and to confirm that the 1992-1993 year was the first year in the teaching profession for that physical educator. The researcher was able to contact 89 (95 percent) beginning teachers by telephone. After several unsuccessful attempts to reach the remaining five by telephone, the researcher mailed the information to them in the form of a letter. In talking with the beginning physical education teachers, the researcher identified 26 teachers who were not actually in their first year of teaching. As a result, the population of beginning physical education teachers included in the study was reduced to 68.

In November of 1992, the survey instrument, accompanied by a cover letter containing directions for completing the survey, was mailed to each of the 68 beginning teachers. The five beginning teachers not contacted by telephone were sent a separate letter, explaining the researcher's attempts to call and the purposes of the study. A second letter was mailed four weeks later to those teachers who had not yet returned the completed survey, reminding them of the importance of their contribution. Fifty-seven surveys (84 percent) were returned. One teacher indicated that this was not his first year in the teaching profession. Thus, the number of usable subjects was reduced to 56.

Table 1 shows that of the 57.9 percent male and 42.1 percent female respondents: (1) 51.8 percent taught in primary (grades K-2) schools; (2) 10.7 percent taught in intermediate (grades 3-5) schools; (3) 25 percent taught in junior high or middle (grades 6-8) schools; and (4) 12.5 percent taught in high (grades 9-12) schools. A little more than 61 percent (61.4) of the beginning teachers listed their community type as rural, 24.6 percent as suburban, and 8.8 percent as inner city, while 5.2 percent did not respond to that question. Of the respondents, 72 percent graduated from a Georgia college, leaving 28 percent as out-of-state graduates. Baccalaureate degrees were held by 91.2 percent of the respondents, while 8.8 percent had earned a master's degree.

Table 1
Demographic Characteristics of Beginning Teachers

| Respondent | N* | % |
|---|----|------|
| Gender | | |
| Male | 33 | 57.9 |
| Female | 24 | 42.1 |
| Community type | | |
| Rural | 35 | 61.4 |
| Suburban | 14 | 24.6 |
| Inner city | 5 | 8.8 |
| Did not answer | 3 | 5.3 |
| Type of school | | |
| Primary--grades K-2 | 29 | 51.8 |
| Intermediate--grades 3-5 | 6 | 10.7 |
| Junior high/middle--grades 6-8 | 14 | 25.0 |
| Secondary--grades 9-12 | 7 | 12.5 |
| Baccalaureate college (in-state) | | |
| Georgia Southern | 13 | |
| University of Georgia | 5 | |
| Berry College | 1 | |
| North Georgia College | 4 | |
| Georgia College | 3 | |
| Valdosta State College | 6 | |
| Albany State College | 2 | |
| Kennesaw State | 1 | |
| West Georgia College | 3 | |
| Clark College | 1 | |
| Fort Valley State College | 2 | |
| Total Georgia graduates | 41 | |
| Baccalaureate college (out-of-state) | | |
| Alabama | 8 | |
| Kansas | 1 | |
| Ohio | 1 | |
| Mississippi | 1 | |
| Tennessee | 2 | |
| Wisconsin | 1 | |
| Virginia | 1 | |
| Kentucky | 1 | |
| Total out-of-state graduates | 16 | |

Table 1 (continued)

| Respondent | N | % |
|---------------------|----|------|
| Highest degree held | | |
| Baccalaureate | 52 | 91.2 |
| Master's | 5 | 8.8 |

*Total N = 57.

Survey Responses

In their first year, beginning teachers are expected to assume the same responsibilities and achieve the same level of success as more experienced teachers. It is documented that, because of these high expectations, first-year teachers often refuse to admit to any difficulties. Newberry (1978) revealed, and Gordon (1991) agreed, that many times beginning teachers disguise the extent of their problems because they fear that admission of those problems may be interpreted as an admission of incompetence. Because many beginning teachers often hesitate to admit to even minimal problems, the rating of "little problem," as well as "substantial problem" and "severe problem," was given significance as a problem area for the beginning teacher. The 40 potential problem areas included in the survey have been ranked according to the percentage of beginning teachers who classified the particular area as a problem.

Table 2 presents each perceived problem area and the percentage of respondents who identified each area as a "little problem," a "substantial problem," or a "severe problem" in the appropriate columns. The column classified as "a problem" indicates the sum of these three columns and the percentage of the survey population who experienced some type of problem with an area. The percentage of respondents who identified a perceived problem area as "no problem" or "not applicable" is also shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Survey Results: Beginning Physical Education Teachers' Perceptions of Problem Areas

| Ranked order | Perceived problem area | Percent identifying areas as: | | | | | Not Applicable |
|--------------|--|-------------------------------|----------------|---------------------|----------------|------------|----------------|
| | | A problem | Little problem | Substantial problem | Severe problem | No problem | |
| 1.0 | Teaching disrespectful students | 89.1 | 45.5 | 25.4 | 18.2 | 10.9 | |
| 2.0 | Classroom management | 82.1 | 58.9 | 19.6 | 3.6 | 17.9 | |
| 3.0 | Obtaining proper equipment for instruction | 80.3 | 33.9 | 32.1 | 14.3 | 19.6 | |
| 4.0 | Obtaining proper facilities for instruction | 78.6 | 30.4 | 21.4 | 26.8 | 21.4 | |
| 5.0 | Overcrowded classes | 76.8 | 37.5 | 12.5 | 26.8 | 23.2 | |
| 6.0 | Determining students' needs | 74.5 | 63.6 | 10.9 | | 25.5 | |
| 7.0 | Managing disruptive students | 73.2 | 39.3 | 25.0 | 7.1 | 26.8 | |
| 8.0 | Adapting instruction to students with special needs | 71.4 | 46.4 | 16.1 | 8.9 | 26.8 | 1.8 |
| 9.0 | Physical education regarded as having a low status by teachers in other areas | 67.8 | 35.7 | 25.0 | 7.1 | 32.1 | |
| 10.0 | Using a variety of teaching methods to assist in the learning process | 66.7 | 46.3 | 18.5 | 1.9 | 29.6 | 3.7 |
| 11.5 | Teaching special education students | 66.1 | 46.4 | 14.3 | 5.4 | 32.1 | 1.8 |
| 11.5 | Acquiring sufficient teaching aids and materials | 66.1 | 28.6 | 25.0 | 12.5 | 32.1 | 1.8 |
| 13.5 | Lack of respect for physical education by other teachers and school administrators | 64.2 | 35.7 | 21.4 | 7.1 | 33.9 | 1.8 |
| 13.5 | Planning time to prepare for class | 64.2 | 33.9 | 21.4 | 8.9 | 35.7 | |
| 15.0 | Assisting students on different skill levels | 62.5 | 50.0 | 10.7 | 1.8 | 37.5 | |
| 16.5 | Evaluating students | 59.0 | 42.9 | 14.3 | 1.8 | 37.5 | 3.6 |
| 16.5 | Ability to motivate students | 59.0 | 42.9 | 16.1 | | 41.1 | |

Table 2 (continued)

| Ranked order | Perceived problem area | Percent identifying areas as: | | | | | Not Applicable |
|--------------|---|-------------------------------|----------------|---------------------|----------------|------------|----------------|
| | | A problem | Little problem | Substantial problem | Severe problem | No problem | |
| 19.0 | Lack of student interest in physical education | 58.9 | 25.0 | 25.0 | 8.9 | 41.1 | |
| 19.0 | Lack of support from parents | 58.9 | 35.7 | 14.3 | 8.9 | 39.3 | 1.8 |
| 19.0 | Failure to be informed of a student's medical problems or handicapping conditions | 58.9 | 44.6 | 10.7 | 3.6 | 41.1 | |
| 21.0 | Lack of enough time allotted for individual classes | 55.4 | 32.1 | 17.9 | 5.4 | 42.9 | 1.8 |
| 22.0 | Requirement of school-related responsibilities in addition to teaching | 48.3 | 28.6 | 16.1 | 3.6 | 46.4 | 5.4 |
| 23.0 | Teaching students of different socioeconomic levels | 45.4 | 34.5 | 9.1 | 1.8 | 49.1 | 5.5 |
| 24.0 | Required paperwork not related to teaching | 44.6 | 32.1 | 8.9 | 3.6 | 44.6 | 10.7 |
| 25.0 | Maintaining effective relationships with teachers in different subject areas | 42.9 | 28.6 | 12.5 | 1.8 | 55.4 | 1.8 |
| 26.5 | Requirement of extra duties | 41.1 | 26.8 | 10.7 | 3.6 | 44.6 | 14.3 |
| 26.5 | Maintaining effective relationships with parents | 41.1 | 28.6 | 10.7 | 1.8 | 57.1 | 1.8 |
| 28.0 | Physical education regarded as having a low status with administrators | 40.1 | 27.3 | 7.3 | 5.5 | 60.0 | |
| 29.0 | Confidence in your teaching ability | 37.5 | 26.8 | 7.1 | 3.6 | 62.5 | |
| 30.5 | Your knowledge of skill in activity areas | 35.7 | 33.9 | 1.8 | | 64.3 | |
| 30.5 | Maintaining effective relationships with students | 35.7 | 25.0 | 10.7 | | 64.3 | |
| 32.5 | Maintaining effective relationships with administrators | 23.3 | 16.1 | 3.6 | 3.6 | 75.8 | |
| 32.5 | Teaching students of a race different from yours | 23.3 | 16.1 | 5.4 | 1.8 | 75.0 | 1.8 |
| 34.5 | Maintaining effective relationships with guidance counselors | 21.5 | 16.1 | 3.6 | 1.8 | 57.1 | 21.4 |
| 34.5 | Teaching students whose primary language is not English | 21.5 | 17.9 | 1.8 | 1.8 | 32.1 | 46.4 |

Table 2 (continued)

| Ranked order | Perceived problem area | Percent identifying areas as: | | | | | |
|--------------|---|-------------------------------|----------------|---------------------|----------------|------------|----------------|
| | | A problem | Little problem | Substantial problem | Severe problem | No problem | Not Applicable |
| 36.0 | Maintaining effective relationships with other physical education teachers | 19.6 | 10.7 | 7.1 | 1.8 | 62.5 | 17.9 |
| 37.0 | Maintaining effective relationships with school clerical workers | 17.9 | 17.9 | | | 82.1 | |
| 38.0 | Maintaining effective relationships with custodians | 14.3 | 12.5 | 1.8 | | 85.7 | |
| 39.0 | Maintaining effective relationships with other coaches | 8.8 | 3.6 | 5.4 | | 67.9 | 23.2 |
| 40.0 | Physical education regarded as having a low status by other physical education teachers | 7.1 | 7.1 | | | 82.1 | 10.7 |

As shown in Table 2, the two categories, "teaching disrespectful students" and "classroom management," were the highest ranked problem areas for the beginning physical education teachers. "Teaching disrespectful students" was the area identified as a problem by 89.1 percent, the largest number of beginning physical education teachers (see Figure 1). "Classroom management" was second, with 82.1 percent experiencing a problem (see Figure 2). Not all beginning teachers had problems with those areas. "Teaching disrespectful students" was not a problem for six (10.9 percent) of the respondents, nor was "classroom management" a problem for 10 (17.9 percent) of the respondents. The results of this study are congruent with the results of most studies on the problems of beginning teachers which identify discipline or classroom management as the most prevalent problem typically experienced by beginning teachers.

Classroom discipline or management may be used as a label for a number of specific problems. The occurrence of this problem appears to be no different for beginning physical education teachers than for the other beginning teachers who have been studied. The results of this survey dispute O'Sullivan's (1989) study of two first-year physical education teachers that determined management of the students and general discipline were not a concern.

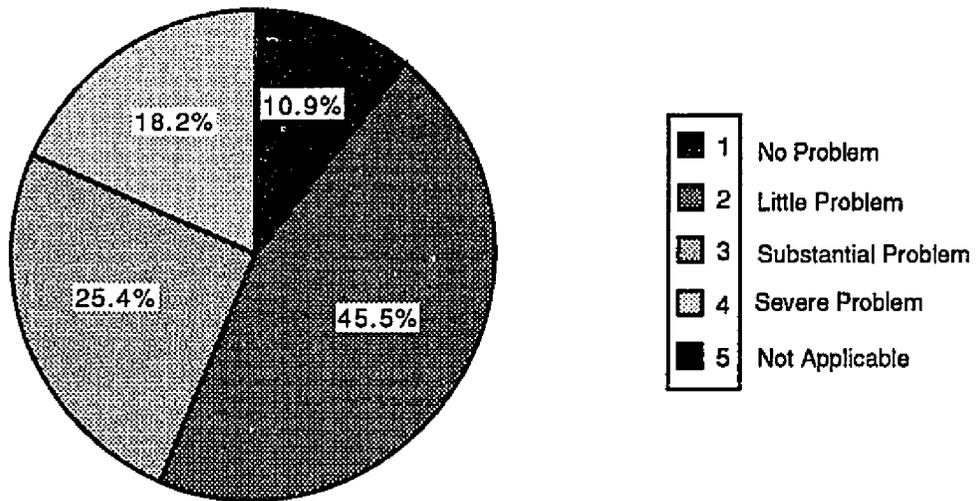


Figure 1. Teaching Disrespectful Students

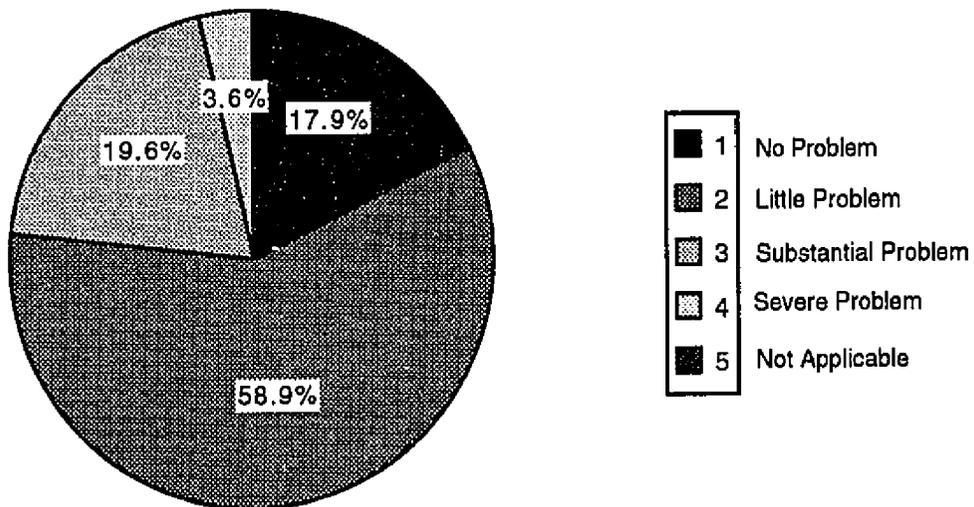


Figure 2. Classroom Management

"Obtaining proper equipment for instruction and obtaining proper facilities for instruction" were ranked as the third and fourth most common problems among the beginning physical education teachers. Although both problems may result from inadequacies within the school, they are problems the beginning teacher should address. Of the respondents, 80.3 percent identified "obtaining equipment" (see Figure 3) and 78.6 percent identified "obtaining facilities" (see Figure 4) as problems they encountered during their first year.

"Obtaining facilities" may seem very similar to "obtaining equipment," but it is actually quite different. While obtaining equipment, materials, supplies, and sufficient teaching aids is often mentioned as a problem in the literature on beginning teachers, "obtaining facilities" is not identified as a problem in the literature reviewed for this study. It appears that if the beginning physical education teacher had to share a gymnasium with one, two, or three other teachers at the same time, then obtaining space for instruction could certainly be a problem. Likewise, there are several schools, primarily elementary schools, where there is no gymnasium. Instruction may take place in the cafeteria, lobby, an empty classroom, or out-of-doors. One beginning physical education teacher included a problem area in her survey that she felt was not sufficiently mentioned in the survey. She identified problems in

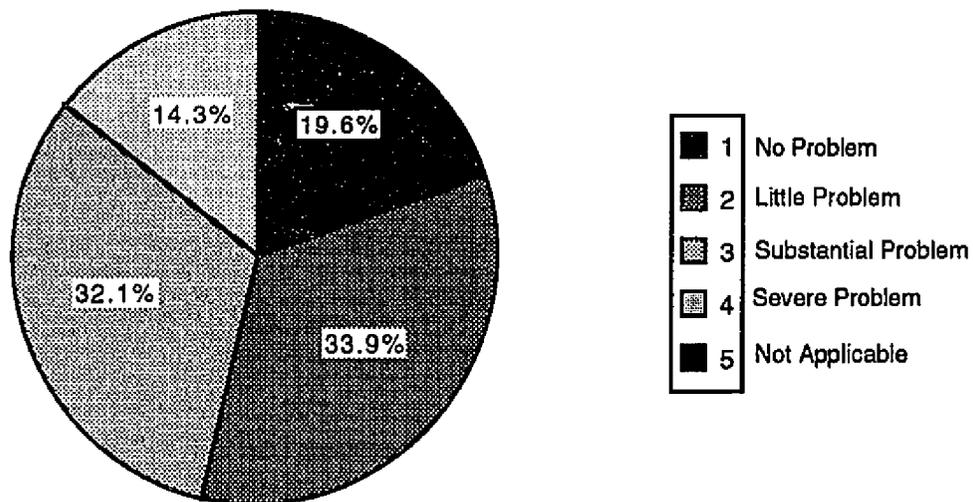


Figure 3. Obtaining Proper Equipment for Instruction

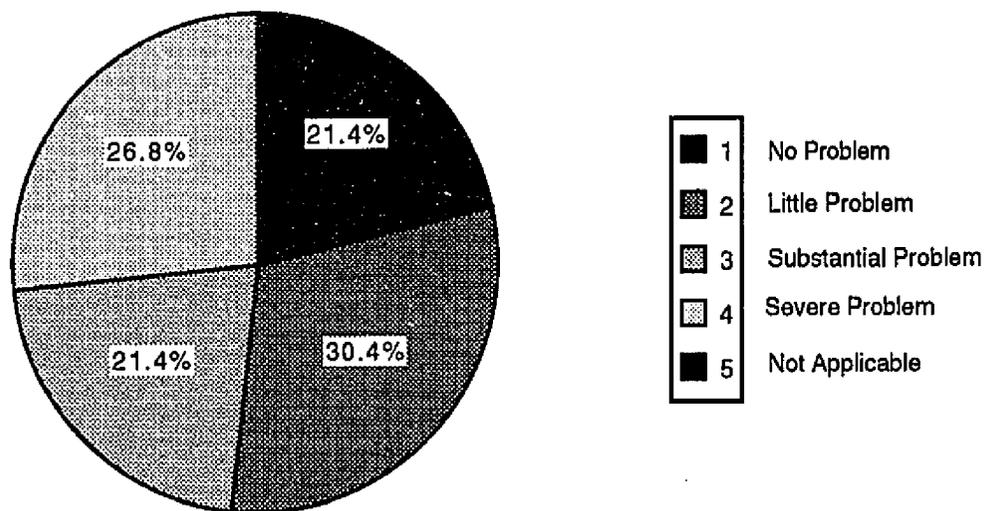


Figure 4. Obtaining Proper Facilities for Instruction

teaching physical education activities in the classroom on rainy and cold days. Her statement indicated that she did not have a gymnasium or an appropriate indoor facility for physical education. Lack of a space for teaching could be a problem for any teacher, regardless of experience. This survey might have included a question on whether a gymnasium was present at the school and, if not, where did instruction take place? If so, was that gymnasium shared by other teachers during the beginning teacher's instructional time?

The fifth highest ranked problem was "overcrowded classes." Overcrowded classes have long been a problem for physical educators. The percentage of teachers who experienced this problem was 76.8 (see Figure 5). Although the Georgia State Department of Education has placed limits on the number of students in particular classes, the responses to this question showed that the class size ranged from a low of 20 to a high of 80. On average, the number of students in a class was 31.

In Veenman's (1984) extensive review of the studies on beginning teachers, large class size was ranked as the lowest of the 24 most perceived problems of beginning teachers. Only 8 of the 91 sampled studies mentioned it as a problem. The results of the surveys completed for this study indicate, however, that while 76.8 percent of the respondents had some type of problem with overcrowded classes, 26.8 percent indicated that overcrowding was a

severe problem. This 26.8 percent is significant in that it is one of the largest percentages of respondents to identify a problem as severe. The occurrence of this problem should be minimized because of the Georgia State Department of Education Rule 160-4-2-.12 which places maximum class size for physical education at 40 students per class in the state of Georgia. Exceptions to this rule are made when a paraprofessional provides instructional support for the teacher.

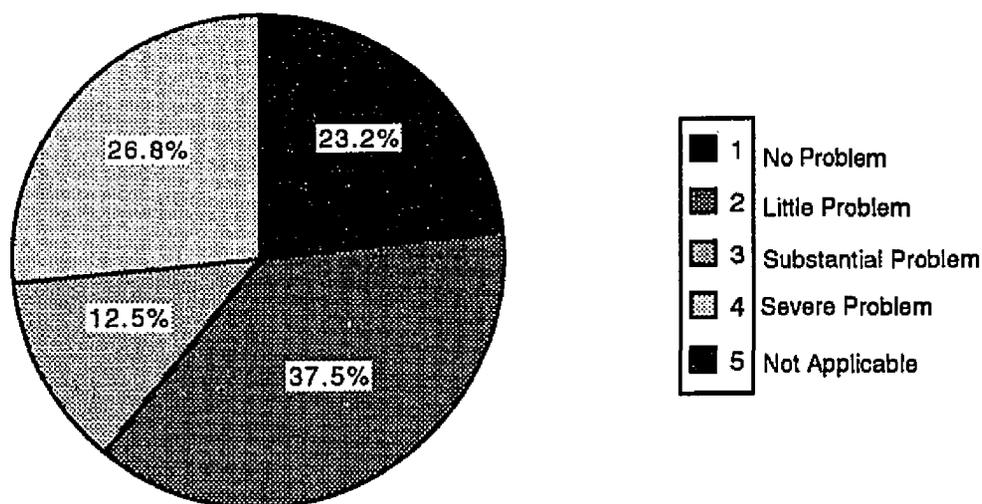


Figure 5. Overcrowded Classes

"Determining students' needs" was ranked sixth, with 74.5 percent of the beginning physical education teachers experiencing this problem (see Figure 6). Fuller's (1969) study of the concerns of teachers reported that beginning teachers are typically more concerned with their personal

needs than with the needs of their students. It appears that the beginning physical education teachers in this study highly prioritize the needs of their students, with almost 75 percent of the respondents identifying it as an area of concern.

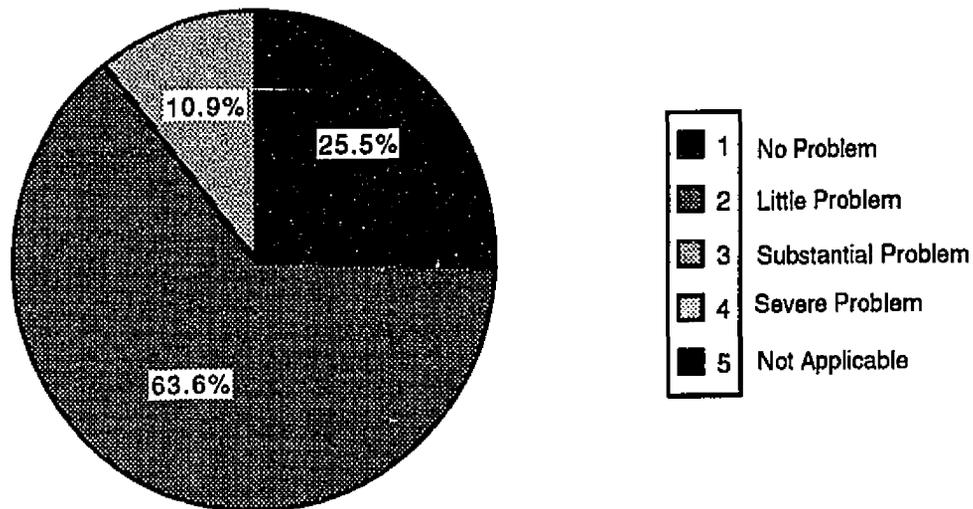


Figure 6. Determining Students' Needs

The seventh highest ranked problem was "managing disruptive students," with 73.2 percent of the respondents identifying it as a problem (see Figure 7). The ranking of this problem further illustrates the difficulty beginning teachers experience with classroom discipline or management. Three of the top seven ranked problems were concerned with classroom discipline or management.

"Adapting instruction for students with special needs" was ranked eighth by the beginning physical education

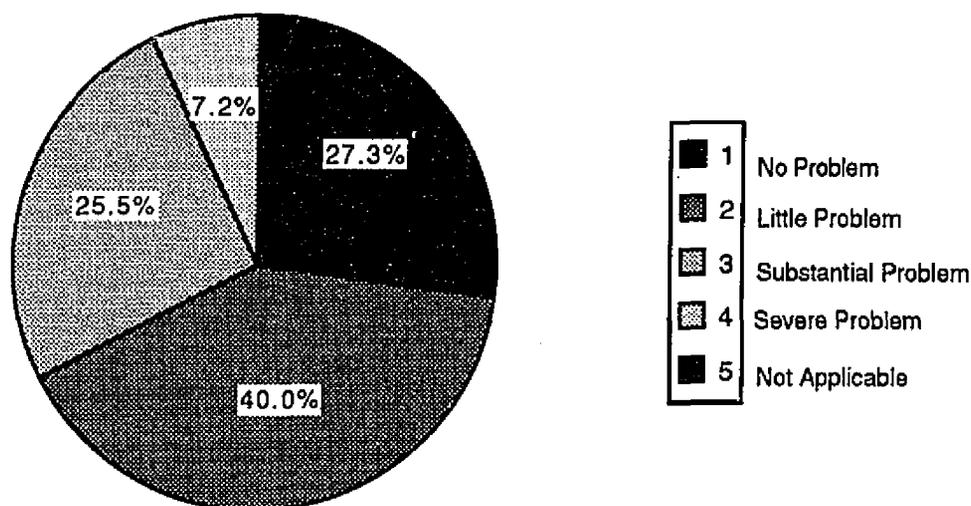


Figure 7. Managing Disruptive Students

teachers, with 71.4 percent experiencing a problem with this area (see Figure 8). A relationship exists between this problem and the sixth ranked problem which is "determining students' needs." Not only did most of the beginning teachers have problems determining students' needs, they also experienced problems adapting instruction to students in order to meet those needs. This relationship helps support the validity of the survey used in this study.

The ninth highest ranked problem was experienced by 67.8 percent of the beginning teachers (see Figure 9). "Physical education regarded as having a low status by teachers in other areas" within the school is a problem worded exclusively for physical education teachers, but this

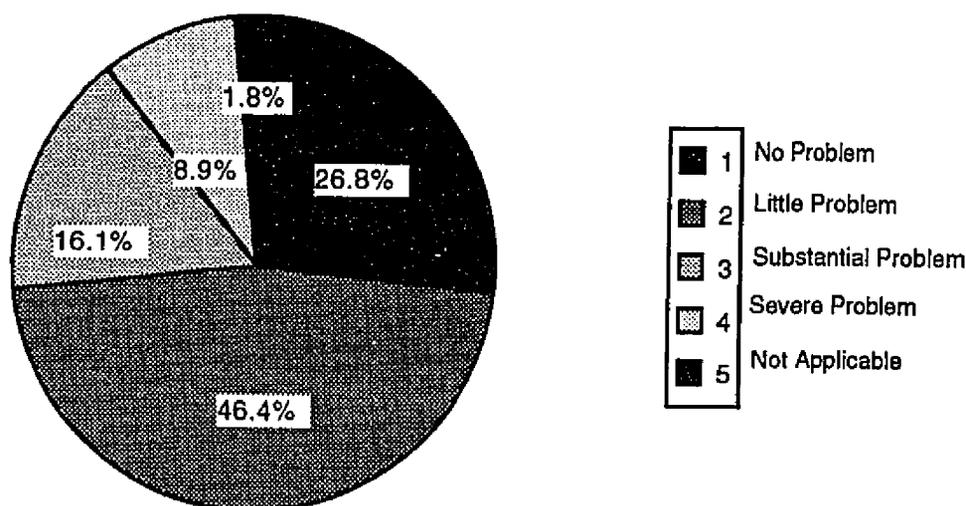


Figure 8. Adapting Instruction to Students with Special Needs

problem may be unique to teachers in other areas not regarded as academic areas, such as music and art. The bias of other teachers for, or against, physical education exists long before the new teacher is even hired. Many times beginning physical education teachers arrive at school full of expectations and ideals. Often they encounter the negative professional biases of other teachers before meeting with their students. This negative bias toward physical education may have resulted from numerous experiences: (1) the previous physical education teacher may have developed a program to meet only the most minimal standards; (2) the other teachers may have had unsuccessful

experiences with physical education teachers, either as students or professionals; or (3) the attitudes toward physical education exemplified by administrators may be less than respectful. The physical education program which is implemented by the beginning teacher may either change negative attitudes toward physical education or justify them. Both time and effort must be devoted to the development of a physical education program if physical educators are to receive the respect and support they and their programs deserve.

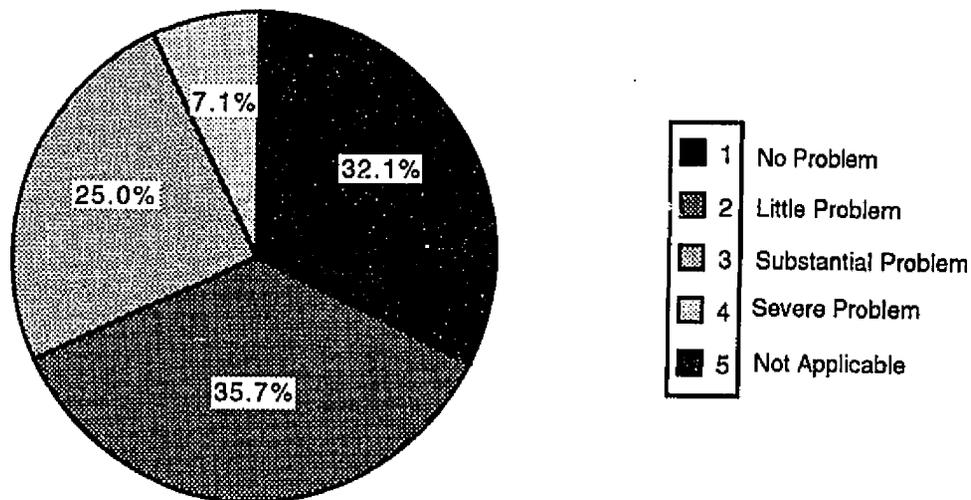


Figure 9. Physical Education Regarded as Having a Low Status by Teachers in Other Areas

The tenth ranked problem was "using a variety of teaching methods to assist in the learning process," with 66.7 percent of the respondents reporting (see Figure 10).

This is a typical problem for most beginning teachers. First-year teachers have a limited repertoire of teaching methods with which they have been successful. The beginning teachers's use of varied teaching methods is further thwarted when he or she begins to experience problems. Ryan (1970) contended that beginning teachers tend to revert to methods they know best when challenged with problems in teaching. Pease (1985) agreed with Ryan by reporting that beginning teachers often become more authoritarian, using teaching methods learned from former teachers, even if the methods directly contradict what they learned in their teacher-preparation program. It appears that beginning teachers need some support in order to develop confidence in a variety of methods.

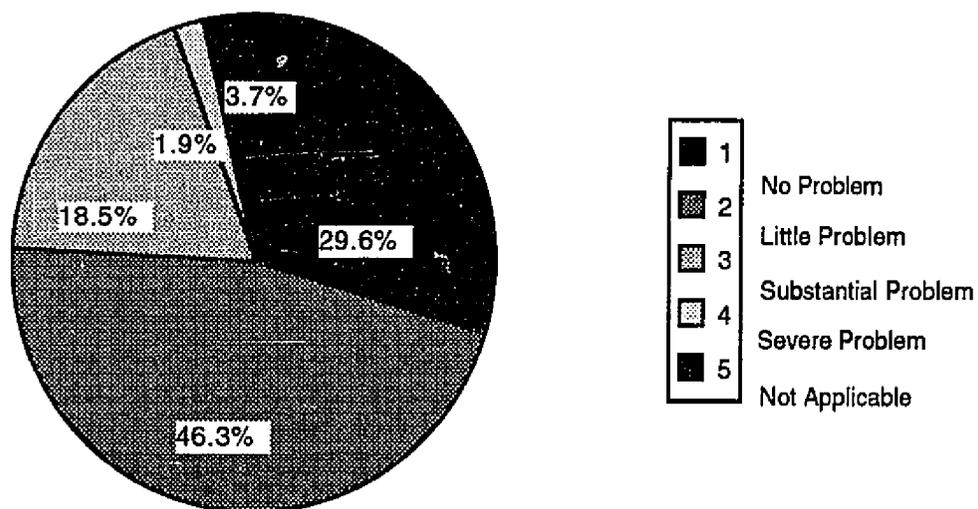


Figure 10. Using a Variety of Teaching Methods

The problem of "teaching special education students" was ranked 11.5, with 66.1 percent of the respondents classifying it as a problem (see Figure 11). The majority of respondents who identified this problem classified it as a "little problem." Some beginning teachers, however, included statements specifically emphasizing the problems they were experiencing in teaching special education students who were mainstreamed into physical education classes.

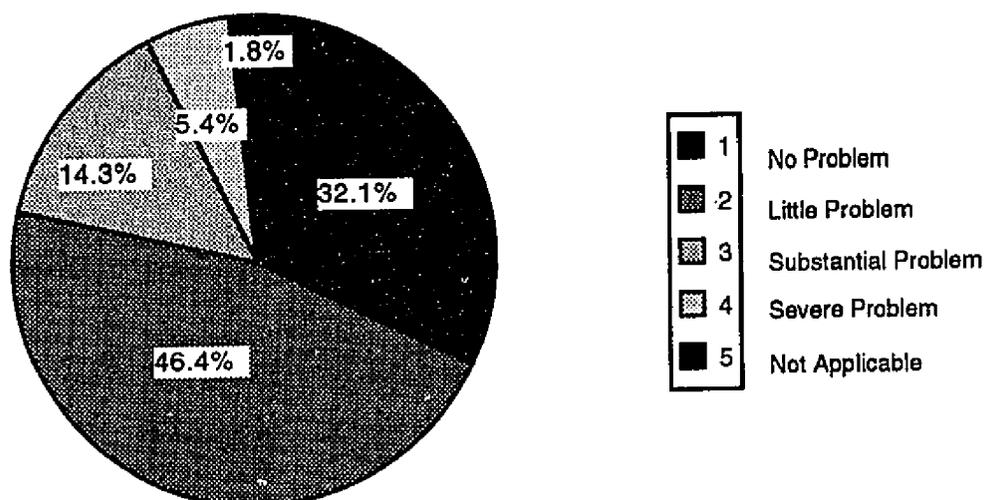


Figure 11. Teaching Special Education Students

"Acquiring sufficient teaching aids and materials" was also ranked 11.5, with the same percentage of beginning physical education teachers identifying it as a problem (see Figure 12). The distribution of responses was more equally divided among the three possible responses than it was in

the previous problem. Of the respondents, 28.6 percent listed it as a "little problem," 25 percent as a "substantial problem," and 12.5 percent as a "severe problem." Six beginning teachers described specific difficulties they experienced in finding and understanding teaching aids and materials.

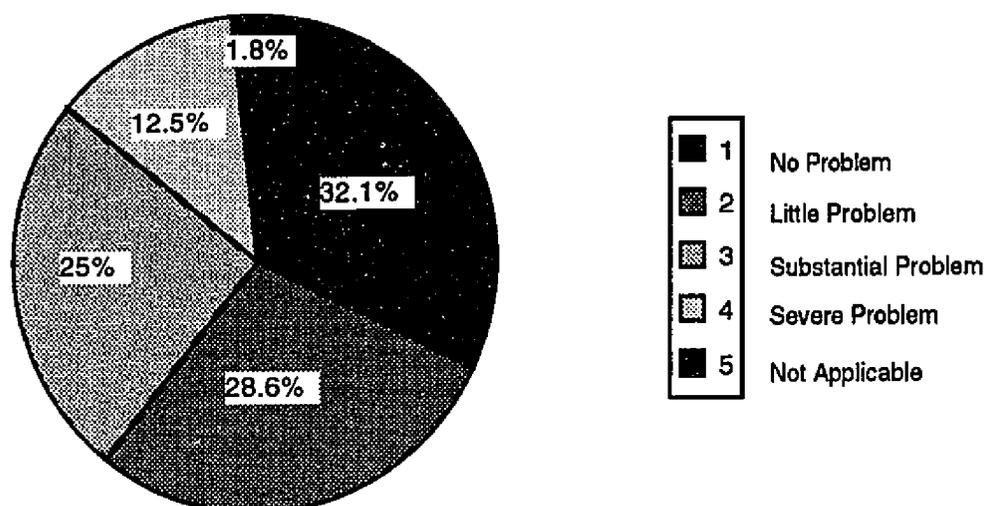


Figure 12. Acquiring Sufficient Teaching Aids and Materials

The problem of the low status of physical education by other teachers is again emphasized in the 13.5 ranked problem: "lack of respect for physical education by other teachers and school administrators." This problem was experienced by 64.2 percent of the respondents (see Figure 13). O'Sullivan's (1989) beginning physical education teachers identified their "greatest concern was gaining respect for themselves as professionals and for their

subject matter with students, parents, and colleagues" (p. 235).

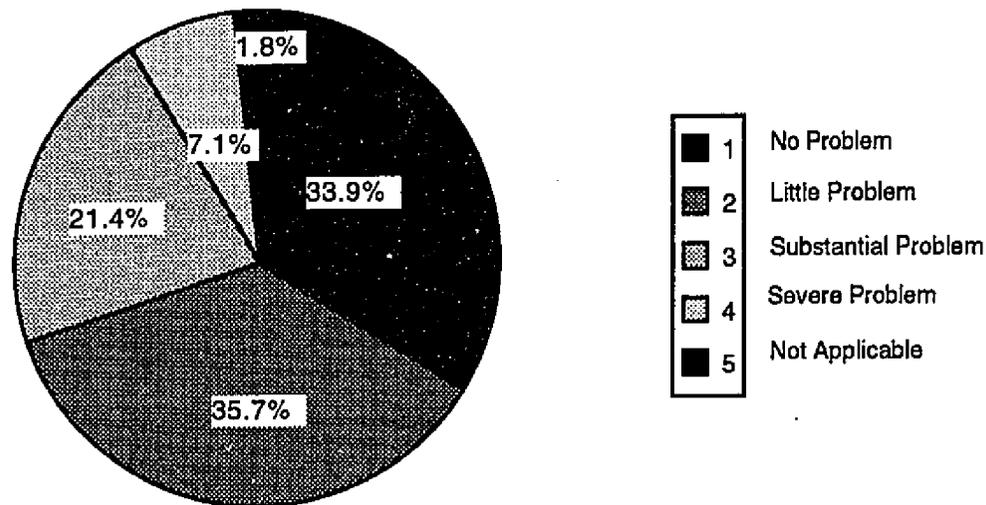


Figure 13. Lack of Respect for Physical Education by Other Teachers and School Administrators

"Planning time to prepare for class" was a problem for 64.2 percent and was also ranked 13.5 (see Figure 14). This problem is found in much of the literature on the problems of beginning teachers, but it may have special significance to physical education teachers because of the dual role of teacher and coach many physical educators have to assume. Of the beginning teachers who completed the survey, 80 percent had coaching responsibilities.

"Assisting students on different skill levels" was a problem for 62.5 percent of the respondents and was ranked

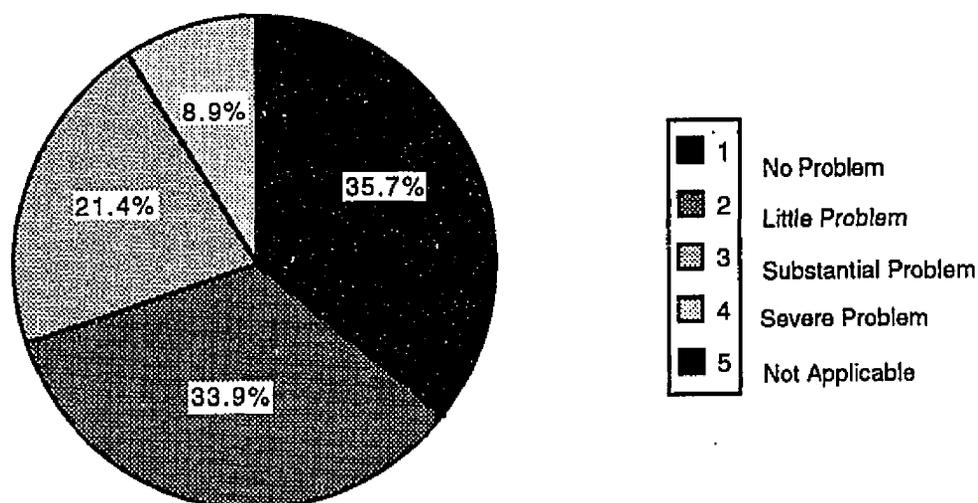


Figure 14. Planning Time to Prepare for Class

as the fifteenth most occurring problem (see Figure 15). While beginning teachers in several studies have identified problems dealing with individual student differences, nowhere may the problem be more pronounced and observed than in the physical education setting. As skills are demonstrated by students in physical education classes, the obvious skill-level differences are recognized not only by the teachers, who may sympathize and encourage, but also by other students, who may tease and harass. Developing instructional techniques to benefit all students is not easy for any teacher, regardless of subject area or experience. Developing those techniques to encourage the students who have few skills to participate in physical education,

without the risk of embarrassment, is difficult at best. In her study, O'Sullivan (1989) identified individualizing the curriculum as one of the top four problems experienced by the beginning physical education teachers.

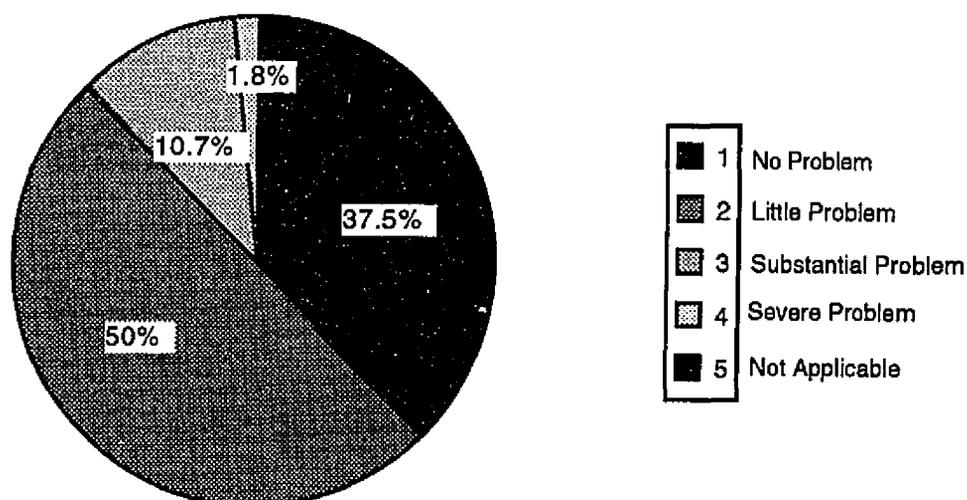


Figure 15. Assisting Students on Different Skill Levels

Of the respondents, 59 percent had a problem with "evaluating students" (see Figure 16). That percentage made "evaluating students" the 16.5 ranked problem. Several studies have identified assessing students' work or evaluating students as a problem for many beginning teachers, regardless of the teachers' subject areas. Veenman (1984) identified assessing students' work as the fourth most frequently perceived problem. O'Sullivan's (1989) beginning physical education teachers cited assessing students as one of the four most prevalent problems. The

results of the surveys completed for this study substantiate the conclusions of earlier studies. It is also interesting to note that two of the beginning physical education teachers identified "evaluating students" as "not applicable" to their teaching situation. This researcher assumes that the students in their classes do not receive grades for participation in physical education.

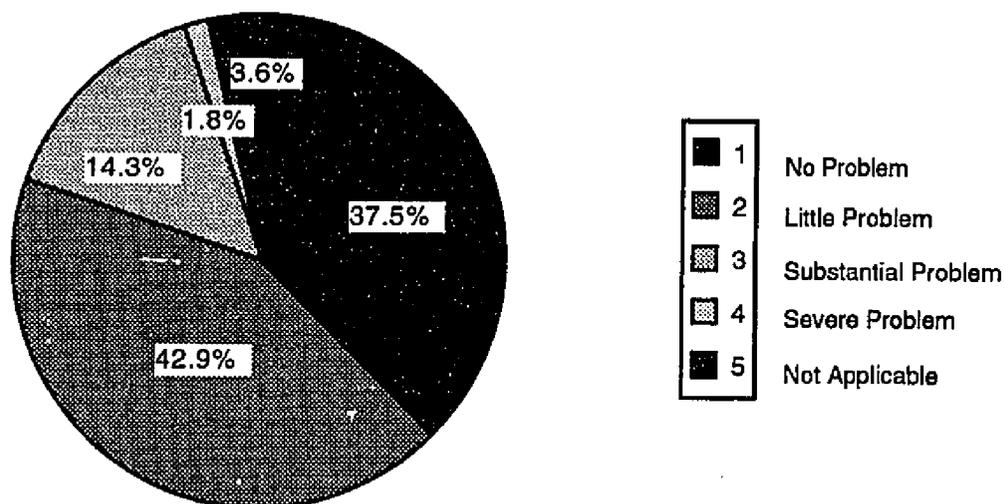


Figure 16. Evaluating Students

"The ability to motivate students" was also ranked as the 16.5 most occurring problem. The findings of this study show a positive correlation with the findings of other studies on this problem of motivation. It did not appear to be as severe a problem as it was for other beginning teachers, but it was still a problem experienced by over half of the beginning physical education teachers

(see Figure 17). There are few things that seem more natural for many children than movement. Physical education provides an opportunity to learn, develop, and exercise this natural instinct. It is somewhat surprising that over half of the beginning physical education teachers had a problem motivating students and 58.9 percent had a problem with a "lack of student interest in physical education"

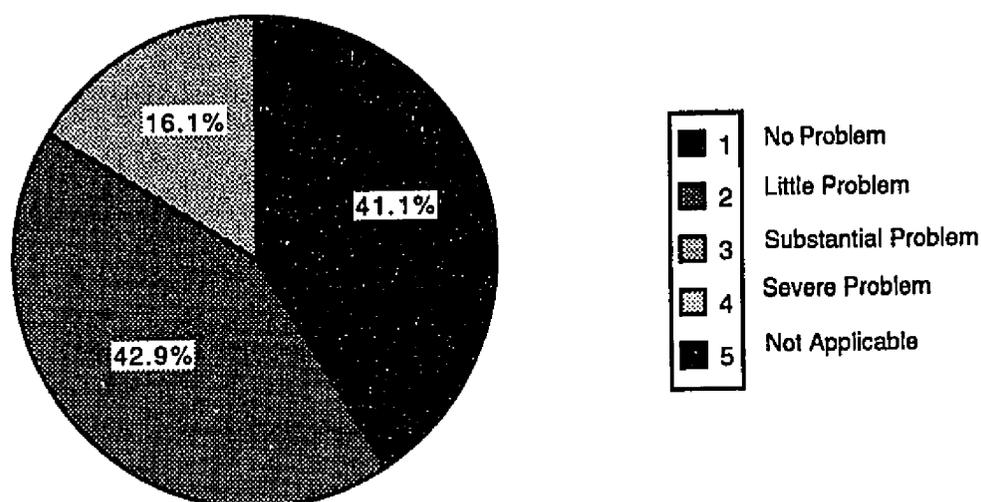


Figure 17. Ability to Motivate Students

(see Figure 18). "Lack of student interest in physical education" was the nineteenth ranked problem. Physical educators have long benefitted from the student's desire to move. Rarely in the past did they have to "sell" students on the ideas of movement and participation. The results of this study indicate that physical educators must assume more

responsibility for providing a curriculum which is both stimulating and motivating for students.

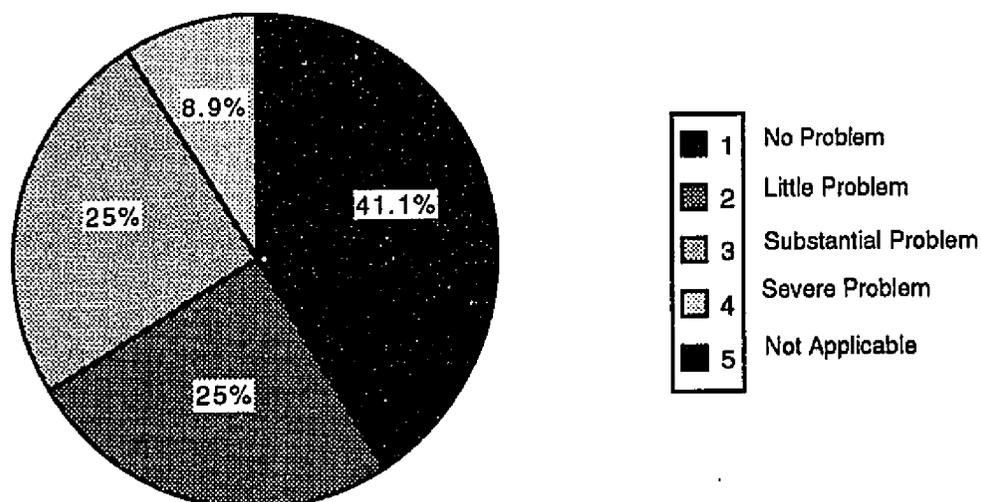


Figure 18. Lack of Student Interest in Physical Education

"Lack of support from parents" was also ranked nineteenth, with 58.9 percent of the respondents identifying it as a problem (see Figure 19). This problem may also be found in the literature as a problem experienced by many beginning teachers. A few of the beginning physical education teachers included statements about the problems they were having relating to parents. One teacher wrote about "parents who were not familiar with the physical education program," indicating that she was experiencing problems with parents who did not understand the requirements of the physical education class. Another wrote that he was experiencing problems with "parents babying

their precious little kids." Regardless of the severity, or the beginning teachers' interpretations of the problem, lack of parental support affected over half of the beginning physical education teachers.

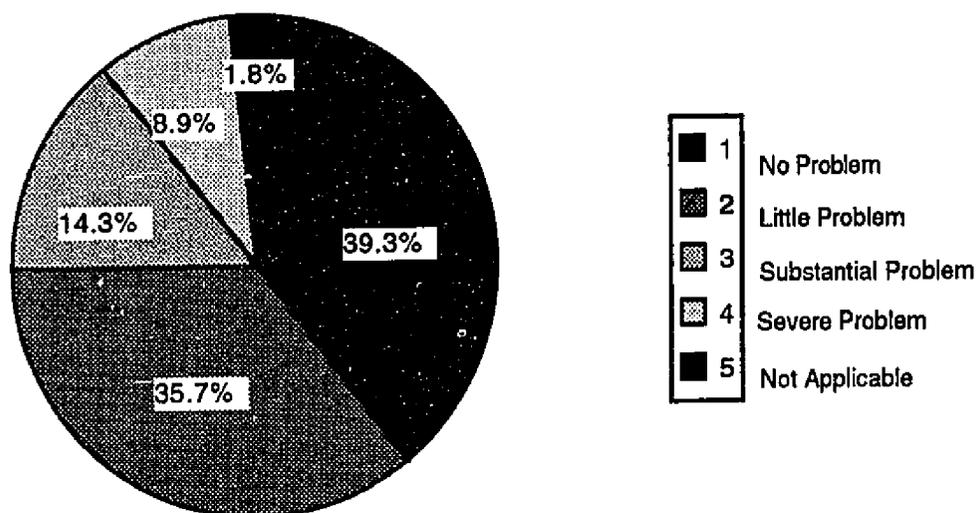


Figure 19. Lack of Support from Parents

Another problem that was also ranked nineteenth, with 58.9 percent of the beginning physical education teachers identifying it as a problem, was "failure to be informed of a student's medical problems or handicapping conditions" (see Figure 20). Special education students and students with health impairments are typically mainstreamed into the physical education classes. Three teachers wrote of the lack of communication that exists between the beginning teachers and other teachers and administrators. One beginning teacher wrote, "I have been the last to find out

about things that concern me." When physical education teachers are not informed of a student's limitations, the effectiveness that the teacher is able to achieve is almost certainly hampered.

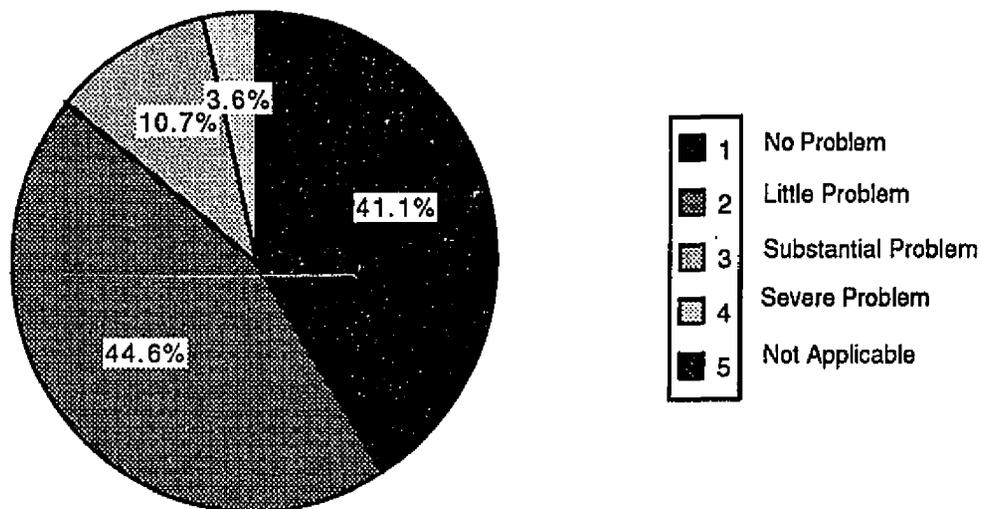


Figure 20. Failure to be Informed of a Student's Medical Problems or Handicapping Conditions

The twenty-first ranked problem was "lack of enough time allotted for individual classes." Of the beginning physical education teachers, 55.4 percent identified this area as a problem (see Figure 21). O'Sullivan (1989) also reported that lack of class time was a problem for the beginning physical education teachers she studied. This problem did not appear, however, in most of the literature reviewed for this study. The average number of minutes the beginning physical education teachers had per class was 44.

Eighteen, or 32 percent of the teachers, had 30 minutes for each class, while 25, or 45 percent, had between 50 and 55 minutes per class.

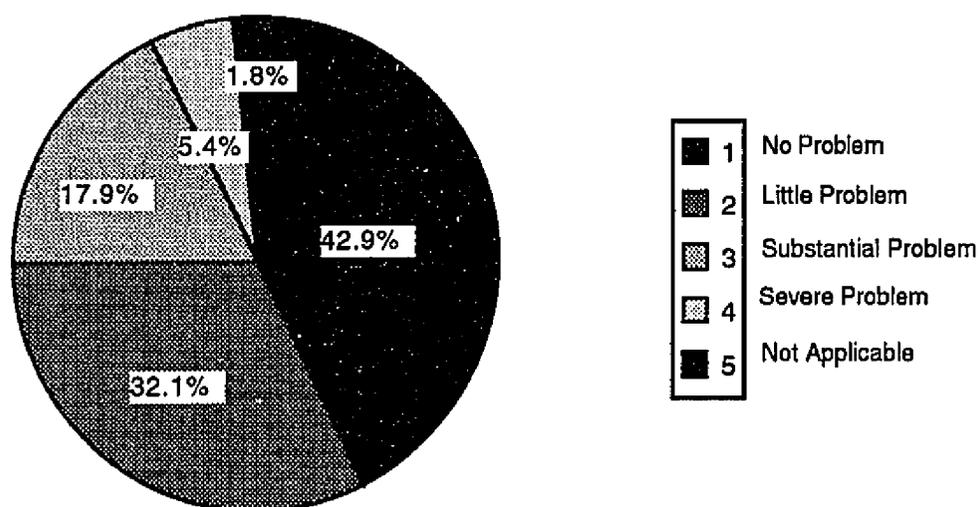


Figure 21. Lack of Enough Time Allotted for Individual Classes

After the first 21 ranked problems were identified, the percentage of teachers experiencing the last 19 problems drops. The 21 most frequently identified problems were experienced by at least 55 percent of the beginning physical education teachers. Problems ranked 22 through 40 were experienced by less than half of the beginning physical education teachers.

The requirement of "school-related responsibilities in addition to teaching," such as coaching, club sponsor, and other school-related responsibilities, was ranked

twenty-second, with 48.3 percent of the respondents identifying it as a problem (see Figure 22). The twenty-third ranked problem was "teaching students of different

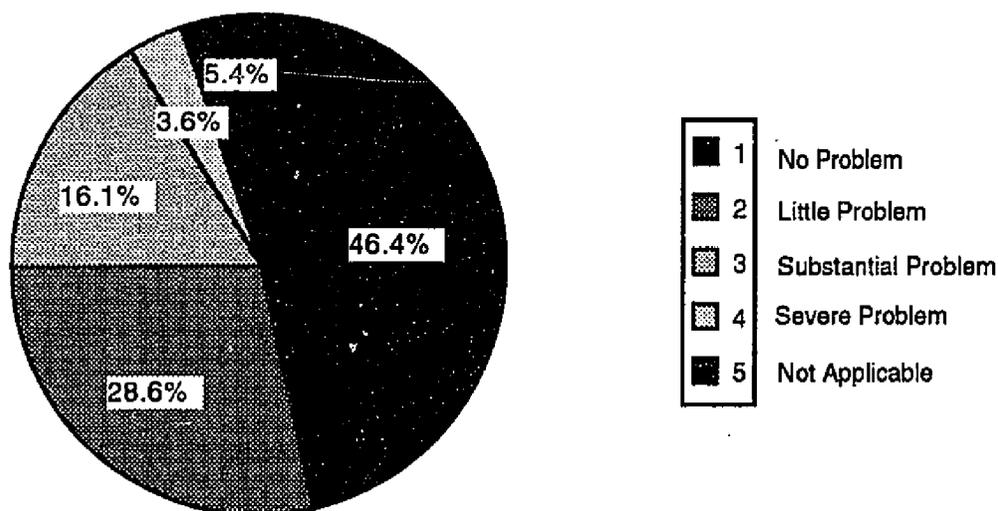


Figure 22. Requirement of School-Related Responsibilities in Addition to Teaching

socioeconomic levels." This problem was experienced by 45.4 percent of the beginning teachers (see Figure 23).

The "required paperwork not related to teaching" was identified by 44.6 percent of the respondents as a problem, and it ranked twenty-fourth (see Figure 24). A problem with "maintaining effective relationships with teachers in different subject areas" was experienced by 42.9 percent of the beginning teachers (see Figure 25). It ranked twenty-fifth among the 40 ranked problems.

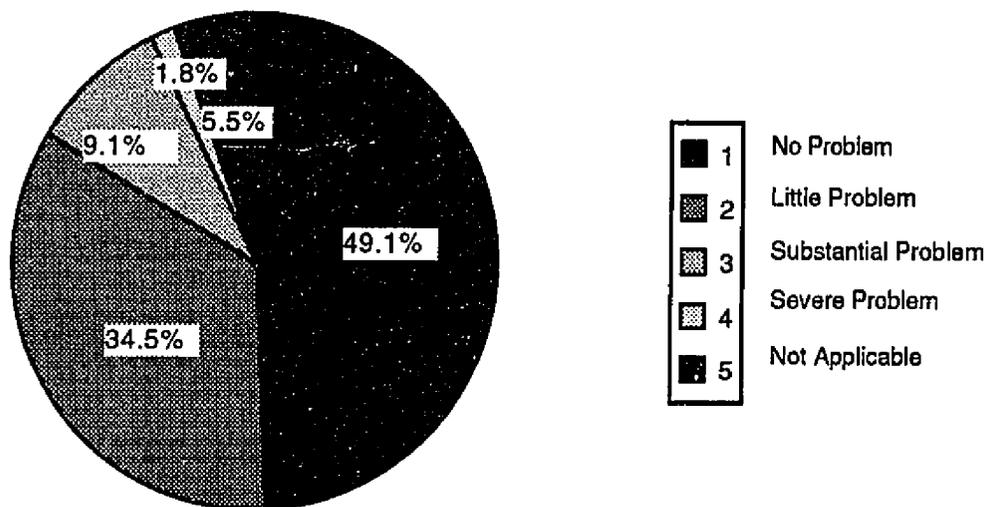


Figure 23. Teaching Students of Different Socioeconomic Levels

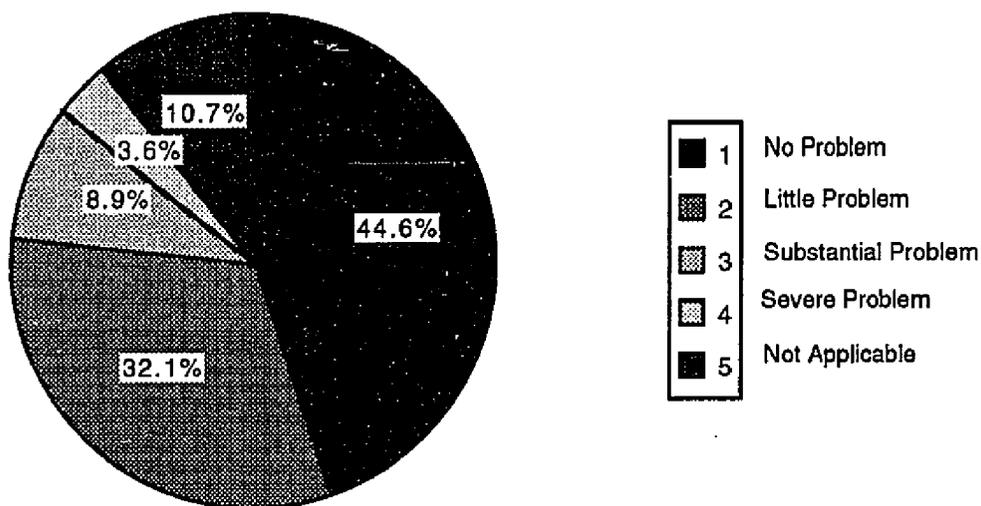


Figure 24. Required Paperwork Not Related to Teaching

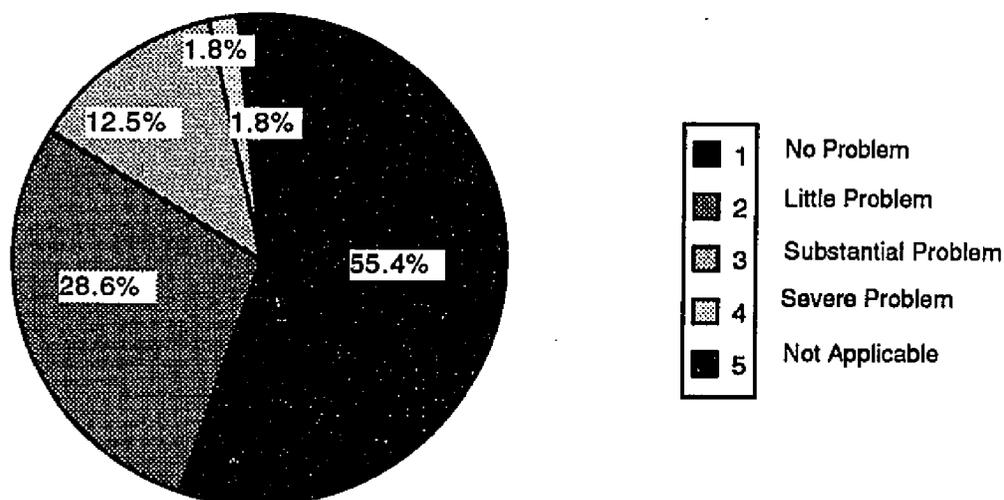


Figure 25. Maintaining Effective Relationships with Teachers in Different Subject Areas

A problem with "the requirement of extra duties," such as lunch duty, hall duty, bus duty, and other duties, was ranked 26.5, with 41.1 percent of the beginning teachers identifying it as a problem (see Figure 26). "Maintaining effective relationships with parents" was also ranked 26.5, with the same percentage experiencing a problem (see Figure 27).

"Physical education regarded as having a low status with administrators" was identified as a problem by 40.1 percent of the beginning teachers and ranked twenty-eighth (see Figure 28). The twenty-ninth ranked problem for 37.5 percent of the beginning teachers was "confidence in their teaching ability" (see Figure 29). This problem closely

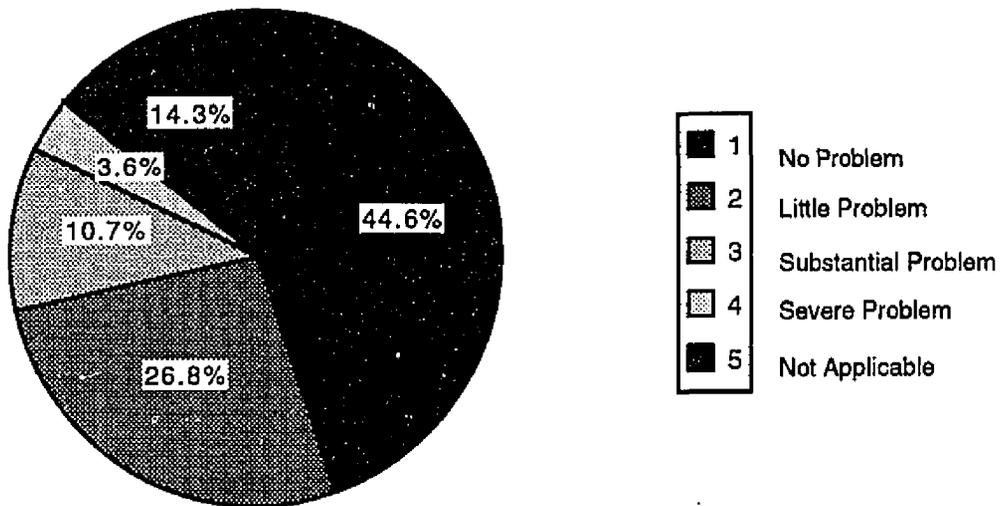


Figure 26. Requirement of Extra Duties (Lunch Duty, Hall Duty, Bus Duty, etc.)

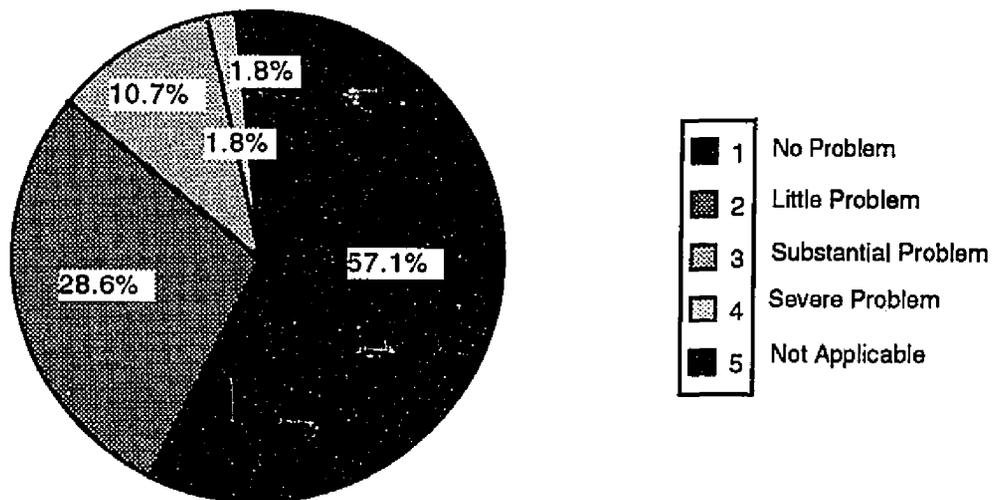


Figure 27. Maintaining Effective Relationships with Parents

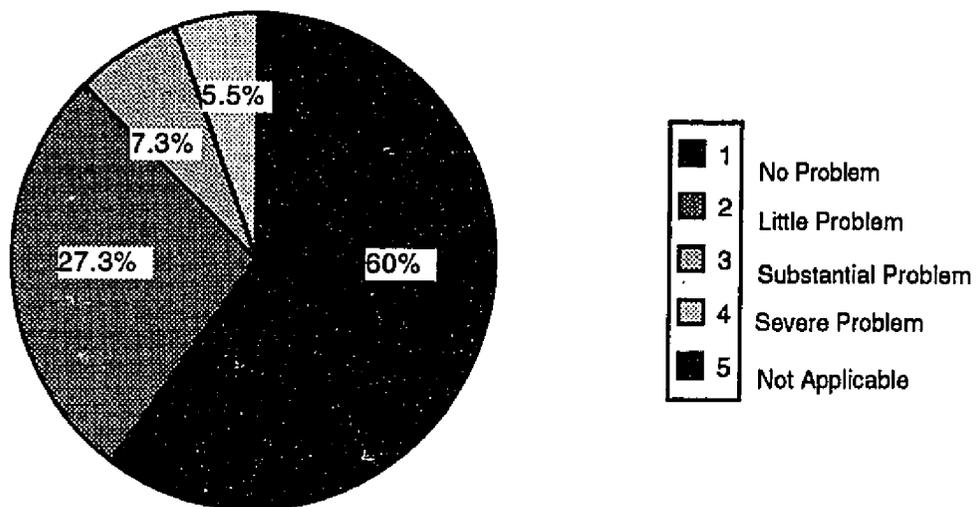


Figure 28. Physical Education Regarded as Having a Low Status with Administrators

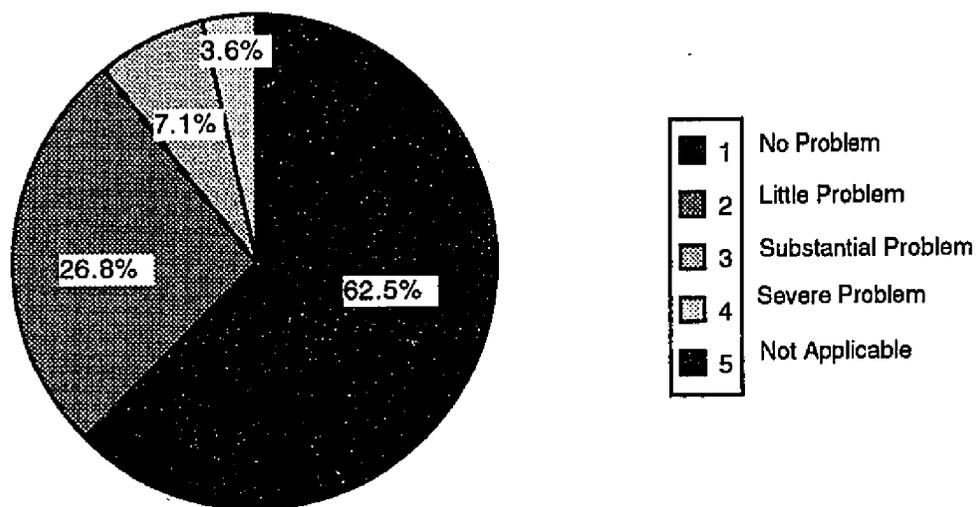


Figure 29. Confidence in Your Teaching Ability

relates with the 30.5 ranked problem experienced by 35.7 percent of the teachers (see Figure 30). That problem was the "knowledge of skill in activity areas" that are taught.

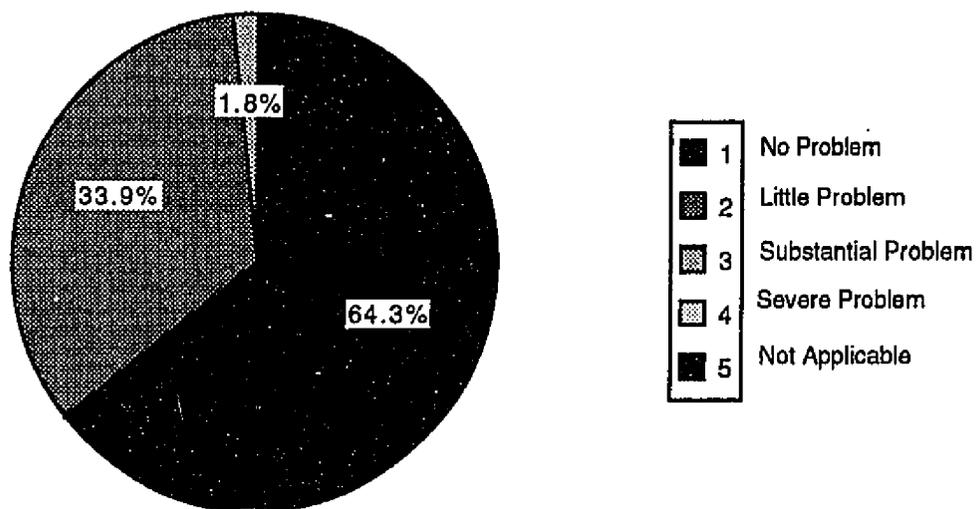


Figure 30. Your Knowledge of Skill in Activity Areas

A problem "maintaining effective relationships with students" was also ranked 30.5 and experienced by 35.7 percent of the beginning teachers (see Figure 31). "Maintaining effective relationships with administrators" was a problem for 23.3 percent and ranked 32.5 (see Figure 32). "Teaching students of a race different from their own" was also a problem for 23.3 percent of the beginning physical education teachers (see Figure 33).

Although the problem of "maintaining effective relationships with guidance counselors" was experienced by 21.5 percent of the beginning teachers and ranked 34.5;

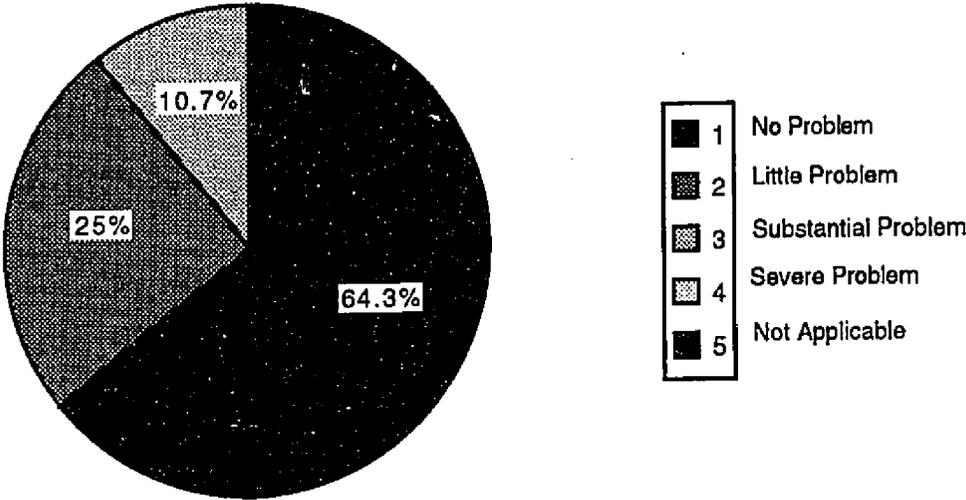


Figure 31. Maintaining Effective Relationships with Students

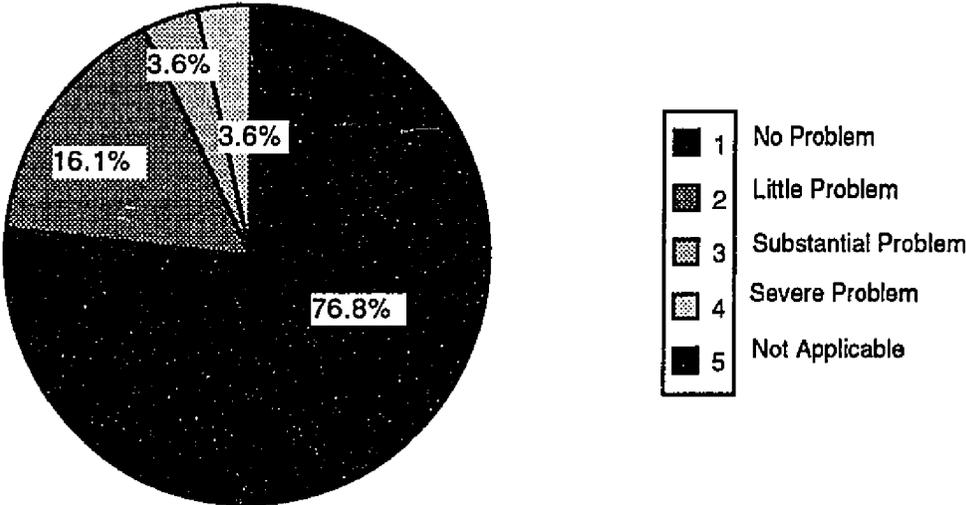


Figure 32. Maintaining Effective Relationships with Administrators

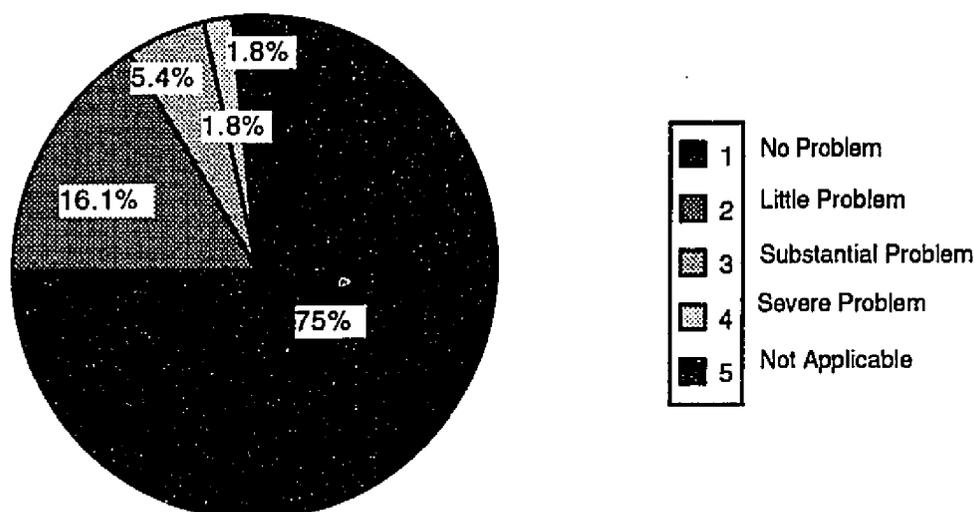


Figure 33. Teaching Students of a Race Different From Yours

a large percentage of teachers categorized it as "not applicable." Several schools throughout the state of Georgia do not have guidance counselors working within the school, thus making this problem area not applicable for 21.4 percent of the respondents (see Figure 34).

The highest percentage of respondents who replied "not applicable" to a problem was with the 34.5 ranked problem. "Teaching students whose primary language is not English" was a problem for 21.5 percent of the teachers. The percentage who responded "not applicable" to that problem was 46.4 (see Figure 35).

"Maintaining effective relationships with other physical education teachers, with school clerical workers,

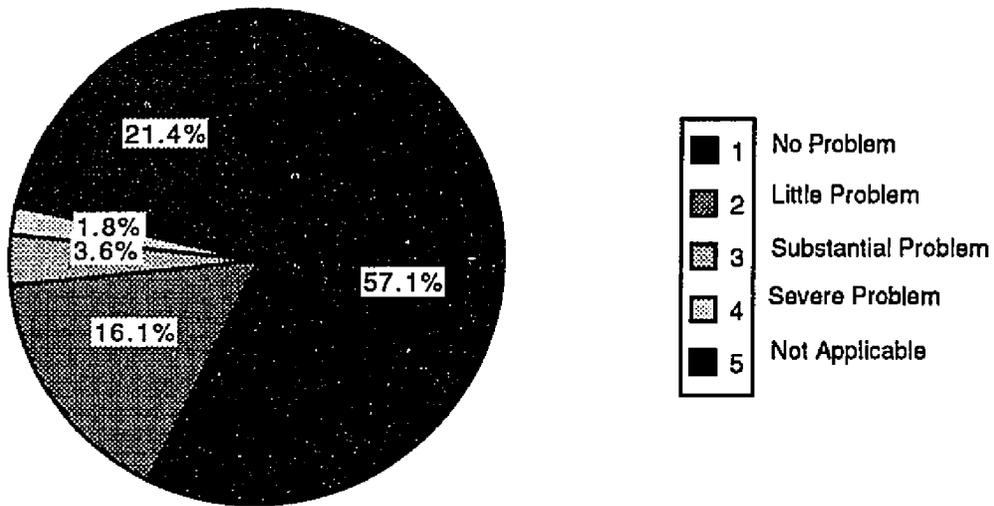


Figure 34. Maintaining Effective Relationships with Guidance Counselors

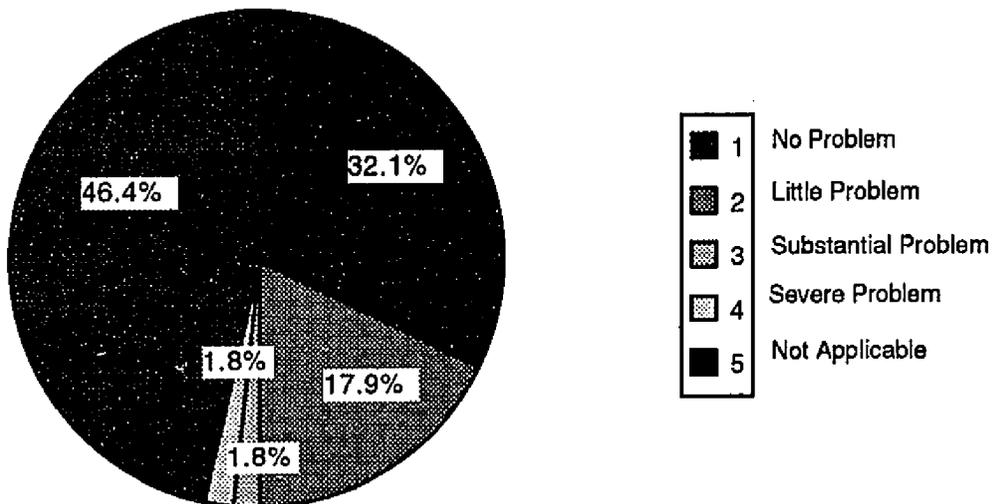


Figure 35. Teaching Students Whose Primary Language Is Not English

with custodians, and with other coaches" were ranked as the thirty-sixth, thirty-seventh, thirty-eighth, and thirty-ninth problems, respectively. Of the beginning teachers, 19.6 percent had problems relating to other physical education teachers (see Figure 36); 17.9 percent had problems relating to clerical workers (see Figure 37); 14.3 percent had problems relating to custodians (see Figure 38); and 8.8 percent had problems relating to other coaches (see Figure 39).

The lowest ranked problem in this survey offers a bright spot to an otherwise dark picture of the problems beginning physical education teachers experience. Only 7.1 percent had a problem with "physical education regarded as having a low status by other physical education teachers" (see Figure 40).

In addition to the problems identified within the survey, the researcher asked the respondents to identify any problems associated with their experience that were not listed in the survey. This request provided an opportunity not only for the researcher to gather more information, but also for the beginning teachers to express unique problems of their situation. Many of the beginning physical education teachers responded to this request, and the problems described by the beginning physical education teachers are listed in their own words on pages 61-63.

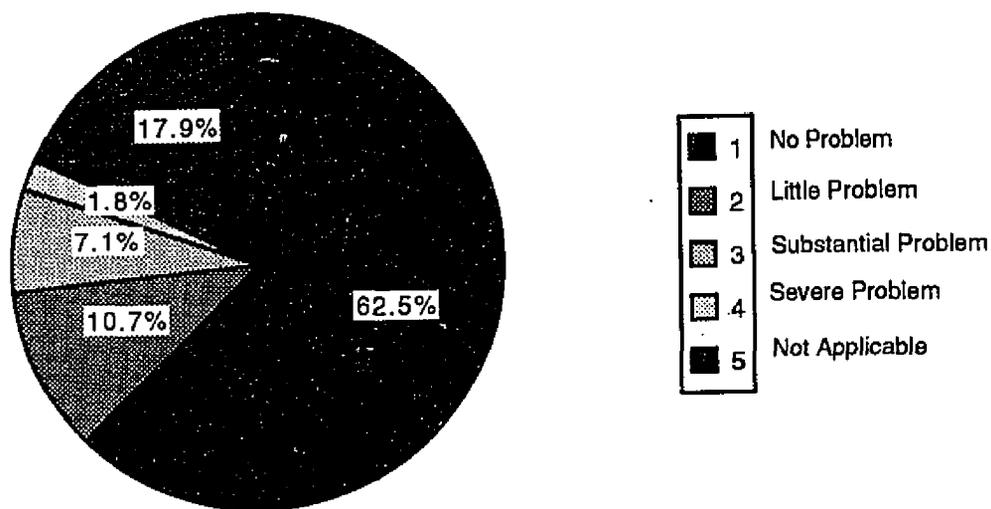


Figure 36. Maintaining Effective Relationships with Other Physical Education Teachers

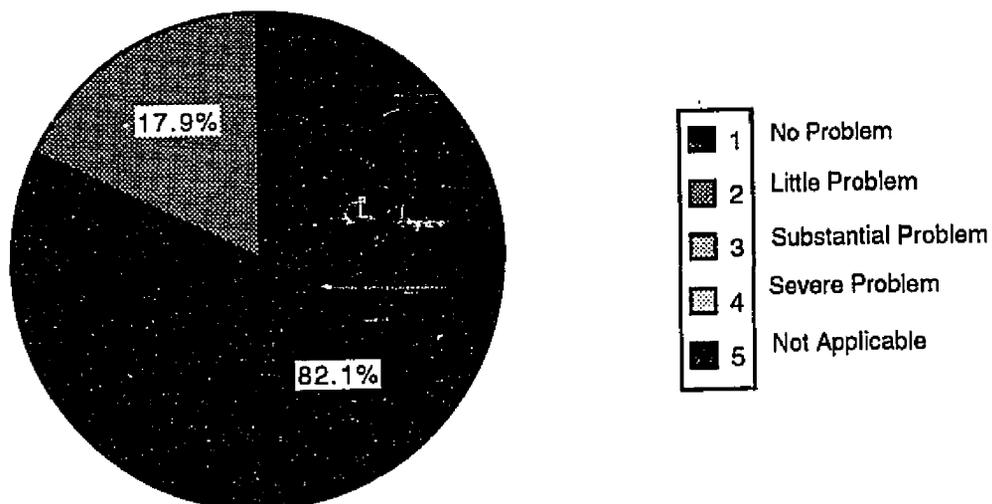


Figure 37. Maintaining Effective Relationships with School Clerical Workers

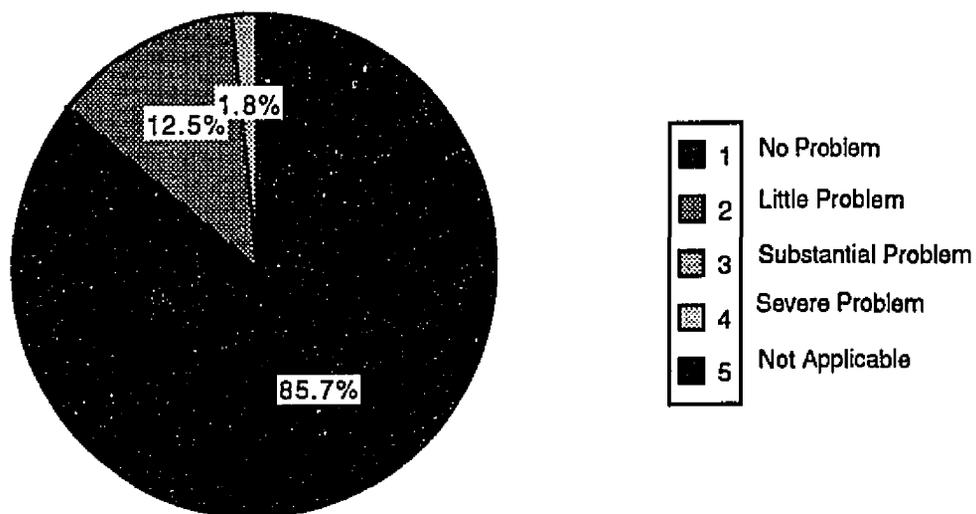


Figure 38. Maintaining Effective Relationships with Custodians

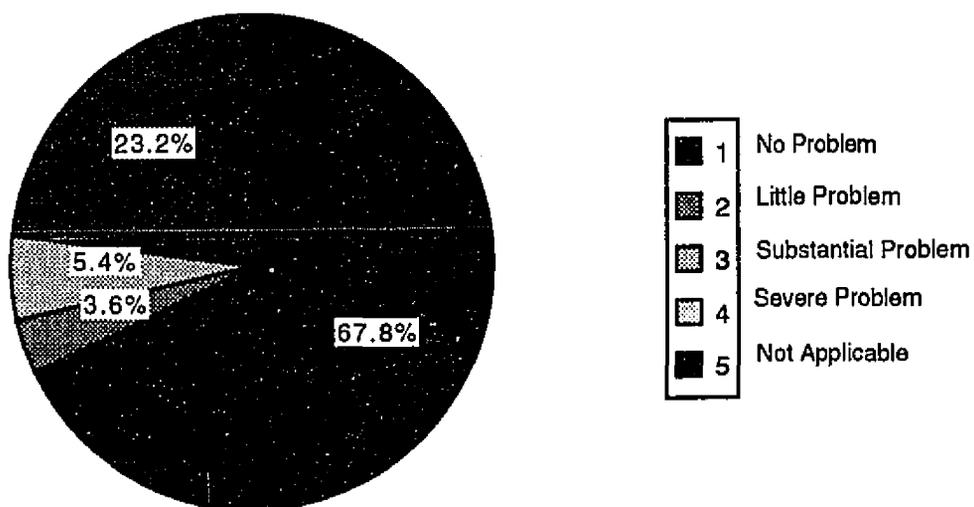


Figure 39. Maintaining Effective Relationships with Other Coaches

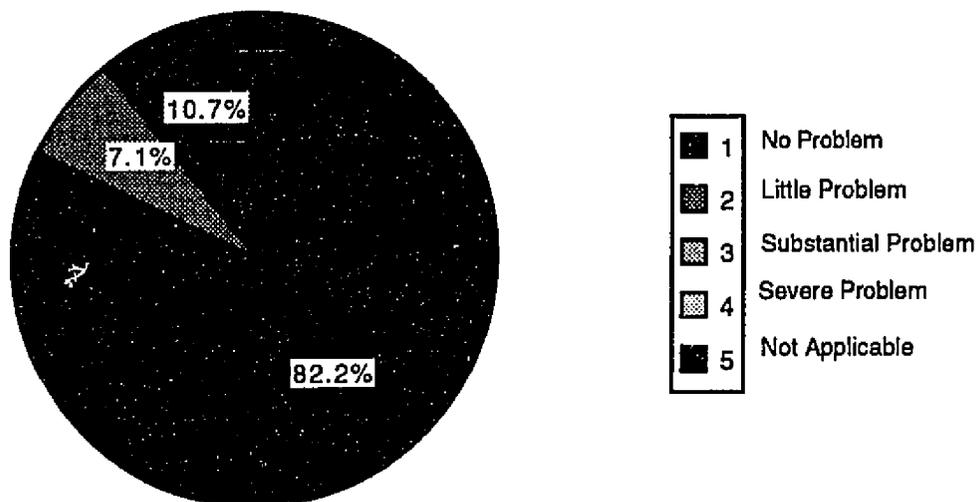


Figure 40. Physical Education Regarded as Having a Low Status By Other Physical Education Teachers

Positive reinforcement from administration has been nonexistent for 12 weeks. There is little understanding of our program and our purpose in physical education.

Assistance from the rest of the school--it takes so much extra time to run errands, go to lunch, talk with other instructors.

Getting along with other teachers.

My principal is 'scared' of the parents and will not stand behind the teachers.

Really understanding the system rules and the way to carry them out.

Finding reference materials in the local community regarding physical education, sports, games, etc. Lack of a generally accepted base for physical education curriculum.

Not enough practical instruction in college relating to discipline problems, large class sizes, paperwork associated with teaching, how to

grade students, etc. First year teachers need someone to guide them and answer all of their questions. It has been difficult to plan lessons without a curriculum to go by. You are expected to know everything, and there is no one to turn to for help and support.

I have problems getting administrators to take responsibility for their job. They always want teachers to manage their classrooms on their own.

Not being told when things are due, or when a class will be on a field trip--Communication and Expectations.

Teaching special education students that have been mainstreamed into a regular class of first graders. First grade is not the ideal grade for special education students to be mainstreamed because it is the first time first graders are in a structured physical education program.

The list pretty much covered the problem areas. The biggest problems came with the parents who were not familiar with physical education programs.

Administrators and other teachers sometimes don't inform new teachers about certain things. They just assume we know what to do.

I have problems with discipline in my high school classes.

Not knowing what to include in my teaching curriculum (especially for the elementary age). In college everything is directed toward high school or college-age students.

Being compared to the previous physical education teacher by some teachers and a few students.

The ability to discipline in a system without using a paddle, yet still maintain respect from administrators who deal with discipline problems.

The main problem that I have is with the special education students who are mainstreamed into physical education with other classes whose ability to learn may already be unsatisfactory. I think this pulls all the kids to a lower level of

learning. Put the special education students with smarter kids who can help them learn.

Parents babying their precious little kids.

Kids not wanting to dress out.

Being out there alone--learning how to grade and what to do.

Teaching physical education in the classroom on rainy and cold days.

Excess of meetings which are not field related.

I have been the last to find out about things that concern me. I hear about it from other teachers.

Not being a certified physical education instructor. This school year I am teaching out of field. My major is Middle Grades (4-8), math and science.

Assigned an additional class to teach after my contract was signed. I was told during my interview that I would teach grades K-3. I was told a week before school started that I also had to teach a fifth grade class. I don't like the lack of communication.

Of the 25 additional problems supplied by the beginning physical education teachers, 10 were problems in relating to administrators and/or other teachers. Lack of communication with the beginning teacher, lack of respect for the physical education program, and lack of reinforcement by administrators and other teachers were problems readily identified by some of the beginning teachers. Professional isolation and the feeling of "being out there alone" were specific problems for six beginning teachers. Difficulties in finding and understanding reference materials, curriculum guides, and school system policies and rules, combined with

feeling that "you are expected to know everything and there is no one to turn to for help and support" left six beginning teachers stranded in unfamiliar territories. Teaching special education students that were mainstreamed into physical education was a specific problem for two beginning teachers, while lack of parental support and understanding was identified by two other teachers. Not unexpectedly, two beginning teachers included statements about the difficulties they were experiencing with discipline. One teacher identified a specific problem in motivating students; another listed a problem in identifying physical education activities that could be done without a facility; and a third lacked confidence in her teaching ability because she was hired to teach physical education without being a certified instructor.

Ryan (1970) concluded that a beginning teacher's first-year experiences can influence that teacher's entire career. While identifying the specific needs, concerns, and problems experienced by beginning physical education teachers, the researcher also identified some of their confusions, frustrations, and disappointments. The responses of these beginning teachers are not entirely unique, but they did enlighten this researcher to what beginning physical education teachers encounter during the first year of their career.

CHAPTER 5

Summary and Discussion

This study identified the problems, needs, and concerns of beginning physical education teachers, grades K-12. Although the study was limited to beginning physical education teachers in the state of Georgia, teachers that were surveyed represented several different preparation programs inside and outside of the state of Georgia. The researcher's intent was not to identify an inclusive list of problems, but rather to simply delineate the most common problems experienced by many beginning physical education teachers. This delineation proves that some of the problems experienced by many beginning physical education teachers are unique to their area of specialization. There were particular problem areas that were also identified as more severe problems for beginning physical education teachers than for other beginning teachers.

Most of the problems identified by over 50 percent of the beginning physical education teachers were incredibly similar to the problems reported by beginning teachers in previous studies. It seems a homogeneity exists among beginning teachers and their perceived problems, regardless of the subject area or grade they are teaching. Of the 21 highest ranked problems encountered by the beginning physical education teachers, four seem to be exclusive to

the beginning teachers' area of specialization:

(1) "obtaining facilities," (2) "physical education regarded as having a low status by other teachers," (3) "failure to be informed of a student's handicapping condition or medical problem," and (4) "lack of time allotted for class." The problem of "overcrowded classes" was prioritized more highly by the beginning physical education teachers than by the beginning teachers in the literature reviewed for this study.

Conclusions and Implications

The problems of beginning teachers are not unknown. Teacher-preparation programs may provide some of the solutions to these problems if the emphasis in teacher preparation is changed from theory-based education to experience-based education. Many of the beginning physical education teachers listed areas they believe their teacher-preparation programs should have addressed or emphasized. The areas that the beginning teachers identified directly correlated to the problems they were having. One teacher wrote that there was "not enough practical instruction in college relating to discipline problems, large class sizes, paperwork associated with teaching, how to grade students, etc." Some of these teachers seemed disappointed with their lack of preparedness for their first year in the profession of their choice. Another teacher wrote, "I just wish it had

prepared me for a 'real' physical education situation--not an 'ideal' one."

Teacher-preparation programs cannot provide beginning teachers with lists of "how-to" instructions regarding the problems they will encounter. Each problem will be specific to the situation in which it occurs. Complaints are justified, however, in regard to the distance that exists between theory and practice. There also appears to be little instruction on how beginning teachers are to bridge that distance. The need for more "hands-on" experience with "real" students was the prevalent theme mentioned by several beginning physical education teachers as an area that should be addressed more often in teacher-preparation programs.

Teacher-induction programs might alleviate some of the problems experienced by beginning physical education teachers by recognizing and addressing the specific problems. One beginning physical education teacher wished that first-year teachers had been assigned a peer teacher: "Someone to help rookie teachers adjust." Professional guidance and support are at least two areas teacher-induction programs can influence.

Future studies should be conducted on the experiences of first-year physical education teachers and the effect those experiences have on each professional's development. The population of beginning physical education teachers used for future studies should be at least as large and as

diverse as the population used for this study. Past studies have been limited in the size and diversity of their population (O'Sullivan, 1989). There are also several ways this population of beginning physical education teachers can be further categorized. Comparisons could then be made between the problems, and their severity, experienced by various categories. Comparisons could be made between the problems experienced by male and female beginning teachers; between problems experienced by high school, junior high school, and elementary school teachers; between problems experienced by teachers in urban, suburban, and inner-city school districts; and even between problems experienced at north Georgia schools and those experienced at south Georgia schools. The list of comparisons that might be made seems endless. While the objectives of future studies might make these comparisons, the purpose of this study was to identify the perceived problems of beginning physical education teachers, regardless of their classification. This study's population diversity allows for a list of problems that can be considered representative of most beginning physical education teachers.

Future studies should also include periodic interviews with the beginning teachers. Researchers should also encourage the beginning teachers to keep journals during their first year. Interviews and journal entries would provide more complete explanations of the problems beginning

teachers encounter. More complete explanations would enable interested professionals to comprehend the educational situations in which these problems occur, the effects the teachers' personalities have on these problems, and the psychological attitudes that develop during the teacher's first year. A more complete understanding of the physical education teacher's first year would allow for preparation and induction programs to better prepare teachers for their transition into the profession. Future steps need to be taken in the direction of preparing students for the problems they will likely encounter as teachers. Identifying the specific problems of beginning physical education teachers may be the first step in assuring that beginning teachers become competent and qualified professionals.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
LETTER TO PERSONNEL DIRECTORS

APPENDIX A

LETTER TO PERSONNEL DIRECTORS

Dear

Paula Dohoney is a graduate student pursuing the Doctor of Arts Degree in Physical Education. She is currently working on her dissertation that will study the problems, needs, and concerns of beginning physical education teachers during their first two months on the job. In order to complete this dissertation, she will need your help as will be explained below. As her advisor, I wish to thank you for your assistance.

As stated above, my dissertation will attempt to determine the problems, needs, and concerns of beginning elementary and secondary school physical education teachers as perceived during their first two months of employment. In order to accomplish this, I will need names of teachers to whom to send a questionnaire.

Your name was given to me as the person most responsible for hiring professionals in your school system. I would be sincerely grateful if you could list the name, and school where he or she teaches, of any first-year physical education teacher that has been hired in your school system for the 1992-93 school year. If no first-year physical education teachers have been hired, your negative response would be appreciated. These first-year physical education teachers will be asked to complete a short survey approximately eight weeks into their teaching experience.

You will find an enclosed, self-addressed, stamped envelope in which to mail your reply. Thank you again for your assistance.

Sincerely

Paula Dohoney

Ralph Ballou, Ph.D.
Advisor

APPENDIX B

LETTER TO BEGINNING TEACHERS CONTACTED BY PHONE

APPENDIX B

LETTER TO BEGINNING TEACHERS CONTACTED BY PHONE

1500 Manly Street
Dalton, GA 30720
October 30, 1992
(706) 278-8757

Dear

I am so glad I had the opportunity to speak with you on the phone. As I told you, I am in my sixth year of teaching physical education and am currently working on my doctorate. The topic of my dissertation is the perceived problems, needs, and concerns of beginning physical education teachers. I intend to prove that the problems experienced by beginning physical education teachers are different from the problems experienced by most beginning teachers in other subject areas.

I have enclosed a copy of my survey instrument. I would appreciate it if you would complete the survey and return it to me in the self-addressed, stamped envelope that I have provided. I cannot tell you how grateful I am for your help with my study.

Individual results of the survey will remain strictly confidential. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call me.

Thanks again for your efforts.

Sincerely,

Paula Dohoney
Dalton High School

Enclosures: Survey
Envelope

APPENDIX C

LETTER TO BEGINNING TEACHERS NOT CONTACTED BY PHONE

APPENDIX C

LETTER TO BEGINNING TEACHERS NOT CONTACTED BY PHONE

1500 Manly Street
Dalton, GA 30720
November 2, 1992
(706) 278-8757

Dear

I am sorry I did not have an opportunity to speak with you on the phone. I wanted to tell you that I am in my sixth year of teaching physical education and am currently working on my doctorate. The topic of my dissertation is the perceived problems, needs, and concerns of beginning physical education teachers. I intend to prove that the problems experienced by beginning physical education teachers are different from the problems experienced by most beginning teachers in other subject areas.

I have enclosed a copy of my survey instrument. I would appreciate it if you would complete the survey and return it to me in the self-addressed, stamped envelope that I have provided. I cannot tell you how grateful I am for your help with my study.

Individual results of the survey will remain strictly confidential. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call me.

Thanks again for your efforts.

Sincerely,

Paula Dohoney
Dalton High School

Enclosures: Survey
Envelope

APPENDIX D
SURVEY INSTRUMENT

APPENDIX D
SURVEY INSTRUMENT

**Perceived Needs, Concerns, and Problems of
Beginning Physical Education Teachers**

Please answer the first three questions. If the answer to question #3 is no, discontinue answering this survey and return it to me. If the answer to question #3 is yes, please finish this survey.

I. 1. Biographic Information

A. What is your age? _____

B. What is your sex? ___male, ___female

2. Educational Information

A. Please circle the highest degree attained:

Bachelor's Master's Education Specialist Doctorate

B. Please list the information about your educational experiences:

Bachelor's Master's Education
Specialist Doctorate

Name of Institution

Degree Earned

Area of Emphasis

Month/Year

Degree was Earned

3. Is this your first full-time teaching position? yes____ no____

4. What grade level(s) do you teach? _____

5. How many classes do you teach per day? _____

6. What is the time allotment for each class? _____

7. What is the approximate enrollment for each class? _____

8. How many physical education teachers are there at your school including yourself? _____

9. What are your other school related responsibilities in addition to teaching?
(example: coaching basketball, annual staff advisor, Triple S sponsor)

10. What do you believe was the primary reason for your employment?

Teaching ability _____

Willingness to Coach _____

Willingness to be a club sponsor _____

Other (please explain) _____

11. Do you have a planning period? yes_____ no_____

If the answer to the above question is yes, how long is the period (total number of minutes each day)? _____

12. Approximately how many students are enrolled in your school? _____

13. How would you classify your school? Inner-City____ Suburban____
Rural_____

II. Potential Problems and Areas of Concern for Beginning Teachers

Directions:

Each of the following statements describes a potential problem in physical education. Please **circle** the response that indicates the degree of problem that each situation is for you as a beginning teacher. If the potential problem has no application to you, please circle #5, Not Applicable

| | No Problem | Little Problem | Substantial Problem | Severe Problem | Not Applicable |
|---|------------|----------------|---------------------|----------------|----------------|
| 1. Assisting students on different skill levels | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Classroom management | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. Evaluating students | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. Personal relationship with students in class | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. Ability to motivate students | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| | No Problem | Little Problem | Substantial Problem | Severe Problem | Not Applicable |
|---|------------|----------------|---------------------|----------------|----------------|
| 6. Using a variety of teaching methods to assist in learning process | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. Planning time to prepare for class | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. Maintaining effective relationships with other school personnel: | | | | | |
| a. other physical education teachers | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| b. teachers in different subject areas | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| c. guidance counselors | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| d. administrators | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| e. coaches | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| f. custodians | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| g. school secretaries and clerical workers | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. Determining students' needs | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. Requirement of other school-related responsibilities in addition to teaching (coaching, club sponsor, etc.) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. Acquiring sufficient teaching aids and materials (films, curriculum guides, etc.) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. Obtaining proper facilities for instruction | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. Obtaining proper equipment for instruction | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. Adapting instruction for students with special needs | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. Your knowledge of skill activity areas | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16. Confidence in your teaching abilities | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17. Requirement of extra duties (lunch duty, hall duty, bus duty, etc. . . .) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| | No Problem | Little Problem | Substantial Problem | Severe Problem | Not Applicable |
|--|------------|----------------|---------------------|----------------|----------------|
| 18. Teaching special education students | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19. Teaching disrespectful students | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20. Teaching students of different socioeconomic levels | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 21. Relationships with parents | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 22. Teaching students of a race different from yours | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 23. Overcrowded classes | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 24. Lack of enough time allotted for individual classes | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 25. Lack of respect for physical education by other teachers and school administrators | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 26. Lack of support from parents | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 27. Lack of student interest in physical education | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 28. Managing disruptive students | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 29. Teaching students whose primary language is not English | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 30. Required paperwork not related to teaching | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 31. Being informed of a student's medical problems or handicapping conditions | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 32. Physical education regarded as having a very low status by | | | | | |
| a. other PE teachers | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| b. teachers in other areas | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| c. administrators | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| d. parents | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

33. Please identify any problems associated with your experience as a beginning teacher that was not listed above.

34. Please number, in rank order, the top five persons you have associated with this year who have had the greatest impact on your feeling, perception, and behaviors in teaching.

| | |
|--|--|
| _____ Superintendent | _____ Asst. Superintendent |
| _____ Principal | _____ Asst. Principal |
| _____ Department Head | _____ Counselor |
| _____ Instructional Supervisor | _____ Other Experienced Teachers (in Physical Ed.) |
| _____ Other Experienced Teachers (outside of Physical Ed.) | |
| _____ Other (please specify) _____ | |

III. Teacher Preparation

1. Check your opinion of your teacher preparation program.

_____ Perfectly met the needs of beginning teachers

_____ Adequately met the needs of beginning teachers

_____ Inadequately met the needs of beginning teachers

_____ Poorly prepared teachers for the demands of being a beginning teacher

2. Please check your opinion of how the required professional education courses prepared you for your teaching experiences?

___ very good ___ good ___ fair ___ poor ___ very poor

APPENDIX E
SECOND LETTER TO NONRESPONDENTS

APPENDIX E
SECOND LETTER TO NONRESPONDENTS

Dalton High School
1500 Manly Street
Dalton, GA 30720
December 4, 1992

Dear

I hope you have received my survey instrument that we discussed on the phone. If you have not yet received it, please call me collect at (706) 278-8757.

Many surveys have been returned to me. If you have recently mailed your survey, disregard this request. If you have not yet had the time to complete it, please try to get the survey to me as soon as you can.

Thank you again for your help.

Sincerely,

Paula Dohoney

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