



# How Can Pre-Service Teachers Feel More Engaged in Their Physical Education Practicum? the Impact of a Caring Approach

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## Abstract

The process of becoming a teacher is complex that requires pre-service teachers (PSTs) to be guided and supported by a knowledgeable person (i.e. a facilitator). Continuous and tailored support allows PSTs to fully engage in their pedagogical practice and not get lost in the technical processes during the practicum (e.g., lesson plans). However, in providing support, the facilitator must be careful not to focus only on the content programmes that PSTs must complete. By taking a caring approach (i.e., actions that require a moral and ethical sense), the facilitator can understand the needs of each PST. This means being there for them and using dialogue to build and maintain a genuine and truly relationship. Although the importance of supporting PSTs' pedagogical practice is recognised in the literature, it remains unclear how a facilitator's caring approach enhances PSTs' engagement in their practicum. Therefore, the aim of the current study is to investigate the impact of a facilitator's caring approach on promoting PSTs' engagement in their practicum. The methodological design was based on an action research design with six PSTs from physical education. The facilitator adjusted her actions according to the analysis of the PSTs' practice and her own actions. Data were collected through focus group interviews, written reflection diaries and field notes and analysed using thematic analysis. The findings highlight that the climate of vulnerability created by the facilitator triggered the PSTs' willingness to take the risk of sharing their honest weaknesses and concerns with themselves in their teaching practice.

**Keywords:** teacher education, care, consciousness, initial teacher training, reflection