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Due to pandemic precautions and smaller cohort sizes, MAE physical education candidates haven't been exposed to many of the typical pre-internship teaching experiences. This greatly affects students' efficacy and confidence levels as they head into their student teaching placements. Clearly, we needed to create some internal options that would provide authentic opportunities for students to gain relevant teaching experience without relying fully on our local partners. The creative solution was to link our capstone pedagogy courses (ES 530G and ES 531G) with sections of HLTH 198L. By aligning the timing of the course offerings, this provided a more authentic environment for our candidates to practice teaching.

In the fall of 2021, students had their first chance to experience this new format. I created 3-day mini-units of content with topics similar to what physical educators might be expected to teach to secondary students. For example, these topics included tennis, disc golf, badminton, and pickleball among others. The teaching responsibilities were equitably distributed among the MAE students enrolled in ES 531G, and they were responsible for all aspects of instruction. From providing appropriate progression of lessons through the mini-unit, creating lesson plans, securing and setting up equipment within the instructional space, executing the lesson plans, and using survey feedback provided by the HLTH 198L students to write a short reflection on their learnings, the process aligned with pedagogical best practices. In addition, the timing of the classes was such that the first half hour of ES 531G was devoted to feedback and mentoring before the HLTH 198L students arrived. In these pre-teaching sessions, the lead "teacher" for the day presented the structure and activities for the upcoming class and assigned tasks to other MAE students to help facilitate a productive learning environment for the HLTH 198L students. During the lessons, the lead teacher's pedagogical competencies were assessed for the clarity of task presentations, the quality of feedback to students, the inclusivity of the learning environment, and the management of students and space with a short debriefing session concluding each teaching session.

Overall, this initial pre-internship experience was so positive that we created a similar combination of classes for this semester (linking ES 530G Team Sports with a section of HLTH 198L). The feedback from students, both in ES 531G and HTHLH 198L, enthusiastically affirmed the value and positive outcomes of our model. At times, MAE students struggle to manage all of the tasks related to teaching, but I am available to step in as needed—just as a mentor teacher should during internship experiences. The HLTH 198L students play a critical role in this process, too, as they provide feedback on the quality of the teaching and suggest improvements for future lessons. Overall, both groups of students (530G/531G + HLTH198L) have embraced their roles, and it has added collaborative value to their student experiences. I have included a couple of photos and comments from students' feedback to help highlight the positive outcomes that are springing from these collaborations.



**The students
“were very
enthusiastic
about teaching ...
and it was great
having the grad
students teach.”**



**Quick fact:
The majority of students in
HLTH 198L stated that
their weekly levels of
physical activity increased
due to enrollment in our
course.**



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