I. Necessity and Purpose of Research

It is generally accepted that the quality of teacher education is determined by selecting and training competent prospective teachers. Competent teachers are those who are well acquainted with subject matter and have teaching abilities to represent it to be easily accepted to given instructional context, to produce maximum academic achievement. To improve teachers’ teaching abilities, it is more important than anything else to develop professional judgement and extend their understanding of subject matter pedagogy (Chang, et al., 2001).

It has been argued by Kang (1977) that professional knowledge necessary to teachers is developed by pedagogy of subject matter. Despite of this argument, most teacher training programs still construct curriculum of teacher education with such contents as liberal arts knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, understanding learner and learning environment, and teacher’s professional values. There has been a change only in such factors as time allocated to each subject matter, credit structure, time and duration of student experience. These changes still raise such problems that why time allocated to each subject matters has been changed (Metzler & Tjeerdsma, 2000).

It has been indicated that various and complex problems being occurred in training prospective teachers may not be fully identified by traditional quantitative studies. Macdonald & Tinning (1995) argue that understanding physical education teacher education or developing prospective teachers’ professional knowledge based on objective ground-quantative research has been rarely successful. Excessive scientism in teacher education resulted in ignoring teacher’s subjective experience by unduly
segmented contents of teacher education (Park, 1996).

Recently new paradigm of qualitative research has rapidly expanded to criticize the attitude of defining education as scientific phenomenon and understanding it segmentally, which resulted in increased numbers of researchers to study teacher education from a different perspective of human science (Lee, 1989; Cho, 1999). However, a new approach of qualitative research in Sport Pedagogy is still on the level of concept and requires more researches being executed to elicit actual changes.

Each university has recently reconstructed teacher education program to improve quality and expertise of pre-service teachers, but the lack of understanding subjective experience of pre-service teachers causes failure to elicit substantial changes. While physical education teacher educators believe that they educate pre-service teachers using new teaching methods, pre-service teachers think physical education teacher education still remains unchanged (Plack, 1985). While there exists a big gap between teacher educators and pre-service teachers, no vigorous effort is being made to narrow it. Thus, the purpose of this research is to deeply understand teacher education for elementary school teachers from the perspective of pre-service teachers taking a physical education major course for elementary school teachers.

II. Method of Research

Participants

Participants are selected considering their volition, geographical proximity, conformity to research purpose. To begin with, two national universities offer training education elementary school teacher in the area of Seoul and Incheon are chosen to find physical education teacher educators consistent with research purpose. Of six physical education teacher educators, four are selected as research participants. Four selected teacher educators are asked to recommend fourteen pre-service teachers in the third or fourth year class and eight of them are known their intention to participate in the study. Each selected teacher educator is also asked to recommend one in-service teacher who has completed physical education major course and been teaching physical education for less than three years in elementary schools. Four recommended in-service teachers agreed to participate in the study.

Data Collection and Analysis

To understand physical education major course of elementary teacher education from the perspective of teacher educators, pre-service teachers and in-service teachers, three stages of phenomenological interview suggested by Seidman (1988) is adopted. Intervals between interviews maintain at least three days and each interview lasts less than 60 minutes. Collected interview data are analyzed through two procedures suggested by Seidman (1988). To begin with, the researcher read the results of interview carefully to bracket concerns of research. The researcher read the bracketed contents to analyze and explain the relationship among them. A part of opening coding and axial coding suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1988) is also adopted to improve the power of data analysis.

Truthfulness of Data

To minimize subjectivity of researchers and to secure truthfulness of the study in analyzing the collected data, ‘member checking’ and ‘peer debriefing’ are undertaken. First ‘member checking’ is taken to make sure the collected interview data are the same as the research participants have been interviewed. Second stage of ‘member checking’ is enforced to validate if the collected data are correctly analyzed. As a way of securing truthfulness of data a peer qualitative researcher having rich experiences in qualitative research method examines all the process of collecting and analyzing data.

III. Major Findings

To fairly evaluate physical education major
course for elementary school teachers, it is more important than anything else to deeply understand subjective experiences of direct recipients of pre-service teachers. Thus, interview data from in-service teachers, teacher educators and pre-service teachers are analyzed from the perspectives of pre-service teachers. Analysis of collected interview data resulted in three major findings of “choosing physical education major course absent in belief,” “physical education major course away from the field of school,” “lack of field experiences.”

Lack of belief to become elementary school physical education teachers

Pre-service teachers attending National University of Education are choosing physical education major course, not because they have clear objective to become elementary school physical education teachers, but because they prefer ‘help each other’ climate in the area of physical education major course. Belief in physical education pre-service teachers are experiencing through teacher education may seriously influence physical education instruction. Thus, it overemphasizes to establish belief and value toward particular subject matter through pre-service teacher education (Lortie, 1975).

Elementary school pre-service teachers enrolled in National University of Education are choosing physical education major course because of light academic burden and ‘helping each other’ climate among physical education majors. This means elementary pre-service teachers are not thinking highly of physical education. Negative attitude pre-service teachers are having toward physical education are not irrelevant to experiences gained through physical education lessons. To change their negative attitude pre-service teachers to recognize toward physical education, it is inevitable that theory-oriented lessonsubjects, adjust achievement level in sport skills, and takeevaluate special measuresteaching ability in addition to improve theory and skill itself, so that they can enjoy physical education teaching abilities (Son et al., 2003).

All participants, pre-service teachers, in-service teachers and teacher educators, state that the most important effort in teaching physical education is to develop a liking for it. In other word, According to Hutchinson’s (1993) research on high school students in physical education lessons, physical education teachers should give priority to enjoyment (Hutchinson, 1993). If students participate in physical education lessons enjoyably teachers may bring maximum outcomes without a great deal of effort.

Physical education teachers without experiencing enjoyment of doing physical education can hardly teach true taste of a sport. Good physical education instruction is enjoyable and valuable classwork (Yoo, 2002). The most serious problem inherent in National University of Education is expecting undue theory and enforcing high levels of sport performance without giving pre-service teachers chance to experience enjoyment of learning sport skills and enjoyment of teaching sport. It is better to find a plan to evaluate teaching ability of pre-service teachers rather than evaluate sport performance of pre-service teachers, which is consistent with the purpose of teacher training (Cho & Son, 2006).

Physical education major course far away from elementary school

Major issue of teacher education program is whether a teacher education institute trains competent pre-service teachers qualified with professional knowledge elementary or secondary schools require. National University of Education for elementary school teachers is university of specialof special purpose supposed to train pre-service teachers corresponding to elementary schools. However, present status of training elementary pre-service teachers is far away from the field of school. It has been criticized that teacher
education for elementary school teachers fails to materialize the essence of elementary school teacher education due to program far away from the field of school, expecting high level of sport performance, and absence of pedagogical content knowledge.

What elementary school teachers really need in teaching elementary school students is vivid teaching skills such as how to provide learning cue, how to help students learning, and other practical wisdom related with physical education lessons (Choi & Son, 2006). However, thorough examination shows that the curriculum for training physical education theory lessonselementary school teachers consists mainly of physical education physical education content knowledge and demands pre-service teachers of higher level of sport performance than the level necessary to teach elementary school students. Teacher education curriculum must be greatly changed to adopt such subjects as supervision of teaching physical education, practicum of teaching physical education, teacher theory of physical education, philosophy of teaching physical education, curriculum of physical education, theory of teaching physical education, evaluation of teaching physical education, improvement of teaching physical education, know to be conductive to teaching elementary school students (Son, 2002).

Placek (1985) argues that teachers have different cognition of useful knowledge from students. The problem of estrangement between university and field has been endlessly raised, but still runs parallel lines with little improvement. Elementary pre-service teachers majoring physical education are obliged to learn professional knowledge necessary to actual field of teaching physical education through teacher education program. This means that the content of teacher education should accede to practical side of education and developing teaching skills should be based on the field of school (Gil, 2003).

Teacher education lacking field experiences

Most physical education teacher educators fail to concentrate their research capability and educational ability on training competent physical education teachers the field of schools requires (Son, 2002). This may be because most physical education teacher educators taking charge of training elementary school teachers are specialized in secondary physical education and assume training pre-service teachers of physical education major. It is an irrefutable fact that elementary school students are different from secondary school students and teaching methods should differ accordingly.

It is not always true that physical education teacher educators having direct teaching experience of elementary school physical education should assume elementary pre-service teacher education. However, it is an obvious fact that teacher educators having an experience of actually teaching elementary school students are in a better position to train elementary pre-service teachers. In-service teachers are skeptical over professional knowledge of physical education teacher educators critically pointing out that physical education teacher educators lacking field experience in elementary schools excessively depend on theory-centered lessons.

Teacher educators training elementary pre-service teachers have made endless efforts to approach the field of schools, but theory-centered lectures are still dominant. To improve the effectiveness of teacher education teaching methods should be changed in a direction of maintaining organic relationship with the field of schools (Gil, 2003). Such a new teaching mode of peer teaching, discussion style teaching, reflective teaching as well as direct teaching method should be combined with existing direct teaching method.

Pre-service teachers majoring elementary physical education strongly desire courses cultivating their teaching ability actually teaching elementary school students to be offered in teacher education program. Physical education teacher
educators like those in other areas should improve their role of teacher educators specially experiencing reality of elementary schools. For example, while pre-service teachers practice student teaching triad of in-service teachers, teacher educators, and pre-service teachers should extend their pedagogical content knowledge through ceaseless critical communication (Yoo, 2000).

References

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