The National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) suggests teachers to assess student learning in physical education settings based on the national content standards (Lund & Kirk, 2002). Current studies (Lund, 2000; Lund & Kirk; Welk & Wood, 2000; Wilson & Roof, 1999) report the need and basis for authentic assessment, and how it can be utilized in the physical education classroom. These forms of assessments are performance based and include teacher observation, self-assessment and peer observation when used in conjunction with performance checklists; as well as, rubrics, self-reporting instruments, portfolios and student journals. Authentic assessment requires meaningful and realistic tasks that are similar to the performance in the field. Traditional assessments are used to evaluate a student’s performance in a more objective format. Typically they are implemented in forms of skill, written and fitness tests.

The purpose of this study was to determine (a) what forms of assessment K-12 physical educators in the state of Indiana used to assess student learning, (b) what forms
of assessment physical educators used to assess the psychomotor, cognitive and affective learning domains and (c) what forms of assessment physical educators used to assess NASPE’s physical education standards (2004).

The researcher created a 21 question survey based on the different forms of authentic and traditional assessment. Demographic questions were included to categorize the teachers into different subgroups. The total number of participants receiving the instrument was 647. The final response rate was 34% (n=222). Frequency analysis was used to describe (a) the participants based on demographic factors which were: highest level of education, years of full-time teaching experience, division of school employment and average class size, and (b) what forms of assessment K-12 physical educators in the state of Indiana used to assess student learning, the psychomotor, cognitive and affective learning domains and the six NASPE (2004) physical education standards.

Results showed that traditional assessments, specifically teacher observations, were primarily the foundation for physical educators. Authentic assessment was minimally utilized in the overall teacher population. However, it was most common in elementary physical education teachers’ and veteran teachers’ classrooms.