The NIU Team Group Bios...

Rob Castaneda (Key Consultant) is the founder and executive director of Beyond the Ball, an organization that seeks to develop youth through a number of sport-based programs in order to help change the negative norms present in some Chicago neighborhoods and replace them with a positive culture. Mr. Castaneda has developed a program curriculum based in building community morale, developing student leaders and peer coaches, and incorporating values of perseverance, respect, responsibility, and teamwork into sport curricula. He has worked as the executive director of Beyond the Ball for seven years and has run youth programs for 14 years. He has seen thousands of youth go through his programs and developed pathways for those who wish to stay involved and become part of his coaching staff. He has received many grants and awards from the City of Chicago and other organizations. Most notably, he received the Most Courageous use of Sport award in 2010 at the international Beyond Sport Conference.

Jennifer Jacobs (Key Consultant) is currently a doctoral student in the Department of Educational Psychology at NIU. She earned a bachelor’s degree in Kinesiology from University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana and a master’s degree in Kinesiology from University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Mrs. Jacobs serves as the Assistant Director of the PALS Group and received a fellowship from the NIU Collaborative on Early Adolescence in 2012 and NIU’s Great Journeys Program in 2013 to support her work on youth development through physical activity. She has extensive experience working in afterschool fitness programs and is the founder and director of Camp Play-A-Lot, a summer camp in Chicago, IL that seeks to empower youth through teaching life skills and promoting an active lifestyle.

Dr. Jinhong Jung is an Associate Professor in the Department of Kinesiology and Physical Education at NIU. Prior to pursuing a career in higher education, he taught physical education over 10 years in South Korean public schools where he implemented innovative curriculum models in his physical education classes. In particular, he introduced Hellison’s Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility (TPSR) model for the first time to South Korean physical education classes. Through Dr. Jung’s 20-years of teaching experience in public schools and in higher education, he has realized that the quality of student learning is greatly dependent on the quality of their teachers. To ensure quality teaching, a teacher should be a life-long learner. A teacher’s
reflection plays a critical role in that teacher’s continued growth and development. This understanding contributes to Dr. Jung’s interest in exploring the nature of teachers’ reflection.

**William A. Pitney (Co-Content Director)** is a Professor in the KNPE department and serves as the Director of Resources and Planning. Dr. Pitney is a certified athletic trainer with clinical experience working with adolescent athletes in a variety of sport settings (e.g., high school, summer camps for pre-adolescents). His primary line of research relates to organizational issues experienced by athletic trainers in various work settings. He is a leading scholar of qualitative research in athletic training.

**Dr. Jim Ressler (Co-Content Director)** is an Assistant Professor in the KNPE department and serves as the Associate Director of the PALS Group. Dr. Ressler’s primary line of research relates to curriculum design, instruction, and implementation. Specifically, he has focused on the training of pre-service and in-service teachers in using well-established instructional models in physical education and sport pedagogy. In particular, he has expertise in Adventure-Based Learning and outdoor education. Dr. Ressler has several years of practical experience as a physical education teacher and a coach. He is highly skilled in training others how to improve their teaching/coaching practice.

**Dr. Paul Wright (BYSC Program Director)** is an Associate Professor in the Department of Kinesiology and Physical Education (KNPE) and serves as the Director of the Physical Activity and Life Skills (PALS) Group. Dr. Wright's research relates to the design, implementation and evaluation of physical activity programs that promote positive youth development. He is regarded internationally as a leading scholar on the TPSR model, having received a Fulbright Research Award in 2010 to support and study the implementation of TPSR in Spain. He has a strong track record of directing funded projects and disseminating results.

The Physical Activity and Life Skills (PALS) Group at NIU is supported by the NIU Collaborative on Early Adolescence (NIU-CEA) and is headquartered in the Department of Kinesiology and Physical Education. For more information about the PALS Group, please visit [www.niu.edu/cea/pals/](http://www.niu.edu/cea/pals/).