Preparing physical education teachers for the reality of teaching in schools: The case of one physical education teacher education (PETE) programme

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Preparing physical education teachers for the reality of teaching in schools:  
The case of one physical education teacher education (PETE) programme

The purpose of this research is to determine the ways in which learning opportunities within the physical education teacher education (PETE) programme are continued in practice by beginning and experienced physical education teachers in post-primary schools. The project identifies the extent to which particular PETE programme experiences and opportunities are relevant to beginning and experienced teachers, establishing the extent to which what teachers need to consider as practitioners is part of the discursive dialogue in PETE programmes. There is a necessity for such a study because, firstly, previous studies question the effect of PETE programmes with respect to more familiar practices observed and practiced in school settings (Matanin and Collier, 2003). Secondly, Irish PETE has yet to contribute to the current international debate of content knowledge within PETE programmes (Siedentop, 2002; Tsangaridou, 2002) and it is imperative that it is conversant with the issues, and actively contributes to, the expanding international research on PETE.

Zeichner & Conklin's (2008) framework for thinking about teacher education programmes provides a way to highlight the substantive features of the PETE programme, examining any gap between the PETE programme and reality of teaching in schools. That is, this project provides empirical evidence demonstrating the link between (1) the PETE programme and teachers' learning and (2) teachers' learning and their practices in the school. The occupational utility of knowledge, with a focus on knowledge of physical education content and knowing how to teach in schools, examines the link between the content knowledge focus in the PETE programme and the content of physical education in schools. Beginning and experienced teachers' changing perceptions about the physical education teaching field is examined with respect to their experience of physical education as a school student, their involvement as a pre-service teacher in a PETE programme and their current role as a teacher. Mapping the extent of these changing perceptions identify what beginning and experienced teachers bring with them to teaching and the impact particular institutional practices have on teachers. Working conditions are crucial to remaining in the profession, acknowledging that teachers often decide whether to remain in the profession based on early experiences (Weiss, 1999). This project identifies the extent to which conditions such as appropriate and fair teaching assignments, working relationships with colleagues and school organization and leadership encourage teachers to remain in the profession.

Working to an interpretive paradigm (MacDonald, Kirk, Metzler, Nilges, Schempp and Wright, 2002), the research methodology sets out to investigate the similarities and differences that exist in beginning and experienced physical education teachers' experiences of teaching. The intention is to identify issues that arise within the first year of teaching and appear to embed themselves as practices for experienced teachers as well as identify issues that arise for beginning teaching but are addressed as one becomes more experienced in teaching. Six beginning teachers were interviewed, focussing on current conceptions of the PETE programme, anticipated career trajectories and valued knowledge. Six experienced teachers were identified and were interviewed focussing on their teaching background, the relationship between PETE programme content and teaching school physical education and plans for the future. Data from the interviews were supplemented by monthly prompt sheets from both the beginning and experienced teacher cohorts, serving to record what both cohorts know and are able to do in their job as well as identify areas they are lacking to teach effectively. They were also prompted to note the maintenance of, or any changes to, their working conditions and how they impact on their teaching.

The extent to which the PETE programme prepared teachers to teach was achieved with varying degrees of success. The PETE programme was viewed more favourably by the experienced teacher cohort, with the beginning teachers highlighting a general lack of preparedness, particularly in relation to content knowledge, contributing to feelings of frustration and resignation. It is necessary to address these issues associated with the PETE programme if it is to successfully prepare pre-service teachers for the real world of school life. Recommendations to emerge from this study include the necessity to provide school-aligned
content knowledge and a more accurate depiction of the environment beginning teachers are likely to encounter in schools in which they work.


Declaration of Originality

“I hereby declare that this project is entirely my own work other than the counsel of my supervisor and that it has not been submitted for any academic award, or part thereof, at this or any other educational establishment”

Signed: Therese Huntley  Date: 30/5/11
Supervisor Ann MacPhail  Date: 30/5/11
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<td>ETs</td>
<td>Experienced Teachers</td>
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<td>PCK</td>
<td>Pedagogical Content Knowledge</td>
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Chapter One
Introduction

1.1 INTRODUCTION

It is imperative that Irish Physical Education Teacher Education (PETE) is conversant with the issues, and actively contributes to, the expanding international research base on PETE (Siedentop, 2002; Tsangaridou, 2002).

PETE programmes consist of several components including the development of skills and knowledge in sports activities and health related concepts, and the advancement of pedagogical knowledge on teaching, learning, curriculum and assessment through observations, opportunities for peer teaching and socio-cultural and philosophical aspects (Hill and Brodin, 2004; O’Sullivan, 1990). Differences in PETE programmes are highlighted in their structure and length, as well as the curricular emphasis of the programme, when courses are offered within the programme and the amount of time spent working in schools (Zeichner and Conklin, 2005).

Despite a PETE programme’s endeavour to prepare teachers to teach in a competent manner to their first group of pupils, PETE programmes are in receipt of recurrent condemnations and are not highly regarded by those who experience them (Bransford, Darling-Hammond and LePage, 2005; Grossman, Smagorinsky and Valencia, 1999). The reasons for this are varied and complex. Firstly, due to the apprenticeship of observation in which pre-service teachers (PSTs) have spent thousands of hours observing their own school teachers, they have formed conceptions, very often misconceptions, on how to teach (Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, Bransford, Berliner, Cochran-Smith, McDonald and Zeichner, 2005; Lortie, 1975). These beliefs are often very resistant to change and, because few PETE programmes have been successful in modifying these beliefs, PETE programmes are unable to produce ‘change’ or ‘transformative agents’ who can transform the practices within the specific school contexts in which teachers’ teach (Fernandez-Balboa, 1997; Doolittle, Dodds and Placek, 1993; Grossman & Richert, 1988). Secondly, PETE programmes are largely unsuccessful in bridging the theory / practice gap with coursework not...
directly related to teaching viewed as not useful (Hayes, Capel, Katene and Cook, 2003). Field experiences (commonly referred to as teaching practice / teaching placements) are seen as practical, real and immediate, and on-campus work as theoretical and remote, and it is common place to separate these two activities into two unrelated parts of professional education (Allen, 2008; Rosaen and Florio-Ruan, 2008). Thirdly, there is a _dichotomy of perceptions_ in relation to knowledge acquisition required for teaching physical education as, knowledge _in_ and _of_ teaching means different things to different people (Kay, 2004). This divisive knowledge base (O’Sullivan, 2003) makes it difficult for PETE programmes to prepare PSTs with the background, prerequisite, relevant and necessary knowledge, particularly when the relevance of the theoretical knowledge is questioned and deemed unimportant. Fourthly, and perhaps most importantly, is the PETE programme’s failure to address the reality of working conditions prevalent in schools. Working conditions which, for beginning teachers, affect a difficult transition into the workplace and result in _reality shock_, _wash out_ and _isolation_ and in the case of experienced teachers, has resulted in _burn out_ (McGaha & Lynn, 2000; Lawson, 1989; Veenman, 1984; Freudenberger and Richelson, 1980). While it may be impossible for PETE programmes to replicate certain school contexts, there is evidence to suggest that physical education teachers are not prepared for the realities of school sites as, during their teacher preparation programme, PSTs remembered ideal conditions that are more than likely not reproduced when teaching in schools (Eldar, Nabel, Schechter, Talmor and Mazin, 2003; Wright, 2001; Williams & Williamson, 1995). Due to this conglomerate of reasons, some physical education teachers question the worth of their teacher preparation (Grossman, Smagorinsky and Valencia, 1999).

1.2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Zeichner and Conklin’s (2005) framework for thinking about teacher education programmes provides a way to highlight the substantive features of the PETE programme, examining any gap between the PETE programme and reality of teaching in schools. The objective of the study was to investigate the ways in which skills and knowledge gained from learning opportunities within a PETE programme are continued in practice by beginning and experienced physical education teachers in post-primary schools in Ireland. The study will provide empirical evidence
demonstrating the link between (1) the PETE programme and teachers’ learning and (2) teachers’ learning and their practices in the school. The study sets out to address three aims;

(1) How do beginning and experienced physical education teachers view the occupational utility of knowledge acquired during the PETE programme?,

The occupational utility of knowledge, with a focus on knowledge of physical education content and knowing how to teach in schools, examines the link between the content knowledge focus in the PETE programme and the content of physical education in schools. Previous studies question the content of a PETE programme with respect to the more familiar practices observed and practiced in the school setting (Matanin & Collier, 2003). The study will identify the extent to which particular PETE programme experiences and opportunities are regarded as relevant to beginning and experienced teachers, establishing the extent to which what teachers need to consider as practitioners – aspects of students’ learning and conduct and aspects of subject matter and policies and school curricula, is part of the discursive dialogue in the PETE programme.

(2) To what extent are changing perceptions of physical education attributed to experiences of beginning and experienced physical education teachers?

This entails mapping the extent of changing perceptions with respect to teachers’ own experience of physical education as a school student, involvement as a PST in a PETE programme, and in their current role as a practicing teacher. Mapping should aid the identification of what beginning and experienced teachers bring with them to teaching and the impact that particular institutional practices have on teachers.

(3) What working conditions impact physical education teachers’ career decisions?

Working conditions in teachers’ careers are crucial to the decision to remain in the profession, acknowledging that teachers often decide whether to remain in the profession on the basis of their early experience. This study identifies the extent to which conditions – appropriate and fair teaching assignments, working relationships with colleagues, appropriate curricular resources and accountability and school organization and leadership – encourage teachers to remain in the profession.
Katz’s (1972) thematic framework of teacher development characterised in four stages of survival, consolidation, renewal and maturity is used to examine the interconnection of content, process and contexts in learning to teach for beginning and experienced teachers.

1.3 OUTLINE OF METHODOLOGY

The research methodology sets out to investigate the similarities and differences that exist in beginning and experienced physical education teachers’ experiences of teaching. The intention is to identify issues that arise within the first year of teaching and appear to embed themselves as practices for experienced teachers as well as identify issues that arise for beginning teaching but are addressed as one becomes more experienced in teaching. The study also contributes to our understanding of the complex relationships evident in PSTs’ transition from university to the workplace (Siedentop, 1990) and in teacher retention (Cochran-Smith, 2004). That is, do teachers remain in teaching because of, or in spite of, favourable experiences as a teacher?

Twelve teachers are represented in the study, six beginning teachers in their first year teaching and six experienced teachers in their seventh year teaching. A qualitative research framework guided the collection and analysis of data. All teachers were interviewed at the start of the school year and again at the end of the school year, with the beginning teacher cohort participating in a further interview at Easter break. Throughout the year, teachers were requested to maintain a monthly prompt sheet that recorded the working conditions within which these teachers conducted their work.

In order to analyse the interview and prompt sheet data obtained from both cohorts, the interpretive paradigm was the most applicable research design because it involves an interpretation of data through the clarification of what and how meanings are embodied in the language of participants (MacDonald, Kirk, Metzler, Nilges, Schempp and Wright, 2002). Thematic analysis was used to analyse and triangulate the interview and prompt sheet data by a coding / tagging / labelling process. This process was used to identify similar text units and was followed by linking and retrieval of similarly coded segments (Mason, 1996). These were arranged under particular themes and the data was analysed under these themes in light of the
research questions. In reporting the information obtained, interview and prompt sheet data for the particular cohorts are intermingled to reinforce points made in the interview with the prompt sheets and vice-versa.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS STUDY
This study is significant for three reasons. Firstly, it provides evidence as to the extent in which PETE programmes are believed to prepare teachers for teaching physical education in an Irish context. This can serve as part of a process in developing and improving PETE programmes, refining structures that prepare teachers more effectively. Secondly, beginning and experienced teachers' experiences can provide an awareness to PETE programmes and faculty of the knowledge required and structures needed for a more successful transition into teaching and for maintaining teacher retention. This impacts beyond the PETE programme and into the realm of governmental policies and there are recommendations on such policies / bodies. Thirdly, this study serves to highlight the predominant working conditions that impact on beginning and experienced teachers' satisfaction and work commitment and, with increased awareness of these issues, PETE programmes can strive to more competently address these issues.
Chapter Two
Literature Review

2.1 INTRODUCTION
Teacher education programmes affect teacher recruitment, retention and quality and programmes differ in structure, length, when they are offered, institutions that sponsor them, admission requirements, curricular emphases and the amount of time spent working in schools (Zeichner and Conklin, 2005). Not everything can be taught in teacher education, therefore making decisions on content and strategies most likely to prepare teachers to learn from their own practice, as well as those of other teachers, is priority (Hammerness et al., 2005). The focus of teacher education should be on substance centring on what teachers need to learn and how best they can be enabled to learn it (Bransford, Darling-Hammond and LePage, 2005). Teacher education is complex because programme components and structures interact with one another and with the experiences prospective teachers bring with them. The outcome of teacher preparation is dependent on teacher’s interaction with each other and making sense of their own experiences (Cochran-Smith and Zeichner, 2005). Recent research has found that teacher preparation curriculum is fragmented and lacks coherence with little attention paid to instruction, or impact of instruction (Clift and Brady, 2005). Darling-Hammond (2008) report many difficulties associated with teacher education programmes. Firstly, prospective teachers learn to work in isolation. Secondly, there is inadequate time, making it challenging to learn subject matter, child development, learning theory, effective teaching strategies and knowledge of learning and learners. There is fragmentation within and across programmes with aspects of teaching and learning disconnected. The prevalence of uninspired teaching methods is apparent due to the predominance of traditional lectures where faculty do not practice what they preach. Finally, a superficial curriculum is often in place resulting in prospective teachers lacking a deep understanding or ability to handle real problems of practice (Darling-Hammond, 2008). The structure and interaction of these programme components form the basis of this study and are analysed with respect to the extent to which PETE programmes prepare PSTs for teaching in post-primary schools. For the purposes of this research, some aspects have not been addressed for particular
reasons, most notably in the working conditions arena. Certain working conditions including safety, pay and governmental responsibilities are not included due to the prevalence of other working conditions which appeared more frequently in the literature and appeared to have a greater affect on teachers' commitment to teaching physical education.

2.2 SOCIALISATION INTO PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Socialisation is defined as, “... the process by which people selectively acquire the values and attitudes, the interests, skills and knowledge – in short, the culture – current in groups to which they are, or seek to become, a member” (Merton, Reader and Kendall, 1957 pg. 278). It is the process whereby “an individual is taught and learns what behaviours and perspectives are customary and desirable within a professional role” (Van Maanen and Schein, 1979, pg. 212). There are three stages in the socialisation into physical education – ‘acculturation’ or recruitment and subjective warrants, ‘professional socialisation’ or professional preparation and ‘organisational socialisation or entry into work (Lawson, 1983a). The first stage, acculturation is the PSTs' perceptions of the physical education teaching profession prior to commencing professional education; the second stage is the process of undertaking professional preparation for that profession and the final stage, occupational socialisation, is the socialisation experiences when leaving professional preparation and entering the world of work (Lawson, 1983a).

Recruitment, the first stage in the socialisation process, involves examining PSTs' perceptions about the physical education teaching profession before entering the professional preparation programme (Templin and Schempp, 1989) and is considered important because of the impact these perceptions have on professional education and subsequent entry into the work place (Dewar, 1989). In the recruitment phase, Lawson (1983a) highlights the necessity to look beyond measuring traits and behaviours but to focus on ‘subjective warrants”, a process which involves analysing PSTs' interpretations of their experiences to understand how and why PSTs make the choice in becoming a physical education teacher; in essence, it is an analysis of a person’s “perceptions of the requirements for teacher education and for actual teaching in schools” (Lawson, 1983a, pg. 6).
The primary socialisation factor in entering physical education is that of sport (MacDonald, Kirk and Braiuka, 1999; Green, 1998; Armour, 1997; Dowling Naess, 1996; Templin, Sparkes, Grant and Schempp, 1994; Stroot, Collier, O‘Sullivan and England, 1994). Other factors affecting PSTs’ entry to physical education teaching are the PSTs’ experiences of physical education as a pupil (Curtner-Smith, 1999; Placek, Doolittle, Ratcliffe, Doods, Portman and Pinkham, 1995; Hutchinson, 1993; Schempp, 1989), interactions with physical education teachers and other adults who teach or coach (Mawer, 1996). Further factors to socialisation into physical education includes viewing teaching physical education as a skill-oriented activity, involves learning how to play games and how to teach them to others and wanting to reproduce, as teachers, the experiences they had as pupils (Dewar, 1989; Templin et al., 1982 cited in Lawson, 1983). Lortie (1975) stated that few recruits enter physical education with a view to changing existing practices. The recruitment period is a significant socialising agency and has a lasting effect that mitigates the impact of professional training (Graber, 1989).

The second stage, professional preparation is the “process by which ... teachers acquire and maintain the values, sensitivities, skills and knowledge that are deemed ideal for physical education teaching” (Lawson, 1983a, pg. 4). There is a need for a _shared technical culture_ where PETE programmes are developed to produce teachers with the requisite knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours, enabling them to develop into good professionals (Lawson, 1983b). This _shared technical culture_ is oftentimes absent from professional preparation and, with curriculum and pedagogy fragmented, PSTs receive mixed messages (Graber, 1989; Lawson, 1983a). As a result, while PSTs, to varying degrees, learn teaching skills, teacher education is generally a low impact exercise when compared to the apprenticeship of observation that occurs during the recruitment phase (Graber, 1989). Lawson (1983a) found that early influences for socialisation are not systematically offset in PETE programmes, as teachers fail to acquire new standards and do not correct or reverse impressions, ideals or orientations, ultimately resulting in PETE programmes having a low impact. The use of skills and knowledge acquired during professional preparation is dependent on the integration of knowledge and skills, the modes of transmission and their correspondence to and utility in schools (Bishop, 1977).
The final stage is organisational socialisation, essential to examine as, “in order to fully understand who enters physical education programmes and why, we have to take seriously the ways in which ... their work is affected by the social and structural relations that exist in schools” (Dewar, 1989, pg. 55). The reason for this is because socialisation involves the interplay between individuals (physical education teachers), the institutions into which they are socialised (schools) and societal influences (Templin and Schempp, 1989). Many school physical education teachers work under difficult circumstances, with the influence of school settings stretching to colleagues, pupils, administrators, curriculum, school policy, rewards and the culture of teaching physical education in schools (Templin and Schempp, 1989).

While useful, this three-stage socialisation model does not highlight the unique situation for physical education (Templin and Schempp, 1989).

2.2.1 Organisational Socialisation of Physical Education Teachers

Organisational socialisation has been recognised as a theoretical framework to aid understanding of a physical educator's entry into the workplace and has been defined as, “The process by which one is taught and learns „the ropes” of a particular role ... the behaviours and perspectives that are customary and desirable within the work setting as well as what ones are not” (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979, pg. 211). A physical educator's occupational socialization is different to other teachers and subjects because it, “Not only reflects the expectations and constraints generated by the society, educational organizations and bureaucracies but also the pervasive influences of working with and within sport” (MacDonald, 1995, pg. 129). Socialisation in physical education is challenging, the reasons for which are varied and complex. Other subjects enjoy a greater status than the subject of physical education as credibility in physical education is seen in managerial and discipline terms, not teaching skills (Giroux, 1981 cited in Lawson, 1989b). Too few people within a school – administrators, parents and other teachers – value physical education and physical education teachers often have role marginality in schools (Hendry, 1975). Physical education is not valued by school management as an important subject and is placed on the periphery of the school curriculum, with little in the way of resources, facilities, equipment and time allocation (O'Sullivan, 2003). A physical education teacher's work is performed in gymnasia and fields that are
often on the periphery of the school (Lawson, 1983a). Other teachers have a lack of respect and acceptance for the physical educator’s subject matter. Most teacher groups meet immediately after school but physical education teachers are immersed in their coaching role at these times. Therefore, physical education teachers experience a lack of integration into the school, with teaching physical education recognised as a “lonely job” (Locke, 1974, pg. 14 cited in Lawson 1983b). Participation in school-life is essential and physical education is paying the price for this self-inflicted non-involvement (O’Sullivan, 2003). Most important is the pupils’ view of physical education. In many cases it is seen as an opportunity to have fun. Pupils are not motivated learners, something which new teachers have difficulty adapting to. As a result of these factors, physical education teachers are constantly battling to provide legitimacy for their subject (O’Sullivan, Stroot & Tannehill, 1989).

There are three work responses to the organisation socialisation process – fence-sitting, the custodian approach and the innovative approach (Lawson, 1983a). Fence-sitting may result in either a custodial or innovative response, depending on whether teachers are motivated to accept and internalise the contents of socialisation or act to change the socialisation setting (Lawson, 1983a). Custodianship is where teachers accept and internalise common institutional practices. This, the most common stance, is the perpetuance of the system, resulting in an acceptance of the status quo and rarely questioning information from more experienced colleagues (Stroot and Whipple, 2003). The customary strategies are employed with the result that the existing system becomes stronger and the prevailing dominant culture of knowledge, teaching and learning practices continue (Conway, Murphy, Rath and Hall, 2009). An innovative response is a desire to act to change the socialisation setting, of which there are two forms. The first is content innovation in which the teacher is proactive and empowered to make changes in a particular context, “Marked by development of substantive improvements or changes in the knowledge base or strategic practices of a particular role” (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979, pg.228). The teacher is not willing to be limited by the current systems and wants to change the practices and strategies used to accomplish existing goals. These modifications can positively affect or inhibit changes in the current system in progressing towards meeting the original goal. Role innovation is the complete rejection of the current system, with the result that the teacher’s role is redefined and involves, “Attacking and attempting to change the
mission associated traditionally with that role” (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979, pg. 228).

Due to the different value orientations between professional preparation / socialisation and organisation socialisation, many researchers hypothesise that these two processes are juxtaposed and contradictory as the outcomes of organisational socialisation compete with professional socialisation (Templin, 1979; van Maanen and Schein, 1979; Downs, 1976). Central to this idea is the beliefs PSTs have on entry into the PETE programme and the extent to which these beliefs, primarily formed during the apprenticeship-of-observation, are altered and changed during these PETE programmes.

2.2.2 The Apprenticeship of Observation

Lortie (1975) stresses the phenomenon of ‘apprenticeship of observation’ where individuals have spent thousands of hours observing teachers and teaching during school years. Teachers enter the profession with formed images of themselves as teachers derived from their own experiences as learners (Behets and Vergauwen, 2006; O’Sullivan, 2003). Subsequently PSTs use these observations to draw inferences on what good teaching is (Hammerness et al., 2005). Prospective teachers tend to be confident in what it means and what is required to be a teacher (Fernandez-Balboa, 1997). Lortie (1975) found that what is learned about teaching during the apprenticeship period is gained from a limited viewpoint, with perceptions not based on pedagogical principles. Observing good teaching does not provide a deep understanding of the complexity of the work (Hammerness et al., 2005; Munby, Russell and Martin, 2001).

Research has indicated that the apprenticeship period plays a considerably stronger role than teacher education in influencing PSTs’ teaching views (Dodds, 1989; Schempp, 1985). This apprenticeship of observation “has a distinct and traceable influence on an individual’s future decisions, practices, and ideologies as a teacher” (Schempp & Graber, 1992, pg. 333). Teacher preparation must attempt to influence beliefs as teachers resist practices advocated by teacher education curricula because practices are incompatible with their own beliefs (Clift and Brady, 2005). Doolittle, Dodds and Placek (1993), studying three cases from a longitudinal study of sixteen
physical education PSTs in America and collecting data through questionnaires, interviews and written assignments, confirmed previous research (Grossman and Richert, 1988) that few programmes have been successful in modifying PSTs' initial beliefs. Previously learned content and experiences in sport and physical education is valuable but may undermine or weaken the impact of teacher education as the apprenticeship period tends to result in the formation of preconceptions, often misconceptions, which serve to inhibit the development of new knowledge (Conway et al., 2009; Behets and Vergauwen, 2006; Matinen and Collier, 2003; McCaughtry and Rovegno, 2003).

2.2.3 Knowledge for Teaching
Knowledge construction, production and utilisation must be the focal point for reform because pedagogical reasoning arises from a firm base of knowledge (Shulman, 1987). The issue of a knowledge base in PETE programmes is divisive (O’Sullivan, 2003). The problem of contextualising knowledge is that knowledge in teaching means different things to different people, i.e., there is a “dichotomy in perceptions” (Kay, 2004, pg. 19). There is disagreement on the amount and type of knowledge a teacher ought to have and equally on whether teacher preparation programmes adequately address that knowledge (Darling-Hammond and Sclan, 1996).

Many kinds of teacher knowledge contribute to teacher quality. Shulman (1987) identified seven knowledge areas as (1) content knowledge, (2) general pedagogic knowledge, (3) pedagogical content knowledge (PCK), (4) curriculum knowledge, (5) knowledge of learning, (6) knowledge of educational contexts, and (7) knowledge of educational ends, purpose, value and philosophical and historical influences. Content knowledge is a set of “fundamental assumptions, definitions, concepts and procedures that constituted the ideas to be learned” (Tatto, Schille, Senk, Ingvarson, Peck and Rowey, 2008, pg. 21). Schwab (1964) states that content knowledge is the ability to know the important concepts and skills in a subject and developing an awareness of how these concepts and skills are structured and organised within a subject. ‘Craft,’ ‘practical,’ ‘professional’ or ‘pedagogical’ knowledge refers to the acquisition of classroom practice knowledge (Schulman, 1986). General pedagogical knowledge is knowledge of the broad principals and strategies of classroom organisation and management that apply, irrespective of the subject (Capel, Hayes,
Katene and Velija, 2009). Amade-Escot (2000) found pedagogical knowledge is embedded in practice, is composed of inter-connected knowledge, beliefs and experiences and is dependent upon contextual factors. Teachers' knowledge is situated because it grows out of, and is shaped by, practice (Elbaz, 1983). Critical to good teaching is an integration of content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge, referred to as pedagogical content knowledge (Hayes et al., 2009). It is the knowledge that makes content instructional and it entails the teacher translating understandings of subject matter into practice (Schempp, Manroos, Tan and Fincher, 1998). It is an integration of multiple forms of knowledge including (1) curriculum (2) knowledge of pupils' conceptions of content, (3) teaching strategies and, (4) purposes for teaching (Grossman, 1990). Curriculum knowledge is knowledge that incorporates materials and programmes which act as ‘tools of the trade’ for teachers (Hayes et al., 2009). Knowledge of learners incorporates the cognitive knowledge of learning, comprising of child development and knowledge of a particular group of learners (Hayes et al., 2009). Knowledge of educational contexts includes an understanding of specific school environments, the catchment area and the wider community (Hayes et al., 2009). Knowledge of educational ends involves the promotion of knowledge of Piaget, Maslow, Erikson and Bloom, as a general understanding of their work can provide a valuable knowledge source for teachers, whilst also providing a precursor through which good and effective teaching practices can emanate (Shulman, 1987).

2.2.4 Domains of Knowledge

Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) suggested three conceptions of knowledge. These are knowledge for practice, knowledge in practice and knowledge of practice. Knowledge for practice is knowledge of subject matter content, pedagogy, learning theories and various teaching strategies (Hammerness et al., 2005). Skilled teachers have deep groundings in subject matter and well-developed strategies of delivering content (O'Sullivan, 2003). This knowledge has, “Influenced the way most current teacher education programmes are conceptualized and presented” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999, pg. 256). Hayes et al. (2003) found, on analysing twelve student teachers, nine mentors and five tutors in three universities in England with data gathered through semi-structured interviews, the focus for physical education teachers is content knowledge. Knowledge in practice refers to the idea that knowledge is
practical, situated and acquired through reflection upon experiences (Hammerness et al., 2005). It is based on the premise that the activity in which the teacher is engaged, the environment within which the activity takes place, and the teacher are inseparable units of analysis with the culmination of these knowledge types enabling teachers to know what to do and how to do it (Rovegno, 2003). The assumption is that, “Teaching is, to a great extent, uncertain and spontaneously craft situated and constructed in response to particularities of everyday life in schools and classrooms” (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1999, pg. 262). Knowledge of practice is the relationship between knowledge and practice and the theoretical aspects of both (Hammerness et al., 2005). It aims to develop leadership, political and moral values that would prepare teachers for teaching in contemporary schools (Fernandez-Balboa, 1997), “Knowledge teachers need to teach well emanates from systematic inquiries about teaching, learners and learning, subject matter, curriculum and schools and schooling” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999, pg. 174).

One type of knowledge should not be prioritised over another as it advocates that physical education is a collection of distinctly separate activities; it “impoverishes the profession” (Hayes et al., 2003, pg. 341). Previous research has argued what the focus of PETE programmes should be on how best to produce graduates who are qualified to teach physical education (O’Sullivan, 1990). PSTs should be educated, and possess knowledge on, not only how pupils physically develop but also psychologically and emotionally, promoting study in areas such as psychology, history, sociology and philosophy (Fernandez-Balboa, 1997). PETE programmes have a role in developing knowledge for teaching. Findings suggest PETE programmes can provide knowledge to teach physical education in an effective manner by providing experiences that will prepare individuals to be successful teachers (Hill and Brodin, 2004; Tsangaridou, 2002).

2.2.5 Beliefs and Knowledge

There is a distinction between beliefs and knowledge, with beliefs based on “evaluation and judgement; knowledge is based on objective fact” (Pajares, 1992 pg. 313). Beliefs are more difficult to measure than knowledge because they must be “inferred from statements or actions ... They reflect a tacit understanding of personal, social or professional truths that have been constructed over time” (Ennis,
Teachers' beliefs can be acquired as a pupil, from life experience or from the teacher education programme (Richardson, 1996). Beliefs that are formed as a pupil and from life experience are difficult to change during teacher education programmes but they must be examined in order to improve and change teacher education programmes, teaching, schooling and pupil learning (Calderhead, 1996). Previous research (Griffin and Combs, 2000; O'Bryant, O'Sullivan and Raudesky, 2000) indicates that PSTs know their role as a teacher before they learn how to teach in teacher education programmes. While the impact of beliefs in classroom practice is contested (Calderhead, 1996), it is beliefs that determine the professional knowledge acquired and simulated rather than the beliefs being shaped by professional knowledge obtained during teacher education programmes (Tsangaridou, 2006). This has repercussions on producing PSTs who act as 'change' or 'transformative' agents' within school contexts.

2.2.6 Agents of Change / Transformative Agents
PETE programmes failing to provide prospective teachers with the necessary knowledge to become ‘transformative agents’ is a major contributor to what is referred to as a crisis in physical education (Fernandez-Balboa, 1997). There is a criticism levied against PETE programmes that they are overly concerned with producing teachers who follow change, rather than lead it (O'Sullivan, 2003). Beginning teachers struggle to act as ‘agents of change’ within school environments unless supported by the school (Allen, 2008). While it is acknowledged that beginning teachers cannot be expected to transform schools, there is a necessity for PETE programmes to educate PSTs in engaging with change, “The need to open novices’ eyes to the realities of the education institution” (Fernandez-Balboa, 1997, pg. 165). If new teachers are to promote change, they must understand how schools work. PETE programmes must provide teachers with necessary support structures and strategies that may bring some degree of change. Without this, PETE programmes are doing PSTs a disservice and as a result “novices graduate with naïve expectations and a contaminated sense of competency” (Fernandez-Balboa, 1997, pg. 165). This leaves them open to the harsh reality of schools, a reality they are not prepared for, and in the long term leaves them “weary, burnt out and soul-broken” (Fernandez-Balboa, 1997, pg. 171).
2.3 PETE PROGRAMME COMPONENTS

PETE programmes have an essential role in preparing PSTs for the occupational socialisation into physical education and many of these PETE programme components interact with each other and incorporate many aspects, including but not limited to, teaching practice placements, a term which can be used interchangeably with field experiences.

2.3.1 Teaching Practice: Benefits and Concerns

The school context – community, peers, administrators and pupils – can have a positive or negative effect on teacher’s knowledge development (Behets and Vergauwen, 2006). Too often, school choice for teaching practice placements are based on convenience rather than the quality of learning experience that will be offered. Wright (2001) found that, “During PETE experiences, participants remembered rather ideal conditions” but that these ideal conditions “were not the norm in schools in which they now taught” (pg. 221).

There is conflicting research regarding teaching practice. Teaching practice can positively change attitudes because PSTs explore understandings of teaching and the role of teachers, apply knowledge and learning in realistic settings, develop a greater vocabulary and comprehension of teaching and can experiment and try out practices in a supportive environment (O’Sullivan, 2003; You and McCullick, 2001; O’Sullivan and Tsangaridou, 1992). Despite the clear rationale, and widespread use, there are concerns. PSTs are rarely allowed to develop curriculum or content and, because the purpose of schools is to educate pupils, and not to support the learning of either beginning or experienced teachers, PSTs‘ needs are often not tended to. These needs stretch to teaching practice failing to offer knowledge that guides more effective teaching and constraining PSTs‘ improvements in content knowledge (You and McCullick, 2001; O’Sullivan and Tsangaridou, 1992).

PSTs regularly report that little is learned from university based theoretical or academic courses but a great deal is learned from field experiences, representing a reductive model of teaching to many teacher educators (O’Sullivan, 1990). Rikard and Knight (1997) found, in a study involving forty-six PSTs, the aim of which was to garner perceptions of their teacher practicum found that within two weeks of their
teaching practice placement, PSTs discounted practices learned in their teacher preparation programmes. This highlights a disparity between theoretical and practical aspects of PETE programmes, discrepancies that stretch far beyond content knowledge and teaching practice placements.

2.3.2 Disparity between Theory and Practice

Grossman, Smagorinsky and Valencia (1999) used an activity theory framework, focussing on a sample of twenty-one graduates which followed them from their final year in their teacher education programme and into their first year of teaching. The study reinforced that teacher education programmes are not highly regarded and are in receipt of recurrent condemnations, with the biggest area of contention being the inability to bridge the theory-practice gap, most vividly demonstrated on field experiences. It is a feature of teacher education to differentiate field experience as one activity and university coursework as another, divided into two unrelated parts of professional education (Rosaen and Florio-Ruane, 2008). The university setting reinforces the student role while school settings reinforce the teacher role, with the teaching role advocated by schools likely to supersede values and practices stressed in university. The predominance of these school values are reasonable because teachers cannot learn to teach without engaging in the activities of teaching (Grossman, Smagorinsky and Valencia, 1999). Teachers view teaching practice placements and field experiences as the most beneficial component of their PETE programme as they provide PSTs with their greatest learning (Behets and Vergauwen, 2006). While the majority of PSTs found value in what they had learned on campus, unless they apply these on-campus theoretical frameworks, knowledge obtained remains distant and of little value in becoming a teacher and is of even less importance to a first-year teacher (Curtner-Smith, 2001). Coursework not directly related to teaching is viewed as not useful, creating a “utilitarian attitude” (Hayes et al., 2003, pg. 337).

Teacher education programmes must strike a balance between theory and practice as teaching is rooted in theory and inseparable in practice, with separation resulting in a false dichotomy (Allen, 2008: Grossman, Smagorinsky and Valencia, 1999). Practical and theoretical elements must converge so that planned, guided and sustained interaction with PSTs is emphasised (Clift and Brady, 2005).
2.4 TRANSITION FROM UNIVERSITY TO THE WORKPLACE

The first year of teaching is highlighted by the difficulty in transitioning from PST to teacher, with many PETE graduates not experiencing a smooth transition from university to teaching (McGaha & Lynn, 2000). Transition is characterised by anxiety and reality shock, brought on by the harsh and cruel reality of everyday classroom life stemming from “unrealistic expectations and the difficulty of teaching in general” (Weinstein, 1988, pg. 31). As O’Sullivan (1989) reported on examining two graduates’ experiences of teaching through the collection of interview, observational and log book entry data, beginning teachers’ difficulties are attributed to assuming full teaching responsibilities immediately, inadequate professional preparation, and the situational conditions within the school. Support, reassurance and assistance during the first year of teaching are inadequate to meet the needs of first year teachers, with mentoring non-existent (Williams and Williamson, 1995).

Siedentop (1991) outlines the process through which effectiveness and experience is achieved. Most teachers feel they will teach well to begin with and their effectiveness will continue in a gradual upward curve. This linear progression is not a realistic representation, with periods of “flatness” where no improvements are seen and periods of “regression”, where the teacher is less effective, evident. The reasons for these stagnations / regressions are due to obstacles in the physical educator’s career. If these obstacles are too big to overcome, teachers become disillusioned and dissatisfied. In order to prevent or alleviate the obstacles, continuous professional development (CPD) is required.

2.4.1 Continuous Professional Development Provision

Continuous Professional Development (CPD) is defined as “all types of professional learning undertaken by teachers beyond the initial point of training” (Craft, 1996, pg. 6). There is a requirement for CPD because PETE programmes cannot be expected to provide all the prepositional knowledge and more importantly, the procedural knowledge – “how to” knowledge which can only grow out of practice – for teaching (Dey, 1993). In order to develop this procedural knowledge, the focus of professional development should be on “teacher learning” (Fishman, Marx, Best and Tal, 2003).

There is a general acknowledgement that CPD in physical education circles is, at best,
“substantively and strategically incomplete” (McLaughlin and Zarrow, 2001, pg. 99-100) and “deficient” (Fishman et al., 2003 pg. 643) and, at worst, “woefully inadequate” (Borko, 2004, pg. 3). Previous research (O’Sullivan, 1996) indicates that most experienced teachers have had no access to professional development for the majority of their careers. This has been the case in Ireland up until the last decade when professional development has received sustained attention and significant investment. Between 1994 and 1999, €35m was provided to focus on the professional development of teachers in Ireland.

The Department of Education (2002) affirmed that teachers must be “supported by in-career development to meet continually changing needs and demands” (pg. 163). This support was more clearly outlined in which a broad view of in-service provision was envisioned, “Courses of varying duration will be required, including some long-duration courses leading to certification, and teachers will continue to be facilitated in pursuing such courses for their professional development” (Department of Education, 1992, pg. 163). The biggest single area of expansion in professional development is in-service, the focus of which is to support teachers in implementing new syllabi and increasing knowledge in subject areas / disciplines / strands (O’Sullivan, 1996).

In Ireland, teachers’ opinion toward structured professional development, including an induction programme, are highly favourable (Killeavy & Murphy, 2006; Government of Ireland, 1984). It was acknowledged that teacher education was “of a good and appropriate standard” but there was an acknowledgement that teacher education should be seen as a continuum of “further investment in teacher education (...) from the careful planning and construction of a nationwide induction and in-service system” (OECD, 1991, pg. 98). The Government of Ireland (1995) called for a “well developed and carefully managed” induction programme from initial preparation to induction to professional development (pg. 112). CPD is essential as it ultimately determines the quality of education in schools (Weiss, 1999). The OECD (2005) stated that;

“Effective professional development is ongoing, includes training, practice and feedback, and provides adequate time and follow-up support. Successful programmes involve teachers in learning activities that are similar to ones they
will use with their students and encourage the development of teachers’ learning communities. A key strategy involves finding ways for teachers to share their expertise and experience more systematically.”

CPD practices are in receipt of common recriminations for various reasons. Firstly, oftentimes CPD is seen as lacking depth, challenge, relevance and application (Armour, 2006). Secondly, the traditional form of in-service – off-school site and one-day courses – are seen as ineffective in supporting teachers to enhance practice (Knight, 2002; Pritchard and Marshall, 2002; Wilson and Berne, 1999). This means that what is learned in CPD cannot be transferred to the school context (Armour and Yelling, 2004). Furthermore, there is agreement that school structures can serve to hinder the professional learning of teachers (Mayer, Mitchell, Macdonald, Land, & Luke, 2003; Stokes, 2001). Therefore, there is a need in CPD to acknowledge the physical environment and the relationships within which teachers carry out their work (Kirk and MacDonald, 1998 pg. 377). Conway et al. (2009) outlined that CPD opportunities are often short term, once off, providing few opportunities for interaction and not as clearly linked to teachers’ professional practice as it might be.

By failing to provide adequate CPD to physical education teachers, there is a strong possibility that teachers’ informal professional networks may not result in optimal or quality learning as these may serve to merely reinforce ineffective practice (Wenger, 1998). Therefore, there is a need to ensure that CPD provision is adequate. Physical education teachers tend to define effective CPD as the provision of practical, relevant and applicable knowledge through usable ideas, a presenter who understands the complexities associated with the real world of teaching and the opportunity for challenging and thought provoking material, allowing time for engagement, reflection and collaboration (Armour and Yelling, 2007). Dey (2003) also found that links with the university were seen as interesting and stimulating.

There is a need for a more “coherent and coordinated approach” (Sugrue, 2002 pg. 335) by building strategic learning partnerships between university, schools and practicing teachers as this engagement is essential for participation, lifelong learning
and creating structures that energise teachers and create a new impetus for their work (Wilson and Berne, 1999).

2.5 LEARNING TO TEACH

Learning to teach extends beyond formal teacher education with teacher learning encompassing how teachers learn to teach and how they develop practices over time (Feiman-Nemser, 2008). Learning to teach can be conceptualised in ‘learning to teach’ models.

2.5.1 Models of ‘Learning to Teach’

There are a large number of studies on how teachers ‘learn to teach’ and the conditions under which teacher learning occurs (O’Sullivan, 1996). Development Stage Theories describe the process of learning to teach and changes teachers experience during the process (Fuller and Bown, 1975; Katz 1972; Fuller, 1969). Learning to teach requires examining developmental stages of a prospective teacher as teacher developmental stages represent a continuum, with teachers moving from feelings of anxiety and concern for survival to mastery of teaching (Stroot and Whipple, 2003).

Katz’s (1972) model of development conveys four stages of teacher development. Stage one, similar to Manuel’s (2003) ‘early survival phase’ (pg. 34) is characterised by conflict between new, innovative strategies taught at university and the traditional, more familiar practices in school settings. Early experiences include shock and self doubt based on the inadequacy of the teaching preparation programme, the necessity to prove oneself, the obligation to comply to the school and staff culture, and being overwhelmed and anxious over workload and competence. This results in one of two emotions, disillusionment and frustration, or the maintenance of an initial determination to swim against the tide. Stage two of Katz’ (1972) development model is dominated by consolidation where teachers focus on the problems and needs of individual children. Stage three, renewal, is evident in the third and fourth year of teaching where patterns are routine so there is a need for new ideas to provide variety in teaching. Stage four occurs in the fifth year of teaching and is summed up in the concept of maturity. Teachers begin to ask questions of themselves and their teaching, focus on insights, perspectives and beliefs about teaching and pupils, and
strive to understand the more subtle meaning of a complex teaching setting. Manuel’s (2003) second phase, ‘forging connections and finding a place’ (pg. 35) is similar to this stage of Katz’s (1972) model of development and is characterised by teachers becoming oriented with their school. Teachers communicate and learn from others, develop an awareness of school decision making processes and recognise socio-political life in schools. Teachers’ frustrations in this phase are compounded by having too many pupils, having supplementary extra-curricular duties and lacking material and time. The obstacles to teaching aspirations are pupils’ lack of motivation and respect for teachers, a one size-fits-all PETE preparation curriculum, lack of resources and burden of large classes, parent engagement in the child’s physical education and school administration being out of touch with classrooms. With these issues, it is little wonder that early teacher years are symbolised by a period of survival and intense discovery (Feiman-Nemser, 2003).

2.6 BEGINNING TEACHERS

Beginning teachers (BTs) are under-prepared for their first teaching assignments (Darling-Hammond & Youngs, 2002). Expectations for BTs are the same as, and in some cases even higher than, expectations for more experienced teachers (Fletcher and Barrett, 2004; Feiman-Nemser, 1983). New teachers, on exiting their teacher preparation programmes, must not be seen as finished products needing only to refine existing skills. Indeed, the focus of teacher education should be on providing teachers with a set of high-level beginning competencies rather than preparing fully-formed teachers (Conway et al., 2009). It is unrealistic to expect BTs to be ‘finished products’ as BTs have legitimate learning needs that cannot be grasped in advance or outside the contexts of teaching (Feiman-Nemser, 2003). BTs need help in learning about the curriculum, pupils, and interacting with colleagues in order to be effective in instructional practices (Fletcher & Barrett, 2004). In the vast majority of cases, BTs have assumed full teaching roles from the first day of entering the classroom, learning on a sink or swim and trial by error basis (Alger, 2009; Little, 1990), resulting in BTs’ experiencing difficulties and expressing concerns.

2.6.1 Difficulties and Concerns for Beginning Teachers

Siedentop (1991) highlights a range of issues that emerge as concerns for BTs. The first is that of ‘present-ism’ (pg. 155), which is a concern with immediate events, the
here-and-now' with little reflective or contemplative practice occurring. Another concern is that of professional autonomy, with the desire to be able to undertake curriculum/content in a flexible manner, while still recognising the importance of the collective nature of school life.

Few difficulties amongst BTs were reported in areas such as lesson planning, establishing positive relationships with colleagues and pupils, and teaching sport skills (Hill and Brodin, 2004). Killeavy's (2006) and O'Sullivan's (1989) findings indicate otherwise, noting problems with establishing and developing collaborative relationships with colleagues and the principal. Similar prevalent concerns include accommodation of pupils' differences through the planning and teaching of developmentally appropriate lessons, individualising the curriculum to match class activities to pupil competences, dealing appropriately with special needs pupils, and strategies to manage non-teaching duties more effectively (Hill and Brodin, 2004; Williams and Williamson, 1995). O'Sullivan (1989) reported that pupil discipline was not a significant concern although much research has indicated that BTs are primarily concerned with classroom discipline and this is the most serious and frequent problem (Killeavy, 2006; Stroot, Faucette and Schwager, 1993; Veenman, 1984). PETE programmes need to address management and discipline with regard to establishing patterns of desirable behaviour and dealing with undesirable behaviours as, while they are communicated, there are few opportunities to practice (Hill and Brodin, 2004).

The realities of the difficulties and challenges BTs face on the job in the first few years must be known, with the provision of pre-service and in-service preparation required to deal with these issues (O'Sullivan, 1989). Failure to heighten this awareness for physical education teachers is likely to result in ‘reality shock’, ‘wash out’, ‘isolation’ and ‘burn out’.

2.6.2 Reality Shock, Wash Out, Isolation and Burn Out
Socialisation in physical education occurs in phases including reality shock, wash out effect, isolation and burn out. ‘Reality shock’ is, “Caused by a combination of realizations by the entry-year teacher into the „real world“ of teaching and being unprepared for many of the demands and difficulties of that world” (Gordon, 1990,
There is evidence to suggest that physical educators are not prepared for the realities of school sites (Williams & Williamson, 1995) but ‘reality shock’ is more typical in non physical education circles than in some quality PETE programmes where BTs do not feel reality shock (O'Sullivan, 1989).

When knowledge learned does not manifest itself in the beginning teacher's classroom, a process referred to as the 'wash-out effect' occurs (Blankenship & Coleman, 2010; Stroot and Whipple, 2003; Schempp and Graber, 1992; Lawson, 1989; Zeichner and Tabachnick, 1981). The wash out effect is, “School practices progressively eroding the effects of teacher education” (Lawson, 1989, pg. 148). The wash out effect is the period in which the impact of teacher education programmes diminishes due to the school not supporting BTs' goals and philosophies (Stroot and Whipple, 2003). Even with strong preparation, first year teachers have difficulty in sustaining the commitment necessary to ensure quality physical education programmes (Stroot and Whipple, 2003).

Previous research (Knight, 2002; Visscher and Witziers, 2004) states that the essence of professional development lies in learning with colleagues in subject department or across personal networks, due to the fact that teachers hold fellow teachers' expertise in high regard (Sandholtz, 2002). Oftentimes, physical education teachers do not have these opportunities as they have insufficient contact and time with other physical educators finding themselves alone in their questions and problems (Mayer et al., 2003). This results in isolation and is one of the biggest obstacles physical education teachers face (Curtner-Smith, 2001). Isolation can be seen in physical, social, psychological and professional domains (Gordon, 1990; MacDonald, 1995). The lack of proximity exacerbates the feeling of isolation (Stroot and Whipple, 2003). Oftentimes, there is only one physical educator in the school building and the gym is located at the far end of the school or is unattached to the school building, resulting in physical education teachers being separated from colleagues, with little opportunity to pursue professional dialogue (Curtner Smith, 2001). This is a cause of concern for physical educators and actively contributes to a “growing sense of isolation from the main functions of the school” (Smyth, 1995, pg. 209). With isolation, opportunities to improve working conditions are unlikely to improve (Armour and Jones, 1998).
A teacher's job description does not change across the year so boredom and routine are cited as obstacles to teacher development. The similarity of assignments from year to year results in a numbing routine, reducing teacher effectiveness, termed "teacher burn out" (Fejgin, Ephraty and Ben-Sira, 1995, pg. 65). Only a few research studies have focussed on teacher burnout of physical education teachers and, because physical education possesses several different characteristics to other subjects, there are aspects of burnout specific to physical education (Depaepe, French and Lavay, 1985). These differences stretch to the ways in which physical education is perceived by pupils, parents and other teachers and the standing and class structure of physical education in relation to other more 'academic' subjects.

2.7 EXPERIENCED TEACHERS

Professional growth consists of an increase in knowledge about pupils, development of teaching processes and a shift from self to pupil learning (Behets and Vergauwen, 2006). As teachers gain experience, they get better at their job (Berliner, 1994). It is acknowledged that developing 'competency' is acquired through experience (Carter, Cushing, Sabers, Stein & Berliner, 1988). This is summed up in the idea that, because pedagogical skills are gained slowly and through experience, teacher education can only produce teachers primed to learn from experience.

2.7.1 Experience in Developing as a Physical Education Teacher

Teacher development from BT to experienced teacher (ET) is the transformation in teacher's knowledge as they gain experience and expertise (Sebren, 1995). Experience plays a vital role in knowledge construction because it develops a teacher's pedagogical content knowledge blending knowledge of how to teach, subject matter and how pupils learn (Grossman, Smagorinsky & Valencia, 1999; Shulman, 1987). Experience enables teachers to understand theory 'in' and 'through' practice (Rovegno, 2003). ETs know techniques and know how to use their knowledge in practice and can take, "into account the complexity of problems which exist in classrooms" because what teachers do is linked to what they think (National Institute of Education, 1975, pg. 1 cited in Housner and Griffey, 1991). While PETE programmes can only produce teachers primed to learn from experience, they can assist in the process of developing BTs into experts.
ETs provide richly detailed instructional descriptions that should be included in teacher education (Berliner, 1986). The evidence of expert performance should influence training programme design as it provides information about what teachers should think about when they plan for or engage in teacher activities. Professional competence is sensitive to subject matter taught, it is not generalised (Schempp et al., 1998). This supports a deepening of teachers' subject matter knowledge in a developmental manner to improve teaching (Schempp et al., 1998). It backs up Leinhart & Smith's (1985) finding that teachers should possess thorough knowledge for the subject they intend to teach, “The subject matter matters” (Rovegno, 1995a, pg. 6).

2.8 WORKPLACE CONDITIONS

Armour and Jones (1998) state that physical education is a career in turmoil as career satisfaction, while possible is rarely achieved (Templin, Sparkes and Schempp, 1991). Templin et al. (1994) hypothesise that satisfaction is based on circumstances where physical education teachers can “understand the contextual and personal struggles of their lives and careers” (pg. 175). Therefore, it is necessary for physical education teachers to address the variables – the contextual workplace, status and support issues – that impact significantly on teachers' commitment to their work (Moreira, Sparkes and Fox, 1995). Workplace conditions are significant variables that affect teaching performance, influencing teachers’ perception of their success and their role as physical education professionals (Stroot and Whipple, 2003). Workplace conditions can make teaching productive and satisfying or unsuccessful and dispiriting, playing a key role in keeping teachers in the field (Wynn, Carboni and Patall, 2007). They can enhance or inhibit a teacher's ability to be effective and can influence their ability to make choices on becoming part of the existing system or being empowered to change the system (Stroot and Whipple, 2003). It is not only the quality or qualifications of individuals who teach, but occupational and workplace factors that affect teachers' decisions to enter, stay or leave the profession (Blasé & Kirby, 1992).

Working conditions that affect teachers' work are the low status of physical education subject matter, isolation, large class sizes, inappropriate facilities, insufficient equipment, the repetitive nature of physical education work, poor interaction with school administration and limited influence in decision making (Stroot and Whipple,
Addressing these variables in teacher preparation programmes is difficult because, without ongoing support from the school setting, quality practices are likely to wash out, a process where pedagogical practices learned during PETE are unable to be applied as they conflict with the prevailing school culture (Zeichner and Tabachnik, 1981). Therefore, understanding factors that contribute to ‘wash out’ are crucial and these factors are examined under five main headings – appropriate and equitable teaching assignments, working relationships with colleagues, appropriate curricular resources, school organisation and leadership and pupils’ motivation to participate in physical education.

2.8.1 Appropriate and Equitable Teaching Assignments

Appropriate and equitable teaching assignments are assignments that are manageable and within a teacher’s field of expertise, suspecting that reasonable teaching assignments may greatly increase the chances of retaining teachers (Johnson and Kardos, 2008). Excessively large classes or teaching loads significantly impacts a teacher’s decision to leave teaching (Johnson, 2004). Out-of-field assignments are common, not only impacting on pupils but also affecting the confidence and satisfaction of the teacher, particularly in instances where they lack a minor/major in the subject they teach (Johnson and Kardos, 2008).

Another issue teachers have to cope with is ‘role conflict’ due to the pressures of supplementary coaching responsibilities (Stroot and Whipple, 2003). Schools and principals differ in their expectations of physical education teachers, with some expected to focus on teaching and others expected to teach and coach (Fejgin et al., 1995). The conflict between teaching and coaching creates a role conflict, with this dual role resulting in physical education teachers highlighting coaching responsibilities as time consuming, subsuming their role as physical educators and as a factor in increasing the possibility of burn out (Stroot and Whipple, 2003; Quigley, Slack and Smith, 1989; Sisley, Capel and Desertrain, 1987). Coaching increases physical education teachers’ isolation as most teaching groups meet after school, during which time physical education teachers are undertaking their coaching roles. Marginalisation of physical educators is a common occurrence in schools and it is a
major issue for both beginning and experienced physical education teachers, one aspect with regards to working relationships with colleagues.

2.8.2 Working Relationships with Colleagues

Physical education is not necessarily viewed as important amongst teachers, pupils and parents and by physical education teachers themselves (Sparkes, Templin, & Schempp, 1990). Physical education, “at best seems to occupy a tenuous place in the school curriculum” (Marshall and Hardman, 2000, pg. 223) and as long as this remains the case, “Physical education will continue to be devalued within the schooling agenda ... and teachers in the field will continue to be considered as marginal” (MacDonald, 1995, pg. 139). The low status of physical education is a constant, recurring phenomenon as it, “Has generally occupied a low position ... has been held in low esteem ... and has suffered doubly in „education“ because its low status was compounded by the low respect given to it by most educators” (Jable, 1997, pg 78). The reason for this low respect from most educators is because the status of physical education is significantly lower than that of „academic“ subjects (Marshall and Hardman, 2000). The emphasis on „academic“ subjects place physical education towards the bottom of schools‘ importance (Kirk, 1988), where physical education teachers are judged based on their management competencies instead of pupil learning accomplishments. O’Sullivan (1989) summed this up with, “The struggle for legitimacy of their subject matter was overshadowed by the collegial respect (legitimacy) teachers received for their managerial rather than instructional abilities” (pg. 240). This struggle for legitimacy of subject matter is not understood or supported by colleagues (O’Sullivan, 1989).

The lack of respect for physical education is also highlighted as physical education lessons are cancelled more often and frequently than so called „academic subjects“, due to examination periods when lessons are abandoned or pupils are taken out of class to provide revision time, and the use of the school hall for school plays, concerts, assemblies and as dining areas (Marshall and Hardman, 2000).

The inescapable conclusion is that physical education is not viewed as educationally worthy, at least in a high-status academic sense (Armour and Jones, 1998). Hargreaves (1982) sums up this issue, “If physical education is to improve its status
as a school subject, physical education teachers will have to be prepared to fight for it. Nobody else is going to grant such a status ... and the physical education teacher must realise that this entails arguing that physical education is more important than some other subjects” (pg. 9).

If an ineffective curriculum, judged in terms of leisure time, is tolerated by those in control of budget and curriculum, it is inevitable many physical educators succumb to this obstacle of neglect and allow their lessons to become socially oriented recreational periods. Many teachers who remain in the profession do so as “non-teaching teachers”, where teachers stop trying to achieve real learning goals and are concerned with well-behaved active pupils. Another option is for teachers to become „tinkœrs„, where they alter learning goals with programmes becoming highly valued within a school (Siedentop, 1991).

2.8.3 Appropriate Curricular Resources and Accountability

Curriculum resources and accountability are central to teachers’ day to day work and fewer than half of teachers felt they had „plenty‘ of access to curriculum and material (Johnson and Kardos, 2008, pg. 24; Cohen and Ball, 1996). Teachers lack basic supplies, resulting in a dearth of instructional resources to conduct day-to-day classes (Moulthrop, Calegar and Eggers, 2005). In a further study, teachers reported they “Either had no curriculum at all – leaving them without guidance about both what to teach and how to teach it – or a curriculum that included only lists of topics and skills – suggesting only generally what to teach but now how to teach it” (Kauffman, Johnson, Kardos, Liu and Peske, 2002, pg. 280). Teachers want rich and detailed curriculum materials with the opportunity to implement it in a flexible manner with a need for physical education teachers to be provided with comprehensive curriculum and resource materials (Johnson and Kardos, 2008).

A primary concern was the lack of accountability in physical education due to the issue of grading and assessment within the subject. The situation with physical education is quite the opposite to many other subjects as there is little to no evaluation occurring, few demands on pupil learning and little/no pupil academic achievement. Physical education teachers struggle with assessments and behaviour instead of pupil learning forming the focus of grading (Stroot and Whipple, 2003). The lack of
teacher and programme evaluation, in terms of incentives, recognition and collaborative programme improvement is a serious obstacle for growth because high standards in physical education and strong support for teachers and programmes cannot happen without evaluation (Siedentop, 1991).

2.8.3.1 Facilities and Equipment

The physical workplace of teachers – the building and classrooms – affect what physical education teachers teach and their sense of affiliation with school, pupils and teaching in general and while there is little evidence to show teachers leave solely on this factor, it is a major contributor to teacher dissatisfaction (Johnson and Kardos, 2008). There is sufficient evidence to hypothesise that “The probability of retention increases” as the “perceived quality of school facilities improves” (Schneider, 2003, pg. 7).

The teaching of physical education occurs in gyms, fields or school yards and, the physical structure of these ‘classrooms’ creates several problems exclusive to physical education as, physical education teachers have to improvise when facilities and equipment are not available and outdoor working conditions are subject to weather conditions (Fejgin et al., 1995). The issue of facilities appears to be a prominent one in an Irish context (MacPhail, Halbert, McEvilly, Hutchinson and MacDonncha, 2005). Facilities were highlighted as the largest category impinging on physical education provision, with inadequate facilities negatively impacting pupils' experiences of physical education.

A surprising number of schools are inadequately equipped (Johnson and Kardos, 2008). In many schools, equipment is an area of deficiency with “some schools lacking in resources so individual games skills practices can become difficult” (Oxley, 1998, pg. 56). In areas where equipment provision was insufficient, it was recognised that it could have a detrimental effect on the physical education curriculum within a school (MacPhail et al., 2005). Inadequate facilities and equipment inhibit the prospects of delivering a sequential curriculum dedicated to pupil learning. At worst, such situations lead to a total abandonment of learning goals, and at best it results in a series of compromises in the programme (Siedentop, 1991). Equipment
and facilities also indicate the level of support provided for physical education by the school organisation and leadership.

2.8.4 School Organisation and Leadership

Principal leadership encompasses most other working conditions as school culture is the single most powerful predictor of a teacher's work, career and commitment. The reason why leadership is important is because they are the broker of working conditions within and throughout the school (Darling-Hammond and Sclan, 1996). Teachers' perceptions of school leadership, culture and teacher autonomy shape their willingness to do their best work, commit to teaching as a career choice and plan to stay in teaching (Weiss, 1999). Teachers' decisions are largely dependent upon how well the school is organised and led (Johnson, 2004).

Past research confirms supportive school leadership and autonomy plays a role in shaping teachers' attitudes toward teaching (Blasé & Kirby, 1992). Wynn, Carboni and Patall (2007), through a sociological framework with fourteen BTs in America participating in individual interviews and two focus group discussions, surmised that supportive leadership is positively correlated with teachers' decisions to remain in the school and it positively impacts teachers' satisfaction (Wynn, Carboni and Patall, 2007). Principals are most effective when they communicate expectations, enforce pupil rules and provide instructional or management guidance (Weiss, 1999). Schools unresponsive to teachers' and pupils' needs are characterised by non-collaborative cultures or unsupportive leadership (Weiss, 1999). Teachers report they have too little an influence on school policies and practices and that their efforts go unnoticed and unrecognised (Darling-Hammond and Sclan, 1996). Top down narrowly defined mandates only reinforce already established beliefs that teachers are ineffective and uninvolved (Wynn, Carboni and Patall, 2007).

Lack of administrative support for programmes is frustrating for many physical educators because it causes a serious affect in the maintenance or improvement of an effective programme (Siedentop, 1991). The standard of physical education has reached a particularly “low ebb” and that many principals, “do not bother much about what is happening in physical education” (Pulis, 1994, pg. 10, 40). In many countries, principals are overwhelmingly perceived to be indifferent or non
supportive of physical education” (Marshall and Hardman, 2000, pg. 214). Principal support can be seen in many other areas such as timetabling provision and employing non-qualified physical education teachers.

2.8.4.1 Timetabling
The issue of timetabling is a pervasive factor in implementing a physical education programme as time is taken up by other competing prioritised subjects (Hardman, 2008a; Hardman, 2008b).

Irish teachers share a common concern that single 35 – 40 minute classes are insufficient to adequately cover content in detail with the implementation of a compulsory double 80 minute class deemed a minimum requirement (MacPhail et al., 2005). In many countries, including Ireland, the physical education provision is not implemented as per national recommendations, with the situation exacerbated by a majority of senior pupils in secondary schools receiving little to no physical education (Hardman, 2008a). In the final years of schooling, there is a considerable reduction in time allocation for physical education, with Halbert and MacPhail (2005) stating there is a progressive reduction in an Irish context from 75 minutes to 57 minutes from junior to senior cycle physical education respectively. Many researchers agree that time allocation for physical education has steadily declined (Annerstedt and Claes, 2008; Allert & Bergh, 1996; Annerstedt & Patriksson, 2000) and that a decrease in time is apparent at every year of secondary school, but especially dramatic for the 14 to 16 year-old age-group (Hardman, 2008b; Harris, 1994). In an Irish context, this is the case, although time provision in transition year increased to 101 minutes per week (MacPhail et al., 2005). In general, the trend is that there is a gradual erosion of secondary school physical education provision, with optional physical education becoming more evident in senior physical education or physical education disappearing from the timetable altogether (Hardman, 2008b; Marshall and Hardman, 2000).

2.8.4.2 Non-Qualified Physical Education Teachers
A common scenario in post-primary schools is to have non-qualified teachers teaching physical education and these teachers are often inadequately or inappropriately prepared to teach physical education (Hardman, 2008b; Ojeme, 1986).
There is a general consensus that teachers need to be highly qualified to teach other subjects except for physical education.

MacPhail et al., (2005) recognised that non-qualified physical education teachers were involved in delivering the physical education curriculum in Irish post-primary schools and this had repercussions, predominantly in the implementation of a games-focussed curriculum (Irish Sports Council, 2005). It is imperative that appropriately qualified teachers teach physical education and that they possess “adequate levels of specialisation” (UNESCO Charter for Physical Education and Sport, 1978, Article 4, pg. 7). A common set-up is for other general teachers to take physical education with the result that there is a predisposition towards games and the development of sport skills in physical education curricula (Marshall and Hardman, 2000).

2.8.5 Other Issues
There are numerous issues that impact and affect working conditions and one of the most prevalent is pupils’ lack of motivation and disinterest in participating physical education.

2.8.5.1 Pupils Lack of Motivation and Participation in Physical Education
The active nature of physical education results in more discipline problems than in normal classroom environments, enhanced not only from over-active pupils but also from passive pupils who do not want to participate, problems that are a continuous source of frustration, dissatisfaction and burnout (Mancini, Wuest, Valentine and Clark, 1984). Off-task pupil and class behaviour and unmotivated pupils are reasons for questioning career choice (O’Sullivan, 2003). Another significant difficulty is resistance from pupils because they are not accustomed to explicit expectations of learning in physical education (O’Sullivan, 1989). Many teachers feel unprepared for this task as pupils do not care about physical education or do not want to participate. This comes as a surprise to many physical education teachers as they were enthusiastic participants in school and expected a similar enthusiasm (Rikard and Knight, 1997). Becoming targets of pupil misbehaviours ran counter to their school experiences as pupils and to how teachers were generally regarded and treated by pupils (Fernandez-Balboa, 1991). Ongoing disruptive behaviour results in teachers abandoning their teaching objectives until management is restored (Rikard and
Knight, 1997). Teachers indicated it is a ‘waste of time’ to do their best when pupil behaviour interferes with teaching (Weiss, 1999). In disorderly schools, little effective teaching or learning can occur and in these schools teachers claimed they, “Seriously considered quitting the teaching profession because pupil discipline and behaviour was such a problem” (Johnson and Kardos, 2008, pg. 43).

While pupil misbehaviour is an area of frustration, worry and burn out for teachers, perhaps more important is developing a ‘sense of success’ and successful ties with pupils (Fejgin et al., 1995). The critical aspect through the difficult and long-term process is teachers’ commitment to the philosophy of it being about the pupils (Rovegno, 2003). Teachers want to help young people learn and develop as teachers’ greatest rewards and career decisions depend on whether they experience a sense of success with pupils (Feistritzer, 2005; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Darling-Hammond and Sclan, 1996). Teachers stay because they love, believe in and respect the pupils they work with and while plagued with self doubts and frustrated by the inequities of the bureaucracy of education, they believe they can make a difference to the pupils’ lives (Cochran-Smith, 2004). Teacher satisfaction arose when their teaching was making a difference to the lives of their pupils (Johnson and Kardos, 2008). Positive pupil interaction was the primary reason teaching physical education was confirmed as career choice for many physical education teachers (O’Sullivan, 2003).

While there are many other issues in relation to working conditions, such as parental support, governmental support and the coverage of safety / first aid, these were not as prominent in the literature. For that reason, the issues of appropriate and equitable teaching assignments, working relationships with colleagues, school organisation and leadership and appropriate curricular resources and accountability were expanded on. All of these issues, as well as the difficulties in promoting pupils’ participation in physical education have effects on the retention of physical education teachers.

2.9 TEACHER RETENTION

While teacher supply and recruitment is important in creating a dynamic and thriving teaching profession, merely producing a high calibre of graduates is insufficient. There is a general consensus that the teaching profession, and America in particular, is engulfed in a teacher shortage crisis of monumental proportions (Algozzine, Gretes,
Queen and Cowan-Hathcock, 2007). Teacher shortages are caused primarily by early attrition (Cochran-Smith, 2004). In solving the teacher shortage crisis recruitment is, “the wrong diagnosis” and a “phoney cure” (Merrow, 1999, pg. 38). There is a realisation that the problem is not teacher recruitment but teacher retention (Cochran-Smith, 2004). The reason why teacher retention is such an issue is as a result of teacher turnover. Teacher turnover has two aspects associated with it. The first is attrition which is the loss of teachers from the profession. The second is migration which is the movement of teachers from one district or school to another (Johnson and Kardos, 2008). It is widely known as teaching’s “revolving door” (Ingersoll, 2003, pg. 11). Teacher turnover is the largest single determinant of demand for new teachers (Cochran-Smith and Zichner, 2005). While this reference is related to an American context, the high ratio of teacher turn-over evident in many countries is disconcerting for the profession (Manuel, 2003). The problem of teacher turnover is not isolated to America as England mirrors these figures (Smithers & Robinson, 2003). In Ireland, attrition rates historically have been relatively low although there is concern that this may be changing (Killeavy, 2006).

First-career entrants are young, generally inexperienced and, while they may have always planned to be a teacher, approach teaching tentatively (Johnson and Kardos, 2008). If they find success, they will stay; if they do not, they will leave (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). Others plan to make a short term contribution to teaching, committing to a few years, before entering another line of work (Peske, Liu, Johnson, Kauffman and Kardos, 2001). An emerging consensus among educators is that retention of new teachers depends on high quality preparation, induction and mentoring programmes and the maintenance of professional development opportunities (Algozzine et al., 2007).

Teacher turnover is significant because it results, not only in financial loss, but instructional and organizational costs (Kain & Singleton, 1996). The biggest improvement in teaching effectiveness increases sharply in the first few years of teaching (Johnson and Kardos, 2008) and schools never get a long-term payoff from its investments in beginning BTs who leave (Darling-Hammond, 2003). Schools fill vacancies with more BTs with little improvement in the quality of instruction (Johnson and Kardos, 2008). Pupils are taught by a string of teachers who are less
effective than ETs as they have left the school before they became competent in their practice (Johnson, Berg, and Donaldson, 2005; Darling-Hammond, 2003). It is the pupils who bear the brunt of inadequately prepared, inexperienced and ill-qualified teachers (Darling-Hammond and Sclan, 1996). While this appears to be the state of physical education in many International examples, the indications are, despite limited research that such a situation does not seem to prevail in Ireland.

2.9.1 Working Conditions and Teacher Retention: An Irish Perspective

Coolahan (2007) states that, in Ireland, teacher education has gone through processes of stagnation and advancement. Between 1965 and 1975 significant changes were introduced to teacher education, followed by a period of retrenchment in the 1980s where teacher education was placed far down the policy list of the Department of Education. In the 1990s it was acknowledged that education is a central component to economic and social development, an acknowledgement that resulted in an “unprecedented analysis, appraisal, consultation, educational policy formation and legislation which greatly changed the general climate and re-established a more affirmative, partnership approach on teacher education as an education policy generally” (Coolahan, 2007, pg. 5).

There are distinctive aspects to teacher education found in Ireland when compared to other International alternatives. The first is to acknowledge the status of the teaching profession as a whole. In Ireland, teaching has a high standard of living and is a well respected professional career when compared to other countries (OECD, 2001). Secondly there is a difficulty in the quality of recruits. In Ireland, recruits are high academic achievers, whereas in International circles, physical education may be one of only a few university programmes in which PSTs may be able to gain access to due to the general mediocre record of academic achievement (Dewar, 1989). A further difference is that, in Ireland, entry requirements into teacher education, and in particular to physical education teacher education, is high, a position juxtaposed to other International examples where entry into teacher education is symbolised by relatively low entrance requirements (Dewar, 1989). The overall impression is that Ireland maintains a high calibre teaching force and attracts high quality candidates, resulting in Ireland having different characteristics to those of other countries.
While the OECD (1991) remarked that “Ireland has been fortunate to maintain the quality of its teaching force” (pg. 100), there exists a “well organised, effective and professionally and academically sound structure of initial teacher education ... initial teacher education is already of a good and appropriate standard” (OECD, 1991, pg. 97). The OECD (1991) qualified that further investment in teacher education should focus on “the careful planning and construction of a nationwide induction and in-service system” (pg. 98). This should have provided a blueprint for future teacher education reform. The Department of Education (1992, 1995) advocated a policy of induction but, despite a pilot programme, a systematic induction programme has yet to be implemented (Coolahan, 2007). The OECD (2005), in a study conducted on the teaching career and teacher education, highlighted Ireland as one country not offering a teacher induction programme with no minimum professional development requirement for any teacher in the school year. This means that “The stages of initial teacher education, induction, and professional development need to be much better interconnected to create a more coherent learning and development system for teachers” (OECD, 2005, pg. 13). There must be a desire to establish a national teacher induction programme (Coolahan, 2007). A programme of induction, as well as a high quality continuing professional development programme, is essential to ensure that serving teachers are able to update their skills in the personnel, professional and pedagogic domains (Stack, 2007 cited in Coolahan, 2007). CPD has undergone a significant period of growth and expansion in Ireland, both in terms of financial and instructional resources (Coolahan, 2007). However Coolahan (2007) highlights the need for an overall strategic policy on in-career teacher development and a commitment to in-career education incorporating long-duration certificate and school based courses.

While there is a dearth of empirical evidence on teacher retention in Ireland, and none in the field of physical education, the general consensus is that attrition rates tend to be lower in Ireland than other countries due to a combination of reasons (OECD, 2001). Firstly, teachers have a consultative voice on the formation of national curricular policy and general education policy. Secondly, teachers work collegially through the implementation of school planning initiatives which serves to strengthen
the school as a learning community. Thirdly, teachers have an increased awareness of
the importance of a positive relationship between school leadership, staff and pupils.
Fourthly, government and the business community place a high value on teaching and
schooling and fifthly, Irish teachers are comparatively well paid by international
standards, ranking seventh of 27 countries surveyed by the OECD (OECD, 2001). It
is important to state that teacher retention has not been a pressing policy issue in
Ireland and there is a lack of research on teacher attrition, making it impossible to
establish patterns and characteristics of the attrition which is taking place (OECD,
2001). It is important to note that these teacher retention features are for the
education system as a whole in Ireland and not specifically for physical education.

2.10 CONCLUSION
From this research it is clear there is a necessity to examine the PETE programme
with regard to beginning and experienced experiences of the programme as PSTs and
their subsequent entry and commitment to their school and teaching profession. This
project has three research questions,

How do beginning and experienced physical education teachers view the
occupational utility of knowledge acquired during the PETE programme?

To what extent are changing perceptions of physical education attributed to
experiences and opportunities of beginning and experienced physical education
teachers?

What working conditions impact physical education teachers’ (potential) career
decisions?

In order to successfully achieve this analysis the interpretive paradigm is an
appropriate research design to use. The research methodology sets out to investigate
the similarities and differences that exist in beginning and experienced physical
education teachers’ experiences of teaching. The intention is to identify issues that
arise within the first year of teaching and appear to embed themselves as practices for
experienced teachers, as well as identify issues that arise for beginning teachers but
are addressed as one becomes more experienced.
Chapter Three
Methodology

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The research methodology employed, and the methods selected to collect data, were chosen to elicit information that would aid in answering and analysing the following research questions;

How do beginning and experienced physical education teachers view the occupational utility of knowledge acquired during the PETE programme?

To what extent are changing perceptions of physical education attributed to experiences and opportunities of beginning and experienced physical education teachers?

What working conditions impact physical education teachers' career decisions?

In order to fully explore the research questions, the most appropriate research design to employ is that of the interpretive paradigm.

3.2 THE INTERPRETIVE PARADIGM

The definition of a paradigm is,

“A set of basic beliefs ... It defines, for its holder, the nature of the ‘world,” the individual’s place in it and the range of possible relationships”

(Guba and Lincoln, 1989, pg. 107).

The interpretive paradigm aims to understand human activity in specific situations through the perspectives of participants, based on the idea that human activity differs depending on time, place and participants (Curtner-Smith, 2003; MacDonald et al., 2002). According to Erickson (1986, pg. 124) the two key questions in interpretive research are _“What is happening here?”_ and _“What do these events mean to the people engaged in them?”_. Answering these questions is central to effectively addressing the above research questions.
Interpretive research involves an interpretation of data, which is achieved by clarifying what and how meanings are embodied in the language of the research participants (MacDonald et al., 2002). This requires the researcher to interact with the data, making interpretive research an "intensely interactive and personal process of engagement" (Sparkes, 1994, pg. 14). In analysing the data I collected, the information obtained has been interpreted. As this process is an inherently personal one, it is distinctly possible that the reader, and others, would arrive at different interpretations. Interpretive research allows for this as things mean and are seen in different ways by different people so 'multiple interpretations' are possible (Sparkes, 1994). Therefore, what is proposed in the findings is not a set of universal rules but, as a result of engaging with the data, what I believe to be the most accurate depiction, interpretation and analysis of the data. Engaging with the data in such a manner means the researcher is not detached from, but positively interacts with, the participants of the study (Grix, 2004). Bias is a by-product of this interaction and, while unintended, is virtually impossible to avoid. This creates a problem with validity and reliability, providing the need to firstly provide the context of the PETE programme, secondly to personally position myself in this study and thirdly to outline the necessity for triangulation.

3.2.1 PETE Programme Context
The PETE programme is a four-year full-time undergraduate Honours Bachelor Degree, with the programme designed to qualify teachers in physical education and another subject in post-primary schools in Ireland. There is a pedagogical focus to this particular PETE programme throughout the four years, with the nature of the PETE programme linked to Katz's (1972) Developmental Model for Learning. The PETE programme aims to provide PSTs with new strategies to move beyond the survival and into the mastery stage.

Entry into the programme is primarily through the Irish Leaving Certificate Examination through the Central Applications Office (CAO). There are approximately eighty to ninety students accepted into the course per year, with a small percentage of students (around 10%) entering the course outside the CAO system as mature students. The general structure of the course is that each of the four years is divided into two 13 week semesters – one from September to December and a second
from February to May. Formal examinations occur at the end of each semester. There are three components to the PETE programme. The first aspect is a physical education component, involving the activities within the Junior Certificate Physical Education (JCPE) curriculum, Athletics, Aquatics, Dance, Games (Invasion and Net), Gymnastics, Health Related Activity and Outdoor Adventure. These activities are supported by theoretical aspects, studying how theory relates to those activities. Theoretical aspects include Anatomy and Physiology, Psychology, Sociology of Sport and Physical Education, and Philosophy. In the teaching of these activities, pedagogy is also present in these modules / programmes objectives / outcomes. In the absence of examining module outlines and syllabus, acknowledgement is made that a concerted effort is evident in the delivery of pedagogical knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge, more overtly evident in modules that have a practical physical activity orientation and those that are primarily concerned with the teaching and learning context. The second component of the PETE programme is Education and Professional Studies. These Studies focus on generic educational Irish issues in order to prepare pre-service teachers to understand post-primary schools and the contexts pre-service teachers will potentially work in. The third constituent of the PETE programme is that of an elective or specialist option. This enables pre-service teachers to gain a qualification in one of the following subjects – Chemistry, English, Geography, Irish or Mathematics. On graduation from the PETE programme, graduates are not only qualified to teach physical education but a second subject from their chosen option.

At the time this research was conducted, there were three teaching practice placements over the four years. The first teaching practice placement is in first year second semester where pre-service teachers are placed in a primary school for one week. The second teaching practice block is in the second semester of second year, with pre-service teachers in post-primary schools for six weeks teaching both physical education and their elective subject. The third teaching practice is a ten-week placement in a post primary school in the first semester of fourth year, teaching both physical education and their elective. There are also further teaching opportunities within modules, placements which enable pre-service teachers to see how coaches work, and through participating in inclusive and integrated physical education, which enables pre-service teachers to adapt classes for people with a physical disability.
3.2.2 Personal Positioning

My school experience of physical education was predominantly games-focused. There was an emphasis on basketball in extra-curricular activities and this formed the basis of the physical education curriculum in the school. Over the course of my five years in secondary school, I did not experience gymnastics, dance, outdoor adventure, aquatics or athletics. Furthermore, my school experience of physical education is synonymous with the phenomenon of ‘throwing in the ball’, with little content taught and little learning occurring. Despite this, physical education was one of my favourite subjects in school and one I thoroughly enjoyed, attributable to my considerable interest in games-related sport. Indeed, if while in school, I had been offered the opportunity to participate in other strands in physical education, I do not think I would have embraced them. It was this interest in sport that prompted my entry into a PETE programme.

Expectations of the PETE programme were different to what I envisioned them to be. Firstly, I did not expect the variety of practical activities that were covered as these were not akin to my secondary school physical education experience or my own personal sporting interests. Secondly, I did not expect the theoretical aspects of the PETE programme and, as a result, did not particularly engage with them during the PETE programme. I deemed this aspect of the PETE programme largely irrelevant. I viewed physical education and teaching physical education in physical terms only, namely being able to teach and do the activities but with little consideration for the theoretical underpinnings to undertaking such tasks. Thirdly, because of the content of my physical education curriculum in school, and considering my background, I was always able to do the activities. I would have been oblivious to other people’s difficulties, lack of motivation or lack of interest in physical education. The necessity for being able to teach pupils who had this disposition towards physical education was different to what I envisioned it to be and was particularly highlighted in the teaching practice elements of the PETE programme.

3.2.2.1 Thoughts on the PETE Programme

The strengths of the PETE programme were many and ranging. Firstly, from a preparation point of view, schemes of work, lesson plans and, in general, organising a class was very well covered. Secondly, teaching practice was a huge strength as it
enabled me to understand what real teaching is like and allowed me to accumulate and apply a plethora of teaching skills and strategies. Thirdly, the PETE programme would have been successful in changing my views with regards to physical education. This is particularly in light of the curriculum, with the PETE programme effective in heightening awareness of the different strands within the JCPE. However, despite these strengths, I would have been consistently critical of the PETE programme I undertook as a student and, oftentimes, found myself frustrated with the PETE programme. Firstly, I questioned the relevance of the theoretical aspects covered to teaching in schools. Secondly, I questioned the extent to which content knowledge was appropriately covered within the PETE programme, as I would not, even now, feel comfortable in teaching many strands of the JCPE curriculum. Thirdly, I would have felt that staff faculty were out of touch with the challenges and difficulties faced in schools, and questioned the realism of the teaching approaches and methods advocated in the PETE programme. As for areas that I would have considered the PETE programme could improve upon, these include more awareness of the realities that are present in schools, especially in areas such as behaviour management and discipline. There is also a necessity on PETE to provide a more realistic environment in which prospective teachers practice their teaching skills with regards to pupils, facilities and equipment. In essence, I think the PETE programme needs to be more closely aligned to the reality of teaching in schools. When this was in evidence, most notably in any teaching practice placements, I found PETE invaluable in learning how to teach.

3.2.2.2 Position in relation to study

It is important at this stage to acknowledge that I was a member of the 2009 graduating cohort from which the sample of beginning teachers for this study were chosen. This position has both advantages and disadvantages. As an advantage, it may have allowed me to elicit more explicit information from this cohort than may not otherwise be attained as they knew, trusted and felt more comfortable in providing this information to me. A disadvantage is that I may have aligned, although unintentionally, my opinions more forcefully with theirs, whether these were positive or negative comments with regards to the PETE programme. My position in relation to this study is to interpret the information provided. I have, in so much as is possible, accurately portrayed and interpreted the information to give the most truthful
representation of the data provided. Overall, I have made every attempt to remove my opinions from the process but, as outlined above with the interpretive paradigm, it is impossible to completely alleviate this concern. This highlights the necessity of triangulating data.

3.2.3 Triangulation
The intention in triangulating data is that a more accurate perspective is gleaned by looking at things from more than one perspective, and using research designs that involve more than one technique of data collection (McNeill, 1990). In the interpretive paradigm researchers often employ more than one data collection technique as it necessitates observation from different angles, with the result that findings or conclusions are likely to be more accurate and convincing if based on several information sources (Grix, 2004; Curtner-Smith, 2003; Yin, 1994). The primary data collection technique within the interpretive paradigm is that of qualitative data (Schempp and Choi, 1994) as is the case in my study with a qualitative research framework guiding the collection and analysis of data.

Qualitative researchers,

“Tend to work in an ‚interpretivist’ position, using methods of data generation which are flexible and sensitive to the social context in which the data are produced”

(Grix, 2004, pg. 120).

Qualitative research usually involves an “in-depth investigation of knowledge through participant observation, employing the interviewing technique … or other documentary analyses” (Ragin, 1994, pg. 91). I used a two-pronged framework by conducting formal interviews and requesting teachers to maintain a monthly prompt sheet.

3.3 METHODOLOGY
The methodology of this study included three steps. Firstly, it was required to consider the ethical considerations essential to the work. Secondly, participants who were in a position to address and analyse the research questions which formed the core of this study were to be identified. Thirdly, data had to be formulated and collected and the timeline for data collection had to be decided upon.
3.3.1 Ethical considerations
As the primary investigator, close consideration had to be paid to the ethical conduct of this work, acknowledging that relevant persons and authorities have to be consulted and the work must be permitted and accepted. Ethical clearance was gained (EHSREC 09/100) and beginning and experienced teachers’ information letters, informing the participants about the research (Appendix A), accompanied by consent forms (Appendix B), were disseminated. To participate in the study consent forms had to be signed. A further aspect to be considered was the participant’s right to privacy, achieved by using pseudonyms at all times and, at no stage, divulging information or names to other participants within the study.

3.3.3 Participant Selection
A sample of beginning teachers (BTs) entering their first year of teaching was sourced from the PETE programme graduating cohort of 2009. These were contemporaries with whom I completed the programme. Six BTs, five female and one male, agreed to participate in the research after initial contact with each was made by the researcher. The six BTs were interviewed in October 2009 with respect to their conceptions of the PETE programme, valued knowledge and anticipated career trajectories. The same cohort of BTs maintained a monthly prompt sheet that recorded what they know and were able to do in their job, as well as identify areas they were lacking to allow them to teach effectively. They were prompted to note the maintenance of, or any changes to, their working conditions and how they impacted on their teaching. A mid-year interview with three of the beginning teacher cohort was conducted in March 2010 in order to verify commonalities and differences of teaching experiences that were being reported and to highlight areas that required further investigation during final interviews. The beginning teacher cohort were interviewed again at the end of their first year of teaching in May 2010 with respect to the articulation of the relationship between the PETE programme and teaching school physical education, and plans for the future.

The experienced teacher cohort develops the work of MacPhail, Tannehill and O’Sullivan (2006) who reported on interviewing a sample of seven of the 2003 graduating cohort as they completed their final year of the PETE programme and again after their first year of teaching in May 2004. From the same cohort, six
experienced teachers (ETs) who have been teaching for six years were contacted and interviewed in November 2009 with respect to their teaching background, relationship between the PETE programme content and teaching school physical education, and plans for the future. The same cohort of ETs maintained an identical prompt sheet to that of the beginning teacher cohort. The experienced teacher cohorts were interviewed at the end of their seventh year of teaching in May 2010. Figure 1 provides a timeline that denotes data collection points for BTs and ETs.
Figure 1. Timeline For Data Collection for Beginning Teachers and Experienced Teachers

Oct

3rd – 29th: Beginning Teacher Interview 1

Nov

6th – 16th: Beginning Teacher Prompt Sheet 1

Dec

10th – 22nd: Beginning Teacher Prompt Sheet 2

Jan

17th – 25th: Experienced Teacher Interview 1

Feb

31st Jan – 19th Feb: Beginning Teacher Prompt Sheet 3

Mar

26th Feb – 17th Mar: Beginning Teacher Interview 2

Apr

22nd Mar – 13th Apr: Beginning Teacher Prompt Sheet 4

May

Beginning Teacher Prompt Sheet 5

June

2nd – 8th: Beginning Teacher Interview 3

28 Feb – 13th Mar: Experienced Teacher Prompt Sheet 2

Experienced Teacher Prompt Sheet 3

Experienced Teacher Prompt Sheet 4

3rd – 10th: Experienced Teacher Interview 2
3.4 INTERVIEWS

An interview is a social interaction between two people, one of whom asks questions to elicit information from the other (Jones, 1996). A face-to-face interview enables “a ‘special insight’ into subjectivity, voice and lived experience” (Atkinson and Silverman, 1997, p. 29). From the outset, my interviews with all participants were semi-structured. Starting with a number of pre-requisite questions, the interview then allowed for flexibility in pursuing unexpected lines of enquiry. This type of interview can also be referred to as a qualitative interview, with open-ended questions (Jones, 1996) providing considerable freedom to the respondent in determining the amount and kind of information to give (Cash, 1991; Stewart and Cash, 1991). The participants were encouraged to discuss at length the topics raised by the researcher, and the researcher adapted questions in accordance to teachers’ responses. The open-ended qualitative line of enquiry occurred in all of the interviews and served to embellish the information obtained from each of the teachers. This provides a more in-depth understanding by contextualizing information to help explain particular findings (Gaskell, 2003). In striving towards conducting effective interviews, it was necessary to firstly formulate relevant interview protocols.

3.4.1 Interview Protocol

The interview protocol serves to give some structure to the interaction between researcher and participants (Rapley, 2004). For the first set of interviews with the beginning and experienced teachers two interview protocols were used, one for the BTs and a separate one for ETs (Appendix C and Appendix D respectively). Due to the varying experiences of both cohorts and in order to elicit the necessary and required information from each of the participants to effectively address the research questions, separate interview protocols were deemed necessary. Templates for both the beginning and experienced interview protocols had already been formulated for use in a previous study. It was decided that these protocols captured the aims and objectives of the research and, as a result, were implemented in this particular study. The mid-year interview protocol for the BTs (Appendix E) was formulated after careful analysis of the prompt sheet responses that each of the three particular BTs had provided. Based on this analysis, questions were formulated to probe how certain situations impinged on their work, how they dealt with these situations, whether they felt they could overcome these situations and the effect these situations had on their
teaching. Both teacher cohorts participated in the final interview. Again, there were separate protocols for the two different cohorts (Appendix F and Appendix G). On analysis of the start-of-year interview, the continuous prompt sheets and, in the case of the BTs the mid-year interview, interview protocols for both final interviews were formulated to explore and address issues further, as well as to develop an understanding of other issues that required clarification.

3.4.2 Interview Structure

The beginning teacher interviews took place in the university building in which they had spent most of their time as undergraduate PETE students. The experienced teachers were each interviewed in the school in which they were teaching.

The interviews began with general questions before moving on to more specific ones. The interview protocol was used as a guide for both the researcher and participants to help focus on the topics of interest and it did not matter if the expected sequence of topics were followed as long as each was addressed. A problem with interviews is getting participants to give full, detailed responses (Jones, 1996) and at some stage during each of the interviews, the need to probe for an answer was required. As much as possible, non-leading questions and probes were asked, acknowledging the necessity to prevent suggesting the nature of the additional information and putting words in the participants’ mouths (Jones, 1996). On following up on different knowledge, comprehension, experience and interests of teachers, probes and questions that were particular to each teacher’s teaching context were asked. Restraint must be exercised in claiming generalisations with an acknowledgement that a lack of emphasis portrayed by some teachers on particular issues is due to the fact that the conversation with all teachers did not necessarily steer in an identical direction.

Furthermore, it is important to state that there appears to be a reliance, particularly for ETs, on the interview data in favour of prompt sheets. There appears to be a greater reliance on interview data for ETs because the interview data from the ETs was much more informative than the prompt sheet data obtained. Interviews allowed for obtaining more detailed responses and, because of this, interview data is richer and more detailed than that obtained through the prompt sheets. There is a greater spread of data from interviews and prompt sheets for BTs.
All interviews were audio-recorded and subsequently typed to produce verbatim text as soon after the interview as possible. Interviews were returned to participants to ensure data was accurate and were then analysed.

3.4.3 Preliminary Data Analysis
At each data collection point, the text and data was checked and tracked. A preliminary data analysis occurred, prior to conducting the first interview, as engaging with the research questions and relevant literature resulted in forming initial ideas on what the data was likely to contain. These initial ideas constituted the beginning of an analytic system for making sense of interview data. Analysis of the interview data was achieved through thematic analysis.

3.4.4 Thematic Analysis
In my preliminary data analysis, all the data collected from the interviews was included. There are two ways of reducing data into themes – block and file or conceptual mapping. The block and file approach was the preferred method, as large pieces of data remain intact (Grbich, 2007). In order to identify themes and concepts, systematic and rigorous consideration of text-based data is required and coding was the most suitable way to analyse this text-based data.

One interview transcript from a particular cohort was selected and it was searched through carefully. Text within the transcript was highlighted, marking every quotation that hinted a particular theme. This step is essentially a coding / tagging / labelling process in identifying similar text units where repeated themes throughout the interview transcripts emerged. When a new theme was discovered in a different interview, each of the other interview transcripts were re-analysed for this particular theme. This is the backwards and forwards method of code analysis (Silverman, 2000) and results in codes being constantly refined. It was an iterative process, with several revisions of code labelling. A header of themes was then created. Text was cut and paste under these headings, referred to as linking, bringing units of the same category together. The aim of this whole process was a quest for common content themes achieved through labelling and subsequent retrieval of similarly coded segments. As the interpretation developed, the raw material was referred back to on numerous occasions to ensure nothing of significance was omitted. In reporting this
data, the themes were placed under particular headings in line with the research questions. Themes and concepts that are identified and coded in one data source are compared and contrasted with similar material in other sources and this cross-reference approach formed the basis of my discussion topics.

Analysing interview data is always inextricably linked to specific theoretical interests and the data obtained is only one possible version (Rapley, 2004). A study only using interviews to understand peoples lived and situated practices is problematic as the interview is not generally considered a complete research method by itself (Rapley, 2004; Jones, 1996). Using interviews as the sole method of a study is not recommended and other methods of enquiry should be applied in conjunction with them as examining the same phenomena from different angles will ensure a more balanced approach and is likely to shed more light on it (Grix, 2004). Prompt sheets were used to gain a greater insight into the issues facing beginning and experienced teachers, hoping to encourage teachers to note incidents that happened at various points throughout the school year rather than relying solely on interviews to reflect on teaching experiences.

3.5 PROMPT SHEETS
Prompt sheets are a form of reflective writing which,

“Focus on the writer’s learning itself and attempts to identify the significance and meaning of a given learning experience, primarily for the writer”

(Fink, 2003, pg. 93).

Self-reflection skills can be improved and strengthened through the use of specific prompts and cues as they can facilitate the learning process for the participants (Kathpalia and Heah, 2008). Prompt sheets were used for four reasons in my particular study. Firstly, prompts were designed to encourage reflection as, through the use of prompts, greater reflection occurs by increasing knowledge integration and understanding (Lind, 2007; Haman, 2002). Secondly, prompts are flexible to elicit qualitatively diverse responses (Thurlow-Long and Stuart, 2004). Thirdly, prompts enabled both the participants and researcher to link ideas and evaluate views and fourthly, prompts that elicit self-explanations lead to improved understandings (Davis, 2001). The rationale for using the particular prompts chosen was to elicit incidents of
meaningful experiences and to attempt to make sense of such experiences (Judd, 2009).

After careful analysis of the start-of-year interview with both the beginning and experienced teacher interviews, prompt sheets (Appendix H) were formulated. The idea of the prompt sheet was for both the beginning and experienced teacher cohorts to document their working conditions and how they felt these conditions either supported or constrained their work within their particular school context. Prompt sheet headings were informed by reading the literature and data from initial interviews, conscious that insights acquired from qualitative interviews may improve the quality of other research designs (Gaskell, 2003). The nature of questions that the prompt sheets contained resulted in working conditions being more commonly reported through the prompt sheets than the interviews.

Initially the prompt sheets were to be tendered by the teachers fortnightly. However, the majority of teachers felt this was too much of a workload indicating that, due to other work pressure, they would have insufficient time to complete the prompt sheets. As a result, monthly submissions were agreed. Courtesy of an email, each of the teachers was sent a copy of the prompt sheet a week prior to its submission date. The completed prompt sheets, from both cohorts, were returned by email as attachments. It was envisaged that the prompt sheets would be completed and returned by the end of each month. Due to a plethora of reasons ranging from busy work-loads, correcting exams and school holidays, oftentimes submission of the completed prompt sheets were late. Overall, five prompt sheets were completed by each of the beginning teacher cohort, with four completed by each of the experienced teachers. These prompt sheets proved to be vital units of analysis.

3.5.1 Thematic Analysis
Coding was used to analyse the prompt sheets, with data reduced through a block and file approach. As with interviews, a coding / tagging / labelling process was used in identifying similar text units, followed by a linking and retrieval of similarly coded segments. These were arranged under particular themes and the data was analysed under these themes in light of the research questions. New themes that emerged
necessitated further consideration and analysis of previously coded data. The majority of themes from the prompt sheets had already emerged from the interviews.

3.6 CONCLUSION
Using the interpretive paradigm, incorporating a qualitative framework as the research design, a combination of research techniques was incorporated. These included interviews and monthly prompt sheets. The analysis for both research techniques was similar, as it involved coding and sorting these codes into themes. These themes are analyzed and discussed in the next two chapters.

It was decided to combine both the interview data and the prompt sheet data, serving to reinforce points made in the interview with the prompt sheets and visa-versa and to present this data and related critical interpretation in two separate results chapters, the beginning teacher cohort (Chapter 4) and the experienced teacher cohort (Chapter 5).
Chapter Four
Beginning Teachers: PETE Programme and the Reality of Teaching in Schools

4.1 INTRODUCTION
Six beginning teachers (BTs), five female and one male, who graduated from the PETE programme in 2009, were identified and participated in the research as they undertook their first year of teaching. Data was collected from initial interviews in October and November 2009, prompt sheets throughout the course of the school year 2009-2010, a follow-up interview in March 2010 and an end of year interview in June 2010. Data collection was informed and guided by the interest in addressing the following research questions,

How do beginning physical education teachers view the occupational utility of knowledge acquired during the PETE programme?

To what extent are changing perceptions of physical education attributed to experiences and opportunities of beginning physical education teachers?

What working conditions impact physical education teachers’ (potential) career decisions?

The demographics of the school within which the BTs worked in are outlined in Appendix I.

In reporting data, direct quotes were used to enhance the data obtained and where data is reported from more than one data collection point in time (…) denotes the break. Interviews were more prevalent when discussing PETE programme experiences and reflections, with prompt sheets more common when discussing working conditions. Due to the nature of the research questions posed, responses may tend to be (constructively) critical in nature.
In this chapter the results obtained are outlined and the significance of the findings are discussed. Results are conceptualised around Shulman's (1987) seven knowledge bases of (1) content / subject matter knowledge, (2) general pedagogic knowledge, (3) curriculum knowledge, (4) pedagogical content knowledge, (5) knowledge of learners and their characteristics, (6) knowledge of educational contexts, and (7) knowledge of educational ends, purpose, value and philosophical and historical influences. Contextualising knowledge is difficult because knowledge in teaching means different things to different people (Kay, 2004). The issue of a knowledge base in PETE programmes is divisive (O'Sullivan, 2003) as there is disagreement on the amount and type of knowledge a teacher ought to have and equally whether teacher preparation programmes adequately address that knowledge (Darling-Hammond, 1996). This is the crux of the analysis of the BTs' insights with regards to their occupational utility of knowledge, their perceptions of teaching physical education and the preparedness for the working conditions they encountered when working in schools.

4.2 CONTENT / SUBJECT MATTER KNOWLEDGE

Content knowledge is the fundamental assumptions, definitions, concepts and procedures that constitute the ideas that teachers need to learn (Tatto et al., 2008). The content / subject matter knowledge of the PETE programme received particular attention from the BTs. While one type of knowledge should not be prioritised over another, Hayes et al. (2003) found the focus for physical education teachers is content knowledge, backed up by these BTs who cited the the applied practical studies (APS) in the PETE programme as the most beneficial in developing content knowledge,

“When I look back on our course, I always look to the practical stuff because when you go out to the school that is what you need to know. You need to know exactly how you are going to teach something. You need to know a certain amount of background to it and why you do it but you also need to know how to do it to provide the best learning experience for the children”

(Claire, Interview, 07/06/2010).

BTs acknowledged that it is difficult to address the content knowledge that every prospective teacher needs because there would be different areas for each person depending on their own interests and sporting areas. Some BTs were complimentary
of the content knowledge covered in the PETE programme and felt prepared for the majority of the tasks expected of them,

“If the teacher said to me, ‘Ok you are doing basketball today,’ I would have no problem delivering a class. That is something we should be proud of and that reflects the course we covered (...) I was confident going in teaching and I think the physical education programme delivered on that point”

(Jean, Interview, 30/10/09; Interview, 08/06/2010).

Other teachers were more critical, pointing to the fact they do not feel prepared from a content knowledge perspective,

“We are not only unprepared, but unqualified to teach some of the strands that were on the JCPE curriculum ... I feel nervous teaching physical education with two other male physical education teachers”

(Elaine, Interview, 31/10/09).

Some practical activities were positively received and the BTs were pleased, in general, with the variety of activities covered in the PETE programme,

“It is good the way we are able to offer things like gymnastics, outdoor adventure and even aquatics and it would be great if we could even do more things ... I know there is a limit but I would like to be able to offer what pupils are interested in these days – even if you take things like hip-hop, taekwondo, kick-boxing – if we just had a little bit more to offer ... even if there was a relationship with the PETE programme to take these as extra courses or to link with coaching courses. We need more arrows in our bow”

(John, Interview, 03/06/2010).

The content knowledge area that received the greatest level of criticism was that of games. The lack of emphasis in games in the PETE programme is disparate to the reality of teaching, as games are the core constituent of many Irish physical education programmes (Irish Sports Council, 2005). A significant issue with the games strand in the PETE programme was insufficient time and, by trying to cover so many games in a short space of time, BTs felt they only got a sample of each. A second issue with games was the level of progressions, with BTs feeling that games could be done in better detail with better progressions in moving from a basic level to a mid level to a high level,

“What we did in PETE was too basic compared to what you are teaching in secondary schools. What we did was how to dribble a ball, perfect for primary school but in
secondary school physical education ... you have to step it up. The content we covered in college would be perfect for primary school but the standard was not high enough for physical education classes”

(Mary, Interview, 08/06/2010).

Content knowledge in the area of dance also received significant attention with BTs acknowledging that they did not feel fully competent, leading some BTs to abandon teaching it, “With dance, I do not know what to do and it is very difficult to cater for both boys and girls and suiting their interests and needs. I would have no interest in teaching it” (Sinead, Interview, 3/10/09). The reason for the BTs’ hesitancy in teaching dance was that firstly, they believed the creative dance covered in the PETE programme was not conducive to teaching it in post-primary schools and secondly believing that pupils, especially boys, would not respond in a positive manner to it.

In improving the APS, a three-fold approach was suggested, “[There should be] ... a lot more practice with a focus on skills, more time and detail provided in the different strands and more emphasis placed on how we can modify activities” (John, Interview, 29/10/09). There was support that the programme should provide “necessary skills, necessary knowledge and necessary ways to impart the knowledge” (Claire, Interview, 3/10/09).

Overall, there was a general consensus that BTs believed they lacked the content knowledge to effectively teach in schools,

“Our degree allows us to be teachers but it does not actually give us the tools as to how to be a good physical education teacher. At the end of the day pupils have to have fun and learn at the same time. We were not given the tools or the knowledge of how to do that ... I feel the knowledge was not given to me”

(Elaine, Interview, 31/10/09).

This was reiterated on two occasions by Sinead;

“I feel that I do not have enough content knowledge on the different strands and more time could have been dedicated to broadening my content knowledge in some areas ... The content knowledge from college is insufficient and way more is needed (...) The content knowledge I had was poor and ... I feel I do not have a great content knowledge. I think if the course had been effective enough, I would have been more confident”

(Interview, 3/10/2009; Interview, 02/06/2010).
Only one BT conveyed her belief that the depth of content knowledge acquired was adequate in the PETE programme, “I have a depth of knowledge within content areas ... we are well-schooled from that point of view” (Jean, Interview, 30/10/09). A lack of depth of content knowledge was a common recurring theme amongst BTs, “We just skimmed the surface. If you want to do, say for example, a four or five week module in a certain sport or activity, have you got the knowledge and the confidence to deliver it? I am not as skilled as I should be” (John, Interview, 29/10/09). Two potential suggestions were voiced by BTs to enhance their content knowledge. Firstly, BTs felt a pre-requisite to practical modules should be participation in coaching courses in all strands of the JCPE curriculum. Secondly, there is a need to increase lecturer’s confidence in teaching particular areas of the curriculum, with the suggestion that bringing in experts of a particular field should become a more common practice.

4.3 GENERAL PEDAGOGICAL KNOWLEDGE

General pedagogical knowledge is the acquisition of classroom practice knowledge (Shulman, 1986). Shulman (1987) states that pedagogical reasoning arises from a firm base of knowledge. The majority of the BTs questioned the extent to which the PETE programme achieved its pedagogical-orientated focus believing it was dependent on the module, “I did not think there was too much of the pedagogy. It depended on the different strands and ... on whoever was giving the lectures” (Mary, Interview, 29/10/09), reinforced by a peer;

“The stuff that I found most beneficial were the ones that were taught to us from a low level so you saw exactly how to teach a skill ... when we were coached the activity. You get taught the best way or a variation of the best way to teach it. I do not think the classes in college were very relevant that made us do everything immediately because that means I am using only my own background – what I have learned in school or in coaching or my personal opinion – rather than what is the best way to do it. It is all well and good in being pro-active and using your initiative but you should be given ideas, strategies and methods that work. You saw what activities would work, how to implement them and what the best way to teach them was. Modules where you could recall the lead-up activities were really good because you could really break down a skill. You should not just be thrown in and immediately have to do something on your own. That is literally creating bad habits and you are only taking knowledge from yourself”

(Claire, Interview, 07/06/2010).
With this prevalent in many modules, lecturers received criticism,

“Some of the time in the PETE programme, the people who were teaching the strands were not very confident at them so how are we supposed to effectively learn when the people who were teaching them to us were not even confident or comfortable in them?”

(Sinead, Interview, 02/06/2010).

A further comment was particularly revealing,

“The pedagogical focus was more of your own ability ... if you are able to use your own pedagogical abilities, you will be fine but ... the course did not really teach those methods very well. I think it was more down to our own ability... If you are a good teacher, you will be a good teacher regardless of the modules we studied. A lot of it is based on the individual ability of the physical education teacher regardless of what training we received”

(Elaine, Interview, 31/10/09).

This was echoed with another BT stating that “in some ways I think I might have been as well able to teach physical education before I started the course when I think of the modules we studied” (Sinead, Interview, 3/10/09). One area in which the BTs felt their pedagogical knowledge improved and increased was through participation in teaching practice placements.

4.3.1 Teaching Practice Placements

Teaching practice placement in schools was “one of the biggest strengths of the course” (Jean, Interview, 30/10/09). Indeed, “the two teaching practices are of immense importance and ... stand out from four years because they were the biggest learning environments” (John, Interview, 29/10/09). One teacher made an interesting comment, “I probably learned more out on teaching practice and on this first few weeks teaching than two or three years of college have taught me” (Mary, Interview, 29/10/09). This backs previous research (Rosaen and Florio-Ruane, 2008; Rikard and Knight, 1997; O'Sullivan, 1990) that little is learned from university based theoretical or academic courses but a great deal is learned from field experiences, with PSTs differentiating field experiences as one activity and university courses another, usually with the result that PSTs discount practices learned in their teacher preparation programme. Indeed, my findings confirm that teachers view teaching practice placements and field experiences as the most beneficial component of their PETE programme, providing PSTs with their greatest learning (Behets and Vergauwen, 2006).
Only one BT viewed teaching practice in a negative light, “I felt teaching practice was a false reality. You went in and usually the physical education teacher was helping you. When you are on teaching practice, there were people looking out for you. That is not the case for me now” (Claire, Interview, 3/10/09). This would seem to illuminate some of the disadvantages of teaching practice, namely that oftentimes school choice is based on convenience, not on the quality of learning experiences that will be offered (Behets and Vergauwen, 2006) resulting in teaching practice failing to develop knowledge that guides more effective teaching (You and McCullick, 2001; O’Sullivan and Tsangaridou, 1992).

Overall, however BTs were happy with the structure and design of teaching practice and were in favour of including more teaching practice placements, “if you are constantly in college and if you are constantly not putting into practice what you are learning it is difficult to take much from it” (John, Interview, 29/10/09). This is in line with Curtner-Smith’s (2001) research which indicates that unless teachers apply on-campus theoretical frameworks, knowledge obtained remains distant and of little value in becoming a teacher, with coursework not directly related to teaching viewed as not useful (Hayes et al., 2003).

4.4 CURRICULUM KNOWLEDGE

Curriculum knowledge is knowledge that incorporates materials and programmes which act as ‘tools of the trade’ for teachers (Hayes et al., 2009). Johnson and Kardos (2008) and Cohen and Ball (1996) hypothesise that curriculum resources are central to teachers’ day to day work and less than half of teachers feel they have ‘plenty’ of access to curriculum and materials. The general consensus is that teachers lack basic supplies, resulting in a dearth of instructional resources to conduct day-to-day classes (Moulthrop et al., 2005). Appropriate curricular resources – ranging from resources, planning lessons and schemes of work with appropriate progressions, employing assessment techniques in physical education, the availability of developmentally appropriate curriculum programmes and the equipment and facility provision – had an impact on BTs’ ability to implement a proper and wide-ranging physical education programme. Teachers want rich and detailed curriculum materials with the opportunity to implement it in a flexible manner with a need for physical education
teachers to be provided with comprehensive curriculum and resource materials (Johnson and Kardos, 2008).

4.4.1 Resources
Feiman-Nemser (2003) claims that an obstacle to teaching aspirations are a lack of resources and this emerged for these participating BTs as an issue from the PETE programme, suggesting that assessment has the potential to address the lack of resources problem. Resource packs were beneficial when teaching with handbooks outlining rules and associated skills, with teaching practice files and DVDs of performances also recognised as valuable. BTs felt they did not exit the PETE programme with sufficient resources, “It is disappointing that you finish four good years of physical education and resource-wise we are still lacking” (Jean, Interview, 30/10/09). If these teachers had their time back in the PETE programme again, they would have taken a different approach and acknowledged a certain degree of personal responsibility resides with them in developing resources for teaching,

“I should have written down the activities we did when we were doing them at the time because there was so much stuff we did. I wish I had done that because now I would have fantastic ideas”

(Elaine, Interview, 02/06/2010).

One aspect that these BTs felt they had sufficient curriculum knowledge was in the area of planning units or lessons in physical education.

4.4.2 Planning Lessons and Schemes of Work
There is conflicting research as regards teachers’ preparedness and abilities to plan lessons and schemes of work. Hill and Brodin (2004) suggest that BTs experience few difficulties in this area but Williams and Williamson (1995) found that BTs have difficulties in accommodating pupils’ differences through planning and teaching developmentally appropriate lessons, individualising the curriculum to match class activities to pupil competences and dealing appropriately with special needs pupils. From these BTs, the former appeared to be the case, reporting that lesson planning was appropriately covered in their PETE programme and has continued in their teaching, although BTs admitted to adopting a more free-flowing approach to lesson planning and teaching than that advocated during teaching practice placements in the PETE programme,
“When I was on teaching practice, I would be constantly referring back to the lesson plan but in the real world you go with the flow. I change things as I go along if it needs to be but ... we should be encouraged to go with the lesson. If kids are enjoying it, spread it out and if they are not, just abandon and move on” (Sinead, Interview, 02/06/2010) and, "A lesson plan is basically a plan that you know what you are going to do but it does not have to be a minute-by-minute, blow-by-blow account. I certainly could not walk into a class not knowing what I was going to do. They would not be as detailed as teaching practice but they would be a general plan on the activity that I was going to be implementing”

(Claire, Interview, 07/06/2010).

BTs preferred a more detailed scheme of work as it provided a goal for both the teachers and pupils to aim towards, “This term we did basketball but it was up to me to decide what I was going to do in each class – passing, dribbling, game work or attacking and defending. I would have liked more specific guidelines because I could monitor the pupils’ progress towards that and it would mean that I have something to aim at”

(Mary, Interview, 08/06/2010).

While the BTs were prepared for planning units and lessons, many felt they had insufficient curriculum knowledge in introducing and implementing assessments to measure or judge pupils’ learning in physical education.

4.4.3 Employing Assessment Techniques in Physical Education

Only one BT conveyed a familiarity with assessment for learning (AfL), “I would do the assessment wheels. They would be a major part of physical education. When each student comes in, they get a folder. At the start of the year, every year, we do a fitness test with them and we would do things like flexibility, a four-minute run, push-ups and reaction time, things like that. They have the assessment wheel as well so each kid would put that into their folder. At the beginning of each strand, we would show the assessment wheel and all their little pointers that we want to work with them on. They would fill in where they thought they were from one to four and then after the cycle was finished, on the back of the page, we do the exact same assessment wheel and they fill it in. All the folders are kept in a filing cabinet for the entire six year. After that pupils can take them with them or we shred them ourselves”

(Jean, Interview, 08/06/2010).
Sinead introduced AfL procedures but they were not as prominent. The remainder of the BTs used teacher-pupil methods, focussing on involvement, participation and improvement. This supports previous research (Stroot and Whipple, 2003) that there is little evaluation occurring in physical education and few demands placed on pupil learning and pupil academic achievement, with the physical education teachers assessing pupils based on behaviour instead of learning. This has serious implications for the subject of physical education as physical education teachers are more likely to allow their lessons become socially oriented periods and high standards in physical education and strong support for teachers and programmes cannot happen without evaluation (Siedentop, 1991).

While each of these aspects – resources, lesson planning and assessments – indicate the degree of curriculum knowledge the BTs possessed, the BTs also examined their curriculum knowledge with regards to the content of the curriculum programmes and materials available to them.

4.4.4 Availability of Appropriate Curriculum Programmes
Appropriate curricular resources had an impact on BTs‘ ability to implement a proper and wide-ranging physical education programme. The BTs were, in general, pleased with the level of curricular support in implementing the Junior Certificate Physical Education (JCPE). The JCPE curriculum received widespread praise. All BTs acknowledged to implementing it in some form or another and were primarily complimentary to the PETE programme for exposing their familiarity to the curriculum. The necessity of a broad and balanced curriculum was emphasised in order to retain pupil interest in physical education. Applying the curriculum to pupils’ interest and abilities was a priority,

“You have to tailor your physical education lessons to their interests and that type of thing ... you have to have that adaptability ... to bring it down to its simplest forms so the weaker student is as capable as the strongest student”

(Jean, Interview, 08/06/2010).
To cater for pupils‘ interests, BTs taught alternative activities such as going to the gym, dance routines in Health Related Activity (HRA), aerobics, boxercise, pilates and kickboxing so that pupils understand there are different ways and avenues to participating in activity besides playing games. The overall emphasis was “physical
education for lifelong … it was not just physical education for six years … It is the hope of sparking something inside them that they might want to continue in later life” (Jean, Interview, 08/06/2010).

There were areas of study of the curriculum that were not covered in the BTs’ teaching, with dance and aquatics highlighted most frequently. The reasons for not teaching dance were outlined previously, with aquatics not being offered due to inappropriate facilities. Most BTs admitted that games was the dominant strand in schools and this focus made it difficult to interest pupils in other areas of the curriculum. A further issue in relation to the curriculum was the time-frame for each area of study with BTs recognising that the proposed six week duration was too long, favouring three to four week blocks. Furthermore, when BTs did not have any influence over the physical education curriculum, it caused frustration,

“The decision to do the strands were not mine. The decision was the other physical education teacher’s. He basically decided what we were doing. It was not a choice for me to teach or not to teach anything. My role in that physical education was to basically physically be there because he had over the quota numbers which meant he needed another teacher to be with him so the decision was always his”

(Elaine, Interview, 02/06/2010).

In teaching physical education in schools, BTs have attempted to follow the JCPE guidelines. This has been aided by a positive culture for physical education within some schools, achieved by the current or previous physical education teacher developing a broad, balanced and varied curriculum,

“My school are part of the JCPE implementation so they are good with going across the different areas which is great because when you walk into the classroom and say we are doing gymnastics, the pupils do not bat an eyelid”

(Jean, Interview, 30/10/2009).

Others are not so lucky in teaching the curriculum, with previous and current teachers providing a limited curriculum, to such an extent that BTs have faced resistance in trying to implement a more varied curriculum, especially amongst the senior classes,

“I can tell with first years and second years I can influence them on the way I teach and I can bring my own focus and view of what physical education should be to them. But for the older years, the structure of physical education has already been engrained in their
minds and they think it is only throwing in a ball ... I do not think it is possible to change the older years”

(Claire, Interview, 3/10/09).

John reported that organising and setting up the curriculum was challenging,

“I had to organise my curriculum plans for each year group. I had to put a transition physical education programme in place. I managed to set up swimming lessons, trips to the activity centre, first aid and coaching courses. I managed to secure funding for a kickboxing programme which will be given by a qualified instructor ... when it comes to planning classes the assumption is there that I am qualified now so am not in need of any support with regard to planning activities”

(Prompt Sheet 1, 6/11/2009).

While there was minimal criticism of the JCPE curriculum and its structure, BTs were not so supportive of the current national provision of the senior cycle physical education curriculum. The BTs displayed a lack of familiarity with the senior cycle, with the majority unaware that there was even a senior cycle curriculum in operation. The lack of a viable syllabus, curriculum or guide led to difficulties in teaching senior cycle physical education, with the lack of such a curriculum a prominent issue that needs to be addressed. There were issues in implementing the curricula, particularly in relation to facilities and equipment.

4.4.5 Equipment and Facility Provision in Implementing Curricula

Teaching of physical education occurs in gyms, fields or school yards and the physical structure of these ‘classrooms’ creates several problems exclusive to physical education as physical education teachers have to improvise when facilities and equipment are not available and outdoor working conditions are subject to weather conditions (Fejgin et al., 1995).

Two teachers cited difficulties in their environs and, for John, facilities have had a detrimental effect on his ability to teach physical education,

“A new hall is badly needed. Often the floor is very slippery as the walls are damp. There is no heating in the hall and no water since Christmas (...) The year was spent trying to overcome that although the three tarmac basketball courts are a great advantage (...) I have had trouble with the hall. It is not up to standard. I did not have use of it for two weeks or every so often. It is not a drastic situation because if I wanted to do badminton
or dodge ball or volleyball or gymnastics I was able to do it but hopefully it will be fixed for next year because it is needed if I want to implement my classes at all or as I wish”

(John, Prompt Sheet 1, 6/11/2009; Prompt Sheet 3, 11/02/09; Interview, 03/06/2010).

Jean highlighted the inconsistency between the facilities for physical education in comparison to other subjects, something that she felt devalued the subject,

“I know so many of my peers are out teaching in tiny halls ... I know you can always adapt your class for these situations but why should we have to adapt a class? In every subject there are thirty tables, thirty chairs in front of you, a black/white board and projectors available. Why don’t we have our basics? It is just not good enough”

(Interview, 30/10/09).

These findings coincide with MacPhail et al. (2005) conclusion that the issue of facilities appears to be a prominent one in an Irish context.

Johnson and Kardos (2008) surmise that a surprising number of schools are inadequately equipped and where equipment provision is insufficient, it could have a detrimental effect on the physical education curriculum within a school (MacPhail et al., 2005). Equipment did not emerge as an issue for the majority of BTs with many admitting there is a good supply of equipment for physical education, corroborating MacPhail et al. (2005) findings. Indeed, when BTs have been involved in ordering equipment for the school and the physical education department, it is a responsibility that made them feel a sense of belonging to their school. John elaborated,

“When I arrived in the first week of school, I was surprised by the lack of physical education equipment. There were no football or soccer balls in the storage area (...) I was informed last week that I had a budget of €150 to spend on equipment. Thankfully I was able to secure badminton racquets at a reasonable price. It is my ambition to upgrade the sports and physical education equipment and facilities in the school. I realise the process will be slow. Thankfully we now have sufficient resources to cater for most activities on the physical education curriculum ... although a new volleyball and badminton net is a priority (...) I have taken it upon myself to upgrade the badminton equipment. Every so often I buy a cheap badminton racquet out of my own money. I know it is far from ideal but I want to be able to teach badminton and therefore it is imperative to have enough racquets. Hopefully next year, I can actually do badminton. I
also purchase the odd cheap soccer ball for students to use at lunch time and also during physical education classes. The money is not there for new sports equipment

(Prompt Sheet 1, 6/11/09; Prompt Sheet 3, 11/2/10; Prompt Sheet 4, 14/05/10).

Allied to content knowledge, general pedagogic knowledge and curriculum knowledge, Shulman (1987) also stressed the importance of developing pedagogical content knowledge.

4.5 PEDAGOGICAL CONTENT KNOWLEDGE

Pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) is described as the knowledge that makes content instruction; it is the integration of content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge (Hayes et al., 2009). It can also be summed up by ‘knowledge in practice’, referring to the idea that knowledge is practical, situated and acquired through reflection upon experiences (Hammerness et al., 2005). It is based on the premise that the activity in which the teacher is engaged, the environment within which the activity takes place and the teacher are inseparable units of analysis with the culmination of these knowledge types enabling teachers to know what to do and how to do it (Rovegno, 2003).

Only one BT identified PCK, believing that pedagogy must remain a core constituent in the PETE programme and pedagogy and content must run concurrently. Claire believed this is because “content and pedagogy are equally important. You need to be able to know how to transfer the knowledge but you also need the knowledge to impart in the first place. Many modules did not follow this through and work on both of them equally” (Interview, 3/10/09). While there is only one overt instance where a BT referred to PCK, there may have been other instances where BTs were conscious of PCK but did not use the terminology. It still has significant repercussions since this knowledge base forms the basis for the selection, organisation and presentation of the content teachers want pupils to acquire Shulman (1987). There could be a possible reason for this. Experience plays a vital role in knowledge construction because it develops a teacher’s pedagogical content knowledge blending knowledge of how to teach, subject matter and how pupils learn (Grossman, Smagorinsky & Valencia, 1999; Shulman, 1987). Experience enables teachers to understand theory in and through practice (Rovegno, 2003). ETs know techniques and know how to
use their knowledge in practice and, a reason why the BTs failed to mention the importance of this knowledge base may be because they have not yet developed the schemata for this type of knowledge due to their relative inexperience.

4.5.1 Role of Experience in Developing as a Physical Education Teacher

Many of the BTs recognised the value of experience and cited this experience as most important, even to the point of dismissing the effect of the PETE programme,

“I do feel more prepared now through experience. You learn from experience and not from listening to lecturers in the PETE programme, some of whom do not have a clue what they are talking about themselves. I have learned a lot from my year out and I would even go as far to say I have learned more in this year than I have in four years in the PETE programme”

(Sinead, Interview, 02/06/2010).

This concurs with Berliner’s (1994) assertion that as teacher gain experience, they get better at their job, with teacher development from BT to ET occurring due to the transformation in teacher’s knowledge (Sebren, 1995).

Claire acknowledged that as the year wore on, the anxious and nervous feelings gradually eroded,

“I would have felt anxious at the start. I wanted to get it perfect every time but now I know that it does not always work out and there is no harm in something going wrong as long as you know how to correct it at the time or for the next time. I am more relaxed in what I am doing and, because I am a real teacher, in a real school, teaching real kids, I can adapt to things better … better than I could in either the PETE programme or out on teaching practice”

(Interview, 07/06/2010).

This hesitancy at the start was echoed by John, although again through experience, it gradually weaned away, “My ability to teach physical education effectively has improved greatly. I am now a much more relaxed and confident teacher” (Prompt Sheet 4, 14/05/2010).

Over a short period a time, Claire felt she had “certainly made progress in the school. My teaching techniques, ideas and confidence have increased in the last couple of months” (Prompt Sheet 2, 22/12/2009) and John commented that “the last few weeks
have seen me settle more into my stride as the physical education teacher in the school. I am now more accustomed to the duties associated with the job and am enjoying my work much more” (Prompt Sheet 2, 10/12/2009). This suggests that BTs move from feelings of anxiety and concern for survival to mastery of teaching, as outlined in the teacher development stages by Katz (1972). This is the process commonly referred to as learning to teach, which requires examining the developmental stages of a prospective teacher as teacher development represent a continuum (Stroot and Whipple, 2003).

Mary notes her frustration in striving to promote change, “I nearly feel trapped in trying to improve things – whether it is the amount of time we have, trying to involve pupils and attempting to create and stick to a curriculum plan” (Prompt Sheet 2, 22/12/2009). This may have significant repercussions. Katz’s (1972) model of development, stage one, similar to Manuel’s (2003) _early survival phase_ is characterised by a conflict between new, innovative strategies taught at university and the traditional, more familiar practices in school settings, with BTs often feeling overwhelmed and anxious due to the prevalence of the latter. This can result in one of two emotions – disillusionment and frustration or the maintenance of the initial determination to swim against the tide. There is evidence to suggest that this particular BT wanted to change the culture that existed for physical education but, due to a conglomerate of reasons, was frustrated in her attempts. Indeed, the next stage of Katz’s (1972) learning model, consolidation, focusing on the problems and needs of individual pupils, also prohibited change for many BTs.

4.6 KNOWLEDGE OF LEARNERS AND THEIR CHARACTERISTICS

Knowledge of learners incorporates the cognitive knowledge of learning, comprising of child development and knowledge of a particular group of learners (Hayes et al., 2009). One of the criticisms of this particular PETE programme was that the BTs did not develop a significant knowledge base on learners and do not possess the required knowledge to motivate pupils (Rikard and Knight, 1997). This knowledge gap has implications on BTs’ abilities to deal with pupils’ reluctance and benevolence to participate in physical education and the disciplinary issues that arise from such benevolence.
4.6.1 Dealing with Pupils’ Reluctance and Benevolence to Participate in Physical Education

Pupils can be obstacles for teaching physical education as pupils are not accustomed to learning expectations in physical education, are not motivated to participate and lack respect for teachers (Feiman-Nemser, 2003; O’Sullivan, 1989). Pupils have emerged as a working condition issue for BTs and, in many instances, BTs felt ill-prepared for the resistance amongst pupils in participating in physical education. Participation of pupils was a significant issue,

“What really sticks out for me are the participation levels. If that is not taken seriously then how can the physical education department be taken seriously? There is just very little encouragement or promotion of physical activity in our school. There could be eight or nine people not participating and there are no consequences. They do not want to do it. It is down to laziness. Once you go past second years, the level of participation goes down. Our facilities are great here so they have access to whatever they want to do and if they want to do it, we will do it”

(Elaine, Interview, 02/06/2010).

These teachers acknowledged that in the junior cycle, there is a high level of participation but at senior cycle less pupils participate, especially girls. Participation and trying to get all pupils involved in physical education was considered important as some adolescents get so little physical activity in any one week. The PETE programme’s attempts to address this concern was negligible as BTs felt that, while low participation may have been mentioned, limited strategies were provided or practiced to deal with the situation. Sinead acknowledged that she “just did not think it would be like that ... when I was in school as a pupil I used always take part ... I just do not understand it” (Interview, 3/10/09). Pupils demonstrate a lack of interest in participating in physical education which comes as a surprise to many physical education teachers as they were enthusiastic participants themselves (Rikard and Knight, 2003). Many of the BTs admitted being unable to sufficiently motivate pupils and improving the activity levels of pupils is jeopardised by particular challenges, most notably the issues of no gear in class and non-qualified teachers teaching physical education.

BTs experienced difficulties in dealing with the issue of pupils turning up to physical education class with no gear which has repercussions on generic pedagogic
knowledge in dealing with classroom management, “You try and split them up but they shout across the hall to each other. I have to keep an eye on the ones who are doing it and the ones who are not doing it. I try to get them involved in the class but sometimes that is only asking for trouble” (Mary, Prompt Sheet 1, 6/11/2009). The lack of consequences made it difficult to increase participation, “If half the class come in with no gear they basically tell you, „Well, we did not bring in gear.” No-one comes in and says, „Send them to detention,” „Send a note home.” There are just no consequences” (Claire, Interview, 3/10/09).

The issues with physical education gear are compounded by non-qualified physical education teachers. A common scenario in post-primary schools is to have other general non-qualified teachers teaching physical education and these teachers are often inadequately or inappropriately prepared to teach physical education (Hardman, 2008b; Ojeme, 1986). Indeed, other research (MacPhail et al., 2005; Marshall and Hardman, 2000) recognised that non-qualified physical education teachers were involved in delivering the physical education curriculum in Irish post-primary schools and this had repercussions, predominantly in the implementation of a games-focussed curriculum with a predisposition towards developing sport skills.

In some situations non-qualified teachers teaching physical education was not evident, as the school ensured that physical education teachers are suitably qualified. In general, however, BTs acknowledged it was a common occurrence and has a detrimental effect on the development of content, pedagogy and curriculum, as outlined by this BT,

“The teachers do not see the need for teaching in physical education. They just see it as physical activity for the students and do not see the pedagogy side of it ... They only throw in the ball (...) There are three other teachers taking physical education in the school, yet I am the only one with a degree in the subject. I find it difficult to communicate in a worthwhile way. It is intimidating as a new teacher to work within their current system. I have ideas but it is hard to come in and change what they are already doing and their ways of doing things”(...) They [non-qualified teachers teaching physical education] primarily let kids play games instead of teaching them any of the skills. It is just basically make two teams and let them play the games. There are often a number of kids standing to the side because they do not want to be part of a big field
game. There is the same set of second years and third years that only ever have physical education with the unqualified ones so it always seems to be the same kids who are sitting out all the time ... At the start I found it annoying and it annoyed me for the children as well because they did not want to just play soccer or football. Half the class do not want to play and end up sitting out, they are not getting anything out of the class. They do not want to do the activity because they do not find it enjoyable or challenging. Also, by having someone else teach it that is unqualified says there is not much benefit to doing four years in college. No matter how young the kids are they know that. In a school that it happens in, it degrades the physical education curriculum”

(Claire, Interview, 3/10/2009; Prompt Sheet 1, 6/11/2009; Interview, 30/03/2010).
The degradation of the physical education curriculum to such an extent results in greater disciplinary issues in physical education than these BTs expected but due to the development of an integration of knowledge, have become more accomplished in dealing with such issues.

4.6.2 Dealing with Disciplinary Issues in Physical Education
Mancini et al. (1984) state that due to the active nature of physical education, more disciplinary issues are likely to arise than in the normal classroom for two predominant reasons – over-active pupils and passive pupils who do not want to participate. While O'Sullivan (1989) reported that pupil discipline was not a significant concern, other research (Killeavy, 2006; Stroot et al., 1993; Veenman, 1984) opposes this notion by highlighting discipline as the most serious and frequent problem for BTs. It is noted from this research that the truth probably lies somewhere in the middle.

These BTs acknowledged they experienced discipline issues at the beginning and were unsure of how to deal with them but, as time elapsed, they have become more comfortable as their discipline management and integration of knowledge bases improved. BTs admitted that when “pupils are disruptive and disrespectful towards me, it makes me feel dissatisfied at times” (Claire, Beginning Teacher, Prompt Sheet 2, 22/12/2009). BTs acknowledged experiencing a huge learning curve in dealing with discipline, with many dependent on their other physical education colleague,

“A group of three second-year girls have rarely taken part in physical education since the beginning of the year. This week when they turned up with no gear, I gave them some work to do for the class. They refused to do any of the work and instead they chatted
laughed, ate and drank in the physical education hall. When I confronted them about it, they were very abusive towards me so I went straight to the other physical education teacher. He then helped me with the situation”

(Sinead, Prompt Sheet 4, 05/05/2010).

Dealing with discipline issues also encompassed the principal,

“Our school principal is a very affable and charismatic man who tries to keep a very happy staff but he can also be too nice sometimes. By this I mean that he is not the best man to deal with discipline issues and it is fairly common for students who are involved in serious misbehaviour to be back in class the following day with very little sanction. This affects the authority of each individual teacher as often the threat of further action does not have any impact on student behaviour”

(John, Prompt Sheet 4, 14/05/2010).

Having and developing a knowledge of learners is important as, for these BTs, one of the greatest motivations for teaching physical education is a positive response from pupils, “When you see the lesser able kids taking part or scoring a goal or taking a shot, you get a good thrill out of that or if a kid comes up to you and says, „God that was great today,” or „I enjoyed that”... They will look at you, the physical education teacher, as one of their favourite teachers – they look at you differently” (John, Interview, 03/06/2010).

This shows that while pupil misbehaviour is a worry for teachers, more important is developing a „sense of success’ with pupils (Fejgin et al., 1995). Teachers’ greatest rewards depend on whether they experience this sense of success with pupils (Rovegno, 2003). Physical education teachers want pupils to learn and develop, are committed to the philosophy of it being about the pupils and believe they can make a difference to the pupils’ lives (Feistritzer, 2005; Cochran-Smith, 2004; Rovegno, 2003; Johnson and Birkeland, 2003; Darling-Hammond and Sclan, 1996).

When pupils are not receptive motivation for teaching physical education diminishes, supporting O’Sullivan’s (2003) finding that positive pupil interaction is the primary reason teaching physical education was confirmed as a career choice for many physical education teachers,
“I love coaching but coaching is different to physical education. I love coaching because kids are interested and motivated. I do not like teaching physical education because it is an uphill battle. A lot of kids do not want to be there. They do not want to take part. It is a constant battle and I do not find it very rewarding. I am only after teaching physical education for a year and I feel bored in the job. It does not feel like a proper job. A proper job should be where you are challenged and I do not feel challenged. There is no motivation”

(Sinead, Interview, 07/06/2010).

Mary’s motivation had also dwindled,

“Sometimes I would be like, „Why do I bother? Why should I bother putting in preparation or work if nobody is going to appreciate it?” On teaching practice in fourth and second year, and I understand it is a different scenario, but I was putting a lot more work into physical education. When I see my other physical education classes not putting in any work but I think, „Why bother when the pupils are just as happy to be play basketball or hockey or soccer or whatever it is”. At times, motivation for teaching physical education would be far less than it should be ... and it was a culmination of everything – lack of collaboration, my relationship with the other physical education teacher, the coaching and the lack of a profile of physical education in the school”

(Mary, Interview, 28/03/2010).

Motivation for teaching physical education can also dwindle as a result of the educational contexts which prevail in specific school situations, providing the necessity to arm BTs with appropriate knowledge of educational contexts.

4.7 KNOWLEDGE OF EDUCATIONAL CONTEXTS

Knowledge of educational contexts includes an understanding of specific school environments, the catchment area and the wider community (Hayes et al., 2009). Educational contexts are recognised as significant variables that affect teaching performance and can make teaching productive and satisfying or unsuccessful and dispiriting (Wynn, Carboni and Patall, 2007), influencing their ability to make choices on becoming part of the existing system or being empowered to change the system (Stroot and Whipple, 2003).

For these BTs, specific school contexts encompassed a range of issues and posed significant challenges. Organisational socialisation, preceded by acculturation and
professional preparation, is the third and final stage in the socialisation into physical education (Lawson, 1983a) and is a complex unit of analysis as it involves the interaction between physical education teachers, schools and societal influences (Templin and Schempp, 1989). Because the occupational socialisation of schools plays a major role in physical education teachers’ application of knowledge (Lawson 1983a; Lawson 1983b), it is essential that BTs are provided with knowledge of the educational contexts they could, or are likely, to encounter. Indeed, this is a necessity as many researchers (Templin, 1979; van Maanen and Schein, 1979; Down, 1976) argue that professional preparation/socialisation and organisational socialisation are juxtaposed and contradictory, as the outcomes of organisational socialisation compete with those of professional socialisation.

Knowledge of educational contexts spreads into many domains, stretching to the low status of physical education subject matter, the culture of teaching physical education in schools, the curriculum, relationships with colleagues, isolation, interaction with the school administration, influence in decision making, school policy, pupils, large class sizes, inappropriate facilities and insufficient equipment (Stroot and Whipple, 2003; Graber, 2001; Macdonald, 1995; Meek and Bethets, 1999; Templin and Schempp, 1989). Addressing these variables in teacher preparation programmes is difficult because, without ongoing support from the school setting, quality practices are likely to wash out, a process where pedagogical practices learned during PETE are unable to be applied as they conflict with the prevailing school culture (Zeichner and Tabachnik, 1981). The most pertinent of these issues for these BTs are analysed in three primary headings – appropriate and equitable teaching assignments, working relationships with colleagues and school organisation and leadership.

4.7.1 Appropriate and Equitable Teaching Assignments

Appropriate and equitable teaching assignments are assignments that are manageable and within a teacher’s field of expertise, (Johnson and Kardos, 2008). Out-of-field assignments are common, not only impacting on pupils but also affecting the confidence and satisfaction of the teacher (Johnson and Kardos, 2008). Developing educational context knowledge requires a need to highlight the issue of out-of-field assignments. This was a major issue for many of these BTs, with John articulating this grievance most effectively,
“I am employed as a teacher of Irish, History and Religion even though I am not qualified in History or Religion. I am under significant pressure and preparing for each class takes a considerable amount of time (...) I have a lack of expertise in teaching religion and ... Much of my time has been taken up trying to get the religion projects for the junior cert exam completed. I found it quite a challenge to get everyone’s completed to a satisfactory level on time”

(Prompt Sheet 1, 6/11/2009; Prompt Sheet 4, 14/5/2010).

Another area in relation to appropriate and equitable teaching assignments was that of class lists. For senior cycle physical education, one BT in particular acknowledged that she did not have the same pupils every week and this has resulted in difficulties in implementing the curriculum,

“Sometimes there is little consideration for my own plan for my class by the other teacher. I feel that this disrupts my teaching and disrupt the pupils” learning as sometimes I have to change the lesson topic on the spot. Continuance can be a challenge (...) Senior classes have been properly divided. This is much better as now I have the same set of students so there is less confusion and disruption for me and for the students. I can now take on my own teaching schemes with fewer disruptions (...) We used give the pupils an option. One teacher would take one thing and I would take another. I did not really like that because it meant you had different children every week. I would have preferred to stick with the list I have because then you have continuance. To follow a scheme of work was hard because we were always chopping and changing ... When they are listening to one teacher one week and another teacher the next, pupil learning is much more difficult”

(Claire, Prompt Sheet 2, 22/12/09; Interview, 30/3/2010; Prompt Sheet 3, 13/2/2010).

The issue with class lists was only prevalent for this particular BT but large class numbers were consistently highlighted as a distinct issue for BTs.

4.7.1.1 Large Class Numbers

Large class numbers form another aspect of educational context knowledge and this was recognised as a consistent problem for these BTs, significantly impacting on a teacher’s ability to teach (Johnson, 2004),

“For the senior classes, there were very large numbers involved – 70 or 70 plus pupils and it made it very difficult. I could only teach to a certain extent. You had to keep
them in some sort of activity and oftentimes that did involve game-type situations ... In a way, it was literally chaos – people everywhere, making noise, not listening. The kids do not get as much benefit from it and I do not get as much of a benefit from it because I cannot teach to the same standard I would like. I could not teach as much as I generally would if I had a smaller number. It made pupil learning more difficult”

(Claire, Interview, 30/03/2010).

Elaine experienced similar difficulties, acknowledging that “one of the physical education classes is over the legal limit for class sizes” (Prompt Sheet 2, 22/12/2009) and Sinead stated that there were, at times, “excessively large classes” (Prompt Sheet 1, 11/10/2009). When group numbers were more manageable, there was evidence that teachers were more at ease, “I am lucky as my school is quite small. Hence the numbers in my class are not exceptionally high. This eases the pressure much more” (John, Prompt Sheet 2, 10/12/2009). While there was little evidence that this issue would force them out of teaching, these teachers admitted they were “overwhelmed (…) under pressure and anxious” with respect to class sizes (Claire, Prompt Sheet 1, 6/11/2009; Prompt Sheet 2, 22/12/2009). Feiman-Nemser (2003) sums it up by saying that the burden of large classes is a significant obstacle to teaching. Another area in which BTs reported difficulties was the extent to which coaching responsibilities were placed upon them.

4.7.1.2 Coaching Responsibilities as part of the Physical Education Teacher Remit

The extent of coaching responsibilities was a consistent theme,

“I have become involved with catering for male and female sport in the school. Most sporting events in the school are coordinated through me. I am also involved in An Gaisce, Greenschool and Dance4Life initiatives adding to the workload I often feel is overwhelming me at times (…) It seems that the physical education teacher is expected to coach teams of all sports after school and ... that physical education teachers are more willing and aware of the importance of giving up their time”

(John, Prompt Sheet 2, 10/12/2009; Prompt Sheet 3, 11/2/2010).

Many teachers felt the coaching role compromised their work as a physical educator,

“Our curriculum has had to deviate from the original year plan. We introduced HRA through the medium of circuits as it is easier to hand over to substitute teachers and there does not have to be a continuum from one area to another. As regards the contact hours with classes we are missing so much time (…) This month has not got any better
regarding fixtures and it came to the stage last week, when I questioned myself if I was a physical education teacher or just a coach. I have been away twice a week since mid term and I am missing time from my classes”

(Jean, Prompt Sheet 4, 11/04/2010; Prompt Sheet 5, 11/05/2010).

This shows the role conflict between teaching and coaching, with these BTs highlighting the coaching responsibilities as time consuming and as subsuming their role as physical educators (Stroot and Whipple, 2003; Quigley, Slack and Smith, 1989; Sisley, Capel and Desertrain, 1987).

While undertaking coaching responsibilities has its benefits, mostly in developing a relationship with pupils, the physical education teacher's responsibility of coaching was juxtaposed to the involvement of other teachers,

“I would see other teachers in the school and they went in and did their work from 9 until 3.30 and they were gone out the door at 3.30. They could spend a half hour in the evenings preparing for classes so it was kind of frustrating that every evening was gone with extra-curricular activities. I was just so tired when I got home in the evenings”

(Mary, Prompt Sheet 3, 18/02/2010).

This is one aspect in relation to working relationships with colleagues.

4.7.2 Working Relationships with Colleagues

Support from colleagues was valued, although in many instances it was not particularly forthcoming as other staff members displayed a benevolence and lack of respect to physical education subject matter and physical education teachers (Lawson, 1983a),

“If there is something happening, physical education is looked at, „Oh there is a slot there, the kids have physical education, and we will just use that class.” It could be something as simple as a table quiz or there are students who need extra maths”

(Jean, Interview, 30/10/09).

John had similar experiences,

“When there is a school mass or a big event, it is often that the teacher will come to you and ask if it is ok to take the class ... it would have happened a lot because teachers would think that if they miss a physical education it does not matter”

(Interview, 03/06/2010).
There was recognition that physical education teachers received little backing or support from staff because there is a feeling that anyone can teach physical education,

“I often get the feeling that many other teachers within the school have no respect for the strand of physical education. I hear comments that exam year classes would be better having other classes instead or that it would be no problem to miss physical education to take an extra class in a different subject. This attitude is annoying as I find it completely disrespectful towards me. It is demeaning the subject I teach. I find it insulting (...) If there was anything to be done, they would be like, „Oh come and do it during physical education class ... for example if they needed an extra science or physics class, it would always be during the physical education session ... There is a lack of support coming from other teachers (...) I find this frustrating at times. I would like this to change”

(Claire, Prompt Sheet 3, 26/04/2010; Interview, 30/03/2010).

Another example of the lack of respect for physical education is the way physical education is disregarded when it comes to exam-time and for the staging of school plays,

“The hall was used for drama week and then school exams were taking place so it had to be set up for those. The weather was not suitable to go outside so we had to revert to supervising the kids in classrooms for double period. Seemingly it happens every year and we can not do anything about it (...) the musical team was under pressure to meet the performance date so we had to row in behind and sacrifice our hall (...) Finally after mid-term we got it back only for it to be used again for the aptitude tests ... very frustrating”

(Jean, Prompt Sheet 2, 22/12/09; Prompt Sheet 3, 17/12/10; Prompt Sheet 4, 26/03/2010).

The disregard for physical education has resulted in teachers having no access to the school hall for a considerable length of time,

“For the entire month of February, I have been without the sports hall due to mock exams and the school musical. This has really affected what I can teach. At the moment, I am teaching in classrooms. This is really inconvenient and difficult as I am not assigned to any one classroom so I am moving from room to room all day everyday. This means that I have to move all of the desks and chairs at the beginning and end of each class. The classrooms are not suitable for this type of activity as they are too small and too warm. It is very unfair that we are put out of our hall for this long period of time (...) I just let it pass because what is the point ... The other physical education teacher has been complaining all the years that it has been happening and he is getting nowhere with it”
This supports Marshall and Hardman’s (2000) research that the lack of respect for physical education is highlighted as physical education classes are cancelled more often and frequently than so called ‘academic subjects’, due to examination periods when lessons are abandoned or pupils are taken out of class to provide revision time, and the use of the school hall for school plays, concerts, assemblies and as dining areas.

The idea that physical education is not viewed as important as other subjects, even amongst pupils, drawing the inescapable conclusion that physical education is not viewed as educationally worthy, at least in a high-status academic sense (Armour and Jones, 1998), was reported by Claire,

“One pupil commented to me, ’Ah sure, physical education must be very nice. Sure, it is not really teaching.’ So that just kind of tells you what people’s opinion of it is … I know they would not give the same response if I said I was a chemistry teacher … Pupils, schools or other teachers do not see physical education as having any value”

(Claire, Interview, 3/10/09).

Elaine summed up the prevailing attitude in the majority of schools BTs worked in,

“I think it is something that is not taken seriously and in this school there is obviously the attitude of, ’Oh sure you are only a physical education teacher’. The attitude to the physical education teachers are that you do not have exams and you are doing nothing. I said to them one day I was hoping to get some geography next year because I had not taught it and I had physical education more or less all day, every day. They were like, ’Why? ’Jesus Christ, how could you get bored getting paid to play all kinds of games? I was like, ’You are not getting played to play, you are getting paid to teach them’. It is just that kind of attitude”

(Elaine, Interview, 02/06/2010).

The general conclusion is that physical education has little respect from most educators because the status of physical education is significantly lower than that of ‘academic’ subjects with the emphasis on these subjects placing physical education towards the bottom of a school’s importance (Marshall and Hardman, 2000; Kirk, 1988).

These frustrations are enhanced when there is a lack of collaboration with physical education colleagues.
4.7.2.1 Lack of Collaboration with physical education colleagues

Mary has consistently experienced difficulties with her physical education colleague both in terms of physical education and in coaching,

“The physical education teacher is just using me and taking advantage of the fact that I am new in the school. She is constantly thinking of herself. She just shovels everything onto me (...) I am only there for a year so I have to just put the head down because as it is, I have to row in with what she wants. I have no other option and that makes me feel under-valued, under-mined even. She just does not see me as an equal. I am someone she thinks she can just take advantage of ... This is my first year out and she really does look down on me because of my inexperience. I am full of ideas and enthusiasm but yet she is dampening it by claiming that it will not work. She puts it down before I have even suggested it or tried it out properly”

(Prompt Sheet 1, 6/11/2009; Prompt Sheet 2, 22/12/2009).

The lack of a meaningful relationship with this physical education colleague was an issue that stretched throughout the whole year,

“I was only here and she was saying basically, you are doing this and you are doing that. I am a professional. I should be able to decide the way that best suits me. It strained our relationship that bit more because I was resentful ... I was hoping to have a teacher who I could feed ideas off and who I could give ideas to ... that I could go and talk things over with ... I feel she did not engage with me as a physical education teacher professional – to go through ideas or strategies or different things that I might have picked up and different things that she might have picked up (...) I am still being dictated to by her. She just completely does not see me as an actual qualified teacher. She is just ruling the Physical Education Department. I do not get a say in anything ... I do all her jobs and all her work (...) She has been teaching for 20 / 30 odd years and she is coming to the end of her career. Maybe, it is understandable she would be tired of doing the same thing and she is stuck in a rut. I cannot do anything about her and her classes but I am not as trapped with my own classes. I have a bit more control in my own classes and I try to stick to the plan so I will know exactly what they [the pupils] have done. I do not think I could get her around to the way I want to do things. It frustrates me but I try not to let it bother me as much ... She was not receptive or open to change. When I would come up with an idea, she would be like, „No that would not work”. It might not have worked for her but I felt maybe I would like to try it and see if it works for me”

(Mary, Interview, 28/03/2010; Prompt Sheet 3, 18/02/2010; Interview, 08/06/2010).
Mary’s situation has been the most prolonged instance of dissatisfaction with physical education colleagues but another BT has had a remarkably similar experience,

“At times I feel he [the other physical education teacher] undermines what I say to the pupils. For example, last week I showed a pupil one way of how to do a sit up. Once I had shown the pupil the other physical education teacher came over and showed the boy another way. After this, he smiled at me. This really annoyed me and I feel that at times this particular physical education teacher does not respect me as a physical education teacher (…) the two male teachers seem to not consider me as a physical education teacher. I am not invited to attend meetings. I have not been given a key to the hall. A couple of weeks ago it was suggested by the physical education teacher that , if I was a physical education teacher in the school I should have a f***** key to the hall”. I felt that this was a totally inappropriate thing to say to me and one that was very hurtful. At times I feel I am not given the acknowledgement that he gives the other physical education teacher in the school (…) He wanted me to do it [a demonstration]. He did not tell me. He did not give me any warning and he wanted me to do it in front of the other pupils and I said no. Later in the staff room he said to me, „I thought you are meant to be a physical education teacher and you cannot even jump over a horse” … He had a way of constantly making me feel inadequate”

(Elaine, Prompt Sheet 1, 16/11/2009; Prompt Sheet 2, 22/12/2009; Interview, 02/06/2010).

BTs felt they improved when they had good collaborative relations with their fellow physical education teacher colleagues,

“We put the scheme of work for the year together at the beginning of the year. Additionally, we team teach some activities and we use lead and assist teaching (…) I received great support from the other physical education teacher … All the credit for my improvement as a teacher goes to him. He was really, really good. He has been there 20 / 30 years. Every time we went to teach something new, he has a system. He knows what he is going to do and if I thought I could add something else we would do it but if not, we would go about it his way. Any time I was going to do something he would give me advice or if I was ever having problems, he would always step in and give me a hand. In that sense, he was very good and any difficulties I did come across, he definitely helped me out. I learned an awful lot from him”

(Sinead, Prompt Sheet 1, 11/10/2009; Prompt Sheet 2, 22/12/2009).
With a lack of collaboration evident for many BTs, it is little wonder that isolation was prevalent amongst the BTs.

4.7.2.2 Isolation

Isolation is one of the biggest obstacles physical education teachers face (Curtner-Smith, 2001). Oftentimes, physical education teachers have insufficient contact and time with other physical educators, finding themselves alone in their questions and problems (Mayer et al., 2003). Many encounters or problems were “dealt with myself ... so I felt alone. Now I just do my own thing ... even though I had a colleague, I could not talk to her ... so I was alone in the physical education department” (Mary, Interview, 28/03/2010).

Isolation was enhanced when there was only one physical educator in the school, with little opportunity to pursue professional dialogue (Curtner-Smith, 2001),

“There is no other physical education teacher in the school so effectively I am the Physical Education Department. I found it difficult to adapt to the level of responsibility being directed towards me. With regard to physical education, I must admit I am alone (...) my teaching has not been interfered with during the course of the year. The other teachers have not questioned how I am getting on. They have not offered advice either on how to teach different aspects of each syllabus. There has been no physical education-focused support system for me and there has been no one that I could turn to during the year with physical education questions (...) There is nobody to tell you, „This is how you teach”... Once I was gone, that was it. It was a shock being the only physical education teacher. Suddenly I was responsible for all the plans, timetabling, pupils, everything ... You have a lot of things being thrown at you. At the start there was a sense of panic. You find yourself fighting your own corner when you are on your own”

(John, Prompt Sheet 1, 6/11/2009; Prompt Sheet 4, 14/05/2010; Interview, 03/06/2010).

Support, reassurance and assistance during the first year of teaching are inadequate to meet the needs of first year teachers, with mentoring non-existent (Williams and Williamson, 1995). BTs acknowledged that a mentoring or induction programme might have resulted in an easier transition because the majority of BTs did not have a formal induction into their school contexts. Mary’s induction to her teaching position was not as expected, “There is a cooperating teacher for new staff but he only approached me twice throughout the whole year just to see how I was doing. The first
When support was properly structured, the benefits were evident, “There was a good level of support. There was a teacher who had a post to look after new teachers and I found her very good. As a new teacher, I thought that was very helpful” (Claire, Interview, 07/06/2010). Knight (2002) and Visscher and Witziers (2004) state the essence of professional development lies in learning with colleagues in subject department or across personal networks, highlighting the role of continuous professional development (CPD).

4.7.2.3 Personal and Professional Development

There is a requirement for CPD because PETE programmes cannot be expected to provide all the prepositional knowledge and more importantly, the procedural knowledge – “how to” knowledge which can only grow out of practice – for teaching (Dey, 1993). In Ireland, as outlined, teachers’ opinion toward structured professional development, including an induction programme, are highly favourable (Killeavy & Murphy, 2006; Government of Ireland, 1984). There is a need for a more “coherent and coordinated approach” (Sugrue, 2002 pg. 335) by building strategic learning partnerships between university, schools and practicing teachers.

Sinead outlined the process of personal development that occurred in her first year of teaching, “I would try out things. Some of it would work. Some things would not work. In that way I improved but it was a learning curve” (Interview, 02/06/2010). BTs were aware of the necessity to undergo personal and professional development and felt they had a responsibility to do so,

“It [The PETE programme] should try and get that across. Your learning should not stop after four years. If you feel that you are fully qualified now, what is the point in going on? There are aspects that you have to improve. The course could emphasise that – your professional development continues (…) You have to feel that you will not learn everything in college. If you stop learning after college, you are finished. There has to be some kind of self-learning. If the physical education teacher thinks, „Oh God, I did not learn that in college, I cannot teach it,” … you just cannot expect PETE to teach you everything”

(John, Interview, 29/10/2009; Interview, 03/06/2010).
The PETE programme has a role in keeping graduates informed of what is available after exiting the programme, as links with the university were seen as interesting and stimulating (Dey, 2003),

“The lines of communication need to be kept open as regards what is going on. What is best practice? How can teachers continue to improve? There could be information given about what is out there”

(John, Interview, 29/10/09).

BTs highlighted the “need for more professional development in teaching on a continuous basis” (John, Prompt Sheet 4, 14/05/2010). Mary had undertaken numerous in-services throughout the year and noted how they benefited her,

“We went on the physical education in-service in November. We got loads of resources and ideas. That in-service nearly settled me a bit because it was my first time out [teaching] so it was good to be brought back like a student and to actually go through different things. I did three out of the five in-services for newly qualified teachers, in conjunction with DCU. We would meet up with other new teachers for a day and we would be talking about different things. It was good to meet up with other new teachers and to be able to throw out a few ideas”

(Mary, Interview, 08/06/2010).

4.7.3 School Organisation and Leadership

School organisation and leadership was cited as one of the most important factors, if not the most important factor, (Darling-Hammond and Sclan, 1996) in determining the educational context which prevailed in the school,

“I think a lot of the problems that arise from physical education come from the backing you have and if the school management are encouraging to physical education”

(Jean, Interview, 08/06/2010).

Support for physical education varies,

“It depends what the physical education department in the school is already like, what their overall objective for physical education or for their students might be and if you are the new teacher in, your view may not be the same as the school Department”

(Claire, Interview, 3/10/09).

Principal and school leadership was an indication of the level of support for physical education in schools,
“The principal is very good at backing us so personally I know I am at no disadvantage in teaching physical education (...) The principal is very pro-physical education. When this principal arrived here five years ago, there has been a marked improvement in physical education ... It is a tribute to her the way the physical education programme has stepped up and the equipment that is now available because we are able to deliver a far better programme”

(Jean, Interview, 29/10/2009; Interview, 08/06/2010).

“I feel the principal gives regard to physical education. He is willing to talk and discuss any teaching issues. He supports decisions from the physical education department to introduce measures to tackle lack of participation from some. This makes me feel that we have some backing from school management”

(Claire, Prompt Sheet 2, 22/12/2009).

Many BTs stressed the important role a principal has to play in whether physical education teachers feel valued because “In a lot of schools it [physical education] is seen as a time waster. A lot of secondary schools are not doing their best to make sure that all the kids are getting involved in physical education” (Sinead, Interview, 3/10/09). The lack of support has a number of knock-on effects, namely with discipline, timetabling and physical education as an optional subject.

For physical education teachers, lack of administrative support for programmes is frustrating as it causes a serious effect in the maintenance or improvement of an effective programme (Siedentop, 1991). Oftentimes, physical education is not valued as an important subject by school management and working colleagues and is placed on the periphery of the school curriculum, indicated by the time allocation for physical education and providing physical education as an optional subject only (O’Sullivan, 2003).

4.7.3.1 Timetabling of physical education in schools

The issue of timetabling is a pervasive factor in implementing a physical education programme as time is taken up by other competing prioritised subjects (Hardman, 2008a; Hardman, 2008b).
When the school was dedicated to providing adequate timetabling for physical education classes, BTs felt physical education received support from the principal. In many cases the issue of adequate timetabling in physical education is not a priority amongst management. Single classes make it difficult to implement the curriculum due to the time constraints involved, “All I can offer is a taster or sampler of what physical education is. It is difficult to cover anything in-depth with them so single classes really do impinge what I can offer and the depth I can offer it to” (John, Interview, 03/06/2010). The issue of single classes resulted in many adjustments to teaching physical education,

“You want them [pupils] active as possible because as well as getting an educational benefit from it, you want them to get a physical benefit too ... If I stop the activity and bring them in, they get frustrated because they are like ‘Why do you keep stopping us? We do not have much time as it’. There is no continuation even though it is week-to-week but there is no flow to the class. I just do not think pupils get as much benefit from it”

(Claire, Interview, 30/03/2010).

The over-riding consensus was that if physical education was taken seriously, there would be double classes. Only one BT had the “luxury” of double classes (Jean, Interview, 08/06/2010).

These findings support research that Irish teachers share a common concern that single thirty-five to forty minute classes are insufficient to adequately cover content in detail with the implementation of a compulsory double eighty minute class deemed a minimum requirement (MacPhail et al., 2005). Many researchers agree that time allocation for physical education, particularly in the final years of schooling, has steadily declined (Annerstedt and Claes, 2008; Allert & Bergh, 1996; Annerstedt & Patriksson, 2000) with Halbert and MacPhail (2005) stating there is a progressive reduction in an Irish context from seventy-five minutes to fifty-seven minutes from junior to senior cycle physical education respectively. A decrease in time is apparent at every year of secondary school, but especially dramatic for the 14 to 16 year-old age-groups (Hardman, 2008b; Harris, 1994). Indeed in some cases, the situation is worse, with many senior cycle pupils especially not partaking in any physical education classes.
4.7.3.2 Physical Education as an Optional Subject

Physical education as an optional subject in schools is a source of frustration, articulated most effectively by Sinead,

“I teach two students every week and the rest of them go off home at that time. Physical education is not seen as important... and I think that shows how physical education is viewed in the school and how I get no support from the school” (...) Because fifth year physical education was optional it turned out that only for the first two weeks I had students and after that nobody turned up

(Interview, 3/10/09; Interview, 07/06/2010).

Sinead acknowledged there was no provision of physical education for sixth years. John was equally frustrated, not only as a teacher but in his experience as a pupil,

“When it comes to senior cycle physical education for a lot of schools it was optional. In my own school as a student it was optional in sixth year and a lot of lads just opted out. You could either do physical education or study ... when that is the way, it is hard to do or teach anything” (Interview, 29/10/09).

4.7.4 Implications of Educational Context Knowledge

Many of the BTs indicated that they were unprepared for the educational context they found themselves in and hinted that the PETE programme must do more to highlight the reality of teaching physical education in schools. There appeared to be incongruence between experiences as a student in college and as a teacher in schools, reflected by Claire

“After gaining a few weeks of real life experience in a school it is different to what I would have expected on leaving the course. I found my experiences do not reflect the physical education course I did in college (...) I found in college they ignore the fact that you would have to discipline the student. There are loads of things that happen in class and you cannot just say 'Stop!’ That does not stop everyone and I think the PETE programme could better prepare you for how you deal with misbehaviour”

(Interview, 3/10/09; Interview, 07/06/2010).

The first issue of contention is that of who you are actually teaching,

“When you learn the sports and activities in here [PETE programme], you are teaching your own peers. It is a created environment where they are going to do exactly what you say, exactly in the same order (...) When you are teaching physical education students in the PETE programme, there is no behaviour management. When students are there, they
are never going to go off bouncing a ball on their own or off in the corner going shooting a hoop”

(John, Interview, 29/10/2009; Interview, 03/06/2010).

BTs were critical of peer teaching as “it is clearly an unrealistic situation” (Claire, Interview, 07/06/2010). Secondly, a lack of realism on behalf of university staff members arose as an issue,

“I found some lecturers who were working in the college for a long time were not up to speed with what was happening in schools. They have to think, ‘In schools right now what do teachers need’ and focus the course in that direction’” (Claire, Interview, 3/10/09), backed up by Mary,

“You would wonder how many of our lecturers have spent time in schools because some of the stuff is completely unrealistic. Lecturers would be like ‘Give them a ball and let them explore.’ If I did that, they would end up walloping each other”

(Interview, 29/10/09).

Thirdly, the belief that the PETE programme dealt with the ideal of physical education was a significant issue,

“The physical education course looked at the optimal environment so every time we discussed something you would have 20 perfect children who wanted to learn, who wanted to listen, who had gear and were willing to do everything you asked. We never really got into the realism of teaching which is that it will not be a perfect class where they all want to take part … I think we need to get down to the nitty-gritty of what exactly could happen and what measures you could take”

(Claire, Interview, 3/10/09).

This concurs with previous research, namely that of Wright (2001) who found that during PETE, PSTs remember rather ideal conditions but these conditions were not the norm in schools in which they now taught. Williamson and Williamson (1995) state that there is evidence to suggest that physical educators are not prepared for the realities of school sites (Williams & Williamson, 1995), a situation which PETE programmes need to redress these issues with a distinct sense of urgency,

“The course needs to be compatible with what you are going to be teaching in schools. The university needs to keep in mind what our goal is and what our qualification will allow us to do at the end of it, which is to teach secondary school kids from the ages of 12 to 17/18 in seven different areas of physical education, to know the ins and outs of them areas and to be able to confidently go into a class and structure a class so that those
goals are achieved. That is not done. It does not address the difficulties you experience in schools”

(Elaine, Interview, 31/10/09).

This has some wide-ranging implications, particularly in the area of commitment to teaching physical education. The majority of teachers could project their mid- to long-term futures in physical education, although they could not see themselves remaining as physical education teachers until retirement. Sinead indicated she had no interest in teaching physical education at all after her experiences this year, “I see myself teaching Irish but hopefully not physical education. I do not enjoy it and it is just the interest, motivation and constant uphill battle. Preferably I will not be teaching physical education for long and I hope I will get a teaching job with just Irish this year” (Interview, 02/06/2010). This position became apparent as early as the start-of-year interview, “I am not sure if teaching physical education is for me. I will see the year out but next year I would like to get a job with just Irish and not physical education. I am just not gone on it” (Sinead, Interview, 3/10/09).

4.8 KNOWLEDGE OF EDUCATIONAL ENDS, PURPOSES, VALUES AND PHILOSOPHICAL AND HISTORICAL INFLUENCES

Knowledge of educational ends, purposes, values and philosophical and historical influences can be summed up in the knowledge base of ‘knowledge of practice’ – the relationship between knowledge and practice and the theoretical aspects of both (Hammerness et al., 2005). Shulman (1987) promotes the study of Piaget, Maslow, Erikson and Bloom, as a general understanding of their work can provide a valuable knowledge source for teachers, whilst also providing a precursor through which good and effective teaching practices can emanate. It aims to develop leadership, political and moral values that would prepare teachers for teaching in contemporary schools (Fernandez-Balboa, 1997) as it involves educating PSTs on not only how pupils physically develop but also psychologically and emotionally, promoting study in areas such as psychology, history, sociology and philosophy (Fernandez-Balboa, 1997).

The idea and rationale for the inclusion of these aspects in the PETE programme, incorporating purposes, values, philosophical and historical influences, was
recognised by most of the BTs, with many citing modules focused on these aspects as interesting and useful. The majority of their grievances were with the quantity of theory, which they felt superseded the practical nature of the course. BTs questioned the application of this knowledge in the real world of schools, with Claire most articulate,

“The slightly more theoretical side of things that we did in the PETE programme, things like psychology, philosophy and sociology, only to an extent did I find that would impact my teaching. I found it interesting but when you are teaching, it is hard to find the connection between what you learned and what you use in school ... it is hard to see where the theoretical aspects fit. There is no harm in knowing it but when out teaching, I’m not sure I really see the overlap”

(Interview, 07/06/2010).

The inability to find this teaching connection was enhanced by the complexity of many of the theoretical modules, deemed irrelevant and unnecessary for post-primary level,

“There is a need to bring it down to a physical education level. I understand that it is very difficult but some of the theory modules were at a level too high for us ... It needed to be brought down to see how we could actually use it as physical education teachers. If that was done, I think we would get a lot more out of it”

(John, Interview, 03/06/2010).

Sinead’s opinions were distinctly different, believing theoretical aspects, in no way, impacted on her teaching,

“Too many modules, like philosophy, psychology and sociology, were completely irrelevant and I will never ever use them again. They are all absolute time wasters. They just should not be there. Over the four years, in each semester, there were at least one or two modules that were completely off the wall. They did not bring anything. They did not give me anything that I need to be a physical education teacher”

(Interview, 3/10/09).

Overall, the BTs acknowledged that there is a necessity for PETE programmes to restructure the theoretical aspects to allow a greater link between the focus of the PETE programme and the focus of school physical education, a sentiment consistently reiterated,
“I think theory could be broken down and areas discussed in detail. Tutorials could be structured better to make more out of a topic. A topic that might be relevant to teachers should be discussed more so you get something out of the class ... The modules should be structured better and, with more planning on the part of the PESS Department and on the individual lecturer, they could present the knowledge in a better way to students”

(Claire, Interview, 3/10/09).

This concurs with Allen (2008) and Grossman, Smagorinsky and Valencia (1999) that PETE programmes must strike a balance between theory and practice as teaching is rooted in theory and inseparable in practice, with separation resulting in a false dichotomy. Practical and theoretical elements must converge so that planned, guided and sustained interaction with PSTs is emphasised (Clift and Brady, 2005).

The findings from these BTs would seem to suggest that it is not learning of educational ends, purposes, values, philosophical and historical influences that was necessarily the issue for these BTs but rather the way in which it was presented and the weighting it received in the programme. In this respect, assessments within the PETE programme was seen as an avenue through which the theoretical aspects could be made more applicable to teaching but, as currently constituted, received criticism from the BTs,

“were focussed on us having to go to the library, looking up theory ... when you constantly have to back everything up with theory, are you losing the point of what you are trying to achieve? You are losing sight of it if you are going overboard with it”

(John, Interview, 29/10/09).

Others were equally critical,

“Drawing posters and this kind of stuff are totally unrealistic ... It was doing assignments for the sake of doing them, getting the marks and that. At the end of the assignment, looking back, did you learn anything? Not really”

(Mary, Interview, 29/10/09).

It was suggested that the uselessness of assignments results in a lack of real and meaningful discussions, which potentially debilitate the PETE programme effectiveness in allowing students and future teachers to form and change beliefs,

“In [name of content area] for example we just handed up an essay. It was never seen again and nothing came out of it ... if less emphasis was put on demanding coursework
This has significant repercussions as, as Fernandez-Balboa (1997) explained, when structured properly the interaction of these aspects of this knowledge base can result in teachers transforming schools. Even with strong preparation, first year teachers have difficulty in sustaining the commitment necessary to ensure quality physical education programmes, although ‘reality shock’ is more typical in non-physical education circles than in some quality PETE programmes (Stroot and Whipple, 2003; O’Sullivan, 1989). However PETE programmes appear overly concerned with producing teachers who follow change, rather than lead it (O’Sullivan, 2003). While it is acknowledged that BTs cannot be expected to transform schools, there is a necessity for PETE programmes to educate the PST in engaging with change. PETE programmes must provide teachers with necessary support structures and strategies that may bring some degree of change. This leaves them open to the harsh reality of schools, a reality they are not prepared for, and in the long term leaves them “weary, burnt out and soul-broken” (Fernandez-Balboa, 1997, pg. 171).

4.8.1 Implications of insufficient knowledge on educational ends, purposes, values and philosophical and historical influences

Because this group of BTs did not engage with this knowledge base as comprehensively as they perhaps should have, the implication is that many of the BTs felt the PETE programme “did not give any knowledge that is going to change me as a physical education teacher ... They did not change my view of teaching physical education before I started in first year and now” (Sinead, Interview, 3/10/09). Many of this cohort admitted to ‘going-with-the-flow’,

“I think because I was the new teacher in the school I did not want to go around telling people how to do their job so I basically just did not say anything ... I even heard someone say that third years and sixth years should not have physical education and have an extra maths class instead. I just had to bite my tongue because as the new teacher, who is going to listen to you anyway?”

(Claire, Interview, 30/03/2010).

Mary outlined the predicament BTs are in, particularly when job security is not evident,
“I do not know whether I am there next year or not so this being my first year and my first time in the school, I had to row in with what was going on at the moment. I did not want to be seen as somebody who is a trouble-maker, trying to change everything ... Because I was literally there for the year I did not want to burn too many bridges or go against anything too much. I wanted to be careful really. I was literally following and doing what I was told for the year. Maybe I should have been a lot more pro-active. Maybe next year will be different. Maybe I can make my own mark on it”

(Mary, Interview, 08/06/2010).

This shows that BTs struggle to act as ‘agents of change’ within school environments unless supported by the school (Allen, 2008).

The limited interaction of BTs with these aspects during the PETE programme has resulted in many of the BTs looking merely to ‘survive’, ‘You need to keep going in the job you are in and not worry about developing yourself. You will do your developing as you go along on your job”’ (Mary, Interview, 29/10/09). BTs felt they needed more time to settle into school life and the demands of being a physical education teacher before exploring other strand options such as gymnastics and dance. Lawson (1983a) outlines three responses to the organisational socialisation process – fencing sitting, the custodian approach and the innovative approach. The BTs appear to be in the fence-sitting phase and whether they undergo a content or innovative response will depend on whether they are motivated to accept the context of socialisation or act to change the socialisation setting (Lawson, 1983a). With such conflicting issues, it is little wonder that early teacher years are symbolized by a period of survival and intense discovery (Feiman-Nemser, 2003).

4.9 CONCLUSION

It is clear that a number of issues arose for BTs and these have had significant repercussion on their motivation and commitment to teaching physical education. In chapter six, the significance of these findings are discussed under two distinct headings

(1) The occupational utility of knowledge acquired during the PETE programme
(2) The working conditions that impact and effect physical education teachers’ career decision.

These two aspects are looked at with respect to the changing perceptions of beginning and experienced physical education teachers and the extent to which experience has a role in changing such perceptions.
5.1 INTRODUCTION
Data from experienced teachers (ETs) was collected through interviews conducted in November and June 2010 and prompt sheets throughout the course of the year. This data was analysed to address the following research questions,

How do experienced physical education teachers view the occupational utility of knowledge acquired during the PETE programme?

To what extent are changing perceptions of physical education attributed to experiences and opportunities of experienced physical education teachers?

What working conditions impact physical education teachers’ (potential) career decisions?

It is important to state here that interview data is particularly prominent as, while prompt sheet responses outlined the issues that arose for ETs, the interview data was much more in-depth and served to contextualise the prompt sheet response data obtained. Furthermore, in some instances, there is a reliance on certain teachers’ views and responses. The reason for this is that, while others had similar experiences and views, the particular teachers’ responses chosen were the most articulate. In this section, the results are outlined and their meanings are critically interpreted. These ETs were involved in a previous study by MacPhail et al. (2006) and, where relevant, this data will be referenced. A brief background to the schools in which the ETs worked is provided (Appendix J).

5.2 CONTENT / SUBJECT MATTER KNOWLEDGE
Content knowledge is the ability to know the important concepts and skills in a subject and developing an awareness of how these concepts and skills are structured
and organised within a subject (Schwab, 1964). Darling-Hammond and Sclan (1996) state that there is disagreement on the amount and type of knowledge a teacher might have, but that one type of knowledge should not be prioritised over another as it serves to view physical education as a collection of separate activities (Hayes et al., 2003).

Some ETs believed the PETE programme was effective in providing a good generic knowledge of how to teach physical education — *We had a good knowledge base, a good idea of various different teaching methods. The knowledge was there from the course*” (Niamh, Interview, 21/11/2009) and Kevin disclosed that “*we had a very good knowledge of physical education*” (Interview, 19/11/2009). Other ETs were less complimentary, believing they did not get a sufficient knowledge base from the PETE programme, “*I did not feel we had a sufficient knowledge base, content knowledge on a very basic level*” (Aine, Interview, 17/11/2009).

These ETs recognised the practical elements of PETE were viewed as the most important, useful and relevant, affirming Hayes et al. (2003) research that content knowledge is the focus for physical education teachers, with appropriate content knowledge and knowing how to teach in schools prominent concerns (MacPhail et al., 2006),

“*Without a doubt the most useful modules have been the actual practical modules that we did. At that time with the course structure we spent a lot of time actually doing the various different games and activities — gymnastics, dance, aquatics, all aspects of that ... the games and strands that we covered ... it was very relevant that way. I just feel from talking to students who are coming out at the moment, some of them are going in teaching the likes of basketball, volleyball and badminton and they have never been taught these activities themselves*”

(Niamh, Experienced Teacher Interview, 21/11/2009)

This was echoed by others,

“*The most important modules would have been the preparation for different sports, actually covering them. Your preparation and ... you set out all the teaching skills and progressions and stuff like that, especially in sports that would not be in your area. The fact you are active and you are physically learning as you go*”

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The main criticism with content knowledge was how it was covered in the PETE programme because it was,

“like attending coaching sessions and applying those to teaching situations. There are elements that are similar but ... games were very much taught in a rule-based, skill-based, coaching-type way. Even with that I was not going to be able to go out and coach a team in any of the games and even basketball, for examples ... I would not have been familiar with it although we spent a lot of time on it”

(Aine, Experienced Teacher Interview, 17/11/2009).

5.3 GENERAL PEDAGOGICAL KNOWLEDGE
General pedagogical knowledge is knowledge of the broad principals and strategies of classroom organisation and management that apply, irrespective of the subject (Capel, Hayes, Katene and Velija, 2009).

Only one ET conveyed that pedagogy was adequately covered within the course, “The way it was taught to us ... they showed us how we could teach as well” (Niamh, Interview, 21/11/2009). Pedagogy must become central to the PETE programme, “We need more of a focus on pedagogy. We did some and what we got was relevant to what we needed but we did not get enough of breaking down the pedagogy” (Nancy, Experienced Teacher Interview, 23/11/2009), enhanced by another teacher, “We did a pedagogy module ... and it was excellent. It really brought me on a lot in terms of thinking what I was doing. There should be more physical education pedagogy modules in first year and second year. We were not exposed enough in a pedagogical sense, in terms of being put in situations in front of a class. In pedagogy we had to teach for 20 / 30 minutes in front of your colleagues. We were assessed and they discussed what you did right and what you did wrong. We were not doing enough of that kind of stuff. You should be doing that every week with three or four lecturers there ... if you had a class of 16 or 18 pupils and you are teaching for 20 minutes. The next group teaches for 20 minutes and there are three groups teaching at the same time in different areas. Each are being assessed, talked about and thinking and
reflecting on what they are doing. We did not get half enough of that. In 12 or 13 weeks, there was 20 / 30 minutes when we were exposed and analysed and analysed ourselves. If that was put into the physical education course, it would be a massive benefit”

(Kevin, Experienced Teacher Interview, 19/11/2009).

It was acknowledged that pedagogy had been incorporated in education but teachers felt this was irrelevant as the classroom environment does not replicate a physical education one, “[them] education modules had absolutely zero relevance to us. There was time wasted in education modules when we were in with science education … doing micro-teaching and being videoed and all of that … and it was of zero relevance” (Kevin, Experienced Teacher Interview, 19/11/2009). One area that served to increase pedagogical knowledge was that of teaching practice, with this aspect of the PETE programme reported as the most relevant (MacPhail et al., 2006).

5.3.1 Teaching Practice Placements
ETs, reinforcing research by Behets and Vergauwen (2006), viewed their teaching practice placements as the most beneficial component of the PETE programme, “It was excellent in the amount of time you got. It is a good time to properly immerse yourself in school life. The fact it was weeks means it was realistic” (Eimear, Interview, 25/11/2009). ETs acknowledged that teaching practice was their most effective learning experience as it allowed them to get into a real teaching situation and to prepare and deliver lessons accordingly, with the materials and equipment available to suit an array of individuals with different interests. This confirms previous research that teaching practice placements allows PSTs to explore understanding of teaching, apply knowledge and learning in realistic setting and to develop a greater vocabulary and comprehension of teaching (O’Sullivan, 2003; You and McCullick, 2001; O’Sullivan & Tsangaridou, 1992).

ETs were pleased with the structure of teaching practice placements, believing that ten weeks was an adequate amount of time to immerse themselves in school life and because of these benefits, ETs felt there should be more teaching practice placements in the PETE programme,
“We had little practical teaching practice and ... unless you focus on teaching practice and continuous teaching – bring in the teaching more, bring in the kids more and even get more access to schools – you will not be able to combat the progression from college to school. It is a lack of practice is what it is” (Nancy, Interview, 23/11/2009) and, “the more practice you get of teaching situations, the better. The more situations, the more schools and the more students you come across, you develop accordingly. The more exposure to real teaching situations, the better and the more confident you are” (Aine, Interview, 17/11/2009).

Many of these ETs separated teaching practice as one activity in PETE programmes and university-based activities as another, dividing professional education into two unrelated parts, with a great deal learned from the teaching practice placements and little learned from the other aspects of the PETE programme (Florio-Ruane, 2008; Rikard and Knight, 1997; O’Sullivan, 1990), “Teaching practice was the best thing that came out of the course. It prepares you” (Nancy, Experienced Teacher Interview, 23/11/2009). One teacher had an opinion juxtaposed to this, “I had such a picture-perfect experience of teaching practice it made me to believe all students were perfect ... well no ... but my experience out teaching was just miles and miles away from my teaching practice experience” (Aine, Experienced Teacher Interview, 17/11/2009). This concurs with Wright’s (2001) findings that during PETE experiences, PSTs remembered ideal conditions but these were not now the norms in schools in which they taught.

5.4 PEDAGOGICAL CONTENT KNOWLEDGE
Pedagogical content knowledge is described as the knowledge that makes content instructional; it is the integration of content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge (Hayes et al., 2009). It is the knowledge that makes content instructional and it entails the teacher translating understandings of subject matter into practice (Schempp, et al., 1998).

The ETs frequently referenced pedagogical content knowledge, with the majority of ETs critical of the pedagogical content knowledge covered in the PETE programme. The ETS felt that pedagogy must run concurrently with content and throughout all
modules, “The pedagogy module was separate from the activity modules. It would have been much more beneficial to have the pedagogical element throughout the activities. There was just not enough knowledge from a pedagogical point of view”


In essence, there must be a greater balance between pedagogy and content, a focus on pedagogical content knowledge, “In order to have that pedagogical focus you have to have the content and that is the balance. You have to get that balance between understanding the game or the concept and being able to translate it into the teaching situation” (Aine, Experienced Teacher Interview, 17/11/2009). This coincides with Schempp et al. (1998) that teachers need to translate understandings of subject matter into practice. There was an acknowledgement from ETs that pedagogical content knowledge must become a core constituent of the PETE programme,

“We did very little as regards breaking things down and teaching it back. I understand you need to know how the game works but, as regards breaking down the skills, we did not do very much of that at all. You need to be teaching people how to teach”


In developing pedagogical content knowledge, experience has a vital role to play as it develops a teacher’s pedagogical content knowledge blending knowledge of how to teach, subject matter and how pupils learn (Grossman, Smagorinsky and Valencia, 1999; Shulman, 1987).

5.4.1 Role of Experience in Developing as a Physical Education Teacher

The reason why experience is invaluable is because it enables teachers to understand theory in‘ and through‘ practice (Rovegno, 2003). ETs know techniques and how to use their knowledge in practice and because what teachers do is linked to what they think (National Institute of Education, 1975, pg. 1 cited in Housner and Griffey, 1991). In citing the role of experience, there was evidence that the PETE programme was successful in accommodating its graduates with the basics to start teaching, providing a relatively solid base from which they could operate (MacPhail et al., 2006), “You do feel, „Right, I have practiced this.” We were well prepared to start. You were not prepared to be the best you were going to be. You are not ready to cope
but you are ready to go” (Kiara, Interview, 19/11/2009). Each ET cited experience as a pre-requisite in developing as a teacher because, as teachers gain experience they get better at their job (Berliner, 1994), “Experience is what brings you along. It is through experience that you develop” (Aine, Interview, 17/11/2009). These ETs appreciated that a level of responsibility lies with them in that –The knowledge I gained in the PETE programme I have used to better myself. I did a lot of work personally” (Aine, Interview, 17/11/2009). ETs signified the extent to which teaching evolves, acknowledging that teaching progresses all the time,

“You need to continue to learn. You cannot expect to be the done deal when you leave college. You have to appreciate that it takes continuous work, continuous development and continuous reflection”

(Kiara, Interview, 19/11/2009).

5.4.2 Provision of In-Services

There is a requirement for Continuous Professional Development (CPD) because PETE programmes cannot be expected to provide all the prepositional knowledge and more importantly, the procedural knowledge – how to” knowledge which can only grow out of practice – for teaching (Dey, 1993). Previous research (O’Sullivan, 1996) indicates that most ETs have had no access to professional development for the majority of their careers. This has been the case in Ireland up until the last decade when professional development has received sustained attention and significant investment.

The biggest single area of expansion in professional development is in-service, the focus of which is to support teachers in implementing new syllabi and increasing knowledge in subject areas / disciplines / strands (O’Sullivan, 1996). All ETs attended in-services and the majority highlighted them as crucial to the development of their teaching, particularly the JCPE in-service programme undertaken in their early teaching years, –Those in-services were good and inspirational. They were invaluable. I think they are very important and I think there should be more of it” (Aine, Interview, 17/11/2009). In-services served to reinvigorate ETs, “The in-services are great at motivating you as a teacher, for giving you new ideas, to meet other teachers and to swap ideas” (Kiara, Interview, 19/11/2009). Kevin was the only dissenting voice, questioning the relevance of in-services and their
incompatibility to introducing many of the ideas in the real world of schools, “I have done a few in-services. Some of them were very good but some of them were a joke. They were totally idealistic. With in-services, some of it was good, some of it was bad and some of it was a waste of time” (Experienced Teacher Interview, 19/11/2009). This backs up other research (Armour, 2006; Armour and Yelling, 2004; Knight, 2002; Pritchard and Marshall, 2002; Wilson and Berne, 1999; Kirk and MacDonald, 1998) that CPD is seen as lacking depth, challenge, relevance and application, are off-school site and are one-day courses which are seen as ineffective in supporting teachers to enhance practice and what is learned in CPD cannot be transferred to the school context.

5.5 CURRICULUM KNOWLEDGE

Curriculum knowledge is knowledge that incorporates materials and programmes which act as ‘tools of the trade’ for teachers (Hayes et al., 2009). Teachers want rich and detailed curriculum, with teachers having a need to be provided with comprehensive curriculum and resource materials (Johnson and Kardos, 2008). Kauffman et al., (2002) found that teachers had limited access to curriculum materials and resources. Teachers lack basic supplies, resulting in a dearth of instructional resources to conduct day-to-day classes (Moulthrop et al., 2005). Appropriate curricular resources impacted the extent to which ETs could implement a proper and wide-ranging physical education programme.

5.5.1 Resources and Accessing Information

Essential to knowledge development is the availability and accessibility of information. A variety of sources of information were mentioned in addition to formalised in-service provision, ranging from the internet, to websites, books, newspapers, coaching courses, different governing bodies and other teachers. It was accepted that there was plenty of information on any aspect of the strands in the curriculum. ETs admitted they tried to keep informed but it has proven difficult to do so because there was a lack of communication with the PETE programme from which they graduated, citing the “university link being lost” (Nancy, Interview, 23/11/2009), concurring that links with the university were seen as interesting and stimulating (Dey, 2003). Knowledge taken from the PETE programme is a reference point for accessing resources, with resources such as folders on different activities and teaching
points being highlighted as particularly useful. ETs felt more resource packs could be provided, allowing prospective teachers to exit the PETE programme and enter teaching with a bank of resources on all the strands on the JCPE curriculum.

5.5.2 Planning Lessons and Schemes of Work
ETs acknowledged they were well prepared for lesson planning and schemes as they had teaching files ready and were relatively up-to-speed in that area. Teachers felt well prepared in this regard and felt they were up-to-speed and well equipped in this area. One area of concern regarding lesson plans and schemes of work was losing sight of the objective due to the necessity to tick the boxes, “There was a formula with creating lesson plans and schemes … trying to achieve cognitive and psychomotor aims. You are trying to tick the boxes. As a result, you do not really engage with it at the level you should be” (Aine, Interview, 17/11/2009). An area in which a sufficient level of engagement was not achieved through the PETE programme was assessment.

5.5.3 Employing Assessment Techniques in Physical Education
On graduating from their PETE programme, ETs displayed little recognition of assessment in physical education (MacPhail et al., 2006). Assessment emerged as a huge difficulty, perhaps the greatest, and the lack of coverage in PETE has resulted in the ETs not assessing in their own physical education classes, “Personally, I do not assess. I know that goes against the JCPE but I would find it very, very difficult to do that. I just could not get around to it to be honest. Should it happen? I suppose it should and there are different ways of doing it but I have not got that far into it. I am doing well to get my guys actually going through the JCPE programme without doing assessments as well at the same time” (Kevin, Experienced Teacher Interview, 19/11/2009). These comments were reiterated, “Assessment would be lacking in physical education in general. Assessment in physical education is only really coming into schools so I would not have done much on assessment and we certainly would not do anything on portfolio work, peer assessment or self assessment” (Nancy, Experienced Teacher Interview, 23/11/2009).

Assessment for learning is not a prominent feature in teachers’ assessment, with only one teacher acknowledging implementing it, with the basis of assessment centred on
teacher-pupil evaluation of effort, observation, participation and involvement, “We got very little preparation on assessment for learning and how to go about assessing students for physical education. Even now I would find that difficult because most of assessments would be observation. It is not very concrete if you are relying on that but yet you do not want them to have assessments whereby someone is demonstrating something and everyone else just watches them because it is very inactive then in your whole class. I think assessment for learning is important and I think it is important to see how they are actually getting on, how they are developing in all areas – not just physically but how they are actually working with others and that kind of thing. It would be good if there was more emphasis on assessment for learning” (Kiara, Experienced Teacher Interview, 19/11/2009).

This lack of assessment and accountability in physical education is a primary concern in the field as physical education teachers focus on behaviour rather than pupil learning (Stroot and Whipple, 2003). The lack of familiarity with these forms of assessments was as a result of a lack of contact with them during PETE, something that needs to be addressed, —We did not really do anything on assessment for physical education. Assessment from the education side is different because it is formal assessment but there was no physical education assessment at all at any stage. That would be one place where they definitely fell down. We still would be only coming up with our own assessments now in the school at the moment, six or seven years later” (Nancy, Experienced Teacher Interview, 23/11/2009).

5.5.4 Availability of Appropriate Curriculum Programmes

Curriculum resources and accountability are central to teachers’ day to day work and fewer than half of teachers felt they had ‘plenty’ of access to curriculum and material (Johnson and Kardos, 2008, pg. 24; Cohen & Ball, 1996).

The majority of ETs felt suitably familiar with the school JCPE syllabus, although some were disapproving of the extent to which they were exposed to the curriculum and highlighted the necessity for a greater link between the school physical education syllabus and what they experienced in the PETE programme. Kiara felt she learned more about the curriculum having exited the PETE programme, “There was a massive amount of work in breaking down the curricula into correct structures. Even,
"Look let’s take a year plan and let’s do one." A template ... we did not have anything like that” (Interview, 19/11/2009).

Some ETs entered schools where there was no physical education programme but each ET tried to make a difference in implementing a broad and balanced curriculum. In one instance there had not been a physical education teacher in the school since 1972 meaning that, in developing the curriculum, there was a necessity to start from scratch. A similar culture of physical education was experienced by others, believing that more needs to be done in PETE programmes to prepare teachers for this reality,

“There was not a brilliant ethos of physical education in the school. It would have been old school – soccer, football and hurling. There was a physical education teacher previously who would have done a lot of games and it might have been roll out a football for a lot of it. Girls had this negative thing towards physical education. I had to fight that culture initially and ... it was hard to overcome that kind of attitude ... “There are teachers graduating replacing teachers who have been teaching thirty years who are not implementing the JCPE. People need to be made aware of what it is really like or what it can be like”

(Kevin, Interview, 19/11/2009).

Games were all that constituted the physical education curriculum in many schools with Nancy explaining the process in having to change the culture evident in schools, with the seed to be ‘active agents’ sown in their PETE programme where the need to challenge current practices to accommodate new perspectives on teaching physical education was emphasised (MacPhail et al., 2006),

“I remember in my first year, two of us wanted to do gymnastics but the other physical education teacher refused. Tightening that up and getting rid of the grey areas is the key and we did that. At the end of the year, they will have done X, Y or Z and we laid that down very clearly from the very first day the pupils came in. We read through the physical education policies, told them the consequences of not doing physical education and it goes through the discipline system very quickly”

(Interview, 10/06/2010).

Each of the ETs implemented the physical education curriculum and [when the]
“curriculum is done and covered, it is great ... if we can achieve the basic guidelines of the JCPE, the kids are availing of a fantastic physical education programme” (Eimear, Interview, 25/11/2009). Van Maanen and Schein (1978) outline three orientations physical education teachers can adopt – custodianship where teachers accept and internalise common institutional practices, content innovation where teachers are empowered to make changes in a particular context and role innovation which is the complete rejection of the current system. Each of the ETs have responded in an innovative manner by implementing a wide-ranging curriculum programme.

While there was universal praise for the JCPE curriculum, the lack of a viable senior cycle equivalent was highlighted as a major disadvantage. ETs believed the current senior cycle physical education programme to be inadequate because it is unrealistic, complex, difficult to teach and teachers are not familiar with it.

5.5.5 Equipment and Facility Provision in Implementing Curricula
There was consensus that ETs had access to good equipment, conflicting Johnson and Kardos‘ (2008) research that a surprising number of schools are inadequately equipped. However, facilities is a prominent issue in an Irish context (MacPhail, Halbert, McEvilly, Hutchinson and MacDonncha (2005), serving to inhibit the possibility of delivering a sequential curriculum, resulting in either a total abandonment of learning goals or serious compromises in the programme (Siedentop, 1991),

“Our gym is a bit away but all our equipment is here. We do not have the facilities on our doorstep. We share the sports hall with the community plus another school so sometimes a lesson you would hope to have for an hour is cut short. It is limiting what the students get (...) It is great to have the sports centre and the management pay for that facility. We would have halls on the school grounds but that could only be used for gymnastics, dance and HRA circuits. It would not be appropriate for the games strand of the curriculum because it is full of drama and stage equipment so anything else is out of the question ... but the issue with the facility is distance really. In other schools all you have to do is open and close the door to an equipment room but I have to put it in the car, drive the car, put it out and take it all away afterwards. It stops or prevents me from
Kevin’s inadequate facilities has led to serious adjustments to the provision of the curriculum,

“The state of the gym floor left a lot to be desired as it slippy on the right hand side. This was addressed eventually, but as it stands I can see the slippery surface beginning to surface again. It is usable at present but the situation needs to be monitored ... I could only use half the gym ... and it got to the stage where I just said that I am not having any more physical education classes. I played on the kids to a certain extent and just told them, „Look when the school gets the gym floor fixed, there will be classes again”. The gym took about three months to fix. It should have been resolved an awful lot sooner and if it was another subject it probably would have been an urgent situation. If that was the woodwork or engineering room, it would be fixed within three days. The outdoor surface still has not been sorted as, in wet conditions it is exceptionally slippy. I do not think it is safe but given the facilities we have, it has to be used. It is falling between two stools as nobody is taking responsibility”

(Prompt Sheet 3, 3/5/2010).

The importance of having appropriate facilities is highlighted by Niamh, “excellent facilities and have excellent equipment ... we can do more or less any strand we want to so it makes teaching a lot easier and the curriculum can be more easily covered”

(Prompt Sheet 1, 13/2/2010).

5.6 KNOWLEDGE OF LEARNERS AND THEIR CHARACTERISTICS

Knowledge of learners incorporates the cognitive knowledge of learning, comprising knowledge of child development and knowledge of a particular group of learners (Hayes et al., 2009). Pupils have an indelible influence on a physical education teacher's work and it is oftentimes through the response of pupils that physical education teachers recognise their worth. In physical education, pupils are not motivated learners and this is something which new teachers have difficulty adapting

5.6.1 Dealing with Pupils' Reluctance and Benevolence to Participate in Physical Education

Pupils' lack of motivation was found by Feiman-Nemser (2003) as a particular obstacle to teaching, a finding consistent with my research. This constant battle has resulted in teachers becoming negative towards the subject and teaching it, “From a motivational point of view and looking at people from different backgrounds who have no interest … that is probably the biggest challenge. You are working with pupils who do not want to work with you and it can have a very negative impact on your whole attitude to teaching physical education” (Kevin, Experienced Teacher Interview, 19/11/2009) and “Motivation is a huge issue ... just a lack of motivation, students not bothered, disinterested, things like that lead to discipline issues. There is a serious lack of motivation. When you get a class that are very disinterested, you can not make them run. You can not make someone jump. You can not. It is completely energy-sapping when you are putting so much into it” (Kiara, Experienced Teacher Interview, 19/11/2009). Many teachers feel unprepared for this task as pupils do not care about physical education or do not want to participate (O’Sullivan, 1989).

These ETs felt they did not acquire a sufficient knowledge base on learners from their PETE programme, with the lack of participation amongst pupils coming as a surprise as teachers were enthusiastic physical education participants in school themselves (Rikard and Knight, 1997), “Most people that end up in the course [the PETE programme] are highly motivated and enjoy sport. You go to a situation where that might not be the case. You might have five in a class that are motivated. You could have 25 who are not” (Kiara, Interview, 19/11/2009) and, “Inclusion is your starting point and naively, inclusion in the PETE programme is taken as a given. In my situation ... it was a fight to get inclusion in the first place” (Kevin, Interview, 19/11/2009). ETs believed that inclusion is the preface for everything in physical education and as a result any form of participation from pupils, particularly amongst girls, would be encouraged,

“You know, if they are not enthusiastic at least they are in their gear and even if they are only walking in and off the court they are getting some small bit of
exercise that if they are sitting on their behinds they will not get. You have to give an allowance. If I see somebody who has not brought in gear for a while, I just make a point saying, „Oh that is brilliant. I am so glad you have your gear now today”. I would acknowledge it. All of that would be a positive and they might not be breaking out in a sweat at the end of it but at least they are doing something and the more you can encourage them to do that little bit, the better”

(Nancy, Interview, 10/06/2010).

While it is deemed imperative that appropriately qualified teachers teach physical education (UESCO, 1978), a further issue with inclusion and participation of pupils is involving non-qualified physical education teachers in delivering the physical education programme and this common scenario has repercussions, primarily in the implementation of a games-focussed curriculum (Hardman, 2008b; MacPhail et al., 2005; Marshall and Hardman, 2000; Ojeme, 1986). Non-qualified teachers teaching physical education presented difficulties because “pupils are not getting quality physical education” (Nancy, Interview, 10/06/2010), making it difficult to implement the curriculum,

“Physical education does fall down [when I am gone with teams] because they would bring in someone to replace me who is unqualified. The way I would look at it is they would not have an unqualified woodwork, metalwork or art teacher taking their classes but physical education, in that respect is not seen as important enough to have a proper replacement teacher. It upsets the rhythm of what I might have been doing. Oftentimes I find that teachers, when they are taking physical education, would get a football from the staff room and bring the class out to kick a ball. It brings the whole thing down because you are back to 15 lads playing football and there are 9 people standing against the wall. They get three weeks of that and straight away, the whole thing is on a downward trend in the students’ eye. I have to fix that situation again, turn that mindset around and the pupils would be slower to turn and momentum is lost. It would definitely affect the whole running of the physical education curriculum in the school”

(Kevin, Interview, 10/06/2010).

Others coped better with this issue,

“You might have two qualified physical education teachers with two others who are helping out. They have to do whatever area they are familiar with and you
would have to cover the other areas. You would have to adapt your syllabus from year to year in order to deal with whatever staff is on at a particular time ... and we do adapt it. Over the three years you get it covered. It is annoying when you are trying to implement a curriculum but your hands are tied. At the end of the day you have to work with what you have and you have to get on with it because you know they are not going to change it”

(Niamh, Interview, 21/11/2009).

Another significant difficulty is resistance from pupils and because physical education is an active subject, discipline problems are more prevalent than in normal classroom environments, enhanced not only from over-active pupils but also from passive pupils who do not want to participate (Mancini et al., 1984).

5.6.2 Dealing with Disciplinary Issues in Physical Education

The difficulties associated with behaviour management were recognised by ETs, “Behaviour management is a tricky one. Kids and their backgrounds are different. It is just a minefield” (Kiara, Interview, 19/11/2009). Only one ET felt prepared for the behaviour management aspect of teaching, “I would have been confident in my ability in the classroom dealing with discipline ... I think we were relatively prepared” (Aine, Interview, 17/11/2009). The majority of ETs felt this aspect of teaching was insufficiently covered in the PETE programme, with one teacher particularly vocal, “We did not do half enough of behaviour management scenarios specifically for physical education. There is a classroom management module that is done through education but ... that is of zero relevance” (Kevin, Interview, 19/11/2009), reinforced by a peer, “It is the motivation it takes. You are going to have kids that really hate physical education. The challenges are kids and their lack of motivation and their lack of interest. You just have to take it that it is just the way it is. Characters can really challenge the patience or safety within physical education ... and it is difficult to motivate them and keep them involved without having a confrontation with them or having constant arguments”

(Eimear, Experienced Teacher Interview, 25/11/2009).

In dealing with behaviour, one ET highlighted that “it is the reasoning of talking them around situations ... winning arguments with kids and still keeping them on your side.
When I was in first year teaching I ended up in a fair few shouting matches with kids whereas that would never happen now. More time [in the PETE Programme] should be put into behavioural management, conflict management, psychology and pedagogy, stuff like that. I think that would be beneficial” (Kevin, Interview, 19/11/2009). The opportunity to practice developing behaviour management skills were not afforded to ETs during their PETE programme and this inexperience resulted in ETs experiencing uncertainty in dealing with behaviour management situations (MacPhail et al., 2006).

Pupils’ benevolence towards physical education makes it difficult to promote a sense of success in pupils, “I certainly try and make sure that every single person will get to some point of success in the class. The things you have going against that is that some kids do not have the coordination. Some kids are totally disinterested. They could not care less. They will stand beside their friends and have a chat” (Kiara, Interview, 19/11/2009). However, despite all these challenges, it is possible, “We brought second years orienteering ... One of the pair that won it had never won a medal for anything before and ... he was made up. He got a trophy and he never ever got a trophy for sport in his entire life. You have to look at the bigger picture too” (Nancy, Interview, 10/06/2010).

These ETs admitted that the most important aspect of teaching physical education is developing this sense of success and successful ties with pupils, being committed to the philosophy of it being about the pupils, being steadfast in their desire to want to help young people learn and develop and believing they can make a difference to pupils’ lives (Cochra-Smith, 2004; Rovegno, 2003; Darling-Hammand and Sclan, 1996; Fejgin et al., 1995). “When classes go right and kids are with you and they achieve something, it is brilliant. You get a buzz out of it. So success within the job is great” (Kiara, Interview, 19/11/2009) and “When you get a great lesson and you see them enjoying it, it is really brilliant. You are happy. They are happy. You can see them going out with red faces and sweat pouring off them. Just even, „Thank you,” or „That was great,” or „Can we do that again next week”” (Eimear, Interview, 25/11/2009). Overall, ETs wanted to provide pupils with the opportunity to learn and
experience a broad and balanced physical education curriculum and that these activities should be enjoyable and fun (MacPhail et al., 2006).

5.7 KNOWLEDGE OF EDUCATIONAL CONTEXTS
Knowledge of educational contexts includes an understanding of specific school environments, the catchment area and the wider community (Hayes et al., 2009). There is evidence to suggest that physical educators are not prepared for the realities of educational contexts (Williams & Williamson, 1995). It is necessary for physical education teachers to address the variables – the contextual workplace, inappropriate facilities, large class sizes, isolation, the low status of physical education and poor interaction with school administration – that affect their work (Stroot and Whipple, 2003; Graber, 2001; Macdonald, 1995; Meek and Behets, 1999; Moreira et al., 1995). These contextual variables are examined under appropriate and equitable teaching assignments, working relationships with colleagues and school organisation and leadership.

5.7.1 Appropriate and Equitable Teaching Assignments
Appropriate and equitable teaching assignments are assignments that are manageable and within a teacher’s field of expertise (Johnson and Kardos, 2008). Two issues that surfaced for ETs were large class size and the extent of the coaching responsibility placed upon physical education teachers.

5.7.1.1 Large Class Numbers
The issue of class size was a minor one for some ETs, “Most year groups – 1st, 2nd, 5th and 6th years are all timetabled together ... it can be quite difficult ... you would have to change what you are doing and adapt. You would not be able to teach your class because there would not be space. We generally would just do circuits in a situation like that. It would be easier if groups were timetabled in separately but I do not think we have the resources to do that within the school so you just have to put up with it and deal with it as best you can” (Niamh, Prompt Sheet 1, 13/2/2010). For others, excessively large classes had serious repercussions in terms of implementing the curriculum and participation levels of pupils (Johnson, 2004),

“For fifth and sixth years, this year we had 60 or 70 timetabled for the gym together and a lot of the time, we had to do cross-court basketball or cross-court
hockey. That is not physical education for anyone. There was no teaching done. It was exactly what we were told not to do in the PETE programme, which is throw in the ball but what can you do with sixty and with another 20 sitting out? Traditionally across the board, the fifth year group I had this year would have been very good for participating in physical education but now, definitely less than half were doing it and it is a direct result of what happened this year. Because it is such a mess, they will not bring in gear and ... I can not discipline them. It is just an absolute nightmare. It is a mess” (...) I have just given up. It is not even Christmas yet and I have given up. We elevated physical education. We have done so much work on it. It is incredible. It used to be an absolute nightmare to teach. We really got participation and we implemented the programme properly. And now I am back to crowd control ... It is soul destroying after all the work we put in for four years. We literally came in here yesterday and said, „Right, we have just given up on it. It is an absolute shambles and it was not like that last year. We had it absolutely perfect last year and it just destroys you. It really does destroy you (...) We have spent the last six years trying to reverse this and who is going to be there to pick up the tab again? We are going to have to start from scratch again for the entire year with that particular group ... I can see them sitting on that bench already. It is hard to break them when you have broken them already. It will be a battle (...) It is heartbreaking. It really is demoralising. I just throw my hands up and go what is the point? What is the point of all that extra time? ... I am at the stage now where I am indifferent (...) It got to the stage where I really did get despondent and it is not professional but what else can you do?”

(Nancy, Interview, 23/11/2009; Prompt Sheet 2, 13/02/2010; Interview, 10/06/2010; Interview, 23/11/2009; Prompt Sheet 3, 19/03/2010)

Another teacher found it difficult to cater for pupils when class sizes were large,

“With groups of 30 and to cater for all of them is much more difficult. The mechanics of working with balls if you are doing games, the amount of equipment you have and facilitating large groups puts more pressure on me, or on any physical education teacher, to maintain everyone’s activity levels. When you have big groups, where do you put the extra pupils to make sure they are getting play
time? It makes proper and full participation more difficult and it can be crowd management. It makes it more challenging without a doubt”  

(Eimear, Interview, 07/06/2010).

5.7.1.2 Coaching Responsibilities as part of the Physical Education Teacher Remit

ETs were concerned by their lack of preparation in the extent of physical education teacher's involvement in extra-curricular activities (MacPhail et al., 2006). One teacher summarized the extent of the commitment for physical education teachers to assume coaching roles, with many ETs suffering ‘role conflict’ indicating that the role of coaching can even subsume their role as a physical education teacher (Stroot and Whipple, 2003; Quigley, Slack and Smith, 1989; Sisley, Capel and Desertrain, 1987),

“I would have an interest in extra-curricular activities but not to the same extent that I am currently doing. I think going into the job you were wary that is what part of your role is going to be. Sometimes that role takes over. You know, they [other colleagues] say, ‘Ah sure the physical education teacher, she is taking loads of teams off, that is fine.’ My physical education classes are totally suffering. I end up losing a lot of time with classes. I am here as a physical education teacher and not as a coach but more of your time ends up dedicated to teams ... The role of the coach with the teacher is an issue that needs to be addressed because the physical education is usually the coach so they end up losing a lot of time with their classes who they only might see once a week”

(Kiara, Interview, 19/11/2009).

ETs did not expect the time consumed in the coaching role to become so central to their role, confirming previous research (Stroot and Whipple, 2003; Quigley, Slack and Smith, 1989; Sisley, Capel and Desertrain, 1987),

“I find that everything sports-wise is thrown at me. The physical education teacher is always the fall guy and out of their devotion to sport and their will to see things done well, they will take an extra team. Other teachers are unwilling to put in the same amount of work and physical education teachers would like to see it run right and, rather than leave something fall between two stools, they will try and pick it up and do something with it themselves”

(Kevin, Interview, 10/06/2010).
5.7.2 Working Relationships with Colleagues

The lack of respect teaching colleagues have for physical education (Sparkes, Templin and Schempp, 1990) was a significant issue for ETs,

“Teachers were taking pupils out of physical education class and they were not telling me beforehand. At the end of the year, I can understand it a bit more but this was at the start of the year. It is just professional to come and let me know that they need pupils for this class or that class. Instead they are just taken out. It is very frustrating because one pupil who I did not allow go, because it was not sanctioned, has never done physical education since. It is just how the students see you and it would have compromised me with a couple of pupils involved big time – big time! I think it is absolutely the height of unprofessionalism. It is just very undermining and disrespectful to both me and physical education”

(Nancy, Experienced Teacher End of year Interview, 10/06/2010). This benevolent attitude towards physical education is highlighted in another particular encounter,

“One of the teachers passed a comment to both the art teacher and me saying, „Sure what are we saying good luck to them for, all they are doing is kicking a football and drawing a few pictures”. That is the general attitude towards physical education and sport. That is their view … and it is very hard to overcome that (…) I feel as the physical education teacher, physical education is not valued to the degree that I would like and it would impact on my relationship with certain members of staff … It would be more an ignorance towards what is required for physical education. They would not realise what is required to run it properly. The school would be probably totally ignorant to the JCPE … Teachers in general would be totally ignorant to the fact that there is a curriculum in physical education or totally ignorant to the fact of the different strands and … still having the attitude that physical education is only kicking a football around (…) I found myself in the last six months … I totally slackened off. I let things slide that I would never have let slide. That was due to the lack of importance placed on physical education and sport in the school… Sometimes you would find it would affect you when you go into a class and you just lose total enthusiasm and you just let things go that you would not have let go previously. You would not be as driven. You would not be as motivated. You would not be as organised as maybe you should be. Motivation certainly does wane. I would find in certain
stages in the year or coming towards the end of term, I would have a very negative attitude. Other teachers would not laugh and sneer at physical education but they would not see the value in it. They would not see what I am doing as work. They think I am having a great time. They think I am out playing sport with the kids”

(Kevin, Prompt Sheet 1, 28/01/2010; Interview, 19/11/2010; Interview, 10/06/2010).

It is against this backdrop that the necessity for collaboration amongst the physical education department was stressed.

5.7.2.1 Lack of Collaboration with physical education colleagues

Previous research (Knight, 2002; Visscher and Witziers, 2004) states that the essence of professional development lies in learning with colleagues in subject department or across personal networks, as teachers hold other teachers’ expertise in high regard (Sandholtz, 2002). The presence of more than one physical education teacher in a school was deemed advantageous, a benefit for three ETs,

“There are three qualified physical education teachers so we spread classes between us. We would both be strong in different areas so, for example she would be particularly strong at athletics so she would normally do athletics with all of the first years … There would be constant communication on planning the JCPE curriculum and the physical education programme with the seniors. Everyone has their own teaching traits but generally speaking, we would talk and throw things around with the other teacher often. It [having another physical education teacher] is a positive. I think it would be a negative if I was there on my own. Even if I take the example of athletics, I would not be able to go into it in as much detail or depth as the other teacher because I do not have experience, knowledge, the interest or involvement in it. I have learned a lot from her in that area, just as, I’m sure, she has from me in other areas and that is how it should be”

(Eimear, Interview, 07/06/2010).

There are many instances in which these ETs felt alone in their questions and problems (Mayer et al., 2003) when collaboration with a physical education working colleague was not particularly strong,

“We have not discussed content, teaching methods, assessment or other areas that I would have discussed with teachers in the past (…) In the physical
education department we have had informal discussions about physical education related issues but have still not had a formal meeting this term (...) The school has had three new physical education teachers in three years so I am a little less inclined to invest time and energy in collaboration (...) I was a bit disillusioned in one sense thinking if this was always going to be the way ... you know is there going to be any kind of consistency from year to year or am I going to be starting every year by handing over a handbook of what I have been doing to the next young teacher that comes straight out of college and just leaves? This year, I have had less collaboration with the other teacher. That lack of collaboration has come from a number of different angles – partly to do with myself but partly to do with a tiny bit disillusionment with the inconsistency of a new teacher starting all over again”

(Aine, Prompt Sheet 1, 31/01/2010; Prompt Sheet 2, 05/03/2010; Prompt Sheet 3, 11/05/2010; Interview, 03/06/2010).

In the main, opportunities to collaborate were greatly received with the majority of ETs in favour of extending collaboration beyond individual schools as, oftentimes, isolation is prevalent in schools particularly in schools with only one physical education teacher.

5.7.2.2 Isolation
Aine had an interesting take on being the only physical education teacher in the school,

“Maybe in some ways I felt isolated that I was on my own in my department. You are completely responsible. Having the whole school evaluation was even scary in those terms but it was really liberating when I came to the school first and it was quite a good challenge for me, a nice place to start when you can make your own programme. You control the whole programme so it is nice in a sense”

(Aine, Interview, 03/06/2010).

ETs acknowledged isolation had been an obstacle at some stage in their career, affirming that when isolation is prevalent, teachers struggle through the entire year, enhanced when there is only one physical education teacher in the school building (Stroot and Whipple, 2003; Curtner-Smith, 2001),
“I am on my own as a physical education teacher. When something does not go great or when something annoys you or when kids are not interested, you really do not have any back-up (...) I am the only physical education teacher in the school and feel sort of isolated in the sense that I would not have any colleagues to bounce ideas off in relation to my subject. Plenty of academic teachers do not see the value or rarely acknowledge the value of my work, often considering physical education as an easy subject to teach. They see it as recreational and of no benefit to education. They do not realise the massive part it plays (...) In terms of just the physical education aspect alone, they would not know anything about it and they would not see your frustration ... they would not understand. It does affect me. I would feel very isolation and basically I am working on my own in terms of subject department meetings. Everybody is going off in their fours and fives to talk about their department and I am there and I am on my own”

(Kevin, Interview, 19/11/2009; Interview 10/06/2010; Prompt Sheet 1, 28/01/2010).

5.7.3 School Organisation and Leadership
Lack of administrative support for programmes is frustrating for many physical educators because it causes a serious affect in the maintenance or improvement of an effective programme (Siedentop, 1991). There is a feeling that the school organisation and leadership are indifferent or non-supportive in what happens in physical education (Marshall and Hardman, 2000; Pulis, 1994),

“There has been an issue with a 6th year class. Two female students, on separate occasions have given me excuse notes from home to say that they do not want to take part in physical education because they are under pressure with study. When I approached the principal about this matter, the fact that the parent did not want their child to take part in physical education was enough. The students are now studying during physical education time. I feel that this issue has not been dealt with correctly and may set a precedence and an undesirable image of physical education for sixth years”

(Prompt Sheet 2, 5/3/2010).

Kevin summed up that a principal’s support, or lack of support, stretches into many domains, confirming Darling-Hammond and Sclan’s (1996) research that principal leadership is important because they are the broker of working conditions within and throughout the school,
“Where there is not support is infrastructural or administrative support – be it time or be it when you are not there, there is not a qualified replacement. Your frustrations are borne out of lack of time, when you are away who is replacing you, when the facilities are not up to scratch, when they are not sorted and how long it takes for them to get them sorted. It is borne out of the respect it [physical education] is given and the status it [physical education] is afforded”

(Interview, 10/06/2010).

The school organisation and leadership, and in particular the lack of it, has serious repercussions on the status of physical education in schools.

5.7.3.1 Status of Physical Education in Post-Primary Schools

Physical education does not have the status or structure of other subjects and, as a result, teachers believe physical education does not receive the recognition it deserves. One ET, Nancy admitted that it is this benevolence that is the root of the physical education problem, with another peer commenting,

“Is it a valued subject? Is it not? Are students pulled out for debates, music practice, extra classes or is the hall taken over for a few weeks every year for the concert? If there are discipline issues in physical education, is the attitude, „At sure, it is only physical education ... they are only going a bit mad. They will be alright”’”

(Kiara, Interview, 19/11/2009).

Other subject teachers convey a lack of respect for physical education as a subject, a constant recurring phenomenon, with the status of physical education paling in comparison to other subjects as lessons are more frequently cancelled than so called „academic subjects’ and the emphasis on „academic‘ subjects place physical education towards the bottom of schools‘ importance (Marshall and Hardman, 2000; Kirk, 1988),

“I feel totally undervalued. Sometimes you come home and say, „Could I be doing anything better? Could I be making more of myself? Am I challenged? Is there an incentive for me to try and do what I’m doing better?“ There is not because of the total lack of recognition (...) it [status] comes from the attitude that is in the school and it comes from the support and importance placed on physical
education in the school ... it [status] is outside my ability to change and it is really at the discretion of the principal”

(Kevin, Interview, 19/11/2009; Interview, 10/06/2010).

Armour and Jones (1998) hypothesise that the inescapable conclusion is that physical education is not viewed as educationally worthy in a high-status academic sense, demonstrated in the time allocation provided for physical education.

5.7.3.2 Timetabling of physical education in schools
Timetabling emerged as an issue for many of ETs, stating that single 35-40 minute classes are inadequate to cover content meaning that physical education provision in Ireland, as in many countries, is not implemented as per national recommendations (Hardman, 2008; MacPhail et al., 2005)

“I have forty minute classes. I could see seven different groups in a day and you are rushed off your feet (...) Kids are only starting to get into something when the bell is gone. They get frustrated with how short the period is. In 40 minutes, it takes 10 minutes by the time they get across to the gym and get changed. They have to leave 5 minutes early so you are talking 25 minutes contact time with them. The way I run my classes, you are trying to teach them. The first 15 minutes might be drills and coaching and then they only get a 10 minute game time. The kids might not be ready for a game but you feel you have to put them into one so that they get a little bit of enjoyment out of it. Essentially at the end of the day, all kids want is games. In that regard it is frustrating for the pupils and it is frustrating for the teacher. Obviously, in a 25 minute class, you can not get into anything as much. At present, I try to implement the syllabus of the JCPE programme within the time allocated but this is proving impossible. In an 80 minute class you could have 20 minutes to play around with in terms of skills and drills, practices, coaching and things like that. You could get a 40 minute game and have your 7 – 8 minutes either side for getting changed and getting in and be comfortable with it and get quality stuff or content done”

(Kevin, Interview, 19/11/2009; Interview, 10/06/2010).

A compulsory double 80 minute class period was deemed a minimum requirement (MacPhail et al., 2005),
“We have double physical education classes and that is a good structure because I can get things covered. If it was a single class, it would be a waste of time. I can not see it working for us. Having a double class is a big benefit in covering the curriculum and for pupils to get a sense of achievement or a sense of physical education. Pupils can get into it. They can get their game at the end. They can do whatever I have planned ... I would say that we get great support from the management and that is reflected in the timetable”

(Eimear, Interview, 06/06/2010).

Furthermore, time allocation for physical education for these ETs decreased with some pupils having no opportunity to pursue physical education in senior cycle. This reduction in physical education was apparent across the board, with the decrease in time especially dramatic for the 14 to 16 year old age group, with time reducing from seventy-five minutes to fifty-seven minutes from junior to senior cycle respectively (Annerstedt and Claes, 2008; Hardman, 2008a; Hardman, 2008b; Halbert and MacPhail, 2005; Annerstedt & Patriksson, 2000; Marshall and Hardman, 2000; Allert & Bergh, 1996; Harris, 1994),

“The transition years have been cut this year to one single period per week. Fifth and sixth years are timetabled opposite another subject so there is a third of the year not doing physical education ... I do not know how that can be solved. We just do not have enough time to teach it”

(Aine, Experienced Teacher Interview, 17/11/2009).

5.7.4 Implications of Educational Context Knowledge
ETs believed PSTs “were not exposed enough with real life situations. You are dealing in ideal situations” (Kevin, Interview, 19/11/2009). Others echoed the lack of realism in the PETE programme, “Things that were expected of us were unrealistic to what actually happens in an actual class, for example trying to bring balloons into a basketball lesson” (Niamh, Interview, 21/11/2009) and —The setting in college is very idealistic, even the fact that people will do everything. The reality is that a lot of students do not want to do it” (Kiara, Interview, 19/11/2009). ETs felt unprepared for schools, “The impression I was given was totally different to what it is. In the course [the PETE programme], physical education is respected and is seen high up the table of things but that is not how it is in school” (Eimear, Interview, 25/11/2009). ETs
were uncertain of the link between the educational context knowledge and real life practice covered in the PETE programme, as the ETs felt that the PETE programme avoided addressing the realities of working conditions within schools and PETE participants remember ideal conditions,

“We would have got little information how physical education fits into the whole school setting. You are trying to fight for your time and the curriculum and trying to ensure that teachers do not come and take people from your classes because it is only physical education. I cannot remember ever saying, „Oh yea, physical education is under-rated””


Covering this knowledge in college is difficult because “all situations are different and it is specific to your school context” (Nancy, Experienced Teacher Interview, 23/11/2009). This is in line with Elbaz (1983) research that knowledge is situated due to the fact it grows out of, and is shaped by practice. This led to questions as to whether the reality of schools can be addressed in the PETE programme, “That is something you can not necessarily teach and something you have to be out there and learn” (Aine, Experienced Teacher Interview, 17/11/2009).

5.7.4.1 Commitment to Teaching Physical Education

Overall, the demands of the job have resulted in many ETs citing physical education teaching as tiring, draining and requiring a lot of energy. ETs felt that it “really does take an awful lot out of you” (Eimear, Interview, 25/11/2009), with Kevin expressing his disillusionment, “Six years after being in a job, you go out with full hope. The more you do it the more negative you get because it is just totally undervalued from right up to the very top of the Government” (Interview, 19/11/2009). In order to remain in teaching, and committed to teaching, rewards have to outweigh frustrations (Darling-Hammond and Slan, 1996). When frustration prevails, teachers‘ desire for teaching diminishes considerably, having severe implications with regards to teacher retention.

As regards teaching in ten years time, or perhaps until retirement, the majority indicated this was not their preference as they believed they would not have the same level of enthusiasm, “Ultimately it is a young person’s game. I do not see that it is
going to be on-going forever. With physical education, I can not imagine being 50 years of age and running around after them. I am not sure I would be as enthusiastic about it any more. I can not see it no” (Nancy, Interview, 23/11/2009). This would suggest that many teachers plan to make a short term contribution to teaching, committing to a few years, before entering another line of work (Peske et al., 2001). Furthermore, two ETs (Kiara and Kevin), after their seventh year teaching, have left the physical education teaching profession. This would confirm that while attrition rates in Ireland historically have been relatively low, there is evidence to suggest this trend may be changing (Killeavy, 2006).

5.8 KNOWLEDGE OF EDUCATIONAL ENDS, PURPOSES, VALUES AND PHILOSOPHICAL AND HISTORICAL INFLUENCES

Shulman (1987) promotes the study of Piaget, Maslow, Erikson and Bloom, as a general understanding of their work can provide a valuable knowledge source for teachers, whilst also providing a precursor through which good and effective teaching practices can emanate. The value attached to these aspects of the PETE programme varied between, “things like philosophy and sociology, those groundings and those subjects were very interesting ... there was a nice balance and it is good that they were on the course” (Aine, Interview, 17/11/2009) to, “the more theoretical modules, how useful it was are debatable. It does inform you but relevance to teaching? I know it is supposed to give you more of a sense of where you coming from but I think they should put less of an emphasis on these areas because I do not know how it impacts within the actual classroom” (Kiara, Interview, 19/11/2009).

With regards to the theoretical element, the firm grounding received was viewed as a valuable component,

“Things like philosophy and sociology ... I was interested in those as a person and as a teacher. Those groundings and those subjects were very interesting to me. I really feel we had such a great introduction to philosophy and sociology in our first or second year in college – a nice balance and really good that they were on the course. The balance for me – the balance in sociology and philosophy was good. Of what I can remember, it was very intense and at a very high level. It is such a huge element and being aware of all of the issues that come up to do with sport”
Others expressed different opinions, that little was gained from the PETE programme with regards to the theoretical components, “Least helpful ... I would have really felt was philosophy. It just went completely over my head. I thought it was a complete waste of a module. It did nothing whatsoever for me” (Nancy, Experienced Teacher Interview, 23/11/2009), elaborated by another ET,

“There were areas I would have seriously enjoyed but use in teaching? Like history of education? Philosophy ... the more theoretical modules, how useful it was is debatable. There seemed to be a fairly large emphasis on it – philosophy, aesthetics, things like that ... things that were interesting but not necessarily useful. They are hugely enjoyable ... it does inform you ... it does broaden the mind ... but relevance to teaching? I am not sure where they come in. I know it is supposed to give you more of a sense of where you coming from a teacher ... and I understand where they are coming from but I just do not think the same emphasis needs to be on it. I think they should put less of an emphasis on these areas because I do not know how it impacts within the actual classroom. It does not necessarily have a lot of practical use in the classroom”

(Kiara, Experienced Teacher Interview, 19/11/2009).

Darling-Hammond (2008) states a dilemma for teacher educators exists in integrating theoretically-based knowledge with experienced-based knowledge. These particular findings would support the presence of this dilemma within PETE programmes and backs up Curtner-Smith’s (2001) finding that coursework not directly related to teaching is viewed as not useful and, while the majority of PSTs found value in what they learned on campus, unless they apply these frameworks, knowledge provided remained of little value in becoming a teacher.

For one teacher, the theoretical benefits were a huge advantage and it has resulted in incorporating these aspects into her teaching, “The theoretical aspects were very useful. Currently we are doing modules. It is a triple class a week of sport science with transition year students and we cover psychology, physiology and sociology of sport within that. In the triple class on sport science, we bring all that into it so definitely it is very useful and relevant” (Niamh, Experienced Teacher Interview, 21/11/2009). This would seem to suggest that PETE programmes must strike a
balance between theory and practice as teaching is rooted in theory and inseparable in
practice and, when practical and theoretical elements converge, planned, guided and
sustained interaction within physical education can occur, positively influencing the
physical education programmes in many schools (Clift and Brady, 2005; Grossman,
Smagorinsky and Valencia, 1999).

5.9 CONCLUSION
It is clear that a number of issues arose and these have had significant repercussions
on ETs’ motivation and commitment to teaching physical education. In the next
section the significance of these findings are discussed around two aspects

(1) The occupational utility of knowledge acquired during the PETE programme

(2) The working conditions that impact and effect physical education teachers’
career decision.

These two aspects are looked at with respect to the changing perceptions of beginning
and experienced physical education teachers and the extent to which experience has a
role in changing such perceptions.
Chapter Six
Shared aspects of Beginning and Experienced Teachers’ Experiences of a PETE Programme and the Reality of Teaching in Schools

6.1 INTRODUCTION
Data collection for beginning teachers (BTs) involved an initial interview in October 2009, follow-up interviews in March 2010 with three of the BTs and end of year interviews in June 2010. In the interim period each of the BTs maintained monthly prompt sheets. Data collection for experienced teachers (ETs) involved an initial interview in October or November, an end of year interview in June and monthly prompt sheets in the interim period. In this chapter the shared results across the two cohorts are discussed with respect to the three research questions;

How do beginning and experienced physical education teachers view the occupational utility of knowledge acquired during the PETE programme?

To what extent are changing perceptions of physical education attributed to experiences of beginning and experienced physical education teachers?

What working conditions impact physical education teachers’ career decisions?

The findings are divided up around two aspects (1) The occupational utility of knowledge acquired during the PETE programme and (2) the working conditions that impact and effect physical education teachers’ career decision. These two aspects are looked at with respect to the changing perceptions of beginning and experienced physical education teachers and the extent to which experience has a role in changing such perceptions. In acknowledging Lawson’s (1983a) socialisation into the physical education profession, the occupational utility of knowledge acquired during the PETE programme primarily refers to the professional phase, with working conditions primarily referring to the organisational socialisation phase. These will be examined to determine if these two distinct phases of socialisation are indeed compatible with the suggestion that school-based values are likely to predominate (Grossman,

6.2 OCCUPATIONAL UTILITY OF KNOWLEDGE

The occupational utility of knowledge acquired during the PETE programme is contextualised with Shulman’s (1987) seven knowledge bases in mind. There were varying degrees of success in providing and arming the BTs and ETs with the utility of knowledge required to teach physical education in the reality of schools. The occupational utility of knowledge acquired is analysed with respect to the usefulness of the knowledge gained and whether the BTs and ETs preferred more of the same experiences or whether a restructuring of the experiences is required.

6.2.1 Content Knowledge in the Applied Practical Studies (APS) in the PETE Programme

The APS of the PETE programme were particularly valued by the BT and ET cohorts, citing them as relevant and beneficial. The BTs appeared more critical of the content knowledge they attained, particularly in relation to an insufficient depth of knowledge obtained and a lack of time in many of these aspects. It is perhaps unsurprising that while many ETs were critical of the content knowledge provided, it was not evident to the same extent as was the case with the BTs. It is important to state that this omission may not have been a direct result of their experiences with the PETE programme but firstly, that it is now seven years since they exited the PETE programme and may have forgotten the extent to which the PETE programme did or did not prepare them in this regard. Secondly, ETs have accumulated a wealth of experience over the course of seven years teaching, with the result that their perceived confidence in content knowledge has been enhanced. This may be one way in which experience has resulted in a changing perception of teaching physical education.

In analysing the content knowledge obtained, BTs bemoaned that they did not have to learn activities – skills from the activities and rules of the activities – in as much detail as they would have wished. The reason for this could be due to the PETE programme attempting to offer more transferable skills of APS than the intricacies of rules, which one may expect to be embedded within the APS experiences. This view is different to that of ETs who appeared to have undertaken, in some instances, a more intensive
course with regards to learning rules of activities and the associated skills of the activity. There was an acknowledgement from ETs that, while the content knowledge conveyed was done through a coaching-oriented setting, the content knowledge covered was largely relevant and applicable to teaching physical education in a school setting. Niamh (ET), in her analysis of student-teachers, feels this content knowledge is not now being provided to a sufficient degree, a suggestion which these BTs would appear to support. This fundamental difference may point to the reason why ETs displayed an apparent confidence in the amount of content knowledge they possessed and their preparedness for teaching physical education.

At this juncture, it is important to state that the PETE programme undertaken by the ETs and BTs has undergone change. While the changes that have occurred in the PETE programme is beyond the scope of this thesis, and a further analysis on the types of experiences that seem to arm PSTs with the content knowledge they require may need to be conducted, the overall feeling was that ETs seemed more positive in the provision of content knowledge from the PETE programme and the structure of these APS modules than their BT counterparts. This would seem to suggest that improvements and advancements should be made in the delivery of APS modules to focus on providing PSTs with a greater occupational utility of knowledge.

6.2.1.1 Teaching Practice and its Effect on Knowledge Development

Both cohorts of BTs and ETs recognised the value and benefit of teaching practice placements. There was only one dissenting voice from the BT (Claire) and ET (Niamh) cohorts, both implying that teaching practice placements appeared to provide an unrealistic representation of real teaching, confirming that teaching practice placements are not always an effective learning context for all (You and McCullick, 2001; O’Sullivan and Tsangaridou, 1992). In general, the consensus from both cohorts was that teaching practice placements served to prepare PSTs well for the demands placed on them in teaching physical education in post-primary schools and it was recognised as the most beneficial and important aspect of PETE programmes (Behets and Vergauwen, 2006; Guyton and McIntyre, 1990; Fagan and Laine, 1980). Furthermore, teaching practice placements received praise from both cohorts in terms of its structure and design, allowing PSTs to apply knowledge and learning in realistic settings (You and McCullick, 2001).
Another area related to teaching practice placements was the lack of appreciation from both cohorts in constructed teaching episodes in the PETE programme. BTs and ETs pointed to improvements in behaviour management as the primary area in which teaching practice was useful and relevant. This was juxtaposed to experiences in university-based teaching experiences with little relevance or value placed on these experiences in the PETE programme. As both BTs and ETs hinted, the teaching role supersedes practices in university, teaching experiences contrive realistic settings which the university cannot, and much more is learned in teaching experiences with regards to developing teaching skills, content and dealing with diverse and at-risk pupils than can be learned at university (You and McCullick, 2001; O′Sullivan and Tsangaridou, 1992; Paese, 1987).

In improving the occupational utility of knowledge, these cohorts favoured, not a reconstruction or reconfiguring of teaching practice placements, but merely an extension of these placements to increase exposure to real-life teaching situations PSTs are likely to encounter on entering post-primary schools. BTs and ETs requested that PETE should offer more teaching practice placement opportunities, conveying a limited appreciation that university-based experience can contrive realistic behavioural management or discipline settings (Siedentop, 1991). By encountering a number of additional teaching practice opportunities, the transition from PST to teacher could be made more effective. Caution should be exercised in promoting this development as there is evidence to suggest that potential problems exist with PETE programmes dominated by field-experiences (You and McCullick, 2001; O′Sullivan and Tsangaridou, 1992; Zeicher, 1992). Therefore, while teaching practice is advantageous, it cannot be to the detriment of having no theoretical-based learning.

6.21.2 Assessment during the PETE Programme and its Contribution to Knowledge Development

Many of the assessment modes used during the PETE programme were deemed irrelevant by BTs due to the inability to garner appropriate teaching resources from them. For that reason, resource packs were particularly favoured as PSTs would leave the PETE programme with a sufficient bank of resources, something that BTs bemoaned a lack of. Again, this may be an indication of where BTs′ priorities lay,
that is, valuing and prioritising knowledge that has a direct impact on teaching. The issue of resources did not emerge as such a big issue for the ETs, although they bemoaned the lack of assessment in physical education covered in the PETE programme, with the result that only two teachers admitted that it was only now, seven years into teaching physical education, that they were thinking about assessing in physical education. The remaining ETs did not display any tendency to change or alter their limited assessment practice, unsurprising given that the teachers felt ill-prepared to carry out assessment tasks. BTs appeared to implement more assessments, with Sinead introducing small assessment strategies and Jean employing the full range of recommended National Council of Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) JCPE assessments, including assessment wheels and portfolios. However, the overall majority of both cohorts admitted to using predominantly teacher-pupil evaluations based on participation and observation. This creates its own problems, not only for the PETE programme, but for physical education as a subject in schools. The lack of teacher and programme evaluation, in terms of incentives, recognition and collaborative programme improvement is a serious obstacle for growth because high standards in physical education and strong support for teachers and programmes cannot happen without some form of assessment or evaluation (Siedentop, 1991).

6.2.2 PETE Programme Provision of General Pedagogical Knowledge

BTs intimated that the general pedagogical knowledge in the PETE programme did not necessarily increase their disposition or capability to become a teacher. This led to a feeling that the pedagogical input was insufficient to improve the PST’s disposition towards teaching in instances where the PSTs were not already positively predisposed. BTs implied that the level and quality of the pedagogical focus was dependent on the content being covered and the particular lecturer delivering the content. There is a suspicion that pedagogy is more prominent in the PETE programme than the BTs conveyed but, when embedded in content disciplines, it may be less explicit to PSTs. This would suggest the need for more visual and practical pedagogical examples within the PETE programme and for faculty to emphasise the relationship between content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge in their own teaching. PETE programmes and faculty within PETE programmes have an important role to play in making this pedagogical content knowledge link explicit,
providing PSTs with the appropriate teaching strategies, styles, methods and content to increase PSTs’ occupational utility of knowledge.

Furthermore, ETs pointed to insufficient exposure, time and practice in developing pedagogical skills and that developing these pedagogical skills must become central to PETE programmes. ETs struggled with the behaviour management aspects associated with teaching physical education, citing the need of PETE programmes to provide more practical and relevant experience to develop general pedagogical knowledge in enhancing the occupational utility of knowledge that is acquired from PETE programmes.

6.2.3 PETE Programme Provision of Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK)

It is important to stress that the idea of PCK was not particularly strong amongst the BT cohort, with ETs displaying a greater comprehension of what PCK is and what it entails. The reason for these juxtaposed positions is because ETs have transferred knowing “that” to knowing “how”, possessing the ability to implement a teaching technique in practice, because pedagogical content knowledge, particularly through experience, has been developed (Rovegno, 2003; Schulman, 1987). This, once again, shows the role of experience in the changing perceptions of teaching physical education and that as teachers gain experience, they get better at their job (Berliner, 1994). This would seem to advocate a role for ETs in the development of PSTs knowledge as Berliner (1986) states that ETs provide richly detailed instructional descriptions that should be included in teacher education. The evidence of expert performance should influence training programme design as it provides information about what teachers should think about when they plan for or engage in teacher activities, supporting that a deepening of teachers’ content knowledge in a developmental manner to improve teaching is required as professional competence is sensitive to subject matter taught, it is not generalized (Schempp et al., 1998). This is a way in which the occupational utility of knowledge could be increased with regards to PSTs acquiring, or at least understanding the intricacies involved in developing PCK.
6.2.3.1 Encountering Professional Development Opportunities, Lack of University Link and Isolation

A number of professional development opportunities were available such as the Junior Cycle Physical Education Support Service (JCPESS), the Physical Education Association of Ireland (PEAI) and, the Physical Education, Physical Activity and Youth Sport (PE-PAYS) Research Centre to both the BTs and ETs. While the induction day in November 2009 associated with the JCPESS and PEAI received widespread praise, of the BT cohort, only Mary participated in any other in-service opportunities. BTs conveyed a minimal acknowledgement of a responsibility to up-skill on their own with BTs' need for professional development only being recognised on entering teaching and not during the PETE programme. This may indicate that PSTs do not engage with the idea of self-directed personal or professional development during the PETE programme itself. This was signified by BTs failing to keep a record of many ideas and games that were shared during the Applied Practical Studies (APS) in the PETE programme, a factor that significantly impinged on the level of resources they acquired. This would suggest that PSTs possess a minimal notion of independent learning or sourcing material without prompting. In light of this, it is apparent that the PETE programme needs to make more of a conscientious effort to prompt PSTs to consider their own personal and professional responsibility. BTs acknowledged that it is impossible for the PETE programme to completely prepare them for the potential pitfalls of teaching physical education and BTs believed it essential for continuous professional development to occur during, and on completion of, the PETE programme, acknowledging that some related knowledge can only be gained by experience in schools. This experience is a characteristic ETs possess and the idea of professional development was a distinct feature with this cohort. Many of the ETs highlighted the positive influence of professional development experiences in improving content, delivery and motivation for teaching physical education. While ETs were, in general, complimentary of the professional development opportunities, they stated, and one ET (Kevin) in particular, the necessity for such opportunities to become more accessible and for a greater depth of information.

Despite potential professional development avenues, both BT and ET cohorts bemoaned that, upon graduation, the link with the university is completely lost,
further enveloping the BTs within a survival mode and leading both BTs and ETs, in many cases, to deal with situations in isolation. For ETs, as the years progressed, this professional isolation has continued with the result that little professional dialogue occurs and, with this, opportunities to improve working conditions are unlikely to improve (Ward and O’Sullivan, 1998).

6.2.4 Perceived Irrelevance of Knowledge relating to Educational Ends, Purposes, Values and Philosophical and Historical Influences

Both cohorts split their PETE programme primarily into two parts – the practical elements, generally regarded as the knowledge bases required to teach physical education in schools (Allen, 2008; Rosean and Florio-Ruane, 2008; Hayes et al., 2003) and theoretical aspects, including knowledge of educational ends, purposes, values and philosophical and historical influences. In general, BTs placed significant value on the knowledge bases that they believe impacted directly on their teaching, with little value placed on theoretical knowledge bases (Curtner-Smith, 2001). BTs believed the theoretical aspects had little relevance to teaching, with one BT (Sinead) in particular vehemently opposed to the inclusion of theoretical aspects in the PETE programme. ETs were not as equivocal in their condemnation of the theoretical components of the PETE programme but, as with BTs, the main grievance was the relevance of this knowledge when teaching physical education in schools. This would suggest the application of the knowledge is valued more than the nature of the knowledge itself and that knowledge not directly related to teaching is viewed as irrelevant (Hayes et al., 2003).

Of the BTs and ETs who could see a relevance to the theoretical components, their grievances lay with the over-emphasis on these aspects to the detriment of the practical nature of the PETE programme. This would suggest the need to restructure the theoretical components, highlighting the necessity to link the theoretical aspects of the PETE programme with the practical activities and to make both directly related to teaching in schools (Behets and Vergauwen, 2006). When this happened for one ET (Niamh), who incorporated theoretical components into her teaching, her experiences in the PETE programme were deemed particularly useful. Therefore, in order to augment the occupational utility of knowledge of PSTs, concurrent action and a better balance between practical, theoretical and field experiences must converge.
6.2.5 Knowledge of Learners and Encouraging Pupils to Participate in Physical Education

BTs pointed to a certain confidence in teaching first year post-primary students, believing they could achieve what they wanted students to experience from a physical education curriculum. For BTs who implemented dance, gymnastics and outdoor adventure, they only tried it with first years. After first year, BTs acknowledged it became very difficult and far more challenging to teach activities other than games because the culture of “physical education as games” had been engrained in pupils. BTs faced huge difficulty in trying to alter that perception of physical education, unaware of the consequences, such as resistance and conflict with pupils, in attempting to change the provision of physical education. Both cohorts of teachers felt invigorated when they experienced a “sense of success” with pupils (Johnson and Birkeland, 2003) but, when pupils’ motivation for participation in physical education was not as expected or desired, BTs and ETs were frustrated. Pupils appear to see physical education as a recreational activity resulting in pupil learning in physical education being a major challenge for BTs and ETs. The extent to which physical education teachers have to motivate and encourage pupils to participate in physical education was a shock to both cohorts, resulting in significant difficulties and frustrations in teaching physical education. BTs and ETs also acknowledged that they were limited in implementing strategies to deal with such problems and this is a further issue the PETE programme needs to address.

BTs did not feel confident in individualising instruction and did not appreciate how prominent it would be in their teaching careers. As an interesting aside, while BTs indicated that pupil learning was their central concern, the frequency with which pupil participation and involvement was mentioned would indicate otherwise. BTs recognised that pupils who want to take part in physical education want to “play”. The proposition, justifiably so, could be made that it was pupil participation, rather than pupil learning, that was the central focus for BTs’ first year teaching in a school. This was a similar theme for the ETs, with the primary teaching philosophy that of pupil participation, fun and enjoyment. This idea of pupil learning not being the primary focus is signified with few BTs and ETs implementing viable assessment procedures.
6.2.6 Developing Curriculum Knowledge and Becoming Transformative Agents

A significant similarity between BTs and ETs was the prevalence of experiencing games on the school physical education curriculum when they, themselves, were pupils. BTs and ETs praised the PETE programme for changing their perception of what physical activities should be included in physical education, something they were unaware of prior to entry into the programme due to their school experiences of physical education consisting predominantly of games-based activities. Exposure to each area of study aided the ability of both cohorts to implement a broad and balanced curriculum and enabled BTs to cater for pupils' interests. BTs made an attempt to implement the JCPE curriculum but it would appear that the games area of study was still the primary one covered in physical education class. While the PETE programme heightened their awareness of the presence of the JCPE curriculum, it was limited in providing the BTs with the tools or strategies to implement it in schools when they were not supported by the school or physical education colleagues (Allen, 2008).

A criticism levied against PETE programmes is that they seem to fail to produce teachers that act as “change agents” (Allen, 2008; Hammerness et al., 2005; You and McCullick, 2001; Kagan, 1992; Doolittle, Dodds and Placek, 1993; Grossman and Richert, 1998) and in the case of BTs, this would appear to bear fruit. Due to the view that elements of content knowledge were insufficient, PCK inadequate, assessment modes inappropriate, an over-reliance on the PETE programme for knowledge acquisition and the appearance that BTs did not engage with the values and philosophies of the theoretical components of the PETE programme, BTs potential to be an effective teacher may have been compromised by what they did / did not engage with through the PETE programme. Each BT became “their own teacher” drawing on the knowledge and experiences they were exposed to. A lack of confidence led BTs to adopt practices of expert teachers, abandoning their personal pedagogical views by copying the practice of seasoned practitioners, ensuring continued transmittal of the same tradition (Hayes et al., 2003). This was the case on many occasions with BTs supporting what their more experienced physical education colleague was doing, even though they did not necessarily agree with it, and did not have the courage or conviction to stand up for what they believed should be practiced. This heightens the concern as to the extent to which the PETE programme is effective in producing change agents (Fernandez-Balboa, 1997). The reality of schools must be
addressed in the PETE programme because most of the difficulties experienced by BTs are as a result of teacher education programmes inadequately preparing them for the realities of life in schools (Siedentop, 1991). BTs reported that the PETE programme focussed on the ‘ideal’ student in ‘ideal’ situations and that these experiences were not the norm in which they now taught (Wright, 2001). This position is juxtaposed to that of ETs, who appeared far more effective in bringing more zealous change in the implementation of a broad and balanced curriculum, adopting the position of ‘transformative agents’ (Fernandez-Balboa, 1997). There was a greater amount of evidence to suggest that ETs had actively promoted change and had acted as change agents, particularly as outlined above, in the area of curriculum development and implementation. This highlights the changed perception of experienced physical education in comparison to their beginning counterparts and how ETs can apply the knowledge gained through their PETE programme and experience to alter the teaching situation which previously prevailed.

6.3 WORKING CONDITIONS

BTs were unprepared for many of the working condition issues encountered in schools and because of this, survival as a BT was evident. Survival was demonstrated by BTs’ predominant concern to cope on a daily basis, questioning their competence and desire to teach (Katz, 1972). BTs experienced considerable grievances that led this cohort to feel physical education was under-valued, and by association this served to diminish their value as physical education teachers and their physical education subject matter. This has led to many BTs resigning themselves to established common practices, believing there is little they can do to enhance their teaching situation. This was remarkably similar to ETs’ articulation of their experience, with many ETs citing management as the only recourse and avenue through which working conditions could be changed. Believing these frustrations are out of their hands, and firmly within the hands of management, has only served to augment the frustrations that were so apparent. Darling-Hammond and Sclan (1996) claimed that principal leadership is the single most powerful predictor of a teacher’s work, career and commitment. One ET, (Niamh) felt adequately supported by the leadership within the school but that is not to say the physical education provision was ideal. These teachers acted as ‘tinkerers’ in that they altered their learning goals and produced programmes that have become highly valued within the school (Siedentop, 1991).
Leadership, whether positive or negative, encompasses most working conditions and plays a role in shaping teachers’ attitudes towards teaching with supportive leadership positively correlated with teachers’ decisions to remain in the profession and positively impacting on teachers’ satisfaction (Wynn, Carboni and Patall, 2007; Weiss, 1999; Darling-Hammond and Selan, 1996; Blasé & Kirby, 1992). Working conditions ultimately determine and affect teachers’ decisions to enter, stay or leave the profession (Johnson and Kardos, 2008; Blasé & Kirby, 1992). Some of the working conditions that emerged as issues for both these cohorts included inappropriate support for physical education from working colleagues, lack of collaboration with physical education teaching colleagues, the extent to which the coaching role subsumed the work as a physical education teacher and pupils’ disinterest and lack of engagement with physical education subject matter. These difficulties were heightened by particular practices of school organisation and leadership such as supplying teachers who are not qualified to teach physical education, having physical education as an optional subject and providing insufficient resources in terms of time and facility allocation.

These findings are highly significant as, in many areas, such as the development of content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge, experience appears to be effective in addressing many of the challenges which BTs identified and are thus not prevalent concerns for ETs. However, the issue of working conditions is far more noteworthy as it identifies aspects that appear to be ongoing for BTs, are not addressed with experience and are issues that remain prevalent for ETs also. After teaching for seven years, ETs reported what, and how, working conditions still hinder the implementation of a worthwhile physical education programme, and ultimately serve to heighten frustrations at the perceived slight on their subject. This has serious implications, namely in the commitment and motivation of teaching physical education and the knock-on effects on teacher retention.

6.3.1 Teacher Commitment and Motivation for Teaching Physical Education
There was evidence from BTs (Jean) and ETs (Niamh) that when there are few working condition issues, they are committed to teaching physical education. There was an acknowledgement that physical education provision is unlikely to be perfect but, due to the remarkably similar utterances from BTs and ETs, there is evidence to
suggest that a more concerted effort must be made to ensure that working conditions in schools are more supportive to both cohorts than they currently are. In some cases, BTs and ETs have persevered in their commitment to teaching physical education despite their frustration with working conditions. This was seen in one BT’s (John’s) case, who despite having minimal use of a hall for a few months of the year and being isolated in having no physical education colleague to collaborate with in terms of curriculum and planning, has remained committed to teaching physical education.

For BTs and ETs who questioned their commitment, the predominant reason was due to working conditions. For most teachers who intimated their desire to leave the physical education profession, there were a number of working conditions which, when combined, served to collectively diminish their commitment to teaching physical education. For one BT (Sinead) it was a culmination of physical education as an optional subject, pupils’ lack of interest and motivation for participating in physical education and an obvious lack of support from the principal. Sinead felt each of these areas were out of her own control and highlighted the disregard for the value and status of physical education as a legitimate subject in post-primary schools. Sinead was the only BT whose intimation to leave the physical education teaching profession was as clear-cut as this, but for ETs, this was more commonplace. For other teachers, one working condition was sufficient to cause significant motivation problems with teaching physical education. For Nancy, an ET, timetabling makes teaching physical education and learning in physical education difficult at best and impossible at worst.

6.3.1.1 Teacher Retention for Teaching Physical Education
Despite the issues that prevail in schools, and BTs’ and ETs’ resignation with regards to this, it is perhaps surprising that the majority of teachers displayed a mid- to long-term commitment to teaching physical education, with the majority committing to ten years. The reason for their preference to stay teaching physical education was a ‘sense of success’ with pupils, having a good relationship and better rapport with pupils than a normal classroom teacher, and admitting that the job itself was something they enjoyed.
Overall however, there is a disconcerting picture emerging that the initial attraction to teaching physical education is being eroded as a direct result of not being in control of the working conditions that are impinging on teaching. This teacher attrition has severe implications for the physical education teaching profession with regards to instructional, administrative and financial costs (Johnson and Kardos, 2008; Kain and Singleton, 1996). The teacher retention picture is far more worrying for ETs, with many admitting to hitting obstacles in their career. ETs' initial enthusiasm for teaching physical education has slowly been eroded and they have been exposed to the phenomenon referred to as the "wash out" effect, in which school practices have progressively eroded the effects of teacher education (Lawson, 1989). The ETs are continually battling for the legitimacy of physical education subject matter (O'Sullivan, 1989). These teachers have displayed perseverance in the determination to swim against the tide but when faced with the same issues year on year, disillusionment and ultimately burnout has become the over-riding emotion. This had serious ramifications. Firstly, it has resulted in teachers becoming "non-teaching teachers" as they have implemented lessons that have become socially oriented recreational periods, even though this is not their preference. Secondly, the lack of support for programmes is frustrating for many physical education teachers because it causes a serious concern in the maintenance or improvement of an effective programme (Siedentop, 1991). The fact that teachers are unable to implement the curriculum as they would like further constrains their relationship with teaching physical education.

Two ETs, Kevin and Kiara, have already left the profession and both cited burn out as the reason. Other teachers could not envision their long-term future in physical education. This would suggest that many teachers do not plan to stay in the profession and view their job in temporary terms only, with teachers abandoning teaching because they are dissatisfied and want to pursue other career opportunities (Weiss, 1999; Choy, Bobbit, Henke, Medrich, Horn and Lieberman, 1993). This is worrying for the profession because teacher turnover results in instructional and organisational costs as the biggest improvement in teaching effectiveness is evident in the first few years (Johnson and Kardos, 2008; Kain and Singleton, 1996). Therefore, if after seven years, physical education teachers are going to leave their profession, physical education will never get a long-term payoff from its investment as schools
are likely to fill vacancies with more novices, with potentially little improvement in the quality of instruction as competent ETs have left the school (Johnson and Kardos, 2008; Johnson et al., 2005 Darling-Hammond, 2003).

With this in mind, the majority of teachers in both cohorts, but particularly the ETs, were not committed to teaching physical education in the longer term. Two ETs have, as of this year, exited the profession. Kevin consistently highlighted his frustration with a lack of management support, particularly in the areas of timetabling provision and facilities, both of which hindered the extent to which he could implement an effective curriculum. Kiara appeared to suffer in light of the coaching responsibilities she was expected to perform in the school. Due to the fact that other teachers were visibly frustrated and advocated they could do little to address the situations within which they find themselves, it is little wonder that resignation was a distinct feature and, in many instances, resulted in them becoming disillusioned and burnt out. This is obviously disconcerting for the profession. There is enough evidence to suggest that, even though only one BT (Sinead) indicated her desire to leave the profession, if their resignation continues to envelop their work, it seems distinctly possible that BTs will follow a similar path to their more experienced counterparts.

Because of the serious repercussions in commitment and motivation to teaching physical education, resulting in teacher retention issues, and because these issues do not seem to be addressed as teachers become more experienced, this forms the most salient research finding. It would appear that working conditions should be the main area within which PETE programmes should focus its efforts. It is extremely pertinent that the PETE programme aims to warn and arm both BTs and ETs with information and strategies on the situations they are likely to encounter when out teaching. It is, however, not solely the responsibility of PETE programmes but also the responsibility of schools to ensure conditions are ripe for developing practices which can enhance the motivation and commitment to teaching and ultimately serve to produce a better learning environment for both teachers and pupils.

6.4 CONCLUSION
It is clear the PETE programme has degrees of success in preparing both BTs and ETs for teaching physical education. This has significant repercussions on BTs’ and ETs’
abilities to cope in their particular school contexts, with the result that BTs and ETs experience significant frustrations, ultimately leading to a feeling of resignation. Unsurprisingly, after seven years of a struggle, greater numbers of ETs intimated their desire to move out of the physical education teaching profession due to feelings of resignation, disillusionment and burnout. It is necessary to address these concerns and recommendations will be formulated to encourage the PETE programme to offer opportunities and experiences that may be more effective in adequately preparing PSTs for the challenges and issues they are likely to encounter in Irish post-primary schools. Recommendations and conclusions are formulated based on this premise.
Chapter Seven
Conclusion and Recommendations

7.1 INTRODUCTION
The goal of this research was to investigate the ways in which learning opportunities within a physical education teacher education (PETE) programme are continued in practice by beginning and experienced physical education teachers in post-primary schools. This was explored in addressing three research questions;

How do beginning and experienced physical education teachers view the occupational utility of knowledge acquired during the PETE programme?,

To what extent are changing perceptions of physical education attributed to experiences of beginning and experienced physical education teachers?

What working conditions impact physical education teachers’ career decisions?

An interpretive paradigm provided the opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of the PETE programme through data BTs and ETs provided through interviews and prompt sheets. As highlighted in previous chapters, BTs and ETs identified aspects of the PETE programme as being more successful than others in preparing confident, informed and effective physical education teachers. Some aspects of the PETE programme require tweaking, while others may need to be reconsidered. There are barriers to adequately preparing PSTs for entry into teaching in post-primary schools and it is essential these are addressed. This chapter aims to revisit the main concerns, providing suggestions and recommendations that provide a view to refining and reconfiguring the PETE programme in the best interests of preparing competent and effective physical education teachers.

For a number of possible reasons, BTs were more critical of their PETE programme than ETs. Firstly this could be due to the BTs being recent graduates of the PETE programme, allowing their recollection of the programme to be more pertinent to their
current positioning as a BT than the ETs who graduated seven years previously. Secondly, the PETE programmes experienced by the BTs and ETs were not identical, with a number of modules structured differently, modules appearing at different points in the four-year programme and additional faculty involved in the delivery of the programme. Thirdly, and perhaps related to the second point, there was a clear distinction between the heightened exposure that the ETs believed they had to content knowledge and the BTs reporting the extent to which theoretical aspects of the programme was detrimental to their exposure to the practical nature of teaching physical education.

7.2 CONTINUUM FROM BEGINNING TO EXPERIENCED TEACHERS

Results were discussed on a continuum from BTs to ETs and conclusions and recommendations are presented in the manner of what we can learn from BTs experiences and whether issues still present as issues for ETs, or whether issues are addressed as teachers become more experienced.

Many of the BTs on entering school sites experienced ‘reality shock’. For some, this was enhanced by isolation and the result of these two factors was a ‘wash out’ of practices experienced during the PETE programme due, predominantly, to constraining working conditions within schools and unsupportive school colleagues. Many of the BTs conformed to the practices that were already occurring in schools, displaying little ability to act as ‘transformative agents’, resulting in feelings of frustration and resignation. As the years progressed, there is evidence from the ETs that these feelings of frustration and resignation remained prevalent, resulting in ETs citing ‘burn out’ in teaching physical education. This has had significant repercussions on their commitment to teaching physical education, with two of the six ETs leaving the profession and three others indicating that it would not be their preference or desire to teach physical education full-time. A similar pathway may await BTs. One BT, after only one year, has intimidated her strong desire not to teach physical education and there is sufficient evidence that other BTs’ commitment has waned, with another BT questioning whether she would prefer primary school teaching. Others have displayed at least a mid-term commitment to teaching physical education and while this is welcome, conditions in schools must be conducive to encourage teachers to remain within the profession. It is questionable whether
teachers can continually swim against the tide and remain enthusiastic and motivated to teach physical education. If teachers are to remain as committed to teaching physical education there is a necessity to not only improve the PETE programme but also school- and governmental-based supports to aid the transition from PST to BT and, through the provision of continuous professional development opportunities, from BT to ET.

7.3 IMPROVING THE PETE PROGRAMME
There were particular areas in which the PETE programme was reported to appropriately prepare PSTs. BTs and ETs acknowledged that the Junior Cycle Physical Education (JCPE) curriculum was covered to such an extent that PSTs, despite having experienced a predominant games curriculum as pupils, recognised the value in many other strands essential to a broad and balanced physical education programme. This has resulted in many of the teachers attempting, with various degrees of success, to implement the JCPE curriculum. Difficulties associated with this occurred for both BTs and ETs. ETs were largely replacing teachers who had followed no particular physical education curriculum and, because they were the first graduates with the new JCPE curriculum, were largely responsible for implementing it. BTs experienced difficulties in implementing the curriculum when not supported by physical education colleagues. While both acknowledged implementing the JCPE curriculum in some form or another, there were aspects of the curriculum that they simply did not do because of their belief that there was a discrepancy between the knowledge acquired in the PETE programme to that required in engaging pupils in schools. This informs the first recommendation of this study. The first recommendation is the alignment of the PETE programme and school-based knowledge. There must be an opportunity to reproduce content from the PETE programme to schools. For that reason, Applied Practical Studies (APS), particularly in the eight areas of study of the JCPE curriculum, must include appropriate content and teaching methods and approaches conducive to teaching physical education.

The second recommendation is the necessity to link theoretical-based modules to the practicality of teaching physical education. BTs failed to identify the link between what were predominantly classed as theoretical modules and the APS modules. ETs were less critical of theoretical modules, which may indicate that with experience and
further practice, ETs recognise the value of such modules to a greater degree. However, while ETs were more temperate in comparison to the BTs, ETs still questioned the link that exists between theoretical knowledge and the practical knowledge used more frequently in teaching physical education in schools. While devaluing knowledge not directly related to teaching creates a utilitarian attitude towards teaching (Hayes et al., 2003), the PETE programme must make more direct links to the theoretical aspects and how they relate to teaching. Many researchers lament that PETE programmes fail to produce ‘change agents’ and the connection of theory and practical module experiences could be one way in which pre-service teachers can gain a greater understanding and comprehension of issues that BTs and ETs potentially face while teaching in post-primary schools. This can be done more effectively by focussing on areas of interest to teachers and physical education teachers, with detailed and comprehensive discussions on these areas allowing for greater interaction with these topics. This could be covered in many of the theoretical aspects covered during the PETE programme. For example, in sociology, gender exposure to sports could be focussed on in depth as well as the varying backgrounds pupils come from and how teachers can potentially deal with these backgrounds with the aim of encouraging or increasing participation in physical activity and physical education. In psychology, PSTs should be exposed to motivation and specifically the strategies physical education teachers can use in order to try and increase pupils' motivation in physical education and physical activity. It is important to state that these topics were discussed in different individual modules but the issue for BTs and ETs was that it was not overtly obvious how they impact in a teaching situation. This resulted in difficulties for BTs and ETs in seeing their application in a school setting. Therefore, the link to teaching situations must be made more explicit to ensure teachers can recognise and are armed with strategies to deal with the particular issues they are faced with.

The third recommendation is a reconstruction and reconfiguration of assessment procedures within the PETE programme in an attempt to make the PETE programme more applicable to teaching physical education. The majority of BTs and ETs bemoaned the lack of relevance of many assessment procedures implemented during the PETE programme. The restructuring of assessment could include a pre-requisite in APS modules to produce resource packs on that particular activity, as teachers cited
these as particularly beneficial when teaching physical education. Resource packs could possibly be completed across modules to encourage the relationship between theory and practice. An example would be the sociology of sport informing the setting up of inclusive games. The ETs acknowledged that, over time, resources accumulated but there should be greater exposure to completing these during the PETE programme, as suggested by BTs. In relation to assessments within the PETE programme, there is a need to include assessments and / or experiences in being assessed in ways that can be used in school. These assessments should include the assessment wheel, portfolios, peer, individual and teacher feedback and technology. Many of the ETs are only thinking about assessing their pupils now, seven years after graduating and the majority of the BTs also recognised that assessment of pupils was not a prominent theme in their physical education classes. This highlights the necessity for exposure to assessment procedures during the PETE programme.

The fourth recommendation is to create realistic disciplinary and classroom management situations. The PETE programme appears to have failed to adequately address classroom management problems that many teachers encounter in teaching physical education. Peer teaching was generally recognised as an ineffective avenue through which classroom management skills can be developed, focussing on ideal situations that were not now common in schools in which teachers’ taught. There is a requirement to provide more opportunities for PSTs to develop skills in this area through the provision of more school-based experiences in affiliation with schools. As one ET outlined, this does not necessarily have to be to teach, but to observe how physical education teachers handle classroom management issues in the specific arena of physical education. ETs acknowledged that with practice and experience, the ability to handle classroom management issues increased dramatically. ETs highlighted different ways in which their handling of classroom management issues improved from avoiding altercations and confrontations with pupils to accumulating a greater number of strategies to encourage pupils to participate. BTs acknowledged that after their first year teaching, they felt more prepared to deal with classroom management issues. This is a further example of how practices are developed and addressed as BTs become more experienced.
The fifth recommendation is that more teaching practice placements should be incorporated into the PETE programme. Teaching practice received significant praise from teachers, indicating it was the period in their programme of study in which their greatest learning occurred. However, it was acknowledged that in some instances the teaching practice placement was not necessarily a realistic representation of teaching physical education depending on the extent to which the school encouraged involvement with the PST. The majority of teachers were in favour of extending the amount of teaching practices. BTs and ETs seem to be in favour of extending the amount of teaching practice. They seemed less conscious of what they could change and indicated they did not want teaching practice reconfigured but rather just more of it, particularly for ETs in being exposed to more behaviour management situations. There are concerns regarding ‘on-the-job’ training only (Darling-Hammond, 2008) so it is essential that, with an extension of teaching practice placements, the theoretical aspects run concurrently and the link between such are inextricably linked.

The sixth recommendation is that PETE programmes must make a more conscious effort to alert PSTs to the reality of school sites they are likely to encounter. Many of the teachers felt largely ill-prepared for what they faced in teaching physical education in post-primary schools, particularly with regard to the working conditions. These included appropriate and fair teaching assignments, working relationships with colleagues, appropriate and fair curriculum, school organisation and leadership and other issues such as coaching responsibilities and motivating pupils to participate in physical education. As teachers became more experienced, there were few instances in which the ETs were able to cope more effectively with the working conditions. Therefore, it is unclear as to whether these issues are addressed or if indeed they serve to manifest themselves as the years of teaching progress and experience accumulates. This would serve to reinforce the role PETE programmes have to play, not only highlighting such issues but, to provide teachers with strategies to deal with what they are likely to face. If PETE programmes succeeded in this aim, it is possible that a far smoother and effective transition from the student role in university to the teacher role in schools could be achieved. Teacher retention may also be addressed somewhat because, armed with knowledge on how schools work, teachers may feel more prepared for the responsibilities and expectations of their roles (O’Sullivan, 1989).
Teachers recognise that a personal and professional responsibility lies with them in developing their knowledge and teaching. The majority of teachers, however, did not recognise the need for this until they had undertaken a teaching position. The seventh recommendation is for the PETE programme to make the need for continuous professional development more implicit amongst PSTs. Many of the teachers regretted that, upon graduation, the university link was lost with regards to what was happening in the field of physical education. Teachers would have preferred if their PETE programme had consistently up-dated them as regards conferences, events and meetings that might be occurring in physical education. Teachers acknowledged that while this may be a function of the Physical Education Association of Ireland (PEAI), there was little contact, recognition or knowledge about this association. There is a need for PSTs to be more familiar with the PEAI in the PETE programme if it is the former who are responsible for maintaining these lines of communication. Otherwise, it is justifiable to suggest that it remains the PETE programme’s responsibility to retain this link and perhaps a database would be an effective method through which these lines of communication could be preserved.

While there is a necessity for PETE programmes to prepare PSTs, it is equally the case that they cannot produce finished products (Conway et al., 2009) and that a degree of responsibility also lies with the individual and schools. It is essential for schools to provide supports for new teachers.

7.4 IMPROVING SCHOOL BASED SUPPORTS
Many of the teachers experienced a difficult transition from university to the workplace. This is largely as a result of the working conditions that prevailed in many schools, a reality which, through their PETE programme, they were unprepared for. Equally, however, it is the responsibility of schools to aid this transition. Teachers underwent a disorganised induction and, in instances where there were mentoring programmes in existence, they were not operating as intended or expected. The eighth recommendation is for schools to establish a systematic and well-organised induction from pre-service to beginning teacher to experienced teacher. This is not just related to individual schools but also requires governmental support. There is a necessity to create an induction and mentoring system, the express aim of which is to support BTs, channel their enthusiasm and advise them on the many issues
they may face. Coupled with this schools need to provide opportunities for continuous professional development, particularly for ETs as, for many, it served to motivate and re-invigorate their desire for teaching physical education. BTs and ETs did not mention the role of union, school or teacher association in CPD but there is a need for schools to provide space for collaborative interactions between teaching professionals. This space includes the provision of planning and meeting time throughout the school year to formulate the physical education curriculum and address any issues that arise as the year progresses.

7.5 CONCLUSION
Three reasons were outlined previously in discussing the significance of this study. The first reason was that by providing evidence as to the extent to which PETE programmes prepare teachers for teaching physical education, it can develop and improve PETE programmes, providing more structures that prepare enthusiastic, motivated and effective teachers. Secondly, by analysing ETs’ experiences with those of BTs, it can provide the PETE programme with an awareness of the knowledge required and structures needed for a more longitudinal transition into teaching. Thirdly, in highlighting prevalent working conditions that impact on BTs and ETs’ satisfaction and commitment, such conditions can be more competently addressed in PETE programmes, with the intention of increasing teacher retention. Through the incorporation of a strong, systematic and comprehensive PETE programme, the values, skills and knowledge teachers experience can improve, resulting in teachers feeling adequately prepared for their jobs in the reality of teaching physical education in post primary schools (O’Sullivan, 1989; Stroot and Whipple, 2003). Ultimately, the potential success, or otherwise, of PETE programmes is dependent on the extent to which teachers, both beginning and experienced, are actively engaged and continue to be actively engaged in the tasks of teaching physical education.
Epilogue

The aim of this research study is to contribute to the research base that currently exists in, and on, PETE programmes. This research study serves to inform programme development in order to improve PETE programme provision. Firstly, it is important to state that the nature of this research and the research questions resulted in inherently (constructively) critical responses. Secondly, in both the beginning and experienced teacher cohorts, many participants held strong voices and strong opinions and, because of this, were very forthcoming on their views – both positive and negative – on the PETE programme and their experiences when out in the real world teaching physical education. I would like to thank them for their participation, efforts and honesty throughout this research study.

From a personal point of view, this research study has been an invaluable learning experience. During my participation in the PETE programme, I would have been very frustrated and critical of it. The primary reason for my criticism was, what I believed to be, the irrelevance of many aspects and particularly the theoretical aspects covered during the PETE programme. I would have been completely oblivious to the need and value of many of these aspects. This may have been a personal deficiency as, perhaps, I did not engage with these aspects on the level I could have or should have. It is a shame, however, that after four years, PSTs leave the PETE programme questioning the worth of it as, it is only through the interaction with them through this research study, that I now realise their potential importance, value and worth. This highlights the necessity for many aspects, and the rationale for the inclusion of these aspects, to be made more explicit to the PSTs and to directly link and relate it to teaching physical education. With this in mind, I think the primary issue with the PETE programme is not the PETE programme or the structure of it per se but rather that it is the delivery and transparency behind it that needs to be promoted.

There have been calls for a five-year PETE programme, a structure prevalent in many countries, in which in the final fifth year PSTs must conduct a masters study. I am not sure this is completely necessary as, even during a four-year PETE programme, it should sufficiently cover, promote and justify the inclusion of all aspects of the PETE
programme to PSTs. I think if it achieved in doing this, the programme would be more positively reviewed and PSTs would engage and recognise the worth of more aspects covered in the PETE programme. The only reason why I would promote the five-year structure is that it provides PSTs with the opportunity to analyse the PETE programme undertaken and it may result in PSTs being more aware of the difficulties and challenges in teaching physical education in an Irish post-primary context. This has been the case for me and, while I believe it is impossible to completely prepare PSTs, it has made me more aware of the issues that can potentially be encountered when out teaching physical education.

During my participation in the PETE programme, I am not sure I interacted with the PETE programme to the level I should have, or with the lecturers. The relationship with the latter could be hindered by the authoritarian relationship between a pupil and teacher in Irish post-primary schools. I do not think I availed of the opportunity to have open discussions with lecturers and I think this debilitated the effect the PETE programme had on my outlook of teaching physical education and, to a large extent, is a considerable reason why I did not particularly rate the PETE programme. I think had I taken this opportunity, I would have gained a lot more from the PETE programme and engaged with many topics more freely and with a more open mind. Ultimately, I think this would have improved and increased the effect the PETE programme had on my outlook of the PETE programme.

Many PSTs, on exiting the PETE programme, have the view that they learn more in that one year than they have in their four-year PETE programme. I would have to say I think I learned a considerable amount in my masters and interacted with the PETE programme at a much greater level. I would also have to say that, having worked in a school for three weeks now, I do not think the PETE programme adequately prepared for many situations I have encountered in teaching physical education in Irish post-primary schools. I understand that it is impossible to learn everything throughout the PETE programme and I recognise that there is a personal responsibility to advance my own personal knowledge but I think there is a duty on the PETE programme to more adequately prepare PSTs for the reality that PSTs are likely to encounter.


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Appendix A: Participant Information Sheet
November 2009
Dear Participant,

We are currently conducting research on the Physical Education Teacher Education (PETE) programme in the University of Limerick and the reality of teaching in schools. We would be grateful if you would consider participating in our study. The data collected will be used to investigate the ways in which learning opportunities within the PETE programme at the University of Limerick are continued in practice by beginning and experienced physical education teachers in post-primary schools.

Participating in this research would involve completing two interviews, approximately one hour in length. It will also involve maintaining a fortnightly prompt sheet throughout the teaching year recording what you know and are able to do in your job as well as identifying areas you are lacking to teach effectively. You may withdraw from this study at any time. All information collected will be held in strict confidence. Aggregated responses may be used for research purposes and be reported in academic journals. Your identity will remain anonymous and will not be associated with the data or referred to at anytime.

Thank you for taking the time to consider participating in the study. If you have further questions you may contact Therese Hartley (085 7396865) or Ann MacPhail (061 234155) of the PESS Department, University of Limerick. If you have concerns about this study and wish to contact someone independent, you may contact The Chairman of the University of Limerick Research Ethics Committee, c/o Anne O’Dwyer, Graduate School, University of Limerick, Limerick, Tel: (061) 202672

Kind Regards,
Therese Hartley
Appendix B: Participant Consent Form
Physical Education Teacher Education Programme and the Reality of Teaching in School

Participant written informed consent form

November 2009

Therese Hartley and Ann MacPhail have requested my participation ______________________ (insert name) in a study titled 'Physical Education Teacher Education Programme in the University of Limerick and the Reality of Teaching in School.'

- I have read and understood the participant information sheet. I am aware of all the procedures involving myself and of any risks and benefits associated with the study. As a result of participating in this study, I will complete two one-hour interviews and maintain a fortnightly prompt sheet.

- I understand what the project is about and what the results will be used for. The information would be used to provide data on the extent to which learning opportunities within the PETE programme are continued by beginning and experienced physical education teachers in post-primary schools.

- I am aware that my results will be kept confidential. The results of this research may be published but that my own name and the school that I teach in will not be revealed. In order to maintain confidentiality of my records, a code will be assigned to my information. The information will be stored on file and computer with only the researchers having access to the information.

- I know participation is voluntary and I can withdraw at any stage without giving any reason.

- I understand that any questions I have concerning this research before or after my consent, will be answered by Therese Hartley (085 7396865) or Ann MacPhail (061 234155), of the PESS Department. If I have concerns about this study and wish to contact an independent party, I may contact the chair of the University of Limerick Research Ethics Committee (061 202022).
Signature of Participant ________________________________  Date __________________

Participant Name (Print) ________________________________

Signature of Investigator ________________________________ Date __________________

Name of Investigator (Print) _____________________________
Appendix C: Beginning Teacher October Interview Protocol
Current conception of the course:

- Is the course what you expected?
- What view of PE has been presented / promoted through the course? (What has been the focus?)
- Is this what you expected? Why / why not?
- What topics / lectures / tutors have been influential in forming the ‘picture’ you now have of BSc PE?
- Is this different from the view you had before entering the course?
- Does your view of BSc PE reflect your experiences from school? What are the similarities? What are the differences?
- What do you think BSc PE should be about? Does this match your view of what it was about while you were at school?
- Have your views changed since the beginning of the course with respect to the programme and what school PE entails?

Valued knowledge:

- What do you see as relevant / irrelevant aspects of the course to teaching PE in schools?
- What do you see as the key concerns to be addressed in PE in schools? To what extent did your course address these concerns?
- How relevant do you think the breadth of your knowledge of PE will be to your work as a PE teacher?
- How important is the depth of knowledge you gained on the PE course to the teaching of PE?
- How well prepared do you feel for the teaching of PE? What do you feel are the strengths and weaknesses of your teacher preparation?

Anticipated career trajectories:

- What do you think are you career prospects? What do you think is the likelihood of getting a job?
- Do you intend to apply for promotional positions? If so, how long before you do? If not, why not?
- Do you intend to do any further study? In what areas?
- What other options do you think are open to you?
Appendix D: Experienced Teacher October Interview Protocol
Teaching Background:
- What subject areas and year levels have you taught?
- What activity / content area do you enjoy teaching the most?

Experiences of University:
- Which subjects in your ITT have been of most / least use to you in your teaching? Why?
- How relevant was the knowledge you gained in your ITT to the teaching of PE?
- How relevant was the knowledge you gained in your ITT to the school situation?
- How important is the depth of knowledge you gained in your ITT to the teaching of PE?
- How well did your ITT prepare you for teaching PE (e.g. understanding and using work programmes, familiarity with new syllabi, behaviour management, preparing units/lessons, setting and marking assessment, other tasks now expected of you)?
- Was there a good progression from your ITT to teaching PE in schools?
- What are the similarities / differences / conflicts in emphasis / content between your ITT and your current teaching? Could you identify the philosophical bases / emphases of your study (e.g. inclusion)? Is this the same or different to the emphases at school?

PE in schools:
- What are the key issues to be addressed in PE in schools?
- What sources of knowledge now inform your PE teaching?
- Where do you typically access the information / skills you need?
- Would you encourage students to become PE teachers? Why / why not?
- What challenges / constraints exist for you in relation to your teaching?
- What, for you, are the benefits and pitfalls of PE teaching?

Plans for the future:
- How long do you think you will be a teacher of PE?
- Do you intend to apply for promotional positions, e.g. HOD, Principal, etc.? 
- If so, how long before you do?
- If not, why not?
• Do you intend to do any further study? Why / why not? In what area?
• Where do you see the field of PE heading in the future?
• What do you see yourself doing in 10 years time?
• Will you be teaching PE until your retirement? Why / why not?
• What other work do you believe you could do with your background?
Appendix E: Beginning Teacher Follow-Up Interview Protocol
• Explain your frustrations and how you maintain your remit as a professional?

• What have you learned to do / not to do?

• What do you agree / disagree with and how does it compromise your teaching
Appendix F: Beginning Teacher End-of-Year Interview Protocol
Teaching Background:
- What subject areas and year levels have you taught?
- What activity / content area do you enjoy teaching the most?

Experiences of University:
- Which subjects in your ITT have been of most / least use to you in your teaching? Why?
- How relevant was the knowledge you gained in your ITT to the teaching of PE?
- How relevant was the knowledge you gained in your ITT to the school situation?
- How important is the depth of knowledge you gained in your ITT to the teaching of PE?
- How well did your ITT prepare you for teaching PE (e.g. understanding and using work programmes, familiarity with new syllabi, behaviour management, preparing units/lessons, setting and marking assessment, other tasks now expected of you)?
- Was there a good progression from your ITT to teaching PE in schools?
- What are the similarities / differences / conflicts in emphasis / content between your ITT and your current teaching? Could you identify the philosophical bases / emphases of your study (e.g. inclusion)? Is this the same or different to the emphases at school?

PE in schools:
- What are the key issues to be addressed in PE in schools?
- What sources of knowledge now inform your PE teaching?
- Where do you typically access the information / skills you need?
- Would you encourage students to become PE teachers? Why / why not?
- What challenges / constraints exist for you in relation to your teaching?
- What, for you, are the benefits and pitfalls of PE teaching?

Plans for the future:
- How long do you think you will be a teacher of PE?
- Do you intend to apply for promotional positions, e.g. HOD, Principal, etc.?
- If so, how long before you do?
- If not, why not?
• Do you intend to do any further study? Why / why not? In what area?
• Where do you see the field of PE heading in the future?
• What do you see yourself doing in 10 years time?
• Will you be teaching PE until your retirement? Why / why not?
• What other work do you believe you could do with your background?
Appendix G: Experienced Teacher End-of-Year Interview Protocol
• Explain your frustrations and how you maintain your remit as a professional?

• What have you learned to do / not to do?

• What do you agree / disagree with and how does it compromise your teaching
Appendix H: Beginning and Experienced Prompt Sheets
Monthly Prompt Sheet Prompts

Over the past fortnight, how have these working conditions impacted on your teaching?

1. Appropriate and fair teaching assignments

2. Working Relationships with Colleagues

3. Appropriate Curricular Resources

4. Level of Accountability

5. School Organization and Leadership

Other / Comments:
Appendix I: Beginning Teachers School Demographics
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Sinead</th>
<th>Claire</th>
<th>Elaine</th>
<th>Jean</th>
<th>John</th>
<th>Mary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demographics</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban / Rural</td>
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<td>Rural</td>
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<td>Urban</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of Pupils</td>
<td>422</td>
<td>540</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>911</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mixed / Single</td>
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<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>All Girls</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>All Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of PE Teachers in School (Including BT)</td>
<td>2 Qualified</td>
<td>2 Qualified; 1 Non-Qualified</td>
<td>2 Qualified</td>
<td>3 Qualified</td>
<td>1 Qualified; 2 Non-Qualified take Senior Cycle PE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship with other PE Teachers</td>
<td>Very good – Qualified: Worked well as the year went on.</td>
<td>Poor – Did not respect BTs views and felt inadequate in male-dominated Curriculum and planning</td>
<td>Brilliant – Team Taught All Classes</td>
<td>No other PE qualified PE teacher and left to BT as an equal and little respect for BTs views</td>
<td>Poor – Did not treat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship with Management</td>
<td>Mixed – Good discipline back-up</td>
<td>Good: Generally supportive</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Very supportive of PE</td>
<td>Mixed – Discipline could be improved but committed to themselves and were unconcerned</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>but not committed to supporting PE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>improving facilities about content covered.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix J: Experienced Teachers School Demographics
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Demographics</th>
<th>Aine</th>
<th>Eimear</th>
<th>Kevin</th>
<th>Kiara</th>
<th>Nancy</th>
<th>Niamh</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Urban / Rural</td>
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<td>Urban</td>
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<td>All Girls</td>
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<td>Mixed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of PE Teachers in School (Including ET)</td>
<td>2 Qualified</td>
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<td>1 Qualified</td>
<td>2 Qualified</td>
<td>2 Qualified</td>
<td>3 Qualified; 1 Non Qualified</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Relationship with other PE Teachers

- Good – although, with teacher retention an issue, not as much collaboration this year with new teacher.
- Good: Share aspects of the curriculum that coincide with strengths. Good collaboration with one teacher in particular
- Only one PE teacher so little collaboration and isolation in dealing with curriculum and planning prevalent
- Good – ET deals with most of the PE so little opportunity to work together. ET would often seek advice from her on certain matters relating to PE.
- Good Relationship – Frequently Collaborate, Plan and Meet Together, Provide Back-Up / Support to each other
- Very positive relationship with other PE teachers, with good collaboration between each.

Relationship with Management

- In general, a positive relationship with management
- Good Backing with no issues on time and resource allocation. Facilities are an issue with no hall on school site, with the school using the local community hall.
- Poor – Little Support or Backing from management for PE
- Mixed – Similar outlook to PE but do not always appreciate the complexities of the job as a PE teacher and the differences between the PE teacher and coach.
- Poor – Management often display a lack of respect for PE, with inadequate timetable provision a particular grievance
- Good Backing – Supportive of PE and the implementation of the PE curriculum in the school