

Linking teacher socialisation research

1 **Linking teacher socialisation research with a PETE program: insights from beginning and** 2 **experienced teachers**

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6

7 **Abstract**

8 The purpose of this study is to explore the extent to which beginning and experienced teachers differed
9 in their perceptions of shaping school forces and their being shaped by school forces. The findings
10 allow the authors to examine the link between teacher socialization research and practice in a physical
11 education teacher education (PETE) program and to consider the practical (and institutional) changes
12 that may improve the quality of teacher education. Six beginning physical education teachers (BTs) (in
13 their first year of teaching) and six experienced physical education teachers (ETs) (who had been
14 teaching for six years) took part in interviews and completed prompt sheets throughout the duration of
15 a school year. The paper discusses ways in which one PETE program has attempted to use, and plans
16 for future use of, BTs' and ETs' accounts of socialization to inform how best to prepare PSTs for the
17 reality of teaching in schools.

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19 **Keywords:** teacher socialisation, occupational socialisation, teacher education

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24 Linking teacher socialisation research with a PETE program: insights from beginning and 25 experienced teachers

26 In reviewing the literature on the socialisation of teachers in physical education, Richards, Templin and
27 Graber (2014) summarise that we have learned about the background characteristics of physical
28 education recruits, the effectiveness of teacher education programs and the influence of induction
29 assistance in aiding new teachers in the transition to the school setting. They believe it is critical that
30 new studies be conducted to both add to the body of teacher socialisation literature and to account for
31 changes in socialisation patterns.

32 Literature on teacher socialization has highlighted the nature and the strength of the personal and the
33 contextual variables influencing the process of becoming a teacher (Lacey, 1977; Zeichner & Gore,
34 1990). A significant amount of research has explored the pressures on BTs (Borich, 1995; Bullough,
35 Knowles & Crow, 1992; Huberman, 1989; Kelchtermans, 1993; Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002;
36 Kuzmic, 1994; Schempp & Graber, 1992; Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1985), with a strong focus on the
37 ‘wash out’, ‘reality shock’, ‘burn out’ of the teacher training impact once teachers are confronted with
38 the realities of teaching in a school context (McGaha & Lynn, 2000; Lawson, 1989; Wideen et al.,
39 1998). Praxis shock’ ‘refers to the teachers’ confrontation with the realities and responsibilities of
40 being a school teacher that puts their beliefs and ideas about teaching to the test, challenges some of
41 them, and confirms others’ (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002, p. 105). The ‘praxis shock’ of beginning
42 teachers not only has to do with issues at the classroom level, but also with teacher socialization in the
43 school as an organization.

44 Zeichner and Gore (1990) note that the emphasis of teacher socialization research has been on how
45 teachers have been influenced and not on how the structures into which they are being socialized have
46 been shaped and recreated by the teachers. They suggest that one consequence of viewing teacher

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47 socialization as an interactive process is that teachers influence and shape the structures into which
48 they are being socialised at the same time that they are being shaped by a variety of forces at many
49 levels. It was with an interest in this reciprocal relationship that the authors of the current study set out
50 to explore the extent to which beginning and experienced teachers differed in their perceptions of
51 shaping school forces as well as being shaped by school forces. It was anticipated that the study would
52 lead the authors to consider the link between teacher socialization research and practice in teacher
53 education programs (Zeichner & Gore, 1990) in addition to considering the practical (and institutional)
54 issues that have to be taken into account in order to improve the quality of teacher education (Flores,
55 2001; Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002). Despite a teacher education program's endeavour to prepare
56 teachers to teach in a competent manner to their first group of students, such programs are in receipt of
57 recurrent condemnations and are not highly regarded by those who experience them (Bransford,
58 Darling-Hammond & LePage, 2005; Grossman, Smagorinsky & Valencia, 1999). The reasons for this
59 are varied and complex. While it may be impossible for programs to replicate certain school contexts,
60 there is evidence to suggest that teachers are not prepared for the realities of school sites as, during
61 their teacher preparation program, pre-service teachers (PSTs) remember ideal conditions that are more
62 than likely not reproduced when teaching in schools (Eldar, Nabel, Schechter, Talmore & Mazin,
63 2003; Wright, 2001). Subsequently, some teachers question the worth of their teacher preparation
64 (Grossman et al., 1999).

65 This study contributes to our understanding of the complex relationships evident in PSTs' transition
66 from university to the workplace (Siedentop, 1990) and in teacher retention (Cochran-Smith, 2004).
67 The intent is to identify issues that arise within the first year of teaching and appear to embed
68 themselves as practices for ETs, and issues that arise for BTs but are addressed as one becomes more
69 experienced in teaching. In highlighting the predominant working conditions that impact on BTs'

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70 satisfaction and work commitment, and the extent to which the conditions continue or cease to
71 continue as they move to becoming ETs, PETE programs can strive to more competently address such
72 issues.

73 Occupational socialization and workplace conditions

74 Occupational socialization is defined as, “all kinds of socialization that initially influence persons to
75 enter the field of physical education and that later are responsible for their perceptions and actions as
76 teacher educators and teachers” (Lawson, 1986, p. 107). Lawson (1983a) proposed that three kinds of
77 socialization are possible for teachers; acculturation, professional socialization and organizational
78 socialization. ‘Acculturation’ refers to any experience that influences teachers to pursue their future
79 profession, proposing that acculturation begins at birth and these experiences are more influential at
80 shaping PSTs attitudes toward teaching than teacher education (Lortie, 1975). ‘Professional
81 socialization’ refers to the process where “would be and experienced teachers acquire and maintain the
82 values, sensitivities, skills, and knowledge that are deemed ideal for teaching physical education”
83 (Lawson 1983a, p. 4), and is expected to occur in teacher education programs. ‘Organizational
84 socialization’ refers to “the process by means of which prospective and experienced teachers acquire
85 and maintain custodial ideology and the knowledge and skills that are valued and rewarded by the
86 organization” (Lawson, 1983a, p. 4). Teachers are introduced to a “landscape of teaching” that varies
87 by school (Schempp & Graber, 1992) and often face a dialectical process where their subjective
88 warrant and orientation to teaching, along with knowledge acquired in their PETE program, may be
89 challenged within their school setting (Lawson, 1983b). Schempp and Graber (1992) describe this as
90 “fitting in and fighting back” (p. 341), where teachers with orientations opposed to those of the school
91 will adapt their practices to fit in or continue with their orientations and fight back against the

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92 socialization of the school. It is the organizational socialisation phase that is explored in the study
93 reported in this paper.

94 In their review of the socialisation literature of physical education teachers, Richards, Templin and
95 Graber (2014) discuss individual physical education teachers, PSTs and the school context as reflecting
96 a continuum of teaching as innovative or custodial. They explain that a custodial orientation reflects an
97 individual or context that is concerned primarily with maintaining the status quo with a reliance on
98 traditional teaching methodologies. An innovative orientation reflects an individual or context that is
99 open to change and encourages new approaches to teaching physical education. The current study
100 reflects a PETE program that strives to instil an innovative orientation through the promotion of
101 innovative teaching methodologies, reflective practice, change agency and action research. A more
102 extensive description of the PETE programme will be provided later in the paper. Examining BTs' and
103 ETs' socialisation in teaching physical education provides an opportunity for those delivering the
104 PETE programme to determine the extent to which the innovative orientation survives in the school
105 context. In turn, it allows teacher educators to consider how the programme can be more effective in
106 encouraging PSTs to engage with change, consider new approaches to teaching physical education and
107 challenge ineffective practices in schools.

108 There is a significant evidence base suggesting initial teacher education programmes do not succeed in
109 producing BTs who challenge and reform existing teaching practices and is primarily attributed to the
110 pressures of occupational socialization on BTs taking on their first teaching position (Cope & Stephen,
111 2001). While there is evidence to suggest that the induction into a career as a physical education
112 teacher may differ from the induction of classroom teachers (O'Sullivan, 1989), different rationales are
113 provided for why this may be the case including the suggestion that recently qualified physical
114 education teachers experience an eased entry into the profession due to lower pedagogical expectations

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115 of physical education teachers (Huberman, 1989) or that the isolation experienced by physical
116 education teachers potentially decrease the amount of pressure and adjustment these BTs have to make
117 (Sparkes, Templin, & Schempp, 1990; Templin, 1989). Regardless, beginning physical education
118 teachers continue to report frustration in their struggle to establish the academic integrity of their
119 subject matter (Curtner-Smith, 2001; Green, 1998; O'Sullivan, 1989).

120 Workplace conditions are significant variables that affect teaching performance, influencing teachers'
121 perception of their success and their role as physical education professionals (Stroot & Whipple, 2003).

122 Workplace conditions can make teaching productive and satisfying or unsuccessful and dispiriting,
123 playing a key role in keeping teachers in the field (Wynn, Carboni & Patall, 2007). They can enhance
124 or inhibit a teacher's ability to be effective and can influence their ability to make choices on becoming
125 part of the existing system or being empowered to change the system (Stroot & Whipple, 2003). It is
126 not only the quality or qualifications of individuals who teach, but occupational and workplace factors
127 that affect teachers' decisions to enter, stay or leave the profession (Blasé & Kirby, 1992).

128 It is well established that working conditions that affect the work of physical education teachers are the
129 low status of physical education subject matter, isolation, relationships with other physical education
130 and classroom teachers, large class sizes, inappropriate facilities, insufficient equipment, scheduling of
131 physical education classes, the repetitive nature of physical education work, poor interaction with
132 school administration and limited influence in decision making (Curtner-Smith, 1997b, 1998, 2001;
133 Graber, 2001; Macdonald, 1995; Meek & Bethets, 1999; Napper-Owen & Phillips, 1995; O'Sullivan,
134 1989; Stroot & Whipple, 2003; Stroot *et al.*, 1993). Addressing these variables in teacher preparation
135 programs is difficult because, without ongoing support from the school setting, quality practices are
136 likely to wash out (Zeichner & Tabachnik, 1981). In a similar vein to Woods and Lynn (2001), it is

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137 anticipated that this study will provide insight into what happens to teachers as they attempt to navigate
138 and negotiate the bureaucracy associated with the school environment.

139 In a similarly designed study to the one reported here, Woods and Lynn (2001) investigated factors
140 that enhanced and constrained six teachers' progress through the career cycle. These teachers graduated
141 from the same university PETE program and were examined during their induction and again later in
142 their career cycles. Data indicated that the physical education teachers and the former physical
143 education teachers were affected by the personal and organizational conditions in both similar and
144 distinct ways. What differentiated those who remained from those who left was the manner in which
145 they negotiated the environmental conditions that occurred throughout their career cycle. This is not
146 dissimilar to what Henniger (2007) reported about the relationship between the extent to which urban
147 physical education teachers allowed work conditions to positively or negatively influence their ability
148 to teach quality physical education.

Expectations of Beginning and Experienced Teachers

150 Expectations for BTs are the same as, and in some cases even higher than, expectations for more
151 experienced teachers (Fletcher & Barrett, 2004; Feiman-Nemser, 1983). The focus of teacher
152 education should be on providing teachers with a set of high-level beginning competencies rather than
153 preparing fully-formed teachers (Conway, Murphy, Rath & Hall, 2009). It is unrealistic to expect BTs
154 to be 'finished products' as BTs have legitimate learning needs that cannot be grasped in advance or
155 outside the contexts of teaching (Feiman-Nemser, 2003). BTs need help in learning about the
156 curriculum, students, and interacting with colleagues in order to be effective in instructional practices
157 (Fletcher & Barrett, 2004). In the vast majority of cases, BTs have assumed full teaching roles from
158 the first day of entering the classroom, learning on a sink or swim basis (Alger, 2009; Little, 1990),
159 resulting in BTs' experiencing difficulties and expressing concerns.

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160 Teacher development from BT to ET is the transformation in a teacher's knowledge as they gain
161 experience and expertise (Sebren, 1995). Professional growth consists of an increase in knowledge
162 about students, development of teaching processes and a shift from self to student learning (Behets &
163 Vergauwen, 2006). As teachers gain experience, they get better at their job (Berliner, 1994),
164 acknowledging that developing 'competency' is acquired through experience (Carter, Cushing, Sabers
165 et al, 1988). Because pedagogical skills are gained slowly and through experience, teacher education
166 can only produce teachers primed to learn from experience.

167 PETE programme

168 The PETE programme related to this study is in an Irish university and is a four-year full-time
169 undergraduate Honours Bachelor Degree, designed to qualify teachers in physical education and
170 another subject in post-primary schools in Ireland. Entry into the programme is primarily through the
171 Irish Leaving Certificate Examination through the Central Applications Office (CAO). At the time of
172 the study, there were approximately 80 to 90 students accepted into the course per year, with around
173 10% of students entering the course outside the CAO system as mature students. The high academic
174 calibre of applicants to physical education teaching has been a consistent trend since the early 1970s.
175 Each of the four years is divided into two 13 week semesters – September to December and February
176 to May with formal examinations at the end of each semester. There are three connected and
177 interrelated components to the PETE programme. The first component in which PSTs spend
178 approximately 50% of their time is the content and pedagogy of physical education which emphasizes
179 the application of teaching the content across post-primary school. The physical education component
180 is framed around three main concepts. Firstly, curriculum models convey the shared philosophy of the
181 PETE faculty and define a clear focus around the content of the PETE program. Exposing PSTs to a
182 variety of curriculum models allows them to experience and understand the different learning

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183 experiences and opportunities possible through such models, encourages PSTs to consider specific,
184 relevant and challenging outcomes in their teaching, and reflects the curriculum framework for senior
185 cycle physical education in Ireland (for students aged between 14 and 17 years) which is structured
186 around six curriculum models. Secondly, teacher as researcher focuses encourages PSTs to engage in
187 undertaking and accessing research that enhances their understanding of the relevance of pedagogical
188 research for teaching young people in schools. Such research provides insight into how things might be
189 adapted or revised to improve practice. The program helps PSTs learn to read, understand and apply
190 research findings to their teaching settings so that they might better impact and facilitate student
191 learning. Commitment to inquiry and reflection through the teacher as researcher is a dimension of
192 teacher professionalism highlighted by the Teaching Council in Ireland. Thirdly, physical activity for a
193 lifetime emphasizes understanding and interrogating young people's physical activity and sedentary
194 behaviour as essential to the work of the physical education teacher in modern society. This ensures that
195 graduates of the program possess the knowledge and skills to assess and address the physical literacy needs
196 of learners. The second component of the PETE programme is Education and Professional Studies in
197 which PSTs spend approximately 25% of their time. These studies focus on generic educational issues
198 and include learning, planning and teaching, diversity and equality in education, curriculum, school
199 organisation and the teacher as a professional. The third component of the PETE programme is an
200 elective or specialist option in which PSTs spend approximately 25 % of their time. This enables PSTs
201 to gain a qualification in one of the following subjects – Chemistry, English, Geography, Irish or
202 Mathematics for which they are qualified to teach on graduation.

203 There are three school placements over the four years. The first takes place during second semester of
204 year one where PSTs are placed in a primary school for one week. The second school placement block
205 is in second semester of second year, with PSTs in post-primary schools for six weeks teaching both
206 physical education and their elective subject. The third school placement is a ten-week placement in a

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207 post-primary school in the first semester of fourth year, teaching both physical education and their
208 elective. There are also further teaching opportunities within modules, placements which enable PSTs
209 to see how coaches work, and through participating in inclusive and integrated physical education,
210 which enables pre-service teachers to adapt classes for people with a physical disability.

211 Methods

212 Participants

213 Six BTs, five female and one male, sourced from the PETE program graduating cohort, agreed to
214 participate in the research after initial contact with each was made by the first author. All six BTs
215 undertook the PETE program at the same time as the first author. On graduating from the program, the
216 second author approached six peers to ascertain if they were interested in being involved in the study.
217 This particular cohort was chosen as the first author had positive relationships with each and was
218 confident that they would be prepared to invest in the requirements of the study. Six ETs, five female
219 and one male, who had been teaching for six years agreed to participate. The six ETs had previously
220 been interviewed by the second author on completion of their PETE program and again at the end of
221 their first year of teaching ([REDACTED]). The intention of inviting the
222 same cohort of ETs was to allow the collection of data that could not only inform the current study but
223 also contribute to a longitudinal study, not the focus of this paper, of physical education teachers
224 teaching and career trajectories. It is important to note that the label of ‘experienced’ refers to the
225 length of time the teachers had been teaching than to their level of expertise in teaching. Both the BTs
226 and ETs graduated from the same four-year concurrent PETE program where graduates enter the PETE
227 program with high level academic standards ([REDACTED]). The influence of significant
228 others, interest in sport and physical education, wanting to teach, coaching and a desire to change
229 school practices have all been reported as reasons for the program’s PSTs entering PETE ([REDACTED]).

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230 [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]). Ethical clearance was granted from the university in which
231 both authors resided at the time.

232 **Data Collection**

233 **Interviews.** The timeline of interviews for both cohorts is noted in Figure 1. The six BTs were
234 interviewed two months into their first teaching position with respect to their conceptions of the PETE
235 program, valued knowledge and anticipated career trajectories. An interview with a sample of three of
236 the BT cohort half way through their first year of teaching was conducted in order to verify
237 commonalities and differences of teaching experiences that were being reported and to highlight areas
238 that required further investigation during final interviews. The BT cohort was interviewed again at the
239 end of their first year of teaching with respect to the articulation of the relationship between the PETE
240 program and teaching school physical education, and plans for the future. All BT interviews were
241 conducted by the first author in the university setting at the end of the school day. Each BT interview
242 on average lasted between 45 and 60 minutes.

243 ETs were interviewed, after they had started their seventh year of teaching, with respect to their
244 teaching background, relationship between the PETE program content and teaching school physical
245 education, and plans for the future. The ET cohorts were again interviewed at the end of their seventh
246 year of teaching. All ET interviews were conducted by the first author in the individual school settings
247 of each ET at the end of the school day. Each interview on average lasted between 45 and 60 minutes.
248 Interview transcripts from the respective cohorts informed the next set of interview questions that were
249 posed. Table 1 provides a sample of questions that were posed at each stage of the study. All
250 interviews were audio-recorded and subsequently typed to produce verbatim text as soon after the
251 interview as possible.

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252 **Prompt sheets.** Prompt sheets were used to gain a greater insight into the issues facing BTs and ETs,
253 hoping to encourage teachers to note incidents that happened at various points throughout the school
254 year rather than relying solely on interviews to reflect on teaching experiences. The idea of the prompt
255 sheet was for the teachers to document their working conditions and how they felt these conditions
256 either supported or constrained their work within their particular school context. Prompt sheets are a
257 form of reflective writing which, “*Focus on the writer’s learning itself and attempts to identify the*
258 *significance and meaning of a given learning experience, primarily for the writer*” (Fink, 2003, pg.
259 93). Self-reflection skills can be improved and strengthened through the use of specific prompts and
260 cues as they can facilitate the learning process for participants (Kathpalia & Heah, 2008). After careful
261 analysis of the initial interviews with the BTs and ETs, prompt sheets were formulated. Prompt sheet
262 headings were informed by noting what had arisen as pertinent working conditions (noted earlier in the
263 paper) and data from initial interviews, conscious that insights acquired from qualitative interviews
264 may improve the quality of other research designs (Gaskell, 2003). Prompt sheets were headed with
265 the question ‘Over the past two weeks, how have the following working conditions impacted on your
266 teaching?’ and space was then provided for them to respond to (i) appropriate and fair teaching
267 assignments, (ii) working relationships with colleagues, (iii) appropriate curricular resources, (iv) level
268 of accountability and (v) school organisation and leadership. A space was also provided for teachers to
269 note additional working conditions and / or any further comments. It was agreed with the BTs and ETs
270 that a prompt sheet was to be submitted each month. Courtesy of an email, each of the teachers was
271 sent a copy of the prompt sheet a week prior to its submission date. The completed prompt sheets were
272 returned to the first author by email. Throughout the course of the study, five prompt sheets were
273 completed by each of the BTs and four prompt sheets by each of the ETs.
274 Timeline of data collection across both cohorts is noted in Figure 1.

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275 [Insert Figure 1 here]

276 Data Analysis

277 All the data collected from the interviews and prompt sheets were included in the preliminary data
278 analysis. The block and file approach was the preferred method of reducing data as large pieces of data
279 remain intact (Grbich, 2007). Systematic and rigorous consideration of interviews and prompt sheets
280 was required and coding was the most suitable way to analyse this data. The backwards and forwards
281 method of code analysis (Silverman, 2000) was used and resulted in codes being constantly refined
282 within and across the knowledge bases. The aim of this whole process was a quest for common content
283 themes achieved through labelling and subsequent retrieval of similarly coded segments. As the
284 interpretation developed, the interviews and prompt sheets were referred back to on numerous
285 occasions to ensure nothing of significance was omitted. Themes and concepts that were identified and
286 coded in the interviews were compared and contrasted with the prompt sheets and this cross-reference
287 approach formed the basis of the discussion topics (Mason, 1996).

288 Efforts to establish trustworthiness included triangulating qualitative data sources (Creswell, 2012),
289 involving identification of similar themes situated in both interviews and prompt sheet transcriptions.
290 Debriefing between the two authors throughout data collection and analysis encouraged discussion on
291 developing interpretations and how best to configure future questions to be posed to the teachers.
292 Noting debriefings by peers as a technique for enhancing credibility of interpretation (Lincoln & Guba,
293 1985), debriefing also allowed the researchers to explore and address any instances where the first
294 author, as a peer of the BT cohort, may have exercised research bias in her interactions with the BT
295 cohort as well as her interpretation of associated data. Member checks were conducted formally by
296 seeking clarification from teachers on the accuracy of their interview transcriptions, with an
297 opportunity to clarify and elaborate on any issues arising in the transcriptions.

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298 **Results**

299 There is evidence to suggest that physical educators are not prepared for the realities of educational
300 contexts (Williams & Williamson, 1995) and it is necessary for physical education teachers to address
301 the variables that affect their work (Stroot & Whipple, 2003; Graber, 2001). The themes that arose
302 from the data analysis and that are consistent with the working conditions previously cited in the
303 literature are shared here, (i) appropriate and equitable teaching assignments and (ii) working
304 relationships with colleagues, with a view to explicitly conveying the extent to which what teachers
305 (BTs and ETs) need to consider as practitioners is part of the discursive dialogue in PETE programs.
306 Data collection points throughout the year provided some perspective on the constant and consistent
307 prevalence of the two themes. This is evidenced in the sections below where BTs and ETs revisit and
308 extend particular narratives throughout the interviews and prompt sheets over the duration of the
309 school year. (...) denotes the change in date from one comment to another within extracts from
310 transcriptions. Pseudonyms replace the names of the teachers.

311 **Appropriate and Equitable Teaching Assignments**

312 Appropriate and equitable teaching assignments are assignments that are manageable and within a
313 teacher's field of expertise (Johnson & Kardos, 2008). Two issues that surfaced for both BTs and ETs
314 were large class size and the extent of the coaching responsibility placed upon physical education
315 teachers.

316 **Large class size.** Large class numbers was recognised as a consistent problem for BTs. Claire admitted
317 she was “overwhelmed (...) under pressure and anxious” with respect to class sizes (BT Claire, Prompt
318 Sheet 1, 6/11/2009; Prompt Sheet 2, 22/12/2009), noting later the significant impact it was having on
319 her ability to teach,

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320 For the senior classes, there were very large numbers involved – 70 or 70 plus pupils and it made
321 it very difficult. I could only teach to a certain extent. You had to keep them in some sort of
322 activity and oftentimes that did involve game-type situations ... In a way, it was literally chaos –
323 people everywhere, making noise, not listening. The kids do not get as much benefit from it and
324 I do not get as much of a benefit from it because I cannot teach to the same standard I would like.
325 I could not teach as much as I generally would if I had a smaller number. It made pupil learning
326 more difficult (BT Claire, Interview, 30/03/2010).

327 Worryingly, excessively large classes continued to have serious repercussions in terms of not only
328 implementing the curriculum and participation levels of students for ETs but also in leading ETs to
329 question their professionalism in dealing with such instances,

330 For fifth and sixth years, this year we had 60 or 70 timetabled for the gym together and a lot of the
331 time, we had to do cross-court basketball or cross-court hockey. That is not physical education for
332 anyone. There was no teaching done. It was exactly what we were told not to do in the PETE
333 program, which is throw in the ball but what can you do with 60 and with another 20 sitting out?
334 (...)We have spent the last six years trying to reverse this and who is going to be there to pick up
335 the tab again? We are going to have to start from scratch again for the entire year with that
336 particular group (ET Nancy, Interview, 23/11/2009; Interview, 10/06/2010)

337 ***Coaching responsibilities.*** The extent of coaching responsibilities was a consistent theme for BTs,

338 I have become involved with catering for male and female sport in the school. Most sporting
339 events in the school are coordinated through me. I am also involved in [name a number of
340 national initiatives delivered predominantly by physical education teachers] adding to the
341 workload I often feel is overwhelming me at times (BT John, Prompt Sheet 2, 10/12/2009).

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342 Many teachers summarized the extent of the commitment for physical education teachers to assume
343 coaching roles, with many BTs and ETs suffering ‘role conflict’ indicating that the role of coaching
344 can compromise their role as a physical education teacher,

345 This month has not got any better regarding fixtures and it came to the stage last week, when I
346 questioned myself if I was a physical education teacher or just a coach. I have been away twice a
347 week since mid term and I am missing time from my [physical education] classes (BT Jean,
348 Prompt Sheet 5, 11/05/2010).

349 The expected coaching responsibilities of the BTs and ETs lead to the consideration of working
350 relationships with colleagues.

Working relationships with colleagues

352 BTs and ETs commented on the associated issues of a lack of support from other subject teaching
353 colleagues and collaboration with (or isolation from) physical education colleagues.

354 *Support (or not) from other subject teaching colleagues.* BTs surmised that the minimal backing or
355 support they received from teaching colleagues was due to the lack of respect for physical education as
356 a school subject,

357 I often get the feeling that many other teachers within the school have no respect for the strand of
358 physical education. I hear comments that exam year classes would be better having other classes
359 [other than physical education] instead or that it would be no problem to miss physical education to
360 take an extra class in a different subject. This attitude is annoying as I find it completely
361 disrespectful towards me. It is demeaning the subject I teach. I find it insulting (BT Claire, Prompt
362 Sheet 3, 26/04/2010).

363 Another example of the lack of respect for physical education was the way physical education was
364 disregarded when it comes to exam-time and /or the staging of school plays,

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365 The hall was used for drama week and then school exams were taking place so it had to be set up
366 for those. The weather was not suitable to go outside so we had to revert to supervising the kids in
367 classrooms for double period. Seemingly it happens every year and we cannot do anything about it
368 (...) Finally after mid-term we got it back [the hall] only for it to be used again for the aptitude
369 tests ... very frustrating (BT Jean, Prompt Sheet 2, 22/12/09; Prompt Sheet 4, 26/03/2010).

370 The lack of respect teaching colleagues convey for physical education continued to be a significant
371 issue for ETs and such benevolent attitude towards physical education was highlighted in an encounter
372 reported by an ET. The extent to which such an attitude affects the ET's commitment to teaching
373 physical education is worrying,

374 One of the teachers passed a comment to both the art teacher and me saying, 'Sure, what are we
375 saying good luck to them for, all they are doing is kicking a football and drawing a few pictures'.
376 That is the general attitude towards physical education and sport. That is their view ... and it is
377 very hard to overcome that (...) I feel as the physical education teacher, physical education is not
378 valued to the degree that I would like and it would impact on my relationship with certain members
379 of staff (ET Kevin, Prompt Sheet 1, 28/01/2010; Interview, 19/11/2010).

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

382 ***Collaboration with (or isolation from) physical education colleagues.*** BTs felt their teaching
383 improved when they had collaborative relations with their fellow physical education teacher
384 colleagues,

385 ... All the credit for my improvement as a teacher goes to him [the other physical education
386 teacher]. He was really, really good. He has been there twenty / thirty years. Every time we went
387 to teach something new, he has a system. He knows what he is going to do and if I thought I could

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388 add something else we would do it but if not, we would go about it his way. Any time I was going
389 to do something he would give me advice or if I was ever having problems, he would always step
390 in and give me a hand. In that sense, he was very good and any difficulties I did come across, he
391 definitely helped me out. I learned an awful lot from him (BT Sinead, Prompt Sheet 2,
392 22/12/2009).

393 Conversely, Mary, as a BT, consistently experienced difficulties with her physical education colleague
394 both in terms of physical education and in coaching,

395 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
396 what she wants. I have no other option and that makes me feel under-valued, under-mined even.
397 She just does not see me as an equal. I am someone she thinks she can just take advantage of
398 ...This is my first year out and she really does look down on me because of my inexperience. I am
399 full of ideas and enthusiasm but yet she is dampening it by claiming that it will not work. She puts
400 it down before I have even suggested it or tried it out properly (Prompt Sheet 2, 22/12/2009).

401 While Mary's situation has been the most prolonged instance of dissatisfaction with physical education
402 colleagues, other BTs had remarkably similar experiences.

403 There were also instances where ETs felt alone in their questions and problems when collaboration
404 with a physical education colleague was not particularly strong,

405 We have not discussed content, teaching methods, assessment or other areas that I would have
406 discussed with teachers in the past (...)I was a bit disillusioned in one sense thinking if this was
407 always going to be the way ... This year, I have had less collaboration with the other teacher. That
408 lack of collaboration has come from a number of different angles – partly to do with myself but
409 partly to do with a tiny bit disillusionment with the inconsistency of a new teacher starting all over
410 again (ET Aine, Prompt Sheet 1, 31/01/2010; Interview, 03/06/2010).

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411 With a lack of collaboration evident for many BTs, it is little wonder that isolation was prevalent.
412 Isolation was heightened for BTs when there was only one physical educator in the school (not an
413 uncommon occurrence in Irish post-primary schools) with little opportunity to pursue professional
414 dialogue,

415 There is no other physical education teacher in the school so effectively I am the Physical
416 Education Department. I found it difficult to adapt to the level of responsibility being directed
417 towards me. With regard to physical education, I must admit I am alone (...) There is nobody to
418 tell you, 'This is how you teach'... Once I was gone, that was it. It was a shock being the only
419 physical education teacher. Suddenly I was responsible for all the plans, timetabling, pupils,
420 everything ... You have a lot of things being thrown at you. At the start there was a sense of panic.
421 You find yourself fighting your own corner when you are on your own (BT John, Prompt Sheet 1,
422 6/11/2009; Interview, 03/06/2010).

423 ETs acknowledged isolation as an obstacle at some stage in their career, affirming that when isolation
424 is prevalent, teachers struggle through the entire year. Again, this is heightened when there is only one
425 physical education teacher in the school,

426 I am on my own as a physical education teacher. When something does not go great or when
427 something annoys you or when kids are not interested, you really do not have any back-up (...)
428 In terms of just the physical education aspect alone, they would not know anything
429 about it and they would not see your frustration ... they would not understand. It does affect
430 me. I would feel very isolation and basically I am working on my own in terms of subject
431 department meetings. Everybody is going off in their fours and fives to talk about their
432 department and I am there and I am on my own (ET Kevin, Interview, 19/11/2009; Prompt
433 Sheet 1, 28/01/2010).

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434 Discussion

435 While one would expect a level of experience to be effective in addressing many of the challenges
436 which BTs identified, the issue of working conditions is noteworthy as it identifies aspects that appear
437 to be on-going for BTs and are issues that remain prevalent for ETs. A number of the working
438 conditions noted by BTs and ETs in this study support previously reported conditions affecting the
439 enactment of physical education teaching practices, i.e., large class sizes (Johnson & Kardos, 2008),
440 coaching responsibilities (Fejgin et al., 1995; Stroot & Whipple, 2003) and support (or not) from other
441 physical education and teaching colleagues (Marshall & Hardman, 2000). The establishment of similar
442 working conditions attached to teaching physical education in the Irish school system provides us with
443 evidence to inform how best we consider such issues in an attempt to develop more effective models of
444 PETE. That is, teacher educators can use BTs' and ETs' accounts of socialization as part of the
445 curriculum (Zeichner & Gore, 1990) of the PETE programme with a view to best preparing teachers
446 for the reality of teaching in schools.

447 Some of the variation that exists in socializing experiences among students is a result of differences in
448 the institutional environments of the schools in which they teach (Zeichner & Gore, 1990), with large
449 class sizes being a reported issue for some of the BTs and ETs. In supporting the suggestions of
450 Kelchtermans and Ballet (2002) we have reported previously how the PETE program has utilized a
451 portfolio assignment as well as small-scale action research projects to engage with particular working
452 condition aspects of individual schools (████████████████████). The institutional environment of
453 Irish schools is further interrogated through numerous modules that reside in the 'education'
454 component of the PETE program. *The School as an Organisation* is a module that runs parallel to
455 PSTs fourth-year school placement and encourages them to consider the prevailing school culture and
456 ideology in which they reside and how they reconfigure themselves within that. The module provides

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457 an action-research perspective where PSTs identify and explore an issue that, through reflective
458 practice, would encourage them to consider the enactment of their own practices. *Teachers as*
459 *Professionals* is a module that provides an opportunity for PSTs to critically reflect on their own
460 developing professional identity as a teacher and their associated teaching philosophy. A strong
461 component of the module is to consider the development of professional agency and how they can best
462 contribute to the critical mass of teachers involved in the wider teaching profession. These
463 opportunities provide meaningful opportunities for PSTs to analyse and reflect upon their own beliefs
464 and implicit theories about teaching and about being a teacher (Flores, 2001). Given that the PSTs
465 enrolled on the PETE programme are studying an additional classroom subject that they are qualified
466 to teach on graduation, they are by default exposed, perhaps more than single-subject PSTs, to
467 contrasting viewpoints in clarifying the complex aspects of teaching in a classroom and a sports hall /
468 gymnasium. One practice that is enforced when PSTs undertake school placements throughout their
469 PETE program is to allow them ‘space’ to try out their own ideas (Hollingsworth, 1989). This is
470 facilitated through encouraging PSTs to identify at least one class a week where they look to enact a
471 new practice, conscious that this is deemed a ‘safe’ space from programme tutors visiting and grading
472 their performance in that particular class.

473 The more recent tension in the Irish school system between the role of the physical educator and the
474 expectation of being involved in coaching lead to the introduction of a *Youth Sport and Policy* module
475 in the PETE programme. The module provides opportunities for PSTs to examine the ways in which
476 their commitment to, and informed engagement with, local sports and physical activity providers
477 external to a school context might have the potential to bring about positive change for all
478 stakeholders, while interrogating the extension of what it may mean to be a ‘physical educator’. This in
479 turn challenges PSTs to (i) identify effective teaching, coaching and facilitation strategies that

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480 accommodate diverse populations, e.g. disadvantaged / minority groups, special educational needs,
481 talented performers, (ii) discuss the relationship between teaching, coaching and facilitating youth
482 physical activity, and (iii) identify the existing pillars of youth sport (physical education, extra-
483 curricular sport and sport outside school), the relationship between them and implications for physical
484 education teachers and youth sport providers. As a consequence of this module, it was decided that
485 there was a need to provide students with a reference point for broadening perspectives of physical
486 education in changing contexts and subsequently the first chapter of [REDACTED]
487 [REDACTED] ([REDACTED]) discusses the role of the physical
488 educator in and beyond the school.

489 The issue of BTs and ETs experiencing a lack of support from other physical education teachers and
490 other teacher colleagues has been more difficult to address through the PETE programme, with an
491 awareness that there is a need to provide PSTs with a skill-set that will encourage them to become
492 change agents with respect to enacting and developing practices that will provide them with support
493 structures that may not be evident otherwise ([REDACTED]). A current development
494 that the PETE program is considering in an attempt to enhance the support structures between teacher
495 educators, PSTs who are to become BTs, and ETs is the establishment of a formalized shared learning
496 community. It is proposed that we consider how potential similarities and differences in learning
497 trajectories (within and across all three populations) inform how best to plan, structure and support a
498 shared learning community. This in turn has significant implications for teachers, teacher educators
499 and PST's learning from, and developing with, each other as well as informing each population on how
500 best to share the responsibility of delivering worthwhile student learning in both school and the PETE
501 program. This supports bringing practicing teachers into the higher education contexts with a view to
502 act as a basis for the development of a more effective initial teacher education and for professional

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503 development of both teachers and lecturers working on initial teacher education programs (Cope &
504 Stephen, 2001), an issue we have addressed through the creation of posts termed ‘Applied Studies
505 Coordinators’.

506 The philosophy behind the Applied Studies Coordinator posts was to encourage those with current
507 experience in teaching physical education in schools to consider a five-year appointment in delivering
508 applied studies (e.g., adventure, athletics, dance, games) to PSTs on the PETE program. The post is a
509 five-year contract to allow teachers currently teaching physical education in schools to consider a
510 career break and to facilitate a turn-over of practicing physical education teachers on the PETE
511 program. It was anticipated that such posts would optimize the access PSTs have to the craft
512 knowledge of practitioners. As Lawson (1986) warns, the teacher educator in higher education cannot
513 afford to divorce themselves or their efforts from practicing teachers. Incorporating the Applied
514 Studies Coordinators into the staff base of the PETE program allows for the development of a shared
515 technical culture, i.e., what constitutes the ideal school physical education program and the associated
516 appropriate teacher behavior in conducting such a program.

517 Conclusion

518 Ultimately, the potential success, or otherwise, of PETE programs is dependent on the extent to which
519 teachers, both beginning and experienced, are actively engaged and continue to be actively engaged in
520 the tasks of teaching school physical education (O’Sullivan, 1989; Stroot & Whipple, 2003). Many of
521 the BTs conformed to the practices that were already occurring in schools, displaying little ability to
522 act as ‘transformative agents’ (Fullan, 1993), resulting in feelings of frustration and resignation. As the
523 years progressed, there is evidence from the ETs that these feelings of frustration and resignation
524 remained prevalent. As has been stated elsewhere, it is imperative that PETE programs provide PSTs
525 with the skill-set and disposition to advocate for the physical education subject and have the ability and

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526 confidence to become change agents ([REDACTED]). These teachers have displayed
527 perseverance in the determination to ‘swim against the tide’ but when faced with the same issues year
528 on year, disillusionment has become the over-riding emotion, not dissimilar to Henniger’s (2007)
529 ‘trouper’ (those who complain about work conditions and believe that workplace conditions has
530 negatively influenced their ability to teach quality physical education).

531 There are mixed accounts of the extent to which a PETE program impacts physical education practices
532 in schools. Minimal impact is attributed to beliefs about the physical education subject being
533 developed during childhood and adolescence not being easily changed (Curtner-Smith, 1999; Green,
534 1998) while there is evidence that PSTs are influenced more when they perceive faculty to be credible
535 (Graber, 1995) and when faculty have specialist degrees in sport pedagogy and agree a professional
536 ideology (Lawson, 1983b). We appreciate that there is more we can do to encourage PSTs to read and
537 discuss accounts of their peers’ teacher socialization and relate them to their own experiences in
538 learning to teach during school placements, potentially gaining greater insights into and control over
539 their own socialization (Zeichner & Gore, 1990). In turn, the same accounts can challenge our thinking
540 and help us to think more clearly about the consequences of our work for those we seek to educate
541 (Zeichner & Gore, 1990). Complementing the exercise of PSTs engaging with accounts of their peers’
542 socialization into teaching, there is a need for PSTs to learn how to read research in physical education
543 and apply it to practice. The PETE programme has attempted to address this in a publication that
544 presents a clear, step-by-step guide on how to read and interpret research related to physical education
545 teaching and learning ([REDACTED]).

546 Agreeing with Lawson (1983b), it is imperative that physical education teacher educators examine
547 their fundamental assumptions about their work. As posed at the beginning of this paper, if indeed the
548 purpose of PETE programs is to produce teachers who will challenge and reform existing teaching

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549 practices, it appears that an obvious starting point is gathering physical education teacher socialization
550 accounts. These then need to be shared with PSTs on the program and an effective way of engaging
551 with such accounts and determining how best PSTs develop a skill-set that not only allows them to
552 deal with such realities but also act as change agents needs to be considered. Extending the role that
553 research on teacher socialization can play, Zeichner and Gore (1990) suggest that such research should
554 be used by teacher educators and policymakers in ways that further the roles of teachers as ‘extended
555 professionals’ who play a significant part in the making of educational policies at the classroom and
556 school levels.

557 One of the main limitations of this study is that the ETs and BTs were tracked intermittently
558 throughout a school year, perhaps resulting in teachers relying on sharing feelings and practices that
559 were closer to the data collection periods than at other times throughout the teaching year. Future work
560 in this area would benefit from tracking the day-to-day operations of physical education teachers to
561 gain a sense of the consistency and cycle of feelings and experience that contribute to the development
562 of teaching expertise. Nevertheless, the study contributes to the literature by raising an awareness of
563 the knowledge required and structures needed for a more meaningful journey for the development of
564 teaching expertise and associated informed effective practices in school physical education.

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