Title: Why Do They Leave ? Physical Education Teacher Attrition

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The story so far

As a paper, this piece represents a portion of a project which is
seeking to understand the lives of beginning health and physical
education (HPE) teachers in state and private secondary schools
in Queensland1. The project's research process represents a
journey into the joys, sorrows and bitter disappointments of 21
teachers who are frequently, and in many different ways, working
in extremely testing circumstances. Goodson (1992) recognized
that studying teachers' lives in context was an emergent and
necessary field of inquiry. Through the brief sharing of these
teachers' lives, I have come to better understand the myriad of
profound difficulties that HPE teachers face: ridicule,
unwelcomed personal and professional surveillance and control,
role conflict, unchallenging work, and lack of support and sexual
harassment from colleagues. While each difficulty requires a
lengthy analysis, and these will be forthcoming, this paper shall
use a broad brush to highlight the key dissatisfactions which
have and will motivate beginning HPE teachers to leave the
profession.

Much of the relevant literature on beginning teachers' concerns
and attrition is located within mainstream education. Student
management, lesson planning, alienation, isolation, distrust,
denigration of personal interests and dependence on outsiders'
opinions have been identified (Bullough, 1987; Edelwich &
Brodsky, 1980; Fuller, 1969; Veenman, 1984). Edelwich and Brodsky
(1980) outlined a cycle of disillusionment for practitioners in
the helping professions that begins with enthusiasm before
stagnation sets in, followed by frustration and apathy before
action is taken. Research outlining the concerns of physical

educators has emerged more recently. These concerns centre on the marginal status of PE teachers and their subject, poor communication with administration, sexism, work overload, poor resources, isolation, routinization of work, and lack of career mobility (Evans & Williams, 1989; O'Sullivan, 1989; Solmon, Worthy & Carter, 1993; Sparkes, 1991; Templin, 1989).

At a theoretical level, the constructs of life history methodology (for example, Corradi, 1991; Goodson, 1992a; Knowles, 1992; Measor & Sikes, 1992; Sparkes, in-press a&b; Sparkes, Templin & Schempp, 1993), teachers' socialization (for example, Ball & Goodson, 1985; Dodds, 1989; Evans & Williams, 1989; Fuller, 1969; Goodson, 1992b; Huberman, 1989; Jordell, 1987; Lawson, 1988, 1989, 1993b, Lawson & Stroot, 1993; Lortie, 1975; Maclean, 1992; Nias, 1986; O'Sullivan, 1989; Sikes, Measor & Woods, 1985; Solmon, Worthy & Carter, 1993; Sparkes, in-press a;

Sparkes, Templin & Schempp, 1990; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979; Veenman, 1984; Williamson, 1993), proletarianization (for example, Apple, 1985; Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985; Braverman, 1974; Derber, 1983; Densmore, 1987; Ginsburg, 1988; Macdonald, 1992; Shaw, 1987), the body (Foucault, 1977; Giddens, 1991; Shilling, 1993 a&b); and sexism (for example, Casey, 1992; Evans & Davies, 1993; Evans & Williams, 1989; Lenskyj, 1991; Macdonald, 1992; Maclean, 1992; Sampson, 1991; Sparkes, in-press a; Sparkes, Templin & Schempp, 1993; Stroot & Williamson, 1993; Talbot, 1993) have shaped the way the data have been read 2.

Research process

The main participants in the project to date are ten female HPE teachers, four of whom work in private schools and six in state secondary schools. Four of their schools were located in Brisbane and five were in rural or provincial towns. Another female participant had already left teaching from a state, rural school. The eleven males who have been interviewed were drawn from three private schools and seven state schools, five of which were located in rural or provincial towns and six in Brisbane. As with the female group, another male participant who had left teaching from a state, metropolitan school was also interviewed. All of the participants had graduated from the Department of Human Movement Studies (HMS) at The University of Queensland between 1987 and 1992, with the majority having graduated in either 1991 or 1992 and thus were in their first or second year of teaching during the period of data collection.

Our discussions with the participants took place in a variety of locations with the convenience of the participants being a priority. However, it was our goal to spend a day in the

teacher's school, to have discussions with the teachers and make fieldnotes about the nature of their day's work. In order to do this we travelled by car and plane throughout the state of Queensland. Without exception, the teachers were welcoming. For those practicing teachers that it was too difficult to visit, we met in Brisbane during their holidays. Others we have spoken to on several occasions as they chose to write letters or visit us. In addition to our discussions and fieldnotes, the practicing teachers have also agreed to make diary entries, for ten days of their choice, concerning the rewards, frustrations and challenges they are encountering. Due to the widespread interest of teachers in the project, some graduates beyond the key participants have offered to keep diaries. Diaries are yet to be returned to us.

Other sources of data, not included in this paper, include interviews with several of the practicing teachers' school principals or deputy principals, and quantitative and statistical data used to establish the employment trends of the HMS teacher education graduates. The quantitative data has been gathered through a questionnaire of graduates of HMS (1986-1992) and statistical information from governmental agencies responsible for teacher employment and registration.

A brief reflection

This work has not been one engaging life history methods as described by Goodson (1988), Measor and Sikes (1992) or Sparkes (in-press a&b) yet the challenges raised by researchers of life history as a methodology are important ones with respect to the conduct of qualitative research employing interview/discussion techniques. First and foremost, the researcher should acknowledge the political dimension to the issue of voice and that, in attempting to create a circumstance in which teachers' voices may be heard, a series of questions of dealing with power and

responsibility ensue. Secondly, the importance of political context is foregrounded as teachers' voices become an expozay of the structural, intellectual and social contexts of the schools in which they work. Other writers have similarly acknowledged the primacy of biography in understnding the teachers and their work (for example, Knowles, 1992; Martinez, 1987).

"The form of relationship between the researcher and story-teller powerfully shapes the ways in which the story of any life gets told" (Sparkes, in-press b). Corradi (1991, p.108) espouses that the researcher and teacher should aim towards a dialogical relationship which "places narrator and researcher on equal footing". Did I achieve this? At some stage I had taught all of the teachers in the university context and I believe I had a good

relationship with all and a close relationship with several. All were contacted via a letter which detailed in advance my expectations of the time and responsibilities which the project entailed and we then negotiated the extent of our interactions based upon the teacher's interest and schedules (Measor & Sikes, 1992). Our university relationship seemed to enhance the depth of our interactions yet it possibly introduced an element of a university supervisor - practice teacher power relationship. For example, as we walked to classes, some teachers unnecessarily justified the quality of their lessons to me. Others seemed genuinely pleased to have a familiar face visit them so far from home. Although the participants had the opportunity to shape the nature of our interactions, as a researcher I have retained perhaps an inordinate degree of power over the direction of the project. As Corradi (1991) and Sparkes (in-press b) remind us, it is the researcher who authors the subsequent documents according to the researcher's purposes and through selection and editing is in a privileged position.

It is this cocktail of intimacy and power which raises ethical questions and challenges. Barone (1992 in Sparkes, in-press b) offers a way forward in arguing that:
if academics are to be worthy of their privileges then one of their primary responsibilities is to speak for those who cannot speak for themselves so that the reader can achieve solidarity with them as fellow human beings...
with the aim of creating individual and societal change. The participants had their own motivations, and perhaps agendas, for agreeing to become involved. Clearly for some it was an opportunity to voice their frustrations with teachers' work with the knowledge that their voices will get reported in spheres which may influence educational decision-makers. For others, our discussions positioned me as "researcher as therapist" (Sparkes, in-press b) and Goodson (1992b) warns of the emergent dangers of such interactions. Regardless of the teacher's perspecctive on our interactions - friend, colleague, therapist, ex-lecturer - the nature of my response to the teachers' narratives weighs heavily.

I should also note that a lengthy self-disclosure is not included although this practice has been proffered as an essential dimension to life history narratives and thereby, I would argue, to interview-based, interpretive research. Suffice to say that firstly, I too have "gotten out" of teaching and secondly, that due to my affection for the participants and my concern for the future of HPE, that I would hope for the nature of HPE teachers' work and the contexts in which much of it is carried out to dramatically change. It is my belief that the following foci are ripe for change.

Lack of status (It's just HPE)

Research papers and reviews in the Journal of Teaching in Physical Education [1993, 12(4)] reinforced the marginal status of physical education (PE) in British and North American schools, and the negative impacts of such marginalization on PE teachers both personally and professionally. HPE teachers in Queensland schools reported similar patterns of marginalization despite the fact that many taught a subject in years 11 and 12 which theoretically carries full academic status 1.

In speaking of the perceived status of HPE in their schools teachers commented:
In my last school it was a case of, "Well go and occupy them for 40 minutes and then bring them back". (Carl)

The most disappointing factor is that there is no accountability..., no assessment; turn up, get an effort mark and that's it, and the girls know that if they've got a note they can get out of phys.ed.. (Jane)

The administration does not give so much support. I think their perception of phys.ed. is "Go and run around the oval".... In their eyes it isn't a worthwhile subject. Our job was to organize carnivals and that was about it.... Physical activity for these kids is just a chance to get out of the classroom.... And I suppose for me it's become that way too. (Russell)

Teachers were caught in a bind that was underpinned by HPE being seen as a break from more educationally worthwhile "mental", rather than "manual", activity. This perspective permeated the administration's position in terms of how HPE was inappropriately defined as sport, how it was timetabled and as highlighted by Sally, Gail and Russell, how it was resourced.
We don't have any undercover area here. (Sally, who teaches outside in temperatures ranging from 3-40 degrees celsius)

The principal said, "Write a new Board programme... but you don't have any extra money in your budget". I got down on my hands and knees... I physically got down on my hands and knees and asked for money. The Principal felt sorry for me so he gave me an extra $500 which wasn't enough... so what I'm having to do now is borrow equipment from other schools which takes a lot of time. (Gail)

It's difficult to get what you want across.... Like we get pushed around the rooms... and I end up teaching on the grass and I don't think that's fair. We shouldn't have done it... but we got

a petition going, 50 or 60 people signed it on Open Day and we're going to give it to the Principal.... I went to see the P&C and... the student forum... and the typical comment was, "You teach on the oval". They think HPE is just a joke and that's depressing. (Russell)

It is a concern that despite the commitment in Board HPE to the academic study of physical activity (a subject which includes exercise physiology, health issues, sociology, biomechanics), an emphasis which many have argued undermines the essence of PE in return for academic status, has not in most instances helped the subject's status. As Mandy and Donald explained:
In terms of subjects, it's pretty much (seen as) a mickey mouse subject. The (councillor) says, "Just take HPE as a soft option". (Mandy)

The school is encouraging a lot of the better academic kids not to do the subject because of the results everyone is achieving.... I think it's getting more respect now. It was seen as a jocks subject (for) those that can't do anything else. But

now they're realizing there's some academic work involved. (Donald)

It seems that the focus on physical activity, together with the teachers tending to work moreso with the less academically able brings with it personal insult.
All the teachers say the normal comments, "Like a PE teacher wouldn't know this from that".... When I first came here the kids thought I was dumb because I was the PE teacher.... It's difficult, like the staff they'll go, "PE teachers have an IQ of 10". Everyone thinks you're dumb and you just get used to it, you just laugh at it (because) I know I'm not.... And I suppose that most of the kids that do (Board) HPE are the slower kids. So automatically we're dumb because we've got all the dumb kids. (Russell)

Russell went on to explain the difficulty that HPE teachers also incur through their association with sports coaching and sports carnivals which are viewed by colleagues as the responsibility solely of HPE teachers and frequently as disruptions to the real work of schools.
Everytime we have a carnival there's so much opposition to it.... We had a lot of opposition to the athletics carnival and the teachers wouldn't do their jobs.... The Deputy Principal, God rest her soul, reckons that it's a waste of time. (Russell)

I told all the teachers they could do a sport and organize one district carnival to help me. They just went "Gasp... that's your

job... you're the sports teacher". That's what they call me...
the sports teacher. (Gail)

With sport on Wednesday afternoons I've a bit of a problem with
teachers.... They assume they can just take kids out of sport and
let them do something else.... I really jacked up at the
beginning of the year.... To me sport is part of the curriculum,
but to other teachers it's just time that they can run around....
I find myself getting very down about the whole thing. (Sally)

In order to overcome the double burden of handling both HPE and
sport in the school, Carl, the most experienced of the teachers
(his fifth year), said he made sure to "keep a very distinct
line. If I'm asked to do too much sport, then I'll say I'm not
doing any more because it's affecting my teaching". As will be
discussed, however, a conflict arises in that it is often
teachers' association with coaching and carnivals that brings
them authority, positive reinforcement and challenge. It is in
these domains, rather than in their HPE classes (notably those
that are non-Board) that teachers resist what has been described
as their deskilling or proletarianization (Densmore, 1987;
Derber, 1983; Macdonald, 1992; Shaw, 1987).

Systemic constraints (It's all stuff coming from the top)

Fundamental connotations of professional work are authority and
independence. When a worker loses control over the technical and
ideological aspects of their work, it can be interpreted as
indicative of proletarianization (Derber, 1983). For teachers,
retaining control over their classroom decisions has been pivotal
to their sense of professionalism. Casey (1992) has reported that
teachers in their study experienced persistent and profound
problems with their school administration with respect to
decision-making. While beginning HPE teachers in this study
support the claims that teachers enjoy having responsibilities in
their classrooms and in school decision-making, they introduce
some contradictions to how decision-making for beginning teachers
has been framed in the literature. What follows are examples of

the breadth of responsibilities for beginning HPE teachers, their
enjoyment of these responsibilities and their frustration when
their autonomy is thwarted.

Here, two teachers indicate the nature of their decision-making.
I co-ordinate PE for all the year 10s in the school, coach a
couple of sporting teams, I'm school athletics co-ordinator, I
was also swimming co-ordinator this year and I coach the Mobil
netball team in the nationwide comp. (Anna)

Because I'm the only HPE teacher out here there is no-one to
consult.... When I first got here there was nothing on paper....
All I got was a note, "Have fun, good luck... your athletics
carnival is on in a week or two" ! I was then told I had to write
a Board HPE programme. It was difficult because I've got no-one
to consult with.... (Gail)
Beginning teachers were frequently writing school programmes,
teaching HPE, organizing intra- and inter-school sport, coaching,
supervising a "home group" or year level. All those interviewed
accepted the responsibilities willingly and frequently alone.
While some research (for example, Stroot, Faucette & Schwager,
1993) have identified isolation as a concern of PE teachers, in
this study isolation was in some respects welcomed as
independence.
I think one of the hardest things I found at the start of the
year was just being in charge and being the boss... sort of
expecting 50 year olds to listen to me. (Later in the interview)
I'm quite happy in a way that I'm in charge.... I like being in
control. I don't know if I got another job how I'd settle back
into just teaching.... I probably enjoy having the pressure off
for a while I guess. (Mandy)

Similarly, Gail said that she liked "the independence. I just
don't like having to make the decision on my own straight away
when I've never had to make that decision before." Nevertheless,
Gail could foresee a time when her work required fewer decisions,
more repetition, when she:
had everything perfect... then I'll be ready to give up
teaching.... If I got into a bigger school I would just be a HPE
teacher. I would not be my own boss. I couldn't decide when I'm
going to do things, how I'm going to do it, change things around
and make the decisions.... I feel I'm going to be bored.
As with most teachers, the participants also valued the
independence they perceived they had within the classroom. Paula
explained, "I've gotten my own... sets of rules and I've sort of
gained my own autonomy in my teaching. So I make all the
decisions now". Russell felt that he wanted "more senior classes
and the freedom (it brings). I need that again". Interestingly
Russell attributed the Board HPE course with "freedom" when it is
the most highly prescribed dimension of HPE teaching in
Queensland.

Despite the pressures of carrying responsibility often alone,
teachers spoke of their frustration when their potential to
contribute was overlooked. Sybil was lamenting that:
I don't have any organizational role at all. I'm being wasted in
that I'm the only member of staff who knows how to prepare any
documents for certification for the year 12s and no-one has said
anything. The subject master hasn't the foresight to see that
perhaps I do know how to do that organization.

Teachers also resented not being consulted by colleagues and the
school administration in decisions which would affect them.
Like they said I was in charge of the year 10 camp again. I
didn't get a choice.... And that's really starting to annoy
me.... They say you choose what you want to do and then they say
you're doing this. (Donald)

In other instances, teachers were frustrated that their
contributions were not regarded as relevant.
The most frustrating thing is that it's hard to put forward ideas
without having them knocked on the head because, "We don't do it
that way here". (Jane)

I used to get involved and talk but we've got an admin. who have
to do it their way.... We argued a point but it's just pointless.
The Principal is going for a promotion.... It's just so much
politics. It's just crap. (Russell)

I've given up a little bit in trying to make people see things in
a different way.... It was not really appreciated, like "let's
get on with it", "it's not relevant"... or "that's a good point
but let's talk about the serious stuff". (Anna)
Postman and Weingarter (1969) made the point that it is
frequently new teachers who ask subversive questions of the
system. All the teachers had studied a final year univeristy
subject which looked at professional responsibility using
Aronowitz and Giroux's (1985) model of intellectualization and it
appeared that many had tried to take a critical or transformative
position on many issues but they failed to have a voice.

Only one teacher mentioned the monitoring of beginning teachers
progress by the school Principal to be a constraint. Most met the
criteria which included detailed lesson planning without
questioning the process. Colin however reflected that he found:
it difficult to produce the bookwork. I know I've got to show
where I've done lesson plans and so on for my (first year
teacher) review. I know personally that I'm managing. Some
feedback has been people showing surprise that I'm a first year
teacher and to me that's a compliment.... It concerns me that I'm
going to be judged more on bookwork than my teaching.... I find
it easier to appraise myself... I'm all for self-appraisal.
He questioned the authority of the hierarchy which excluded his
own perspectives.

A tirade was unleashed by several teachers working under the
authority of the state education department. While some teachers
accepted the state's authority, others pinpointed it as the prime
motivation for their intention to leave teaching. Their concerns

identified the array of new school policies, assessment
protocols, and teacher allocation and transfer arrangements which
they found problematic.

There's so many controlling forces that you don't have any say
what happens to you.... And it's some person in a regional office
who has all the say and that changes from day to day. (Paula)

They're trying to make it into a bottom up system, but it's top
down to the max. You get sent 27 different policies that you have
to write that you're already doing anyway... but now you have to
formalize things, and you don't have the time to write and you
know full well once they're written you're not going to have time
to refer to them.... It's policy writing for the sake of keeping
people in jobs.... It's just reams and reams of paperwork for no
real outcome in terms of the students' education. (Doug)

All these kids are being tested on things all the time and it's
just a hassle to us. Most of us are jacking up at the amount of
extra work we're expected to do on top of our subject area.
(Sally)

It's external factors... the way the system operates that would
make me want to get out. And I have wanted to get out in a big
way.... I think things have got harder in that you become more

cynical about where you are going and the way the Education
Department treats you.... It's just a numbers game I think...
with this transfer business.... It's just an unfair system....
And you just don't have any bargaining power. I just feel
powerless and weak. (Sally)

Anna spoke similarly of powerlessness within the confines of her
school culture (Sparkes, 1991) and she introduced the important
determinant of gender which intersects with agency.

(A problem with colleagues) has a lot to do with power, you know,
who gets input into the decisions that are made, and it's usually
never me because I'm in another staffroom and I'm female....
Really the decision has been made before I get to hear about it.

Since this interview Anna has left teaching in despair. As will
be discussed in a later section, social injustice became
unbearable for her. Although Russell too intends to leave
teaching soon, he expressed his resistance through his dress. He
acknowledged:

Yes, I look a bit different purposely. I feel like I'm trapped in
teaching. It's sort of set too many rules and... this is sort of
my way of... rebelling a little bit.... I don't like the admin.
side of things; you're just too constricted in what you can do.

Nature of HPE work (It's boring)

My responsibilities include all of my classes, preparation, unit
plans and work programmes for years 8 to 10 and 11 and 12 Board
HPE. I get an average of two spares a day to do all the
organizational stuff. We have two regional carnivals and there
are approximately five or six sporting events held. For the
region I am the cross country coach... athletics coach, and open
guys and girls basketball.... So I find myself very tightly
strung for time. (Ben, rural state school)

I enjoy being sportsmaster... (and) the administration is
supportive.... I've got 20 periods off a week. I teach 15 out of
35.... I don't really get time to sit down.... I might get ten
minutes here and there.... The phone never stops ringing. That's
probably one thing that frustrates me more than anything else,
just the phone.... It's a six day a week job because Saturdays
are taken up with sport.... I guess you do live and breathe work.
(Steven, private metropolitan school)

I arrive at about 8.30, 8.45. Lessons, I get morning tea for half
an hour, lessons, then lunch. And then two lessons again (and) as
soon as 3.10 comes I sort of switch off, say "Hooray" and then go
home. As I said, I'm on seven spares a week... (so) the amount of
work I need to do isn't great. (Rod, metropolitan state school)

A comparison of the work conditions and responsibilities of these
three male teachers gives a stark example of the different types
of expectations that schools have for teachers. While the private
schools required a commitment of out-of-school time, most
teachers were freed during the working day in lieu of that time
or given spares in which to attend to organization. While many
teachers in state metropolitan high schools were able to
concentrate on their teaching, their peers in rural schools were
frantic. Gail's story, from a rural state high school, is
important to tell.
My priorities are organizing for the lessons... if the school has
the equipment, the bus, finding out whether there's something
going on and whether we'll be missing a lesson. You could say my
least priority is how my lessons run... which annoys me a lot
because that should be my number one priority... reflecting on my
teaching.... I'm not having time to do that at the moment. I'm
having to spend my whole time on the admin. side.... When I go

into the classroom it's like a relief... away from everything
else... and away from worrying that all the sports arrangements
are in place, like have the kids picked their sports... have
you've phoned up all the people in the community, organized
facilities, written letters saying thank-you. Sometimes... I
write a few quick notes in red on my lesson plan... "this didn't

work, try this way". But I think I need to do more of that.

I spoke to the Principal at one stage and said, "This has got to
stop, I've got too much work. Let's be realistic, I've got 60-70
hours of work a week and I'm still in my first year!".... Anyway,
it got to one stage where I said, "I'm not going (to the
carnival), you find another teacher". The Principal did agree
with that... but only he and two other teachers have their bus
licences.

As will become evident, teachers were ambivalent about the non-
teaching responsibilities that occupied that bulk of their time.
Barabara, like several teachers, found the constant
"administrivia", an unwelcome distraction.
There are so many other things that you have to do other than
teaching that take up all of your time. So you can't concentrate
on teaching. There's just little, nitty, gritty, administrative
type things that you have to do all the time that takes your mind
away from the actual teaching job itself.
However, the organizational responsibilities, to which Gail was
referring, were viewed differently to the administrivia. Their
responsibilities, frequently associated with sport coaching and
organization, were most often a source of challenge and reward
for those teachers who had them.
I'm definitley bored here.... Even though we complained at my
first school about having to organize carnivals, in the eyes of
the other people in the school, that was an important function
and our organizational ability was shown to them by our
organization of a carnival. So if the carnival was run well then,
"Wow! Aren't they a great phys. ed. team!". (Sybil)

What's so good about teaching are the extra-curricular
activities... like the volleyball camp, athletics afternoons,
like my trip away with the State Girls' Basketball team... where
you spend quality time, you're just with the kids, you have
individual time, and the kids are there to learn, they want to
learn.... Most of the non-teaching things are the stuff that
makes the time worthwhile because the opportunities associated
directly with teaching are sometimes monotonous... you do the
tasks over and over again. (Ben)
While these varied responsibilities have been interpreted as role
conflict (Dodds, 1989; Lawson, 1993b; Stroot et al., 1993), for
many teachers they gave a source of satisfaction, albeit short-
lived. There was the prediction that, as with their teaching, the
challenge of these sport-related responsibilities would also
wane.
I like trying new things... instigating my own little
challenges... (but) after three years I'll know how to do
everything too well. It'll be too easy to organize a carnival....
You'll know it's going to be successful because you've done it

six times already. (Gail)

The lived or predicted experience of boredom and routine
associated with teachers' work was a great concern to most of the
teachers and, as with teachers in the study of Stroot et al.,
many struggled to resist this. While it usually took until the
second year for teachers to become aware of their routinization,
some did feel it within six months of their placement. The
timelines suggested in most work on attrition are more delayed
than for the participants of this study.

Being a first year, having to do all the work, I was
preoccupied... But this year, having everything organized, it's
boring... and I don't get any satisfaction out of teaching the
same thing.... The kids are good and I try to make the classes
enjoyable (but) but more for me than for them. Like I make the
lessons funny because it helps me pass the time. For me, a whole
day of prac. is good, not because I'm going to teach it, but
because I haven't got to do much. And that's pretty slack I
know... I'm bored basically. (Russell, second year)

I could see that next year, if I was teaching, that I would start
to go through the motions of teaching. I was going to get into a
rut - a routine. And as much as I tried to kick myself in the
butt all the time and say, "Do something different"... I could
see that I would slip and I would become like the other teachers
and... I didn't want to be like them. (Barbara, second year)

I was teaching the same lesson three times and I was thinking,
"This is getting boring". Then I started to slip in my lesson
preparation... (and) I'd say to myself half way through the
lesson, these kids are doing nothing of value... they were
playing the ol' busy, happy, good. (Ian, first year)

Their routine was aggrevated by what they considered as "wasting
my intellect" or the lack of intellectual challenge. In 1975
Lortie also found this to be a problem amongst his participants.
Intellectual satisfaction was found at inservice courses, working
with the demands of the Board HPE course and occasionally, from
like-minded colleagues.
Last year a colleague was always trying to keep a finger on the
pulse and make sure he knew what was going on and it was great to
sit down and talk with him anytime but here there doesn't seem to
be too many people who know what's going on.... Even though it is
only two years that I'd been out of uni. I felt like I was going
brain dead.... I think teaching can offer intellectual challenge
like with some of the Board units we're preparing now. (Sybil)
While Stroot et al. (1993) suggested that beginning teachers are
shocked by the realities of school life, these participants'

reflections indicate a readiness and willingness to become involved with the more complex demands of teachers' work.

The challenges to schooling based on the extent of predicted or actual boredom are multi-faceted. Targets for change include what teaching HPE entails, helping teachers develop skills for self-renewal, extended access to inservicing, and restructuring patterns of authority and responsibility amongst colleagues (Lawson, 1993a). Perhaps it becomes a question of school culture. What are the dynamics which facilitated Steven in his third year of teaching?

There's still a lot I need to learn... you never stop learning.... I get a real buzz out of my work, total satisfaction. It's just great. At this stage I can't imagine doing anything else.... I really enjoy the kids.... I also enjoy the administration aspect.... Hopefully tomorrow, with the inter-house athletics carnival... if it comes off, I'll get a buzz out of it.

Professional and personal surveillance (Being watched)

Discussions surrounding Foucauldian notions of surveillance have underpinned recent work which discusses the meanings of embodiment and self-identity (for example Giddens, 1991; Shilling, 1993 a&b). Due to the public nature of HPE teachers' work and the physicality which it embraces, together with the small town living conditions for many beginning HPE teachers (see Nelson, 1992) , aspects of professional and personal surveillance

were mentioned by many teachers to be a great responsibility, if not intrusive and oppressive. Denzin (in Goodson, 1992) raised the question as to whether a boundary between the public and private lives of teachers indeed exists.

Clearly, the teachers' responsibilities such as the running of carnivals had the potential to bring accolades in a way that few teachers may experience. Colin reported that, "People mostly say, 'That was a really good swimming carnival'... or 'You did a really good job organizing sport last term'". As a consequence he was:

very careful in what I choose to take on and I'm also careful in what I commit myself to and that I do it because it's always being seen... I'm aware of people watching.

Conversely:

A source of dissatisfction is never being seen to do the right thing by the administration. Continually criticized! Always criticized the minute you do something that's supposedly wrong.... And whenever something good happens or something positive, you don't hear about it. (Donald)

While HPE teachers and perhaps those involved with undertakings such as school musicals and the like, have their work more open to criticism, those teachers who live in a small town felt an added dimension to being watched.

This particular town is very difficult to live in because the teacher accommodation is very poor.... and there's no sporting facilities except for tennis and netball... and the small town sort of mentality and the gossip... infringes upon school. You can't say anything at school without knowing it's going to end up down the pub on Friday afternoon..... Here, private lives and professional lives are just so intertwined that it becomes really depressing... and you can't escape unless you get out of here. (Sally)

Added to these problems was the sharing of accommodation by teachers who must, in essence, live together 24 hours a day and this put an added strain on working relationships.

The other problem is we live in the same teaching complex....
He'd come home in the middle of the night and wake me and my flatmate up.... He was infringing on my personal life.(Sally)

Donald felt that he could not escape into a personal world in his town due to the limited venues for socializing and the constant awareness of his habits and diet being watched.

The worst thing is you go down to a pub with mates from football and there's students there from school.... Here there's such a limited choice that everyone goes to one of three places and everywhere you go you feel like you're being watched. Last year I thought I'd like to live here but in a different job, something where you're not so much in the public eye all the time. Like when you're walking down the street you have to be conscious of what you're eating because students will see the health and phy. ed. teacher eating something they shouldn't.... I feel that pressure really badly.

Ben acknowledged the potential oppression of his personal life being watched but was able to rationalize it as part of his professional responsibilities.

I'm actively seen in the community... I'm very physically active.... So in terms of their attribution of activity, health, leisure and the phys. ed. teacher, I try to put across as positive image as I can. Like when I shop, I always buy fairly decent food. I feel like people are always watching you. And in this community, they'd let you know, "Hey, that phys. ed. teacher just picked up six blocks of chocolate".... But in all my relationships with the community I... try and maintain a professional status.... I did find it oppressive at the start...

but the real fun part's yet to come because at the moment I'm not in an intimate relationship with somebody.

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Not only were teachers' personal lives being watched but so too was their "look"; what clothes they chose to wear or how they wore their hair. Russell felt that working in his town had been, "good for about a year (but) it's the sort of town that if you're not born here you don't fit in.... People talk about me all the time because I'm different... like I've got long hair...." However, more oppressive was the community control which lead to Gail feeling uncomfortable teaching in a tennis skirt and awkward when she was seen not wearing her usual teaching shorts.

I should not have to feel that when I get dressed up and go to "Speech Night" in a dress or a skirt that every teacher and kid is going to make a comment about me.... They make good comments, which should be flattering, but it still annoys me that they should have to notice me and say "Oh, you are a lady!" That annoys me a lot. Why should you have to be noticed all the time?

The issue of scutiny intersects with research which has suggested that isolation is a problem for PE teachers (Stroot et al., 1993; Templin, 1989). In a physical sense, the teachers were generally not isolated but where teachers perceived an emotional lack of support, together with uncomfortable surveillance, one could argue that they too were isolated.

Collegiality and staffroom culture (I was devastated)

Relationships with staffroom colleagues were extremely important to the beginning teachers in shaping their attitudes towards work. While socialization literature positions collegiality as pivotal in positive, professional socialization, what follows are indications that collegial support and staffroom cultures were frequently damaging to beginning teachers' outlook on their profession. As several teachers did attest, however, their colleagues did add the support and humor they needed to cope with their work. As Russell said, "Getting on well with the staff in this staffroom makes it bearable". Gail corroborated this view.

If you don't have staff that congeal, it just multiplies the discomfort... and that's the last thing you need because of all the negative feedback you get from the kids.... If you didn't have positive re-inforcement from (your colleagues) you'd go down the gurgler.

Colin also believed the staffroom in his school was a positive environment.

We support each other emotionally in the staffroom. We've got Japanese, business principles and phys. ed.... so we're a good mix. People come in there really frustrated... in tears... (and) we've all been there for each other.... It's a really nurturing environment. So having that is a big plus.... Even though the staffroom is not centrally located for our needs, it's far outweighed by the fact that the people are great and we enjoy being there.

On occasions senior members of staff who were sharing the staffroom with HPE, such as those in the science areas, were mentioned as providing positive feedback to teachers that the administration failed to give. Less often the Head of Department in HPE (if the school had that position) was mentioned as being supportive. The most difficult environments were those in which the senior member of the HPE staff failed to be proactive when the beginning teachers, particularly female beginning teachers, were harassed or exploited or when the staffroom culture was unmotivating. Barbara summed up her staffroom culture in saying, "I was young. I was the only female. The subject master was in on it and I didn't want to rock the boat. It was too much of a hassle". Sybil felt strongly that, "The head of department is not

pulling his weight and I find it frustrating that nothing has been said to him and other people have had to carry the weight."

Negative morale was a problem to several teachers and they perceived themselves as having to employ strategies to escape it. Teachers enter the profession with plans of implementing excellent physical education programmes and all too often they become acculturated to a lower professional standard after a year or two. I was made grade 12 co-ordinator (in my first year) so I put in these umpteen hours... into the programme... and I was looking at the other teachers and thinking I was putting in all this effort and they're not... definitely not motivating for me at all. They were just going along, getting there at 8.30am and leaving at 3.00pm and although they were saying, "We are experienced teachers, we don't have to do that preparation"... you know damn well their lessons are just pathetic.... That, in essence, is why I decided not to teach by about half way through the (first) year. I didn't want to end up like these people as I saw their future as pretty bleak. (Ian)
Ian noted, as reported Maclean (1992), that his problems with his colleagues could have escalated when he was given added responsibilites uncommon for a beginning teacher in a large school. "They hadn't got the privileges I had straight off and they'd often make smart remarks about the effort I put in and that didn't bother me". Paula, as a young female, was in an environment in which she was unable to be as assertive as Ian.
As a first year teacher, as soon as you enter the work profession... people just treat you as though you're lower down on the scale.... You get pushed around a lot and it's up to you to decide what limit and how far you want them to push you.... It took me a while to realize how to deal with it and how to subtly get my message across without offending anyone... because I just would have been treated even more badly.
For Paula:

The first year induction was a time to share ideas and you got a level of professionalism and you could use your knowledge from uni. Otherwise it sort of goes out the window when you come into a staffroom like this where it's just mucking around... with low level and degrading comments. There is no discussion that's related to the curriculum or related to your work.

With difficulty, Paula gave a lengthy account of the harassment she had received.
They'd say, "How was your weekend Paula? Oh, you've got a sore back because that's from rolling around with your man". Do I need to go on? Do I need to go further? ... I'd first of all not say anything... and if I didn't... it just got worse.... I'd just be hurt, absolutely hurt and devastated by what he'd just said.
Paula reported this behaviour to her Principal but that had little effect. Sally had similar experiences and had reported a colleague for harassing her and what she believed was harassment of the female students.
The guy who was here last year... was just bad news. I reported him to the Principal for sexual harassment of me, let alone children out on the oval. And the Principal was prepared to take it further. But I said, "I have given him a warning". He (the teacher) backed right off then. He would talk about the girls... "I got into the netball game because I wanted to feel Rachels' tits rubbing against me". And I took offence at that.... Whether he's saying it to her or to me or just in general, it's not the professional thing to do. We had various discussions or arguments... where he'd be talking about reading his Playboys or Penthouse... and what he was looking at and I'd be saying, "I really don't care to hear it... if you want to discuss it, discuss it elsewhere"....He ended up telling me to "f off"....

Other female teachers also were distressed with what they believed was the unjust treatment of students by their colleagues.
They really were just a mob of jocks, and I was the only female in the staffroom.... They just swore, carried on, and talked about the girls as if they were... sex objects. We had problems where we had two male phys. eds. going out with year 11 girls. I couldn't handle that. I found it absolutely abhorrent. (Barbara)

I've had fist fights with the male staff (and) so have other female members of staff.... Most of it has to do with... a lack of sensitivity and that usually means some kind of discrimination and we have a lot of arguments over that.... (The male staff) discriminate against pupils who are outside the stereotype or against male pupils who talk with a lisp who are characterized as "poofters" when they are the age of 12 or 13 just because they

don't fit in with some manly model... or against female pupils
because they are not males. (Anna)

"Why should I have to put up with this in my place of work?", was
Sally's question. Paula lamented:"I think, 'Why am I here? Why am
I doing this?' But it has never been because of the students. I
enjoy teaching them so much. It's always been because of the
staff". The stories of these women confirm that discrimination is
an issue for women PE teachers (for example, Evans & Williams,
1989; Sparkes, Templin and Schempp, 1993) and that it underpins
why many assertive, feminists leave teaching (Casey, 1992). It
seems that ongoing attention needs to be given to several aspects
of collegiality. Teachers need help with creating and maintaining
positive staffroom cultures: ones in which appropriate leadership
is demonstrated, mutual respect and enthusiasm are engendered and
harassment is not tolerated.

Managing students (I reported it but...)

Without exception, the greatest sources of delight for the
teachers were the positive moments they had with their students.
I like it when the kids say hello to you outside the school. Even
if it's the worst kid in the school.... I really like seeing the
kids involved and enjoying themselves... and learning and
improving. That just gives me a shudder. (Gail)

Sometimes a good day would be when a kid opens up to you... or it
can be a day when the whole class can do a backward roll....
Sometimes it will be when you see a kid changing their behaviour
as a result of the way you have been treating them so that they
start to treat each other well.... That gives a good feeling.
(Anna)
Yet, the age-old problem for beginning teachers of managing
students was mentioned by approximately half of the group as
being a concern. As Colin recounted:
At times... managing children is very depressing.... If nothing
seems to be working, or even worse, when you think you're getting
somewhere... but all of a sudden the kids don't respond... and
all the hard work and trust... is out the window.... It's very
depressing.... You feel as if you've failed constantly and it
becomes very stressful....

However, many concerns were not focussed on the problems teachers
faced in the privacy of their classes, as frequently reported in
the literature, but with the lack of administrative support when
problems arose and with how they perceived student behaviour
would look in the future.
I found it difficult to motivate myself because I'm so
disillusioned with the system.... As a teacher you have no power

at all. If a kid tells you to "Get fucked", you've just got to take it. You take it to the Principal... and they (the students) get a two day holiday. There is... very little respect... and this is not (perceived by) one or two teachers, this is everybody here. (Doug)

The administration is a problem... mainly with disciplining the kids. I mean kids get suspended for three to five days and (they) see that as a holiday. I don't think the back-up from the administration for discipline is there. (Rod)

The majority of teachers here are trying to take a certain line with managing behaviour, and other teachers are hindering that by taking a completely different approach. So theres' no uniformity, it's inconsistent and that really frustrates me. (Colin)

Gail's summation of the future of schooling was also expressed by others.
I think education has changed and the kids do not show as much respect as they used to when we were at school.... I think that teaching is becoming unsatisfying because of that.... At the moment it doesn't worry me if the kids try to muck up. It's a challenge for me... to beat the kids at their own thing.... I think it's society in general. Why have an education when it's not going to help them get a job later on ? The situation is hopeless for them so why should they listen to a teacher ?
As Sparkes (1991) articulated, the teachers' sense of agency was minimal in the light of contemporary socio-economic problems.

Drifting out, planning out, getting out

How teachers talked about their careers varied from those who were struggling to remain in teaching week by week to those who could not imagine themselves involved in any other work. On balance, however, half of the 21 teachers interviewed planned to leave teaching in schools, while a further five could foresee themselves drifting out of the profession. Because of the speculative nature of teachers' predictions, definite conclusions with respect to patterns are hard to make. Nevertheless, there seemed to be more commitment to staying in HPE teaching amongst those teachers employed in private schools and there was a greater likelihood of women leaving, particularly those working in the state education system. This ratio differs somewhat from the research of Evans and Williams (1989) which indicated that 80% of men and 40% of women intended to leave teaching.

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Steven, in his third year at a private school, was very
committed. "I live and breathe this place." As with three other
participants (Carl, Colin and Mandy), Steven was working towards
becoming a Head of Department, describing the position as a
challenge. Colin was the only participant who had the goal of
becoming a Principal and that shaped his current commitment to
work (Edelwich & Brodsky, 1980).
I'd eventually like to be a Principal... basically that's my
ultimate goal and I try to keep that in mind in the things that I
do.... It influences that fact that I need to be assertive and
not passive about things. I need to show I'm capable. So I always
put myself under pressure to be able to achieve....
Therefore, few participants had a career perspective in teaching,
as described by Maclean (1992), and even fewer had a sense of
their vertical mobility.

Many teachers felt unsettled but were not sure where their

alternatives may lie. Weak career structures with limited future
perspectives in teaching have been blamed for teachers lack of
career direction (Lortie, 1975; Maclean, 1992). Jane asked
herself, "Do I want to go and travel? Do I want to do another
degree and experience some other job and then come back to
teaching? Or do I want to devote myself to the educational side
of things?" Kym was wondering, "how a 40 year old female phys.
ed. teacher copes.... I can't see me really wanting to teach
phys. ed. but I would still be in teaching, coaching, something
to do with children". Sally felt that her own relative lack of
"fire in the belly" suggested that she was:
in the wrong profession.... I'm not prepared to make school my
entire life. It becomes the same group of teachers who are doing
all of the extra curriculum and I just get very tired of it...
and then if I pull out of something... you're told that your
ineffective and lazy.... I'm not aiming to be a subject master or
principal or anything like that, I'm quite happy to just do the
teaching job and under no circumstances is it what I'm going to
be doing in ten years time.

Donald and Paula had planned more definite time lines and
alternatives.
Hopefully I'll make five years teaching. I'm looking at post-
graduate studies now. Ideally I want to get my pilot's
licence.... But actually I was enrolled in an MBA this year until
I found out it was going to cost $30,000 to complete it, so I've
put it on hold to think about it. (Donald)

My plan is for two years teaching and then make another decision
about where I want to head. I'm thinking about teaching overseas

or doing further study.... Just doing a part-time job and part-
time course in business, getting some management skills under my
belt... become a personnel manager... sitting in an office,
looking after staff and keeping the cash books. I'd control what
other people do... a position of authority. (Paula)

Another group were struggling to remain in teaching, or in their
current positions, but that they stayed because of the security
of income. In terms of Edelwich and Brodsky's (1980) model, they
were on the verge of intervention and horizontal mobility was an
option. Sybil said that she would leave if:
I won a lot of money, and not have to worry about the mortgage,
or be offered a job in a private school. I'd like to stay in
teaching I think but not necessarily in the state system and not
necessarily in the secondary school.... I think that if I was
working with kids where I didn't have to worry about discipline
so much and the kids were motivated enough to be able to work
independently... then that would be enough reward for... having
to put in extra hours.
Sybil has also been applying for equity officer jobs while
studying for a Master of Arts degree in Women's Studies.

Russell was typical of those who wanted change and were
disappointed in themselves for not feeling able to make a change.
I'm sick of being out in the cold. I need a beach.... You save
money... like I've got thousands of dollars... but nothing
else.... A couple of times this year I've wanted to go back to
uni.... I want to do biomechanics.... I just think I can do more
for me.... That's probably because I don't know where teaching is
going to take me... I just feel like learning more.... What I
really want to do is to work with athletics by doing honours in
biomechanics or maybe a doctorate.... I'm more disappointed in
myself because I'm not brave enough to get out.... I've got to
make a decision about what's more important, students or me. And
I think it's starting to be more me.

At the time of our visit to Doug he was contemplating leaving
mid-year in a state of disillusionment.
I had bad experiences in phys. ed. at school.... I was never
encouraged, I was always put down... so I wanted to make it
better. And I came out here and realized that it basically isn't
possible... under these conditions... because you've got so much
else to deal with. Basically I haven't enjoyed my time here....
I've got up four mornings in a row and not wanted to come to
school.... I've always been interested in dance. There are some
dance teaching and learning positions available in Brisbane.
Similarly Anna's disillusionment drove her to leave and she is
preparing to study for a doctorate, having completed her Master

of Education degree while teaching.
I think other subject areas and other aspects of schooling will
change before phys. ed. will change in terms of equality and
racial discrimination and sensitivity. I'm looking for something
that has more reach than phys. ed. and has less barriers than
phys. ed. puts up.... I don't want small scale change; I want it
big and I want it now!
Ian, who has left teaching, in a very open exchange expressed the
sentiments of others.
I think the biggest part of why I left teaching was because I
felt I was undervaluing what I could really do. I felt I was
wasting my potential so I knew I would go stale, falling into a
rut like everybody else, and I thought I could do more with my
life.
Unlike Lortie's (1975) participants, those intending to leave
teaching did not describe their experiences as personal failure.
Similar to Reynold and Swan's (1991) conclusion, many teachers
committed to transformation are planning to leave although some
of those intending to have careers in teaching are change-
oriented. The folkloric explanations for PE teacher attrition,
particularly with respect to women, such as "getting out of the
sun" and "having a family" were infrequently mentioned.

Synthesis

Some of this data confirms what is already known about the
concerns of beginning PE teachers although little data has been
collected in the Australian context. So what new insights can be
gained? In the theoretical and applied dimensions, there seems to
be several outcomes. The most difficult response is the challenge
presented in the literature by scholars of life history
methodology who spoke of "fair trade". With teachers having spent
their time on the project and having, at times, revealed intimate
details of their problems, what should be the nature of my
action, my trade?

At a theoretical level, the experiences of beginning HPE teachers
present a challenge to conventional theories of socialization.
Lawson and Stroot (1993) suggest that socialization should be
viewed as dialectical, personal and problematic. More
specifically, theories need to better accommodate the variety of
school contexts that exist, particularly the categories of
difference between state and private schools and between small,
and usually rural, schools and large, and usually urban, schools.
Studies of socialization have also tended to focus on "the
classroom" as being pivotal in teachers' work, yet for most HPE
teachers, their significant work experiences frequently took
place outside the classroom in their extra- and co-curricula
responsibilities. Other challenges to theories on the private
nature of teachers' work (Bullough, 1987) and induction time-

lines (for example, Edelwich & Brodsky, 1980; Fuller, 1969;
Maclean, 1992) may be made.

Responses to these questions can draw on current work on school

and teaching cultures (Lawson, 1993; Sparkes & Bloomer, 1993) and
previous work that has recognized that the assumption of cultural
uniformity is untenable (Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986). From
different perspectives, commentators are looking at and for
cultural change in schools. Culture can be understood as "the way
the social relations of a group are structured and shaped: but
also the way those shapes are experienced, understood and
interpreted" (Clarke et al. in Sparkes & Bloomer, 1993, p.172).
What school cultures are more nurturing and stimulating for
beginning HPE teachers? How are these school cultures established
and maintained? Lawson (1993b) suggests that shaping the culture
of teaching as a moral task may eventuate in teachers and
teaching having a more clearly defined sense of purpose
encouraging personal and organizational renewal.

Yet merging the professional and personal aspects of teaching
into a moral dimension also brings with it some caveats as
suggested by the participants of this study. When the personal
and professional dimensions of their lives became indistinct,
such as with their living arrangements or their constantly being
in the public eye, several teachers became disturbed by "being
watched". The oppression of constant surveillance is relatively
unexplored with respect to teachers' lives yet it represents a
way of understanding many of the problems teachers perceive.
These include the public critique of carnivals, the close
scrutiny of their year 11 and 12 programmes, how they look, how
they recreate, and what they eat.

The concept of surveillance may also extend the way in which
teachers' deskilling or proletarianization has been looked at.
Teachers spoke of many ways in which their work was out of their
control, where they lacked authority and autonomy, where they
were consumed with administration and concerns that were
peripheral to the task of teaching, where they felt unrewarded
(see Templin, 1989), and where they felt manipulated. Together
these experiences underpin teachers' frustrations and motivations
to leave. Liston and Zeichner's (1991) call for teachers to work
as situational decision-makers rather than having situationally
constrained choice is a relevant goal for the work culture of HPE
teachers.

As has been discussed in proletarianization literature (Apple,
1985; Densmore, 1987; Macdonald, 1992; Marshall & Peters, 1990),
women may bear the burden of proletarianization as they less

frequently are in positions of authority (Maclean, 1992; Sampson, 1991) and are subjugated to dominant male cultural patterns of behaviour (Evans & Williams, 1989; Sparkes, in-press a&b; Talbot, 1993). The stories of sexual harassment told by the female beginning teachers unfortunately lend weight to the dimension of proletarianization. While all the women were assertive in their resistance, some felt their only option was to leave teaching.

Several questions beg to be asked. Should some of the participants have chosen teaching as a profession? Should those who enter teaching programmes be more carefully selected? Should it matter that those who are disenchanted with teaching decide to leave? Regardless, what beginning teachers have told us is that the work conditions for them in schools are often intolerable and require change. While the struggles of teachers at a personal level should be important to us all, there are also serious implications for the PE profession. Lawson (1989) wrote of the socialization process of "Rookie to Veteran" but will HPE have any veterans?

Notes

1. State schools refer to those fully funded by the Queensland State Government and private schools are those which are aligned to a religious denomination or are non-denominational and which require parents to pay school fees. In Queensland health education and physical education tends to be taught as one school subject, thus HPE. In years 11 and 12 students may select the subject HPE, offered and controlled by the Board of Senior Secondary School Studies (the Board) as an examinable subject towards tertiary entrance.
2. It is impossible to refer to the breadth of literature which is informing this project within the text of this paper and therefore I have included this literature in a Bibliography rather than give a more limited Reference List.

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