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**IMPACTING ON THE SOCIALISATION OF BEGINNING TEACHERS
OF PHYSICAL & HEALTH EDUCATION THROUGH COLLABORATION**

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ABSTRACT

Learning to teach is a complex process and beginning teachers face many influences in their preparation for this role. Recognition of the powerful formal and informal educational processes impacting on the preparation and socialisation of a teacher can assist both teacher educators and teachers to make informed and constructive changes to the way they carry out their work.

Field experience is accepted as a critical element in the professional preparation of beginning teachers. This paper examines how the socialisation constructs related to field experience were addressed for a group of beginning teachers of physical and health education during a final year internship program. The program will be described and quantitative and qualitative data gained from questionnaires will be presented and discussed. Recommendations and implications for future field experience programs and preservice training will be explored.

BACKGROUND

Why does a person become a teacher and how do they acquire the required knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to perform the role. These are questions frequently asked by those involved in teacher preparation as they continually seek to provide relevant, interesting and appropriate preservice course work and field experience. Studies seeking the answers to these questions have a long history beginning with the Willard Waller's classic *The Sociology of Teaching* (1932) which analysed the role of the teacher and its effects on personality and social status. Lortie's (1975) work *Schoolteacher: A Sociological Study* argued that students' predispositions stand at the core of becoming a teacher exerting a stronger influence than preservice training or later workplace factors. These two studies are representative of the field of scholarship of teacher socialisation which seeks to understand the process whereby an individual becomes a participating member of the society of teachers (Danziger, 1971).

The competing explanations of teacher socialisation which have arisen are derived and influenced by different intellectual traditions namely functionalist, interpretive and critical (Zeichner & Gore, 1990). The functionalist and interpretive approaches are similar in that they both view teacher socialisation as an overarching process whereby the individual engages in learning a role which requires adjustment to the culture of the profession (Battersby, 1983). The critical approach however, is based on a paradigm which acknowledges the need for reflectivity, deconstruction of what is taken for granted and a vital concern for social transformation aimed at increasing justice, equality, freedom and human dignity (Zeichner & Gore, 1990). Over the past decade we have seen a shift from the functionalist to the critical approach and this study attempts to employ aspects of both paradigms to investigate how preservice teachers can play an active role in the formation of their beliefs, attitudes and behaviour as a teacher of physical and health education.

Previous research in the physical education area has seen the emergence of pretraining observation, recruitment, professional training and field experience as major socialising experiences for the beginning teacher. Other later influences such as contextual factors related to the school setting, inservice training and the culture or hidden physical education curriculum have been identified as factors which have impacted on teachers after entry into the permanent teaching ranks.

Research on teacher socialisation suggests that preservice teachers enter their training having spent many thousands of hours as pupils in an "apprenticeship of observation" (Lortie, 1975). Lortie reported that formal preservice training had less effect than the early experiences gained as a student in schools over an extended period of many years. Others have suggested these experiences lead to the development by preservice teachers of a body of values, attitudes and practices which include well developed and often highly entrenched ideas about what constitutes good teaching and learning (Clarke, 1988; Pajares, 1992). Crow (1987) and Holt-Renolds (1992) suggest that the attitudes and beliefs formed about teaching from these experiences result in a kind of "filter" through which preservice teachers view the theoretical content in teacher training. The years spent as a school student engaging in physical and health education and sport programs have been theorised to provide influential social contacts for potential teachers (Lawson, 1983) and as they

witness the everyday tasks of teaching they come to develop beliefs about attitudes, skills and responsibilities of those who teach.

Schemp (1989) states the "apprenticeship" metaphor as having limitations as he feels that physical education teachers do not see students as future teachers and offer very few explanations for the decisions they make and therefore preservice teachers tend to rely on recollected imitation from their school days rather than instructional knowledge gained from an apprenticeship. He suggests that teachers will interpret these early observations and use them in conjunction with experience and educational background together with workplace conditions to influence not determine their professional practice as a teacher. Schemp summaries this approach by stating:

Given the familiarity from protracted exposure, the apprenticeship offers a powerful source of influence for teachers in learning the tasks of teaching. (p. 29)

Recruitment into teaching physical and health education is an area with very little research background or evidence and again that which exists is fragmented depending on intellectual tradition or paradigm adopted by the researcher. The functionalists see recruitment as the first part of the socialisation into teaching as it allows for an empirical understanding of what entrants bring into a preservice training program and creates a potential to have greater uniformity in the control of the socialisation process. The interpretive perspective views an understanding of recruitment as important in determining how potential teachers of physical and health education create and negotiate their personal and professional identities. Finally the critical perspective as explained by Dewar (1989) views recruitment as a set of cultural and social processes of selection that can be used to maintain or transform the relations of power and dominance that characterise teaching of physical and health education. Data from early studies on recruitment into physical education (Pooley, 1975) show that students are attracted to careers in physical education because they see it as an occupation providing opportunities to work with and help others, to serve society and to enable them to continue to associate and gain rewards and enjoyment from sport and physical activity. Research undertaken by Dewar (1984) supported these findings as well as identifying that individuals who, although having a strong background in sport and physical education, had decided against careers in physical education teaching cited low pay, limited lifespan and career opportunities as reasons for their choice to seek careers in other areas.

What happens to students as they pass through their professional preparation or preservice teacher training is another important facet of the socialisation process. Graber (1988) identified that physical education preservice teachers tend to develop their own subcultures, are selective about what they take from and give to the training curriculum. He reported that preservice teachers often role play" to satisfy the requirements of their training without internalising the dispositions of the training programs and continue to harbour doubts about the usefulness of their training content. Most preservice teachers will learn how to write lesson plans, know the content of syllabuses to be taught, identify different teaching strategies and management models or approaches and be aware of required administrative duties and legal

responsibilities undertaken by a teacher of physical and health education. Whether these formal curriculum learnings are implemented in their future teaching is hard to measure and is the ultimate test of socialisation (Graber, 1989).

The field experience or practicum is seen as an important test and further development in the socialisation process. There appears to be universal agreement that the main function of field experience is to link theory to practice by direct engagement with students in the classroom (Cruikshank & Armaline, 1986; Rubin, 1989). It is also seen as the most significant occasion in a preservice teacher's training for acquiring new knowledge, skills and dispositions (Richardson-Koehler, 1988; Turney, 1988; Zeichner, 1986). Field experience has consistently been valued by both preservice and inservice teachers as the most important aspect of their professional training (Batten, Griffin & Ainley, 1991) and would therefore provide the ideal time for perspective teachers to reconstruct their beliefs, knowledge and practices in line with the reality of the classroom.

McLaughlin (1991) attempted to investigate the impact of the practicum on preservice teachers beliefs and practices by tracking 26 secondary teachers as they used several methods to evaluate themselves comparing their classroom behaviours to their teaching objectives. Analysis concluded that the preservice teachers conceptions of success in teaching remained constant with their prior beliefs/images of teachers and students and there was little evidence of reflection or change in prior beliefs or practices. Another study conducted by Griffin (1989) attempted to describe and assess the practicum experience of 93 preservice teachers in an undergraduate and a master's program using data collected from classroom observations, interviews, journals, audiotapes of post observation conferences and scores obtained from a variety of standardised tests. Data was collected at the beginning, middle and end of the practicum and analysis found that the deep-seated personal beliefs and teaching practices remained unchanged over the course of the field experience. Participants and procedures were more alike than different across the settings eliminating the strong argument of the impact of contextual differences and participants tended to view their experience in interpersonal terms rather than professional knowledge gain and skill development. They used the warmth of their relationship with their respective colleague teacher as the criteria of success and achievement. Griffin (1989) also found there to be a lack of a common knowledge base guiding the preservice teachers and their colleague teachers in the schools.

Some of the common themes that emerge from reviewing studies of the impact of field experience centre on the failure of the field experience to address the primary tasks of preservice teachers when placed in the school setting. These should involve confirming and validating the image of self as teacher, acquiring knowledge of students and using it to modify the image of self as teacher, questioning the appropriateness of personal beliefs in the school setting and acquiring management and instructional procedures which become automated with experience. Researchers such as Zeichner and Tabachnick (1985) argue that the effect of teacher training appears to be "washed-out" when preservice teachers enter the school setting, whilst others like Veenmann (1984) describe the transition from training to teaching as "reality shock" where the missionary ideals formed during teacher training collapse under the harsh reality of the classroom.

Possible reasons given for this failure have been the time frame of the practicum which is generally only a few weeks in length and does not have a guided, structured set of experiences designed to encourage preservice teachers to examine and reflect on their beliefs and practices. Another reason has been the lack of a common knowledge base and academic language that school personnel, university and preservice teachers understand and use to assist professional development and socialisation. Finally, teacher educators may not impact on preservice teachers because there may be a lack of agreement between themselves about the desirable attributes, practices and beliefs about teaching, which can lead to reinforcing rather than challenging the previous beliefs and practices of preservice teachers. (Brousseau & Freeman, 1988).

The importance of collaboration and partnership in the reform of teacher education and improvement in the quality of teaching is well documented internationally (Clift & Say, 1988; Zeichner, 1986). However, in Australia this type of partnership has only been instigated since the 1990's when the value of a triadic partnership and the acknowledgement that teachers are also teacher educators (Dobbins, 1994) has been recognised as an important factor in assisting the quality of teacher education. This collaboration should involve the strong linkage of all parts of the professional continuum to provide sequential sets of experiences and knowledge for the preservice teacher. In the past the segmentation of this continuum into separate phases of preservice, induction and inservice has contributed significantly to the failure of policy makers, teacher educators, employers, unions, teachers and researchers to work together to develop a shared language and understanding of the complex and multifaceted phenomena of teacher education (Fullerton, Gill & James, 1993). The time spent in schools can become mere experience lacking in direction or purpose if there is not a set of clear directions and common notions about what should be practised and these should be understood by all parties involved. The Schools Council (1990) stated:

A closer focus of collaboration between practice, and reflection on practice is the way to achieve a better initial training (p.89)

Given the interrelatedness of the many problems of teacher education it was felt by a group of teacher educators at The University of Newcastle that an attempt at dialogue and collaboration between the stakeholders in teacher education held real potential for the improvement of teacher training. This led to the development of a framework for an internship to assist the transition from student teacher to induction and teaching. This study sought to investigate, after participation in a continuous extended 10 week field experience program including an extensive preparation program involving preservice teachers, school and university personnel, the factors which contributed to the socialisation of a group of final year physical and health education preservice teachers. The following research questions guided the data collection:

1. What influences preservice physical and health education teachers to select their course?
2. What recruitment factors and qualities are important to preservice teachers of physical and health education?
3. What are considered to be the importance course components and influences in the training of physical and health education teachers?
4. What are the important outcomes and "rewards" gained from teaching in an extended field experience internship program?

5. What are the future career directions of these preservice teachers?

6. Is there any significant differences when the variable of gender is considered for each of these questions?

METHOD

The study sample involved 54 preservice teachers in the final semester of a four year Bachelor of Education (Physical and Health Education) degree at the University of Newcastle.

These preservice teachers had successfully completed seven semesters and had met the requirements of the award of Diploma of Teaching and were granted casual teaching status by employers to teach in secondary schools in the Hunter Region of NSW. In the semester prior to beginning the internship program the study participants attended weekly Internship Preparation Program lectures involving revision of the knowledge base and domains of teaching which formed the basis of their pedagogy lectures and professional development plans during the internship.

They engaged in discussions related to all aspects of professional practices required within the school settings and received input from local teachers regarding contemporary issues relating to physical and health education in schools.

The schools, upon agreement to be a partner in the program, nominated colleague teachers and a school executive to work with the preservice teachers. The university appointed a university teacher educator to supervise the preservice teachers and finally a member of the university staff was appointed as specialist internship coordinator for the physical and health education specialisation. All parties in the program met for two orientation days prior to the commencement of the first phase and not only were responsibilities, lines of communication and support teams clearly articulated but school and faculty socialisation began. The teaching component of the internship required solo teaching of 1/3 of colleague teacher's load for the first 4 weeks before moving into undertaking the teaching of 2/3rd of the colleague teacher's load for the final 6 weeks.

During the internship program the preservice teachers and school personnel attended separate university seminars where the focus was on assisting the integration and transition into the role of permanent teacher through reflection and discussion of problems and issues faced by all parties.

After completion of the internship program the preservice teachers returned to university for their final session and at this point completed a Preservice Teacher Socialisation Study questionnaire which required a responses using a four point Likert Scale and an open ended response question. This questionnaire was designed to investigate the factors which influence preservice teachers of physical and health education as they make the transition from school student to school teacher. The questionnaire focused on the areas of pretraining, recruitment, preservice training, field experience, future career ambitions and general reflections on the image of the "ideal" physical and health education teacher. The quantitative data generated by this study was subjected to analysis using SPSS to calculate frequencies and descriptive statistics. The qualitative data provided by the written responses to the final open ended question was collated to establish themes or suggestions. Missing data was not a constraint in this study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Part A of the questionnaire provided background information relating to the sample group. The results (Table 1) indicated an even distribution of gender in the preservice group with 54% aged between 18-22 years and 46% aged between 23-30 years of age. The study group were asked to indicate when they had decided to pursue physical and health education as a career and the responses indicated 16% decided early during their secondary education from 13-15 years, 80% decided at 16-21 years age and 4% or 2 students entered the course as mature age students having decided after the age of 21 years. Research has shown that those who decide to enter teaching at an earlier age are more committed and successful in their study (Schempp, 1989).

Anecdotal evidence suggests this is also true of the mature age student who has had time in the work force or away from the school system before entering teacher training.

Table 1

Part B of the questionnaire was designed to investigate the areas identified in the literature as significant influences on the socialisation of physical and health education teachers. Seven major questions covering five main themes of socialisation were posed to the participants in the study and a range of alternatives given for them to respond to. The pretraining question (Table 2) asked participants to indicate who influenced them in their decision to become a physical & health education teacher.

Analysis of the responses indicated that this group of preservice teachers were influenced by their physical and health education teachers at school. There was a difference in the male and female responses with the females indicating the strong influence of the school teacher and the males indicating the coach as a major influence which replicates the findings of Templin, Woodford and Mulling (1982). A group of 5 males also put forward other people such as careers advisers, sporting heroes, army sergeant, prac teacher at school and university admissions centre adviser as influencing their choice.

Table 2

PRETRAINING INFLUENCES

Aspects of recruitment of teachers is another socialising influence on preservice teachers as they often enter the teacher training courses for a variety of reasons and therefore have different expectations. Identification of reasons and qualities common to those entering this area of teaching together with the factors which attract them help to develop an understanding of the expectations and traits of the typical physical and health education preservice teachers. The participants in the study were asked what factors or reasons attracted them to teaching physical and health education and what qualities do they feel are

most important for a teacher in this area to have (Table 3 & Table 4). The total group responses indicated the strong recruitment influences of sport, school physical education and the outdoor and fitness aspects of the occupation. When the variable of gender was analysed females reported a significantly higher influence on the "desire to work with children" than the males (female $m=3.46$ male $m=3.02$), whereas males continued to be influenced in their choice by the sport, fitness and outdoors factor. It is of interest to note that the male respondents recorded a higher response than the females to the factor "the course would be easy and less time consuming".

Table 3

RECRUITMENT INFLUENCES

When participants were asked what qualities they felt were important for a teacher of physical and health education to possess the total group and both gender groups reported "communication and management skills" as the most important quality. Although the males reported earlier in the questionnaire that their coaches influenced their choice of career, here they report "fitness and sporting ability" ($m=3.00$) and "coaching experience and qualifications" ($m=3.05$) to be of less importance as a quality for a teacher of Physical and Health Education to possess.

Table 4

RECRUITMENT QUALITIES

Teacher educators expect preservice teachers to become socialised during their undergraduate professional preparation training during which time they are expected to internalise the dispositions of the teaching role and become committed to maintaining a professional orientation to their work. This study identified major components of the formal curriculum and asked this group of students to indicate the level of importance in their development and socialisation as a member of physical and health education teaching profession. The responses (Table 5) indicated the total group and both males and females as a subgroup felt the "field experience" was the most important component of their training (group $m=3.87$, males $m=3.74$, female $m=3.94$). This was closely followed by "sports/practical skills and coaching" (group $m=3.64$, male $m=3.55$, female $m=3.71$). However research has recognised that preservice teachers also learn from an unintended or "hidden" curriculum (Dodds, 1983; Wisniewski, 1984) which is not readily available for analysis. Graber (1988) suggests the hidden curriculum can have a positive function if it reinforces the intended curriculum however, if it is in opposition preservice teachers may receive powerful messages which are dysfunctional to socialisation and undermine the training program.

Table 5

PRESERVICE TRAINING COMPONENTS

After undertaking an extended field experience program this group of preservice teachers were asked what they felt were the important outcomes of their internship experience. Again there was consensus amongst the group with classroom management and control gaining the highest mean score by the total group and ranking highest with both males and females (group $m=3.80$, male $m=3.75$, female $m=3.82$).

This supports past research which identifies classroom management as the area of greatest concern for both preservice and inservice teachers (Martin & Norwich, 1991; McCormack, 1997; Merrett & Wheldall, 1993) and the greatest concern for beginning teachers (Veenmann, 1984). Research has also shown that preservice teachers become more authoritarian during their field experience (Hoy & Woolfolk, 1990) as they are confronted with a custodial school culture and colleague teachers and supervisors who expect control and order along with knowledge of skills and theoretical content areas. This classroom management is therefore strongly linked to gaining "favourable reports from supervisors" which was given as the second most important outcome of their internship experience.

Table 6

PERSONAL OUTCOMES OF INTERNSHIP

After teaching physical and health education in schools for three months this group of beginning teachers were asked what they saw as the rewards of this teaching experience and their future ambitions (Table 7 and Table 8). Their responses to the question of rewards gained from teaching were idealist and represented the less materialistic ideals of "helping students" and "enjoyment of teaching activities" as the "rewards" recording the highest mean scores for both males and females. It is hoped these ideals continue into inservice teaching for this group of future teachers.

Table 7

PERSONAL TEACHING REWARDS

When this group of preservice teachers were asked about their future ambitions (Table 8) there was a significant difference in the responses based on gender with males in the study indicating their desire to move into senior positions of "Head Teacher of Physical and Health Education" (male $m=3.75$, female $m=3.08$) or administration positions of "Principal, Deputy or Leading Teacher" whilst the females saw themselves primarily as classroom teachers. These ambitions reflect and it can be speculated are influenced by the imbalance of women currently holding these senior positions in schools. The organisational culture of schools in most NSW secondary schools does not provide a balance of role models for females as the majority of senior positions are held by males whilst the classroom teachers are the females. This could be explained by the dual demands of family responsibilities faced by women and

the ideology of patriarchy which often pervades the management of school systems (Evans & Williams, 1989).

Table 8

FUTURE CAREER AMBITIONS

Part C of the study asked the participants to describe their "ideal" physical and health education teacher by way of an open ended response question. When the responses were analysed two themes consistently emerged, firstly phrases or words that described personal characteristics - "enthusiastic; a good communicator; sporty and athletic; friendly; caring; cooperative; leadership ability; positive role model; enjoys working with children and people". Secondly teaching skills and practices were identified with the following descriptions - "well organised; adopts student-centred approach to teaching; respects students and colleagues; good knowledge of content and teaching strategies; consistent and fair classroom management practices; regularly reflects on lessons and is prepared to be flexible, and possess a strong commitment to educating students in how to lead an active healthy lifestyle".

CONCLUSION

The internship program in this study was strategically located in the socialisation and professionalisation of this group of preservice physical and health education teachers. It occurred at the conclusion of formal classroom preparation and just preceding the opportunity for full-time teaching. The program aimed to involve a triadic partnership between schools, university and preservice teachers through a collaborative approach.

This approach had a shared language and knowledge base, progressive goal setting, formative and summative observations and conferences to provide regular opportunities for all parties to plan, discuss and critique the process rather than just "survive". The results of the questionnaire demonstrated the need for teachers and teacher educators to recognise and work with the power of the apprenticeship. Reflection on their apprenticeship provides preservice teachers with a rich pool of observed teachers for ideas on improving their own practice. Teacher educators and colleague teachers in schools need to extend this concept to themselves and be very aware of the vital role models they provide to these future teachers. The ways in which physical and health education teachers think about and execute their work is extremely important in the process of socialisation into physical and health education teaching.

The recruitment influences and qualities indicate that individuals are attracted to careers in physical and health education because it is perceived as an occupation where people can continue their association with sport and physical activity, work with and help others and is rewarding and enjoyable. Recruits into the tertiary teacher training courses in Australia are generally very high achievers both academically and in the sporting arena and have generally been successful in the system. It can therefore be seen that there are patterns of socialisation into teaching that are related to the characteristics that segment the teaching of physical and health education. It is important for tertiary educators to challenge these future

teachers to reflect on their position and the social relations of class, race and gender that exist in society as they develop their personal perspectives and practices.

The responses to this study indicated the gender differences and further reinforced the need to challenge gender socialisation by examining the structure and function of physical and health education in a male dominated society. Field experience can provide the opportunity for this to occur and will be successful when the views of teaching by all participants are similar and presented in a progressive, inclusive, sequential and well-timed program. The field experience needs to support the theoretical preparation with all parties understanding the perspectives and linking them to continuous practice in making choices and reflecting so that they become students of their own teaching (Dodds, 1989).

This study sought to highlight some of the factors or components that play a critical role in the ongoing process of the socialisation of preservice teachers as they move into teaching. Developing a collaborative awareness and understanding of these components of the socialisation process will enable teachers and tertiary educators to make informed and constructive changes in the way they carry out their work to enhance the lives of future physical educators and the quality of the education offered to our children.

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