

Professional Socialization of Pre-service Physical Education Teachers in Hong Kong Institute of Education

香港教育學院體育師訓生職化過程的探索

Chung Li

*Department of Physical Education and Sports Science,
The Hong Kong Institute of Education, HONG KONG*

李宗

香港教育學院體育及運動科學系



Abstract

This paper presents a qualitative study with the use of the interpretive paradigm to capture subjective meanings that pre-service Physical Education (PE) teachers gave to their professional socialization process at the early stage of their two-year full-time teacher-training program. Data concerning their actions, feelings and reflection on their practical, pedagogical and theoretical modules were collected through interviewing and writing of reflective journal. Participants were analyzed according to their types namely, “athletes”, “idealists”, “pragmatists”, “followers” and “the insecure group” while joining the program. It was interesting to find that they all articulated their professional learning to the “process knowledge” through experience rather than “propositional” one in the form of discipline based and theoretical conceptions regardless of their types. The findings provide information about how pre-service PE teachers learn and develop their professional knowledge, which in return, generate implications on how the Physical Education Teacher Education (PETE) program can be implemented effectively in Hong Kong.

摘要

本文章以詮釋理念來探索香港教育學院體育學系本科生職化的過程，研究對象為二十位來自體育學系的本科生，對部份師資培訓課程及經歷作出回顧及分析，藉此了解其學習模式及職化過程，並對現有的課程作出了探討及建議。

Introduction

In recent years, “how one becomes a physical education (PE) teacher” has been the major concern of the PE scholars and teacher educators (Bain, 1990; Doolittle, et al, 1993; Graber, 1989, 1990, 1995; Templin & Schempp, 1989). This paper reported the second part of the four-phase study project titled “From students to PE teachers—the occupational socialization of pre-service PE teachers in Hong Kong”. It was launched in 1997 and completed in 1999. It aims at enquiring how twenty PE recruits experience their learn-to-teach process throughout their

two-year full-time professional preparation program in Hong Kong.

This paper starts with the highlighting of the research focus and explaining the use of the interpretive research paradigm as the methodology. How PE recruits experience part of their teacher training program is discussed. Critical issues and particular conceptions concerning the professional socialization of the PE recruits are presented at the end of each section. It ends up with the discussion section concluding the overall insights on how recruits develop their professional knowledge and the implications on

the physical education teacher education (PETE) programs in Hong Kong.

The Occupational Socialization Perspective

Lawson's (1983a, 1983b) conceptualizes occupational socialization as "all kinds of socialization that initially influence persons to enter the field of PE and that later are responsible for their perceptions and actions as teacher educators and teachers" (Lawson, 1986, p. 107). He suggests that the process may cover three phases namely acculturation, professional and organizational socialization. Acculturation refers to the impacts of PE recruits' biography before joining the PETE since birth. Organizational socialization explains the influence of the workforce when recruits enter into their PE teaching career in schools.

The present study focuses on part of the professional socialization phase within which the impact of the PETE is thought to be the main socializing agent. According to Lawson (1983a, 1983b) and others, (Dewar & Lawson, 1984; Graham, 1991a; O'Bryant, 1996; Templin & Schempp, 1989) professional socialization is a "dynamic and dialectical" process (Graber, 1991b, 1995; Lawson, 1983a, 1983b). PE recruits actively negotiate such a problematic process. They "acquire and maintain the values, sensitivities, skills and knowledge that are deemed ideal for teaching PE" (Lawson, 1983a, p.4).

There are only a few studies enquiring the professional socialization of PE recruits and PETE has very often been criticized as lacking of programmatic vision (Bain, 1990; Barrette, 1996; Carreiro, 1994). Graber (1991, 1995) and Graham (1991b) found in their studies that PE recruits' socialization and their subsequent actions were unaffected by the PETE. Templin (1979) reported that such impacts were washed out when they entered into the bureaucratic school environment. On the contrary, some quality PETE programs were reported to be useful of changing PE recruits' perceptions of the roles (Bain & Wendt, 1983). Rovego (1992a) illustrated in her study that PE recruits acquired high levels of commitment to teaching with the movement approach. In another study, she (Rovego, 1992b) described how seven PE recruits acquired pedagogical content knowledge during a field-based elementary PE methods course. Despite all these, we still know little about how recruits actually learn to become PE teachers and how PETE works in facilitating their socialization.

PE recruits were found in the first study phase, belonging to five different types namely the athletes, pragmatists, followers, idealists and the insecure group (Li, 1997). They joined the teacher education program for a variety of reasons and had preconceived views on PE, PE teachers and PE teaching, which differ in significant aspects. Their ways of thinking and acting were conceptualized from custodial to progressive and from utilitarian-dominated to liberal-oriented. The "Athletes" tended to reject acting out in the public unless success was perceived. This might have resulted from their predominant performance-oriented characteristics. The "Idealists" might be relatively more progressive and ready for any challenges. They would listen to advice and act on it for a better implementation of the PE programs. The "Followers" followed the instructions and tried to find the easiest way of completing the tasks. The "Pragmatists" acted out on pragmatic reasons. Recruits of the "Insecure Group" might choose to act out when they thought they would perform well or opt to hide when failure was perceived. The typology provides one of the many ways of understanding the PE recruits and is used in this study for comparing and analyzing the professional socialization of the PE recruits.

The typology of "knowledge use" suggested by Broudy et al (1974) is employed to explain in detail how PE recruits experience and develop their professional knowledge. It includes four different modes namely replication, application, interpretation and association. The first two are dominated in a large proportion of schooling (Broudy et al, 1974) and a significant part in higher education (Eraut, 1994). "Interpretative" knowledge involves understanding and judgment. The "associative" knowledge always involves metaphor or images, which are semi-conscious and intuitive. It is the base for generalization. The four modes of knowledge use are applied to illustrate the types and levels of PE recruits' professional learning and their tutors' teaching.

Methodology

How does PE recruit experience their PETE program? What kinds of knowledge do they perceive as salient? What are the differences among different types of the PE recruits in perceiving such experience? To answer these questions, a qualitative study was required and the interpretive research paradigm was adopted (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Sparkes, 1992) to see how PE recruits attach meaning to their subjective experience. According

to Bruner (1996), subjective experience is personal account of actions and feelings as well as their reflection. During the meaning making process, the hermeneutic circle that requires a constant movement of the interplay between individual expression and the context essential for interpretation is involved (Burrell & Morgan 1987, Sparkes 1992). Generally, any meaning generated from the socialization of PE recruits is the product of an interpretive movement between parts and the whole. Thus, the study relied on the researcher's pre-occupation, understanding and professional judgments. Through an understanding as such, a more contextual picture on the professional socialization process of the PE recruits could be obtained.

Twenty PE recruits were purposefully selected from the varieties of age range, skill proficiency levels, residential areas and socio-economic background. It was hoped to generate shared patterns of commonalities and high quality case descriptions useful for documenting uniqueness. During negotiating access, PE recruits' consent was obtained. They were explained with the details of the study, their rights and obligations. All possible means of ensuring their confidentiality were executed. Pseudonyms concerning their actual name, schools, the districts they lived and the sports they had involved were employed to protect their anonymity.

The semi-structured interview and reflective journals (Solomon et al, 1990) were adopted as means for data collection. Each participant was asked to write a reflective journal and attend an interview for about 30 minutes. A general interview guide suggested by Patton (1990) was used as a checklist to make sure that all relevant topics had been covered. All participants were asked to recall one or several notable topics and activities of the teaching modules that they had attended. It was an enquiry of the concrete details of their acquired experience and knowledge. They were required to express their feelings and give comments on the respective courses. The questions were reflective with the intention for understanding their subjective perceptions about those courses and decontextualizing the kind of knowledge that they perceived as salient. The data were collected during the end of the first half-year after recruits had joined the PETE program.

All data were transcribed, organized, coded and analyzed thoroughly and inductively. Emerging and recurring themes were identified for content analysis and compared constantly. During the process, phenomena

were interpreted in a wider context of recruits' professional socialization. It was then interpolated with the data and cross-case analysis. These emerging categories were analyzed in the process of "saturate", "abstract", "conceptualize" and "test" with the data in a spiral or back and forth manner (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Strauss, 1987).

The two-year full-time PETE program composes of 64 credit-bearing units scheduled in four semesters, within which 18 credit points are allotted to the PETE modules. Each credit point carries 15 teaching hours. It aims at equipping recruits for teaching PE competently up to junior secondary level in Hong Kong. The first semester lasts for half a year and the five modules are arranged for prepare PE recruits for their early field experience in schools in the second semester. "Foundations and Principles of PE", "Teaching of PE" and "Curriculum Studies in PE" are the primarily theoretical courses included in PETE program. Besides, two physical skill-oriented modules are to be chosen from "western folk dance", "gymnastics", "basketball" or "athletics". They are the "common core" activities strongly recommended by the Curriculum Development Committee of Hong Kong (1975, 1980, 1988) to be included in the formal PE curriculum for secondary schools. PE recruits are expected to benefit from these modules and equip themselves with both theoretical and practical repertoires of the pedagogical content knowledge.

This study tied up with an interpretive paradigm and the main emphasis was to generate an understanding empirically with the adequacy of accounts of the PE recruits and the research process. The process involved robust interpretation and explanation based on the data. All possible methodological means were employed to ensure the "trustworthiness" and "authenticity" of the data, which in turn, established credibility and legitimacy of this research (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). Direct quotations from PE recruits were provided to lend depth and authenticity of the data. As far as possible, PE recruits' own wordings were used when describing their meanings and intentions for developing the major categories. Translation of PE recruits' scripts of interviews and reflective journal was undertaken by a PE professional and cross-checked by the participants. It was to ensure that the transcripts were describing their responses truly. The reflective journals were used for cross-checking, validating and triangulating the accounts made by the PE recruits during the interviews (Denzin, 1990).

Results

Twenty recruits aged from 18 to 23 were selected. Sixteen of them came from working-class families and lived in public housing estates while the rest came from middle class. Most of them were fresh graduates from secondary schools and three of them graduated one year earlier. One of them had spent a year at a nursing school; another worked as an office clerk and the third one was looking for a job before joining the Institute. Among these subjects, only one student was eligible to enter local university. However, he chose the teacher training as his career. All others attempted to enter the university but were unsuccessful because of their relatively low academic results obtained in the A-level examination.

Physical Skill-Oriented Modules

“Western folk dance”, “basketball”, “athletics”, and “gymnastics” are the options included as the contents of two physical skill-oriented modules. From the scripts arising from the interviews and reflective journals, most of the male recruits had relatively little prior knowledge and skills in dance while some of the females were very familiar with it because of their previous experience gained in their secondary school PE program. Most male recruits had some experience in playing basketball. Chung, Lai and Fai were elite basketball players who had been participating in the sport for a long time. Most of the female recruits such as Yan, Siu and Hung had relatively little experience of playing the game and their skill proficiency in basketball were below the average. All recruits had involved in some kinds of athletic activities in their secondary school life and To was an elite athlete specializing in the 100m sprinting with the skill level of national standard. Gymnastics was regarded as a difficult unit as most of them were not familiar with the skills.

The tutors of dance, basketball and gymnastics integrated different types of knowledge in their teaching. Both of the “replicative” and “applicative” modes of knowledge were commonly incorporated. They intended to build up recruits’ professional knowledge by incorporating “the pedagogical know how” into the content knowledge of these physical activities. Most of the recruits stated that they had been introduced a lot of practical experience-derived knowledge in the form “mastery of skills”, “teaching progression”, “writing lesson plan” and “safety precautions

while teaching the physical activities” for physical skill instruction. The above elements were proved to be successful and highlighted by the recruits as their program expectations.

On the contrary, most of the recruits had some reservations on how athletics was implemented. The teaching content included practical knowledge of basic skills in athletics such as start, sprint, hurdling, high jump and some interesting introductory activities. The throwing events of shot putt and javelin were omitted. The mode of teaching adopted by the tutor was mainly “replicate” practices on simple athletic skills. Unfavorable remarks were related to the limited scope and elementary level of the content taught. The presentations were not well-organized. The instructions were too long and the practices were found to be too few. More important, most of the recruits felt that they had not acquired “the skills and knowledge of the event” and “the know-how of the pedagogy”. They had not experienced the positive values through involving in it as they did in other physically oriented skill units.

Theoretical Modules

Three theoretical modules are mainly “propositional knowledge” including discipline-based theories. The content of “Foundation and Principles of PE” is primarily disciplinary-based knowledge including history, sociology and philosophy. The module of “Curriculum Studies in PE” is mainly knowledge in curriculum. The content acquaints recruits with the understanding of essential PE curricular theories so that they can have the ability to plan, select and implement the PE curriculum rationally. The “Teaching of PE” emphasizes on the pedagogical knowledge. It introduces PE recruits with theories and concepts about the pedagogy in PE teaching.

Most of the PE recruits had difficulty in recalling the course content and notable activities of the module of “Foundation and Principle of PE”. They could only recall the course content in a nitty-gritty manner including theoretical concepts of PE, sports, play and competition together with their roles, functions and development in schools and the society in a wider aspect. It was the intention of the tutor to extend recruits’ scope of theoretical knowledge and prepared them with sound rationality in making decisions in teaching PE. It appeared that the “replicative” mode of professional learning was adopted within which recruits were required to replicate their

“acquired” knowledge in written examination. No learning activities for deliberation of the concepts to local context were reported. Most of the recruits commented negatively on the relevance of the module. They commented that it was a difficult subject and they had learnt very little. Some of them were not very sure about how much they had got from the module. The presentation skill of the tutor, the nature of the discipline-based concepts as vague and abstract, and the predominant physical and practical oriented preferences of the students were some of the causes reported.

The module of “Curriculum Studies in PE” included knowledge of program planning such as possible modes of rainy day lessons, progressive teaching activities for various PE content, teaching plans, unit plans, lesson plans and the scheme of work. Few recruits mentioned that they had studied some theoretical knowledge such as concepts of the PE curriculum, planning progressive teaching activities and content analysis. Besides, students had to participate in applicative and interpretative modes of professional learning through making use of knowledge in group discussion, designing teaching activities, writing lesson and unit plans. The practical knowledge in the forms of constructing program planning was highly complimented. However, the theoretical knowledge such as curriculum theories and models, which were thought as the foundational knowledge, was rarely mentioned. It is not clear whether the problem lies on the tutor’s presentation or the selective focus of the recruits on the practical aspects of their teacher training.

The content of “Teaching of PE” included different kinds of knowledge. There was theoretical knowledge concerning different types of PE teaching. Pedagogical knowledge was incorporated to include the skills of using of voice, executing demonstration, managing the class and conducting rainy day lessons. The tutor involved each recruit in a ten-minute micro-teaching experience after completing the theoretical part. It was the intention of the tutor to make use of the micro-teaching as a means of putting theories into practices. Interestingly, most of the recruits valued such experiential teaching positively. Complimentary remarks like “useful”, “fantastic”, “learn a lot”, “gained lots of valuable information” and “practical” were commonly articulated. It appeared that a variety of different modes of professional learning were adopted within which recruits were required to interpret, apply and associate their “acquired” knowledge in dynamic teaching situations practically. However, they

seldom pinpointed the theoretical knowledge concerning the PE pedagogy and the actual practices of the theories.

Cross case analysis by means of their “types” reveals that there are considerable differences in the points of view among groups of the recruits. Below is the summary of the findings:

Athletes - Pedagogical Attentive and Pretending to Participate Actively

Lai and Chung were elite basketball players and To was a sprinter. Lai, had learnt to dance since her secondary school days while Chung and To had little experience in it. Although they were not satisfied with the superficial content of basketball taught in the module, they admitted that they had particularly attended to the pedagogical knowledge and seemed to be impressed by the hints of teaching. Here is one of the dialogues for illustration:

He (the tutor of basketball) taught us how to dribble in the first lesson.... We were taught how to teach with progressive stages. We should never start with shooting. I have learnt how to teach some basic skills of basketball in junior secondary forms. (To)

They were very familiar with the skills of athletics because of their extensive involvement in the event in their secondary school PE curriculum. They expressed that they would not have difficulty in teaching the subject. However, they were not satisfied with the implementation of the teaching unit for the scope of content that the tutor had taught was limited and the skills were seemingly at the elementary level. There was little for them to learn. It was interesting to see that they had adopted similar “fronting and image projection” strategy (Graber, 1989) by pretending to participate actively in the practical sessions. In their mind, they had different perceptions. To treated it as an opportunity to show off his talent. Lai, on the other hand, dragged on the module because she thought that she could do nothing other than to pretend participating actively. Chung thought differently. He began to worry about the inadequacies of the module, which might not be able to prepare his colleagues for teaching athletics in school. His active participation intended to offer help to the weaker ones in class. The following dialogues illustrate their strategies used in the teaching unit of athletics:

Do not mention about it... Please don't tell X about it. What he taught was really superficial...I don't think I will have any problem in teaching. But, for the others, I don't think they have such ability by the meantime. They need to learn from concrete examples, so I offer to help. (Chung)

Everything taught in the module was really superficial and I have come across most of them in my coaching course. What we need is some advanced knowledge concerning training and improvement of performance. But I still actively involved in the sessions as I treated it as opportunities for me to demonstrate how good I was in athletic. (To)

I didn't have any difficulties in athletics because I participate in the athletic meet each year. But I have learnt nothing in the module. The skills taught were really at the elementary level. I still actively participated in the activities. Other than that, what could we do? I wondered why some of us said they enjoyed the activities much. Maybe, they haven't participated in any meet before. (Lai)

All athletes seemed to have difficulties in understanding the theoretical concepts taught in the module of "Foundation and Principles of PE". They could recall bits of theoretical concepts but they were not satisfied with such little knowledge that they could gain. However, they commented the modules of "Teaching of PE" and "Curriculum Studies in PE" favorably. They complimented the modules as "useful and practical". Accordingly, the practical knowledge in forms pedagogical skills and experience was their focus in their professional learning. They claimed that they had learnt how to plan their teaching including practical knowledge of designing, analyzing and writing the teaching content. They were impressed by the practical teaching experience in the form of micro-teaching which provided them with the opportunity to use their theoretical knowledge in simulated practical situation. Actually, they were involved in the processes of "interpretative" and "associative" modes of professional learning through practical experience. However, it is common to see most of them having an inclination of relating their remarks with the acquisition of managerial skills. The dialogues below reflected such an articulation:

"Teaching of PE" is the most useful module. We came across different types of teaching. We also learn how to maintain good discipline and acquire teaching skills. (To)

Some of us tried to be naughty during the class (micro-teaching session). Ms X told us not to use punishment only, or else, the pupils would lose their interests in PE. We had to use some other methods. It was so different from my original thinking. I thought that punishment was the only way to stop any destructive behavior and I begin to know that I am wrong. (Chung)

It is O.K. I don't think I will have problem in this module. I know how to write the teaching schemes and lesson plans. I learnt how to analysis the content. Moreover, I am pretty good at a number of sports. I don't think I will have any difficulty in choosing activities to teach. (Lai)

The Insecure Group - Skill Acquisition Oriented and Activities Focus

PE recruits of the insecure group were found articulating more to the episodic incidents. The activities and skills in the teaching units were their main focus. They preferred to have the mastery of practical knowledge in the form of skill proficiency, which was largely the result of "replicative" learning and practising of the practical skills. The acknowledgements of "learnt some basic skills" and "acquired some interesting exercises" were their usual remarks on the modules. Their relatively low level of skill proficiency might explain some of their problems. Improving their proficiency in physical skills was their higher priority of professional learning. Below are some of their dialogues quoted for illustration:

I learnt some of the stunts in gymnastics. At least, I know the series of movement and what spotting is. (Chan)

The skills of the horizontal bar interested me most. I was afraid to perform the skills on the bar when it was too high. But I could do it when the bar was lowered. I like the whole module because I did not know gymnastics before I am interested in learning new things. (Man)

It is really excellent. There are so many ways to perform even a simple movement as a forward roll. It was so amazing and I went to the library and borrowed books about gymnastics. I was not interested in gymnastics before. There are several (different) events in gymnastics. We began to like gymnastics. However, we had spent too much time on the floor exercise. I hope that we can spend more time on vaulting and uneven bars. (Kuen)

However, they had more different perceptions on their knowledge learnt in the theoretical modules when compared with that of the practical ones. All of them valued the practical experiences in their professional learning in the modules of "Curriculum Studies of PE" and "Teaching of PE". Chan claimed that experiential learning in the form of micro-teaching enabled him "to acquire the actual skills of being a PE teacher". Probably, he associated practically with what he was going to teach in PE lessons. Man also praised his tutor's advice concerning practical teaching as "useful". As a self-reflection, it was not until he was being involved in the practical teaching situation that he began to aware the artistry of teaching PE. It was the kind of experiential knowledge that he was longing for:

I originally thought that it was so simple to teach and could not understand why other colleagues would have so many problems. But then, when it came to my turn, I knew that it was not so simple as I always thought. I never thought that we should face the wall when giving instruction so that the voice can be trapped. I have also learnt how to manage the class. Well, the class I taught was too nice. Everyone was co-operative... (Man)

The Idealists - Self Initiated, Considerate, To Learn More Is Their Target

Most of the idealists could recall in details what they had acquired in the modules. They were found to be more self-initiated in their learning regardless of their familiarity of the content upon entry into the program and the tutors' performance during the modules. Trying to acquire professional knowledge seems to be their target for learning. They tended to adopt more "interpretative" and "associative" modes in their professional learning. Yan was an example. Her failure in passing the practical examination in the basketball unit pushed her to practise more. Her sense of commitment can be reflected in her dialogue quoted below:

I am weak in playing basketball. I failed in the practical examination. I need to practice more on it and I have to take the supplementary examination later. I hope that I can do better this time and will not fail again. For me, there must be room for improvement. (Yan)

Lung, Fai and Leung thought that their age and physical capability might not be suitable for doing gymnastics. However, they expressed that it was their

obligation to practice and train themselves up for facilitating better teaching. Their comments below signify their sense of commitment of building up professional knowledge to enhance professional competence:

I was incapable of doing many of the stunts. I realized that I had to practice. I learnt some of the sequences of movement. I learnt the basic skills of gymnastics and their progressive stages. I will make use of them in the TP. I think the skills I have mastered through practice is helpful for my teaching. (Lung)

Oh! Gymnastics was my weakest event. Since I had never been involved in such an activity before, my flexibility was poor and it was difficult for me to perform the skills in perfect and aesthetic forms. But I have been trying my best to practice because I know it is important for me to know the event and demonstrate the skills to my pupils. I can now master most of the skills in the syllabus. Sometimes, I feel very satisfied because I have mastered many difficult stunts and even performed them aesthetically. (Fai)

I have learnt the varieties of teaching. I learnt how to spot and perform safely. The most important thing of teaching gymnastics is safety. It was quite difficult for me especially my flexibility was poor. It was very difficult for me to accomplish a gymnastic stunt with perfect pose. But when it was done, it was really terrific and I got a sense of satisfaction. (Leung)

Although the idealists had similar dissatisfactory feelings on athletics and the "Foundation and Principles of PE", they exhibited a more considerate thinking of looking for causes of the inadequacies such as the limited time allotted to the module and the monotonous nature of event. Their remarks on the theoretical modules were also more positive. They were more capable of recalling most of the contents. Their remarks were different from the other groups of being more open-minded, considerate, liberal and willing to open them up to professional experiences.

In general, practical experience was valued and remarked significantly. Among all, Siu got the highest aspiration. She apprehended most of the course content and the values she had experienced as quoted below:

During the micro teaching, the lecturers gave us some suggestions every time. I try to remember them all

and I would like to see if they are practical and useful or not. It is a real experience of teaching. The lecturers gave us advice and the colleagues shared ideas and experience. This can motivate thinking... (Siu)

It was through such experiential learning that she began to acquire her professional knowledge and became aware the importance of safety precautions in teaching PE. She reflected:

I have learnt some of the techniques of teaching PE: how to plan, how to demonstrate, how to give instructions, how to guide a practice, how to correct and how to evaluate. However, the safety rules are the most important thing in teaching. Providing students with a safe environment is far more important than just with fun and enjoyment. Thus, safety precaution is the most important thing in teaching PE.

Followers— The Easygoing Type, Diversified Perceptions on the Module

The followers were the easy-going recruits and appeared to accept whatever knowledge they received from the modules. They articulated their comments according to their immediate perceptions. Deliberation of their professional knowledge learnt in the modules was relatively little when compared with that of the idealists.

Sometimes, they tended to articulate their comments in a prevalent way. In some occasions, they just claimed simply their acquisition of theoretical knowledge concerning the terminology. Most of them expressed their dissatisfaction on the limited scope taught in the athletic unit. They acknowledged positively the values of practical experience that they came across in the dance, gymnastics and basketball units, the modules of “Teaching of PE” and the “Curriculum Studies in PE”. The following dialogues illustrate some of their perceptions:

This is (Gymnastics) my another weak event. I learnt a lot in this module but I still do not have confidence to teach it to my pupils. So I do not plan to teach this during my coming teaching practice. I think I have to overcome this in my future teaching. (Ho)

Everything is good in this module because there are progressive stages for every stunt and we will not make a mess when writing lesson plans. (Kai)

The two year course seems to be too short. We cannot learn much. I myself am lucky that I am good at

quite a number of sports. So, I shall try to learn more theories. I shall try hard in swimming. There should be more practice and training of skills. It would be much better if the courses can be accompanied with textbook. (Kin)

Pragmatists -Thinking Over the Utility Value of the Module Content

Most of the pragmatists seemed generating more suspicious comments when the tutors were not perceived as competent as they expected. When the module was not satisfactorily implemented, they generated more adverse comments. However, what they desired was an exclusive attention on the “ready-cooked” content from all modules so that they could use and teach it to their pupils in school without much deliberation. The dialogues quoted from Hang and Tung on the athletic module reflected most of their intentions:

Could the teaching of the module be a bit better planned? Activities were loosely organized. I learnt nothing from it. It is useless for my coming TP!... What can we do? We just stuck with it and did whatever was told. ... (Hang)

Really disappointing. I gained little from his lessons. The module was not much useful for my future teaching. I just pretended I enjoyed it during the lessons. (Tung)

Sometimes, they looked for excuses when they anticipated that they could not manage well in their professional learning. They commonly articulated that they were too old for learning this and that, the event was dangerous and pupils would have no interest in it. In so doing, they thought they could escape from being penalised for incompetence. We can see from the dialogues of Hang and Tung on gymnastics below that they would not pay much attention and effort on it:

It is too difficult for me and it is too dangerous for the pupils too. All the stunts demanded good flexibility. I should have involved in it when I was young. I am too old for that. I am not going to teach it in my coming TP because pupils won't be interested in it. It is too hard and boring. I think my boys and I like ball games better. (Hang)

It is too difficult. I wonder whether the activities should be excluded for boys. There are dangerous elements behind. What about if pupils are injured

when performing these stunts? We did have two colleagues injured during our gymnastic classes. (Tung)

They argued and complained about the practicality of information conveyed in the module of “Foundation and Principles of PE”. On the other hand, they related much of their learning in the other modules with utility ends. In their minds, everything taught in the course should directly prepare them for the coming TP and meeting the basic requirements of the school principals and inspectors of the Education Department in their future teaching career. Below are the dialogues of Kwan and Hung recapitulating their utilitarian emphases:

The theory sessions (Foundations and Principles of PE) are useful. But when it came to the teaching practice, we could not make use of what we had learnt in these sessions. (Kwan)

The content is practical especially the teaching schemes and lesson plans. Sooner or later we will be required by the school principals or inspectors of the Education Department to present our plans for teaching. (Hung)

Discussion

PE recruits complimented favorably those modules with more practical “know how” of the program such as “how to play”, “how to organize”, “how to teach”, “how to select progressive stages”, “how to write lesson plans”, “how to provide teaching points” and “how to teach safely”. It is logical as they sooner or later have to deal with situations wherein they must make practical decisions. These are the kind of professional knowledge involving practical action and determined by deliberative and eclectic procedures salient for their future job as PE teachers (Manen, 1977). It supports that recruits tend to prefer their professional knowledge, at least at the beginning of their professional socialization, to come from experience, in context and in practice (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995). It involves practical reasoning (Wright, 2000) through justification and generalization within which ideas, procedures or actions are put on trial to see whether they are applicable to the new situations. They are the process knowledge describing what and how recruits should do in their professional work or examine the nature of their professional action.

To a certain extent, it illustrates the inadequacies of the tutors’ teaching effectiveness and recruits’ unawareness of the importance of the “propositional” and disciplinary knowledge within a strictly academic frame of reference. The recruits’ modes of professional learning of developing and using such knowledge, within which the learning processes are mostly practical in nature, happened in professional contexts and bounded by professional requirements are ignored. The knowledge learnt could not become part of their professional knowledge unless it had been used for a professional purpose. It may reflect the selective attention of the recruits on the physical and pedagogical components because what they need most in order to facilitate good teaching in the playground is skills. Perhaps Eraut (1994) is right for he argues that “it is misleading to think of knowledge as first being acquired and then later put to use. Not only does an idea get reinterpreted during use, but it may even need to be used before it can acquire any significant meaning for the user” (p.50). Thus, the results challenge the mode of “propositional” knowledge structure of the teacher preparation program. The over reliance on the highly codified discipline base knowledge without deliberation on the practicality and the nature of professional performance may be problematic. Generally, PE recruits can be inspired and motivated most if they can be involved more different modes of knowledge such as “application”, “association” and “interpretation”.

Graber (1989) suggests that PE recruits may enter the teacher education program with a variety of expectations on the curriculum. From the data collected, it is found that the biographies of the recruits did affect much on their expectation on their knowledge learnt. The athletes were the ones who always had confidence to teach. They never worried about their teaching. They seldom concerned much on what the tutors could teach them. The insecure group and the followers who were usually weak in skill proficiency looked at learning as something important. They showed their eagerness of how much they could learn from the modules and were afraid that they could not be skilful enough to teach. The idealists and the pragmatists seemed to adopt their own measurement on the modules and got what they wanted selectively. They tried to compensate their own weaknesses by learning and practice new skills. However, it is important to note that all recruits treasured the real practices of certain sports and pedagogic skills. Otherwise, they would not have much confidence in teaching. It highlights the powerful impacts that pre-

training-stage experiences have on what and how recruits would learn in the teacher education program. The results confirm the findings of most early studies about the powerful impacts of teacher recruits' biographies on their socialization process (Calderhead & Robson, 1991; Doolittle et al, 1993; Kagan, 1992; Lortie, 1975; Rovegno, 1992; Tabachnick & Zeichner, 1984).

Lortie's (1975) suggestion of helping teacher recruits examine their past and determine how it has shaped their current beliefs about teaching is worth considering. At least, teacher educators have to aware and begin to design ways to explore and deal with such powerful teacher perspectives. It is not until then, the teacher education program as a socializing agent becomes significant.

References

- Bain, L.L. (1990). Physical education teacher education. In W.R. Houston, M. Haberman and J. Sikula. (Eds.). *Handbook of Research on Teacher Education*. New York: Macmillan, pp. 758-781.
- Bain, L.L., & Wendt, J. (1983). Undergraduate physical education majors' perceptions of the roles of teacher and coach. *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, 54, 112-118.
- Barrette, G.T. (1996). Physical education teacher education design and research: Studying curriculum intent and outcomes. In G.H. Doll-Tepner and W. Brettschneider. (Eds.). *Physical education and sport, changes and challenges*. Aachen: Meyer & Meryer Verlag.
- Bogdan, R.C., & Biklen, S.K. (1992). *Qualitative research for education: an introduction to theory and methods*. Boston, MA: Allyn Bacon.
- Broudy, H.P., Smith, B.O., & Burnett, J.R. (1974). *Excellence in American Secondary School: A study in curriculum theory*. Huntington, NY: Robert. E. Krieger.
- Bruner, E. (1986). Experience and its expressions. In V. Tunner & E. Bruner (Eds.), *The anthropology of experience*. pp.3-30. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.
- Burrell, G., & Morgan, G. (1979). *Sociological paradigms and organizational analysis*. London: Gower.
- Calderhead J., & Robson M. (1991). Images of teaching: Students' early conceptions of classroom practice. *Teaching and teacher Education*, 7(1),1-8.
- Carreiro, C.F. (1994). Teaching teachers: Aims, methods and contents. In J. Mester. (Ed). *Sports, leisure and physical education. Trends and development*. 1. pp. 484-505. Aachen: Meyer Verlag.
- Clandinin, D.J., & Connelly, F.M. (1995). *Teachers' professional knowledge landscapes*. New York: Teachers College.
- Curriculum Development Committee.(1975). *Provisional syllabus for Physical Education (Form I-VI)*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong Government Printer.
- Curriculum Development Committee.(1980). *Syllabus for Secondary Schools: Physical Education*. (Form I-VI), Hong Kong: Hong Kong Government Printer.
- Curriculum Development Committee.(1988). *Syllabus for Secondary Schools: Physical Education (Form I-VI)*, Hong Kong: Hong Kong Government Printer.
- Dewar, A.M., & Lawson, H.A. (1984). The subjective warrant and recruitment into physical education. *The Quest*, 36, 15-25.
- Doolittle, S., Dodds, P., & Placek, J. (1993). Persistence of beliefs about teaching during formal training of pre-service teachers. *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education*, 12, 355-365.
- Eraut, M. (1994). *Developing professional knowledge and competence*. London: The Falmer Press.
- Graber, K.C. (1989). Teaching tomorrow's teachers: Professional preparation as an agent of socialization. In T.J. Templin & P.G. Schempp (Eds.) *Socialization into physical education: Learning to teach*. pp. 59-80. London: WCB Brown & Benchmark.
- Graber, K.C. (1990). What they see and what they do: Perceptions and expectations held by teacher educators. *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education*, 10, 49-65.
- Graber, K.C. (1995). The influence of teacher education programs on the beliefs of student teachers: general pedagogical knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and teacher education course work.. *Journal of Teaching Physical Education*, 14, 157-178.

- Graham G. (1991a). An Overview of TECPEP. *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education*, 10, 323-334
- Graham G. (1991b). The influence of teacher education on pre-service development: Beyond a custodial orientation. *The Quest*, 43(1), 1-19.
- Guba, E.G., & Lincoln, Y.S. (1981) *Effective Evaluation*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Kagan, D.M. (1992). Professional growth among pre-service and beginning teachers. *Review of Educational Research*, 62(2). 129-169.
- Layder, D. (1993). *New Strategies in Social Research*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Lawson, H. (1983a). Towards a model of teacher socialization in physical education: The subjective warrant, recruitment, and teacher education. *Journal of Teaching Physical Education*, 2(3), 3-16.
- Lawson, H. (1983b). Towards a model of teacher socialization in physical education: Entry into schools, teachers' role orientation and longevity in teaching. *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education*, 3(1), 3-15
- Lawson, H. (1986). Occupational socialization and the design of teacher education programs. *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education*, 5, 107-116.
- Li, C. (1997). Subjective Warrant of Pre-service PE teachers. *Paper presented in the Hong Kong Educational Research Association 14th Annual Conference in Hong Kong*.
- Livingston, L.A. (1996). Re-defining the role of physical activity courses in the preparation of physical education teaching professions. *Physical Educator*. Fall. 111-4.
- Lortie, D.C. (1975). *Schoolteacher: A sociological study*. Chicago, IL: The university of Chicago Press.
- Manen, M.V. (1977). Linking ways of knowing with the ways of being practical. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 6(3), 205-228.
- O'Bryant, C.P. (1996). *Choosing physical education as a profession: Stories of three American women*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. The Ohio State University.
- Patton, M.Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation methods*. London: Sage.
- Rovegno, I. (1992a). Learning a new curricular approach: Mechanisms of knowledge acquisition in preservice teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 8, 253-264.
- Rovegno, I. (1992b). Learning to teach in a field-based methods course: The development of pedagogical content knowledge. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 8, 69-82.
- Schon, D.A. (1983). *The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action*. New York: Basic Books.
- Shulman, L.S. (1987). Knowledge and teaching: Foundations of the new reform. *Harvard Educational Review*, 57, 1-22.
- Solmon, M.A., Worthy, T., & Lee, A.M. (1990). Teacher role identity of student teachers in physical education: An interactive analysis. *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education*, 10, 188-209.
- Sparkes, A.C. (1992). *Research in physical education and sport*. London: The Falmer Press.
- Strauss, A.L. (1987). *Qualitative analysis for social scientists*. Cambridge, UK: University of Cambridge Press.
- Stroot, S.A., & Williamson, K.M. (1993). (Ed). Socialization into physical education. [Monograph]. *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education*, 12, 386-398.
- Tabachnick B.R., & Zeichner, K.M. (1984). The impact of the student teaching experience on the development of teacher perspectives. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 35(6). 28-36.
- Templin, T. J., & Schempp, P.G. (1989). Socialization into physical education: Its heritage and hope. In T. Templin and P. Schempp (Eds). *Socialization into physical education: learning to teach*. pp. 1-12. Indianapolis, IL: Benchmark Press.
- Templin, T. J. (1979). Occupational socialization and the physical education student teacher. *Research Quarterly*, 50, 482-493.
- Wright, L.J.M. (2000). Practical knowledge, performance and physical education. *The Quest*, 52, 273-283.