

The Practice of the Beginning Secondary School Physical Education Teachers 新任中學體育老師的教學工作

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to investigate the practice of teaching of beginning secondary school physical education teachers. The problems and the factors that confronted the teachers in their first year of work were examined. Thirteen physical education graduates of the Hong Kong Institute of Education in 2005 teaching in secondary schools were purposely invited to participate in the study. Qualitative data were collected by a combination of techniques: passive participant observation, formal and informal interviews, document analysis, and journal writing. Constant comparison and analytic induction were used to organize and categorize the data. Data generated helped to understand the confrontations faced and the influence of the workplace factors on the practices of beginning teachers. Results indicated that the teachers adjusted their practices according to their school contextual conditions during their first year of teaching. The common practices of teaching were a) instructional approach, b) lesson preparation, c) contents, and d) classroom management. The workplace impact was mainly come from their students, administrators, and work responsibilities. The participants also employed socializing strategies in order to survive in schools. Findings of the study hold implications for the development and preparation of physical education teachers with respect to the influence of organizational socialization.

摘要

本研究目的是探討新任中學體育老師的教學工作。同時亦檢視新任教師任教時所遇到的困難及影響其教學工作的因素。十三位新任中學體育老師參與是次研究。透過被動參與式觀察、正式及非正式訪問、老師反思日誌及文件分析等方法收集數據。然後以持續比較法分析資料。結果顯示影響教師教學工作因素包括學生、校內管理人員及教師工作量。教師調整教學方式及採取社會化生存策略以配合學校需要。此等結果給予體育教師發展及培訓多方面啟示。

Introduction

The goal of all physical education teacher education programmes is to develop students to become competent and effective teachers. Recent research has indicated that some physical education teacher education programmes have been successful in socializing pre-service teachers toward focusing on pupil learning and achievement (Curtner-Smith, 1996; O'Sullivan & Tsangaridou, 1992).

However, it is not known whether the pedagogical skills and philosophical perspectives gained from the teacher education are maintained when pre-service teachers start their teaching in workplace after graduate.

Physical educators have been interested in understanding how individuals learn to be physical education teachers. The most prevalent model used to examine the socialization process of teachers has been

occupational socialization (see Lawson, 1983a, 1983b, 1986, 1988, 1989, 1991; Schempp & Grabber, 1992; Stroot, 1993; Templin & Schempp, 1989). Occupational socialization was defined as “all kinds of socialization that initially influence persons to enter the field of physical education and that later are responsible for their perceptions and actions as teacher educators and teachers” (Lawson, 1986, p. 107). Research on socialization into physical education indicates a three-stage process within the occupational socialization model (Lawson, 1983a, 1983b; Templin & Schempp, 1989). These phases are: a) recruitment socialization; b) professional education; and c) organizational socialization. This model progresses on the bases of interaction and learning among participants with their school experiences and settings. Physical educators noted that the perspectives and practices of physical education teacher were likely to be influenced by these three phases of socialization (Lawson, 1983a, 1983b; Templin & Schempp, 1989). However, Lawson argued that specific workplace factors could influence new teacher’s teaching incongruence with the perspectives and practices espoused during their teacher education when they entered the workforce. Zeichner (1980) has long questioned the influences of teacher education programmes are maintained when pre-service teachers start teaching in school in his study.

Some educators even suggested that the most important time in a teacher’s career perhaps is the induction phase. They described its as “ a transitional period in teacher education between teacher preparation and continuing professional development, during which assistance may be provided and /or assessment may be applied to beginning teachers” (Huling-Austin, Odell, Ishler, Kay, & Edelfelt, 1989, p. 3). This implied the huge impact of the organizational socialization on beginning teachers. In fact, new teachers acquired the knowledge, values, and skills endorsed by the workplace when they transit from the teacher education programmes to actual school teaching within this stage, (Lawson, 1986). In real practice, different workplace factors could either support or limit new teachers’ teaching in congruence with those espoused during their teacher education once they entered the school.

When enter into the workplace, new teachers usually conform and internalize the school norms or tradition, as well as imitating the experienced teachers around them. The new teachers mostly experience “reality shock” (Lawson,

1989) when they recognize their teacher preparation is not matched with the workplace requirements. They usually abandon the perspectives of teacher education and adopt the school traditions or norms. They start to follow the experienced teachers around and result in either an immediate or delay ‘wash-out’ of the effects of professional preparation (Lawson, 1983a, 1983b).

The new teachers begin to learn strategies by trial and error for survival in school. Huberman (1989) comments the induction period in new school is the time for discovery and survival. He added that the relationship with the students and colleagues, instructional ability, and enthusiasm closely related to the difficulties of this induction period.

Educators has also identified that the first year is the most difficult period of a teacher’s career as pre-service teachers make transition from student to school teacher (Dow, 1979; Lacy, 1977). Research data also show that the first year is critical because it may affect whether the beginning teacher will leave the profession and determine what types of teacher she or he will be (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). As pre-service teachers start teaching in their workplace, most of them may fill with uncertainty and find their jobs more challenging than expected. It seems that the pre-service teachers are not always prepared for the demands of working and have misconceptions about the realities of the teaching of a teacher (Lortie, 1975). Research findings indicate that some of the beginning teachers do choose to leave the profession within the few years of teaching in some western countries (Carre, 1980; Macdonald, 1999; Schlechty & Vance, 1983; Smithers, 1990).

Furthermore, beginning teachers are facing problems and limitations during the induction period, especially the first year of teaching (Solmon, Worthy & Carter, 1993; Veenman, 1984). Solmon, Worthy and Carter (1993) recognized common problems and difficulties of 1st year physical education teachers used to face. “Classroom management, lack of control, discipline problems, frustration, anxiety, isolation, a sense of being overwhelmed by job responsibilities, and feeling unprepared to do the job” are all the frequent difficulties mentioned by the beginning teachers (Solmon, Worthy & Carter, 1993, p. 313). However, physical educators argue that these problems and difficulties do not create much trouble to beginning physical education teachers. The transition

shock experienced by classroom teachers may not be the characteristics of physical education teacher induction (Kreider, 1985; O'Sullivan, 1989; Schempp & Graber, 1992). Some speculate that this might be due to the marginal nature of the subject and such status may lead to lower pedagogical expectation and teaching performance for physical education teachers (Schempp & Graber, 1992).

In their inquiries into beginning physical education teachers' experiences, Stroot, Faucette, and Schwager (1993) found that the new teachers experienced role conflict, isolation, reality shock, and burnout in their first year teaching. These experiences all are congruent to the difficulties what Veenman (1984) found ten years ago.

Workplace conditions also affect the socialization of teachers. Educators showed that workplace conditions greatly influence teachers' commitment to teaching, teaching effectiveness and their retention in the profession (Goodlad, 1984; Lortie, 1975). Locke, Griffin, and Templin (1986) reveal that the lack of adequate facilities and equipment, the large class sizes, and the lack of time for instruction are common problems in physical education teaching.

Lawson (1989) further indicates that personal-social factors, situational factors, organizational factors and political-economic factors within workplace conditions interact with each other and influence the practices of new teachers.

In short, organizational socialization is diverse and lead to "wash-out" effects of the teacher education. Organizational culture, workplace conditions and all participants in schools play an important part in the organizational socialization of beginning teachers. Nevertheless, the new teachers are not passive recipients; instead, they actively interact and learn within the socialization process.

It is likely that beginning physical education teachers may need to adjust their practice in order to adapt to their new working environments during the organizational socialization process. It is important for the teacher educators to understand the practice of the beginning teachers whether they are in congruence to those espoused during their teacher education. However, most of the beginning teacher socialization studies were in western context. In Hong Kong, Li (2000,

2002) studied the professional socialization of 20 pre-service student teachers in the Hong Kong Institute of Education. He provided information about how pre-service physical education teachers learn and develop their professional knowledge. To date, there is no study investigating the first year teaching of beginning physical education teachers in Hong Kong. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the practices of secondary school beginning physical education teachers during their first year of work. This study does not only focus on practices of the beginning teachers but also look into the factors that affect the teachers in teaching during their first year of work. Several research questions were set to guide the inquiry of the study: a) What pedagogical practices did the beginning teachers employ during their first year of teaching? b) What were the major problems and difficulties the beginning teachers faced during their first year of teaching? c) How did the beginning teacher react to these problems and difficulties? This study is also the first project attempts to uncover how the Hong Kong beginning teachers react to their confrontations and investigates the effects of the contextual school elements on their practices during the first year teaching. It is hoped that the results generated help us to understand more about the first year practice of the beginning secondary physical education teachers in Hong Kong. Specifically, we may understand more about the influence of the contextual school elements on the teachers. This is important to physical education teacher educators as they have responsibility to help their students to have a successful transition into their workforce. In addition, this study also attempts to explore the teachers' perceptions and adequacy of their physical education teacher education programmes with reference to their first year teaching. This information is valuable to the investigators as they may make use of the data to improve the existing physical education teacher education programme in the education institute. The results also hold implications for the development and preparation of physical education teachers. This study is meaningful because it will give us a better picture about the first year teaching life of beginning secondary physical education teachers in local context.

Method

For the purposes of the study, the investigators employed qualitative approaches to address the above research questions. Since socialization process is complex

dynamic events occurring in complex environment, qualitative data could help to give a better account of the first year teaching life of the beginning physical education teachers. Several data collection techniques will be adopted: Formal and informal interviews, document analysis, journal writing and the taking of field notes during lessons observation. Data generated from these methods may help us understand more about the organizational socializing process of the participants.

The thirteen beginning physical education teachers are the main interest in this study. They are the graduates of the four-year full time Bachelor of Education programme in secondary education majoring physical education in 2005. All of them started their teaching in secondary physical education in September 2005. They were purposely invited to take part in the study. They were explained with the purposes and details of the study. As to gain trust and insure protection of the participants, all possible means of ensuring their confidentiality were executed. Pseudonyms were employed to protect their anonymity throughout the study. Informed consents were obtained from the teachers and their principals prior to commencement of the present study. Additionally, the investigation also complies with the institute's ethical policies on the use of human subjects.

The physical education teachers were videotaped teaching two physical education lessons. The teachers were strongly requested to use their usual teaching methods during the videotaped lessons. Subsequently, the principal investigator observed the lessons and made field notes recording. The investigator acted as a non-participant during the observation. It means that he only observes and does not involve himself in the activities of the setting (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Spradley, 1980). During the observation of the participants, field notes related to the teaching and learning activities were taken in the form of a field journal. After the lesson observation, the field notes were expanded, transcribed and commented on by the investigator. It is important to note that the field notes of non-participants' observation function as an additional data source for triangulation and provide supportive findings and validate findings for making conclusions.

Besides, the investigators arranged formal interview appointments with the participants at the end of school term. One of the purposes of the interviews is to

understand the participants' beliefs and knowledge about the content they teach. This helps the investigators learn more about the participants regarding the following theme: a) conceptions about teaching physical education, b) perception of the teacher's role, c) their preparation in teaching, d) their perception of the physical education teacher education programme in preparing their work in the workplace, e) their workplaces, f) the workplace factors that influence their teaching and practice, g) how they react to these influencing factors, and g) comments on their practice of teaching throughout the year. The interview is semi-structured and open ended. The interview questions were developed to the research questions and the purpose of the study. All interviews were audio-taped to provide verbatim transcriptions for analysis.

Whenever, there was an opportunity, the principal investigator would informally interview the participants. These interviews took place after school. Some informal interviews were conducted by telephone. The focus is to gain additional biographical data and information pertaining to the research questions which guided the study. Finally, when the opportunity arose, the principal investigator would informally interview the participants' colleagues and administrators. The purpose is to gain additional data in different perspectives on workplace factors which influence the participants' teaching. Responses to questions asked during informal interviews were recorded as soon after the completion of each interview as possible. This was done by making written notes or by tape-recording of conversations.

Another data source involved analyzing documents relevant to the research questions which guided the study. The participants were asked to give copies of curriculum guides, unit plans, lesson plans, pupil and teacher assessment forms and official school board policy statements throughout their first year of teaching. This information helps us to understand the practices of the participants and the expectations of their workplaces.

Lastly, the participants were requested to keep a reflective journal of their first year of work. In the guidelines for journal writing, they were asked to a) tell about their first experiences as a physical education teacher, b) appraise how well they were prepared to take on the job they were doing during their physical education teacher education, and c) identify the workplace

factors which were influencing their teaching. Finally, they also need to provide details of the programmes they had inherited in terms of curriculum, class, sizes, equipment, and facilities. However, all the participants did not submit the reflective journals of their first year of work even under several requests. They all claimed that they were too busy in school with heavy workload and school commitments. The first investigator therefore made informal interviews by using telephone and asking the teachers' overall impressions of their first-year work. This information replaced their views from the reflective journals.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data for this study consist of interview tapes, field notes of lesson observation, teaching and school document and reflective journals. Data were collected over a period of six months, beginning in February and ending in August. Data analysis and interpretation were an ongoing process throughout the study (Bogdan & Biklin, 1992). Analytic induction and constant comparison were the strategies used during the analysis process (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Specifically, the analysis of teaching perspectives and organizational socialization of the physical education teachers included the following dimensions: conception in teaching physical education, lesson preparation, practice of teaching, perception of their physical education teacher education, the workplace factors influence their practice and their reaction to these workforce factors. All interviews and field notes of lesson observation were fully transcribed. Related documents were also analyzed. Transcripts, field notes and documents were constantly examined and reviewed carefully. Notes, ideas and interpretations were written, compared and discussed. Distinguished themes were then identified within the data. Categories were allowed to emerge separately from the data according to each theme. These themes and categories were changed and discarded in response to this analytic induction process (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). The investigators searched for the dominant patterns and trend related to the research questions within the study. The final data presented from the inductive process included the outlines of what was said and examined. Direct quotations with participants' own wordings were used to lend validity to the data.

Several strategies were used as to establish the trustworthiness of results and enhance the credibility of the findings: triangulation, peer debriefing, and member checks. Data collected from different sources were compared and cross-checked as to confirm its accuracy and interpretation. In addition, an experienced qualitative research colleague was asked to read and comment on the preliminary analysis and interpretation of the data. Lastly, the participants were asked to read the interview transcripts and field notes to verify accuracy.

Readers should be cautious when reading the findings of the study as the research was part of an attempt to evaluate the influence of the physical education teacher education programme to the practices of the teachers in which the investigators involved. It is not clear to what extent the participants were affected by the fact that the investigators had been responsible for their teacher education. They may have felt pressure in answering the questions concerning the effectiveness of the physical education teacher education programme simply because of the involvement of the investigators. To minimize this impact, the first investigator stressed the data collected would be confidential that they were under no pressure to participate in the study and they were free to withdraw at any time. Besides, the investigators had positive relationship with the participants and they thought that they would express their own opinions during the interviews. Moreover, the investigators perceived that the participants viewed them as researchers and that this relationship enabled the investigators to gain an in-depth understanding of the teaching experience of the participants during the first year of work.

Results

Data generated from different collecting methods helped to provide answers to the research questions. The analysis of the data gave us better understanding of the practices of secondary school beginning physical education teachers, the problems they faced and how they responded to these issues during their first year of work.

Practice of Teaching

Several major categories with regard to the practice of teaching of the beginning teachers during their first year of work emerged from the analysis: instructional approach, lesson preparation, contents and classroom management.

Instructional Approach

Teaching has been identified as one of the major responsibilities of school physical education teachers (Buck, Lund, Harrison, & Cook, 2007). Beginning teachers are expected to teach competently as their experienced colleagues. The participants in the study cared about their teaching performances when they started working in schools. Almost all of them agreed that teaching well in physical education was the most important aspect in their job. "As a physical education teacher, I think teaching well in class is the most important..." and "...in fact, the most important job in school is teaching... this should be my first priority..." are the typical views of the participants. Moreover, they admitted that they would adopt the teaching approaches with most confidence when they started to teach. These usually were what they had learnt in their teacher education programme. Here was the comment of Norman: "I usually apply what I have learnt ...they are the basis for teaching PE. The institute programme taught me all of them". In the interviews, they claimed both direct and indirect approaches were used in their teaching. Some maintained that direct teaching strategies were more appropriate for teaching junior forms and 'low banding' students as they might have behavioral problems in class. They would employ some indirect strategies such as Teaching Game for Understanding or Guided Discovery in games teaching for upper forms students.

According to the observation of the first investigator, it appeared that the participants were fairly consistent regarding their methods of teaching. Most demonstrated a "show and tell" approach whereby they gave a demonstration of the skill and asked the students to practice. Throughout the observation, none of the teachers were observed using any alternative style other than direct command teaching. As Kate said, "I mostly adopt the direct teaching strategy; that is I show demonstration first and let the students practice afterwards...let them practice what I show them..." He (Kent) used 'more direct teaching styles' and the tasks he asked students to complete were more likely to be 'drills and practice' 'focused on skill work'. Most participants pointed out that they were comfortable in using the command and practice style of teaching, "basically, just straight out talking to them. Hands-on demonstrating..." Besides, they stressed this strategy was also commonly used by their school colleagues. This common practice presented an

important image and model for them to follow in school. It seemed that their experienced colleagues also exerted influence on how they teach in the lessons.

In addition to the participants' teaching strategies, most of them gave several teaching points while instructing and they believed this would help their student learning. Here was the description of a participant's field notes: "Ben did not explain the task. He let the students try the movement first. All students dribbled the basketballs in all directions. Ben stopped them and gave several points on dribbling skills before they re-started practicing again." The participants provided opportunity for the students to try the things out first and they further gave instruction later on. They emphasized the learning of the skill selected.

Observational data confirmed that the participants were mainly using a teacher-directed approach and technique-based strategy in their teaching. The participants stressed the importance of skill acquisition in their teaching in the interviews. They purposely reinforced skills learning and practicing. It is likely that the direct teaching strategy was commonly used by the participants. In fact, they all agreed this traditional approach was mostly used as to suit the needs of students as well as the teaching conditions. Most of them raised that they had learnt different teaching strategies during their teacher education, the adoption of inquiry or TGfU approaches were difficult and inappropriate in most cases during the first year of teaching.

Lesson Preparation

Preparation is a key to success, and teaching physical education is no exception. Good teachers always plan and prepare their teaching. It is advised for the beginning physical education teacher to have detail lesson plans in their teaching (Sherblom & McElhone, 1996). There is no substitute for preparedness when new teachers start teaching. All participants in the present study taught according to their school physical education curriculum. Working in the new challenging environments, they should prepare lessons well before they teach. However, it was surprising that most of them did not spend much time in preparing their teaching. Below were some of the practices of participants in lesson preparation:

Be frank, I did not prepare much for the PE lessons...I only planned the lesson just before it started...I would prepare some learning activities related to the contents I was going to teach. (Kerry, interview)

I usually prepare my lesson the night before...if possible, I will make use of the weekend...In fact, I spend most of the weekend to handle other school administrative work. (Cherry, interview)

As I usually do not have lessons during the first two periods, I will make use this time in preparing PE lessons each day. (May, interview)

Most participants indicated that they did not write lesson plans for preparation. "I did not write the lesson plans all the way before I taught...but I had all the activities in my mind before I went into the class." Even the exceptional lesson plans being submitted by a participant, they were only outlines of the learning activities. It is evident that the teachers in the present study did not prepare much for their daily teaching.

Some participants were upset to find physical education was not accepted as legitimate subject in schools. The school administrators did not concern student learning in physical education lessons and treated physical education as just a play session. The teachers sensed that they were teaching a low status subject. They therefore would prioritize their school work according to their importance. They felt that performing other school duties is more important than spending time preparing physical education lesson. As Kerry commented, "maybe there are so many things (duties) for me to concern...therefore, for PE teaching, I will not spend much time to prepare..." Kevin also shared the same view, "my school treats English and Chinese as important subjects in school...but PE is...indeed, there is not much resource allocated to PE subject...but they only support the development of extra-curricular PE activities... the school administrators emphasize the school sports achievements but they do not care about the development of PE, why should I spend much time in teaching PE?" Most teachers admitted that they spent little time in physical education lesson planning. For the beginning teachers, it seems that preparing lesson plans for teaching physical education is unrealistic, useless and impracticable.

Contents Selection

Choosing appropriate contents to match the curriculum model will help students achieve planned learning outcomes (Siedentop & Tannehill, 2000). From the document collected, it was found that the participants' school physical education programmes were rather traditional. They can be described as multi-activity model (Siedentop, 2007). The activities chosen included soccer, basketball, volleyball, badminton, table tennis, track and field, gymnastics, and in some cases dance and life-long activities. The participants commented that the programmes for the junior secondary level in their schools were basic and traditional. The students were aimed to learn various sports skills in different sports activities. They were mostly ball games activities. For the upper secondary level, they would introduce some trendy life-long sports activities in order to attract the student interests in the lessons. The students were prepared to capture lifelong activities sports skills as to enhance their further participation in these activities.

I have taught volleyball, basketball, football, badminton, gymnastics this year, they are mostly games activities...let me think...for Form six, bowling and tennis are chosen... (Kate, interview)

For the school sports day, I deliberately teach athletics a bit earlier...then we have ball games such as volleyball, handball, basketball, football... I reserve table tennis and badminton during rainy days...for upper forms, such as Form six, they have table tennis, bowling and golf... (Kevin, interview)

...mostly ball games activities but we teach athletics just before the school sports day...Ball games activities include handball, football, basketball, volleyball, table tennis and badminton as well... Yes, we also teach shuttlecock and hockey... (Ben, interview)

These selections seem to be influenced by the Education Bureau's PE curriculum guidelines for secondary physical education. The schools' curriculum approaches tend to support and reinforce the government's curriculum guidelines. From the informal conversations with the physical education panels, these schools curricular were in fact designed by them. They claimed that they usually adopt the government curriculum guidelines in order to save troubles if they are queried by the school principals or the government physical education inspectors during school inspection. In practice, most beginning teachers

followed their school's education policy and had limited input into planning the curriculum for their schools.

Despite limited input regarding the school curriculum, all teachers still had the opportunity in selecting and structuring learning tasks for their teaching. As Kerry commented that they did have syllabus to follow and he still had to design the learning activities in each lesson. Percy valued the school teacher resource book given by her school physical education panel. She prepared her lessons based on the information in the resource book. For the design of the lessons, most participants believed their learning activities should be fun to keep students' interest and active. They all prefer a learning atmosphere that is relaxed and fun. These were major rationales in designing the learning activities of the participants: "I would try and make it in a way that is exciting to the students," and "For a lot of my activities in the lesson, I had the entire students participate. I would plan for relaxed and fun activities." It seems that the teachers concern how the students perceive and experience in their lessons.

Moreover, field notes data indicated that all teachers usually followed a routine which consisted of warm up, skill instruction and game activities at the end in the teaching. The teachers emphasized the learning of the planned skills. It was also noted that most skills were geared towards the development of traditional sports, especially ball games activities. Apparently, the teachers care both the student perception of the lesson as well their skill learning in the lesson. These teaching principles were clearly stated by the participants:

Besides arousing the student interest in PE, it is important to help them learn the sports skills.
(Ben, interview)

...let them be happy and enjoy the lessons are important. For my students (Band 3), it is rather difficult for them to learn a lot during the lesson...
(Kevin, interview)

I aim to have my students learn something and feel happy during the lesson. (May, interview)

I hope the students can learn the skills that I plan to teach and enjoy the learning activities...
(Peggy, interview)

To attain a relaxed learning environment, the teachers believed their physical education activities should be exciting and not be boring for the students. This will help the student learn and achieve the lesson outcomes.

Classroom Management

Classroom management is a key component of effective teaching. Physical education teachers believed that effective classroom management is a necessary precondition for effective teaching and learning (Parker, 1995). They argued that teachers must establish goals, organize classes and develop a management scheme before student achievement can occur. The participants in the study concerned much of the classroom management and student discipline in their teaching. To maintain control of the situation, teachers usually organize students into groups. Grouping is the commonly used strategy to limit student freedom to move about. Limited facilities and equipment often dictate that students share practice space and equipment. The field notes data indicated that most teachers stressed the class control and tried to establish their teaching routines in the lessons. The teachers spent quite a long time in explaining and directing. The students always spent an excessive amount of time sitting down and listening. Here was one of the typical teaching scenarios:

Kathy arranged the class into groups. She did not hurry her presentation and demonstration. She spent some time in the grouping and class management. It seemed that she deliberately adopting this managing strategy in her teaching... (Kathy, field notes)

Some participants admitted that they purposely employed strict control strategy in their teaching. May stated, "Student control was the first motto in my PE classes, but as I kept struggling with student controls, I began to understand and take their positions...Kids are wild in nature. Unless you have strictly toward them, they easily mess up your class."

Most teachers like to adopt the station strategy (Rink, 2006) in their teaching. They believed this would help to minimize off-task behaviours in class. Ben described that "students like the stations because everybody is busy. Nobody is standing around and everybody is on task". Kate also like this strategy, "I want the students to be doing something all the time, they will not have time causing troubles...that make me feel like all of them are participating well."

Most beginning teachers had made some effort in developing their classroom management and discipline control of students. They all spent quite an excessive amount of time in establishing, maintaining classroom rules and procedures in their teaching. However, this management behaviour might affect the learning of the students if they occupy much time in the lesson.

In sum, the teachers adopted similar teaching and managing strategies in the instruction of physical education. They mentioned that a combination of command and exploratory instructional strategies were used depending on the activities or lessons. In practice, the teaching approach was teacher-directed and technique oriented. It seemed that the student, colleagues and school administrators affected much of their practice in the study.

Difficulties and Problems of Teachers

New teachers usually find problems and difficulties when they first start teaching in schools. Research findings identified that beginning teachers in general education and in physical education faced common problems and shared difficulties (Napper-Owen Phillips, 1995; Smyth, 1995; Solmon, Worthy & Carter, 1993; Veenman, 1984). The participants in the study also faced numerous problems when they entered the profession. Data analysis revealed that several themes emerged concerning the difficulties of the teachers: workload and duties, teaching other subjects, handling discipline and problem students, and uncomfortable pressure.

Workload and Duties

The beginning teachers are expected to teach and work the workload of their experienced colleagues. They usually are assigned to teach five to six lessons each day. Other than teaching, coaching is almost a required school duty for physical education teachers in school. All physical education teachers are required to coach sports team after school hours. Most participants claimed that they were very busy in their daily work in school. All of them were given administrative duties in addition to their physical education teaching and coaching duties. They were also assigned to take up numerous administrative committees in school such as discipline and extra-curricular activities committees. Some of them worked as class tutors, extracurricular activities teachers, discipline teachers, civic education teachers, counseling

teachers and so forth in schools. As Norman commented that he had 'been on several committees in the school and that's common to the first-year teacher'. Most of them have to work long working hours each day. When comparing to teaching practice during teacher training, some found the workload was rather exhaustive and sometimes unacceptable. As Ling complained, "Besides teaching physical education lessons, I have to coach up to eight in the evening after school, I was extremely tired and exhausted each day!" Kent also shared similar feelings and gave a remark on his duties in school, "the additional responsibilities that are part of the job are 'staggering'...in reality, working in school has had so many things than I would have thought...I feel like there are so many things that are job-specific that you have to take on and the PE part is not the only duty in school."

Although the teachers considered their teaching load 'reasonable' in terms of time allocation, in general they described their schedule and work duties as 'extremely busy'. It seemed that their work was "tiring" 'stressful' and 'quite a busy workload' for the first-year teachers.

Teaching Other Subjects

Beginning teachers concerned much of their teaching performances during the induction period. They cared about their teaching assignments. They were all frustrated when they were assigned to teach other teaching subject besides physical education. As the participants in the study were majored in physical education during their teacher education, it is challenging for them to teach other teaching subjects in school. Teaching other subjects that have not been trained is even a more difficult task. It was surprised to find two third of the new teachers in the study need to teach other subjects they were unfamiliar. They found difficulties in teaching these subjects as they lack related subject knowledge and pedagogical skills. The teachers are unfamiliar with the class room environments and do not understand much about the teaching and learning process of these subjects.

I don't know how to teach Mathematics. I don't know where to start. I have no training to teach Mathematics. It is not my favourite subject. Right from the start, the administration knows that I don't like teaching Mathematics, and they give it to me anyway. (Norman, interview)

I was not trained in Mathematics and Integrated Science. I did not know how to explain to them (students) if they had difficulties. I also had classroom management problems when I conducted experiments in the laboratory... (Kevin, interview)

...I had problems in setting up experiments in the Integrated Science laboratory lessons as I was unfamiliar in teaching this subject. (Kent, interview)

...I had classroom management problem in teaching Mathematics in classroom. I was not used to teaching with the blackboard as I was not trained to teach Mathematics. (Kate, interview)

The participants need to spend extra time and effort in preparing these 'unfamiliar' subjects. They were frustrated when they did not teach well in these teaching subjects. It is apparent that beginning teachers perceived difficulties if they were assigned to teach outside of their areas of expertise.

Handling Discipline and Problem Students

Beginning teachers overwhelmingly have difficulties managing student behaviours and find discipline the focus of their attention and energy. The teachers usually had false expectations about what is going on in the gymnasium. These inaccurate expectations had caused failure in handling student behavioural problems in classes. Research findings indicated that managing student behaviours was always the typical concern and problems of beginning teachers (O'Connell Rust, 1994; Olson & Osborne, 1991; Solmon, Worthy & Carter, 1993; Veenman, 1984).

The teachers in the study also found difficulties in dealing with discipline and problem students. Some participants were upset to know their students showed no interest in physical education lessons. Cherry was generally distressed by the students' lack of motivation and interest in physical education. "My students did not like class seriously...a lot of them came to class pass the time...I have to fight every day..." (Cherry, interview) Ling faced similar conditions and commented, "One of the most frustrating things about teaching in this school is having students who are behavioural problems and very low achieving...they are with very low learning attitude and they try to make excuses not to attend the PE lessons. They usually do not bring PE uniforms..." Moreover, some teachers had to teach some 'special'

students and these students were causing them troubles in class. Peggy pointed out that she had some 'special' students in her school. "Some students had behavioural problems in PE classes. They always caused you some troubles but the most difficult part was that you had problem students; some are hyperactive and some have asperger syndrome..." Kerry also added that he had difficulties in handling emotion students, "I found some student had emotional problems. They did not listen to you. They were hard to control. I did not know how to handle these students..." Ben blamed that some students had wrong concepts on physical education, "a large number of students come to school not ready to learn...they were difficult to teach because many of them had no concept of 'listening' and 'following directions'... they did not like PE lessons and they thought PE was only for recreation. They had the right whether to take part or not...it was a tough time for me when I found that the students were not as motivated and interested as I expected." Ben had to push them to learn in the lessons and he stated that he felt 'more like a policeman than a teacher'.

Some teachers indicated that the practice of previous physical education teachers had caused some students to have low learning attitude in class. As Kevin hinted in his interview, "... there are teachers here who in no way taught the curriculum...I would have to say that a lot of the classes were getting nothing of PE...this year, I had to teach some of these students and this was difficult"

Kent also complained the teaching styles of the recent teacher, "the previous PE teacher usually offered free play in the lessons. The students were not used to have proper PE lessons. They always requested free play in my lesson." May also found her students always complained and compared her teaching with the previous PE teacher. "In the first few months, some students would like to bargain with me concerning the rules and requirements..." (May, interview) Students' attitude toward learning and discipline problems had caused much frustration and troubles for the beginning teachers in the study.

Uncomfortable Pressure and Stress

Research on teacher stress has been well documented (Dunham, 1992, Kyriacou, 1987). In some local studies, Hong Kong secondary school teachers were confirmed experiencing different sources of stress or pressure in their work (Chan, 1996; Hui & Chan, 1996). Hui and Chan (1996) indicated that young and less experienced teachers perceived more stress than their experienced counterparts in Hong Kong. Gold (1996) identified that the beginning teachers' transition from student to teacher often involved a great of stress from various sources. There is no exception to the participants in the study. When they were asked the main causes of stress or pressure during their first years of teaching, they gave the same apprehensions which focused on parents, students and administrators.

Over two-third of the teachers responded by stating that was quite difficult during their initial teaching experiences. They mentioned that they were questioned and complained by parents on their handling procedures of their children in schools. Ben, Kerry, Peggy, Carl and Norman had experienced complaints from parents. Other stress factors relating to parental issue included the stress of contact with parents. Kevin claimed that he was not trusted by the parents and a lack of response to his concern about students' attitude and disengagement had added him pressure. They all acknowledged their inexperience in dealing with parents might lead to uncomfortable pressure. Smeltzer Erb (2002) contends that confrontational parent interactions may cause anxiety and negative emotional tension for beginning teachers.

A second stress factor identified by over half of the beginning teachers was the pressure they felt concerning the student response and performance to their teaching. Some students always compared their teaching with their previous physical education teachers. Cherry, Kent, Ben and May indicated that the students were not used to their teaching styles and gave them much pressure. Ling admitted that her severe conflicts with upper form students added to her frustrations. She felt that students had little respect for her. It was mentioned that student performance is a 'direct reflection of my teaching,' the students' uncooperative behaviours seemed to add anxiety for these beginning teachers. Kate worried about the Mathematics test performances of her students as received comments from her Mathematics panel, "Student academic

performance may imply your teaching ability". Student responses in class have caused much stress for the beginning teachers in the study.

Few teachers also revealed the school administrators might give them pressure in school. Kerry said that the negative verbal comments from the head of extra-curricular activities and school principal gave him great stress throughout the year. Kate also suggested that observations by the vice principal and physical education panel could be stressful. She realized that the lesson observations "directly affect if she will have a job next year". May also complained the sudden extra duties assigned by the principal and head of department, "it was depressing and very difficult to settle in...head of department is very good at delegating her duties... I may have extra responsibilities...the principal suddenly asked me to give him a proposal of organizing of the school cross county race in a few days time, I was really shocked!" The personal nature of the participants' experiences is reflected in the diversity of stressors in their responses in their school context. It seems that they were facing different kind of pressure in schools.

Survival Strategies

Studies on teacher professional socialization provides some patterns of how teacher handle different situations in the workplace (Zeichner & Gore, 1990). Lacy (1977) indicated that teachers might not lead to conforming behaviours as socialization is 'the adoption or creation of appropriate social strategies'. Range of coping strategies were identified and employed to succeed in schools by teachers. These were a) strategic compliance, b) internalized adjustment, and c) strategic redefinition. Williams and Williamson (1998) had provided evidences how beginning physical education teachers adopted these socialization strategies during their initial teaching experiences. Zeichner, Tabachnick, and Densmore (1987) found that the biographical and workplace variables contributed to the beginners' successful or unsuccessful coping strategies in their study of beginning teachers' professional socialization. Recently, Choi and Tang (2005) discussed how four Hong Kong beginning teachers employed role management strategies with regard to the requirements of their workplace.

The beginning teachers in the present study also adopted several socializing strategies in response to the socialization process during their first year of work. According to Dodds (1989), socializing strategies are measures and mechanisms that teachers use to tackle their socialization experiences. For the present study, they may be simply regarded as the teachers' mode of professional development in terms of skills and knowledge acquisition or their responses in the form of behaviours for resolving dissonance in their first-year teaching. From the data analysis of various sources, the survival strategies employed by the teachers are a) professional conceptions; b) compromised practice; and c) peer support.

Professional Conceptions

Most teachers in the study ranked teaching as their most important working duty in school. They all prepared to do a good job during their transition from student to teacher. However, they found that their teaching was more challenging than expected and this exerted great impact on their teaching beliefs. The beginning teachers might re-adjust their professional conceptions within this challenging environment.

The teachers in the study bothered much on the lesson delivery and classroom management. These are the areas they learnt to do well during their teaching practice. Most of them found their students responded differently and behaved not the ways as they expected. Some students demonstrated poor learning attitude and low achievement in the physical education classes. The teachers got frustrated and started to spend much effort in training their students to learn in the lessons.

Most teachers were primarily concerned with students' learning and teaching in physical education clearly indicated that they were inducted during their physical education teacher education. The influence of the workplace factors on their teaching and the socialization strategies (Lawson 1983b; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979) adopted by the teachers explains teaching is a difficult task for them. The workplace factors of most participants encountered might be unsupportive and not allowing them to teach properly. For this study, some students of the participants were not accustomed to their 'new' teaching. The teachers could not teach openly as they had been trained. They need to re-adjust their teaching. To survive and teach smoothly became the major focus of their instruction. Classroom management was treated as

the first priority of their lesson goal. The teachers would be happy if they could find students behave properly in the lesson. As Kate said, "My students were not interested in PE lessons, I would be happy and satisfied if they could try and take part in the activities". In fact, Cherry, Kent, Kevin, Norman, May, Ling, Ben and Carl also shared the same experiences and admitted they had re-adjusted their teaching concepts. They did not expect much from their instruction when they found the students were not used to their teaching in the first term. However, they did not give up and insisted their teaching mode throughout the year. They believed their teaching would help their students learn in the lessons. They all claimed that they had to struggle with their students to learn at first and eventually were happy and satisfied to see the students had changed and accepted their teaching at the end of the school term. They trusted that the students had improved and progressed to proper learning in physical education. It seemed that beginning teachers take time to develop classroom management strategies.

As aforementioned, the beginning teachers found physical education was normally treated as cultural or marginal subject in school. The school administrators had low expectations for physical education teaching. The teachers were expected to organize more sports extra-curricular activities as well as coach successfully in school. No wonder some teachers (such as Kent, Kate and Kevin) claimed the main purpose of being employed, "...I was being hired to coach and not to teach..." They therefore change their professional focus and make much effort in fulfilling the coaching role in school. They understand that their coaching skills would be valued if they help the sports teams to win prizes for schools. They would seek status through their coaching responsibilities.

Compromised Practice

The participants would compromise their practice when they found their teaching were far beyond their expectations. They no longer concerned much of their physical education teaching. They devoted much time and effort in coaching their sports teams or fulfilling other assigned duties in school. As Kevin exclaimed, "...other duties are more important than teaching physical education lessons, I would not spend much time in preparing PE lessons". Responses of students in class also influenced the teaching of beginning teachers. Most of them would think the innovative strategies they learnt in the teacher

education might not be appropriate for their students. In order to control the challenging teaching environments, teacher-centered styles would be their preferred choice in teaching. Direct methods with command and practice styles were commonly adopted. They wished to establish their personalities and authority and controlling student learning behaviours. When the teachers noticed that the direct teaching approach was successfully employed by their experienced colleagues in school, there was no reason they did not adopt this approach to teach 'properly'. May was surprised how her physical education panel managed his class, "He controlled the whole class and only gave directions to the students. The students behaved properly...I learnt some teaching tricks from him..." Percy also added, "All my PE colleagues were teaching with the direct teaching methods and they were teaching very well. I think this is most suitable teaching approach for the students here." It is clear that the beginning teachers had adjusted their teaching styles and learning goals when they want to survive in their schools.

Peer Support

Huberman (1989) described the first year of teaching as a time of survival and a period of "getting through". The teachers would try to find ways to resolve their problems encountered. Seeking help and advice from experienced colleagues is common coping strategy adopted by the beginning teachers in general education (Hertzog, 2002). In the present study, most teachers indicated that they would seek someone for assistance when they faced problems in schools. They affirmed that talking with colleagues is very effective for them. The reasons they sought advice from them was that the colleagues might have experienced the same situations and could relate to the problems and concerns encountered by novice teachers. Peggy mentioned that listening to his colleagues' suggestions helped to relieve some of the pressure. Cherry and Kent also added that they used to approach some experienced colleagues for assistance. They claimed that their colleagues were helpful and gave them invaluable advice based on their working experiences in schools. Other beginning teachers valued the help from their physical education colleagues. Ben expressed grateful thank to his school physical education colleagues for taking care of him throughout the year. "I would like to thank my PE colleagues for giving me so much advice when I have problems. We maintain close relationship so far." Ling also appreciated the advice given by her physical education panel, "He taught me

how to handle the problem students. I learnt a lot from him." May and Kate acknowledged that they frequently sought initial help from their experienced physical education colleagues. It is surprising that most of the beginning teachers in the study did not have mentoring system in school. Only two teachers mentioned they were assigned mentors taking care of them in their first year of teaching. They agreed that their mentors helped them a lot in their work. Apparently, the beginning teachers usually sought advice from their experienced or physical education colleagues when they had problems. School mentoring system might help and support these new teachers to a certain extent.

Discussion

The purposes of the study were to examine the practices of the beginning teachers and to identify the problems they faced as well as to understand how they responded to these problems during their year of teaching. The practices of the teachers revealed in the study are similar to some beginning teachers reported in other studies (Curtner-Smith, 1997; Curtner-Smith, 1998; Curtner-Smith, 2001; Hardy, 1999; Smyth, 1995; Solmon, Worthy, & Carter, 1993; Williams & Williamson, 1998). It seems that inexperienced teachers hold common practices when they start teaching. Most studies of beginning teachers indicated that the new teachers faced reality shock during their initial teaching experiences (Hardy, 1999; Smyth, 1995; Solmon, Worthy, & Carter, 1993; Stroot, Faucette, & Schwager, 1993; Williams & Williamson, 1998; Wright, 2001). The practices of teaching of the new teachers were likely the responses to the reality shock. Veenman (1984) described reality shock as "the collapse of the missionary ideals found during teaching training by the harsh and rude reality of classroom life" (p. 143). Gordon (1990) explained the cause of reality shock were the mismatched realizations and being unprepared for the demands and difficulties of the 'real world' of teaching. The participants in the study discovered their workplace and jobs considerably different from what they had expected, and had significant problems managing student behaviours and teaching in pace. With this unexpected challenging working environment, they became confused and frustrated. Educators found that beginning teachers often had unrealistic expectations and beliefs about teaching, students, the workplace, and the difficulty of teaching in general (Feiman-Nemser, 1983; Marso & Pigge, 1987; Weinstein, 1988).

In the study, the participants found their personal role expectations of being a teacher were different from those of the workplace. The daily routine of teaching demands much more the reality of full-time teaching come as a “shock” to them. They faced professional conflicts and problems to know some of their students did not want to learn in physical education lessons; school administrators expected good coaching performance instead of quality teaching from them; they were assigned heavy workload with multiples roles and duties apart from teaching physical education; and they were required to teach other subjects as well. The teachers need to adjust their practice of teaching in order to survive in their schools. They were forced to adopt specific instructional approach, classroom management strategies, and working tactics to suit their school needs. The major concerns of the teachers expressed in the study were identical to those Loughran (1994) and Ryan (1986) found in their research, namely, that novice teachers had troubles in handling their students. There were differences between what they should be doing for the students, what they wanted from the students, and what was actually possible.

Furthermore, Veenman (1984) argued that inadequate professional training was a common problem expressed by the beginning teachers. Educators identified that limitation of teacher education programmes, such as limited field experiences might fail to prepare students for the daily duties of teaching and the social and political content of schools (Feiman-Nemser, 1983; Olson & Osborne, 1991). Findings of physical education research provided evidence when teachers have had pre-service experiences in school settings similar to those found in their school sites, they were less likely to experience reality shock when started teaching (Curtner-Smith, 2001; Kreider, 1985; Macdonald, 1995; O’Sullivan, 1989). It appears the physical education teacher education programme is related to the success of beginning teachers in the first year of work. Most participants in the study spoke quite positively of their teacher education programmes they experienced. Many felt they had acquired the skills and knowledge necessary in delivery a good physical education lesson in their schools. They were generally satisfied with their teacher training. Below were some of their comments of the teachers on the teacher education programmes:

In the institute, I learned the skills right, and in learning the skills right I can now teach my students correctly... (May, interview)

The teacher education did prepare me...it gave me teaching strategies...I feel that the programme taught me a lot of things. (Percy, interview)

I thought that was a great help...I think of the techniques thing was a fantastic idea. I learnt some ideas from that. (Harry, interview)

I learnt a lot during the teacher education but a lot of it does not really fall into plan until you actually start teaching... (Kent, interview)

Nevertheless, there were negative comments from the teachers as well. The biggest citation made was the failure of the programmes to provide sufficient teaching experience. The programmes’ inability in preparing teachers properly handled emotion and low learning attitude students was also mentioned by few teachers. Some commented their field experiences were short and their experiences in teaching practice were not real when compare to their first year of teaching. They preferred longer period of teaching practice in order to gain multiple opportunities to practice teaching in different school contexts. Some teachers thought if they had sufficient field experiences could have helped their first year of teaching.

On the other hand, findings revealed in the study indicated that workplace factors, teaching assignments, colleagues, school administrators, students and parents, exerted influence on the teaching of the beginning teachers. These workplace factors were also described in previous studies of first-year physical education teachers (Napper-Owen & Phillips, 1995; O’Sullivan, 1989; Smyth, 1995; Solomon et al., 1993; Stroot et al., 1993; Williams & Williamson, 1998). Many of the workplace factors identified in the study were likely to hinder or assist the teachers in their delivery of the physical education programmes. The teachers’ perception of the degrees of support and undertaking they received from their school administrators also played an important part in shaping their perspectives and practices in schools. The school administrators did not see physical education as a legitimate subject in school. Most of the participants did not express in carrying any action in what O’Sullivan (1989) called the “struggle for legitimacy”. They seemed to be helplessness and could only employ strategic compliance (Lacey, 1977) or strategic adjustment (Ethridge, 1989) in their work.

The marginalization of physical education is a serious issue in Hong Kong. The legitimacy of physical education as a subject area is not only for beginning teachers but also for the every physical educators of the profession. It implies that there is a need for education or reeducation of principals or administrators about the purposes and practices of the physical education in Hong Kong.

Most participants admitted the constraints in the workplace did not allow them introducing different teaching methods publicly. They sensed that the school culture and students did not encourage teacher autonomy in their instructional practices. Using traditional teaching methods and controlling students in the lessons seemed to be the most appropriate strategies for their teaching.

It is likely the knowledge learnt in the teacher education programmes does not manifest in the new teachers' teaching. Zeichner and Tabachnick (1981) described this phenomenon as the washout effect. It is the period of time when the impact of the teacher education programmes diminishes. Lawson (1989) underscored the influence of the workplace, "School practices progressively erode the effects of teacher education" (p. 148). In the study, the participants emphasized the importance of student learning in their teaching and aimed to change the learning behaviours of students. It seemed that the knowledge they learned in the teacher education was not washed out, but they decided to adjust their practices that suit the context needs, even though they had learned different teaching strategies in their teacher preparation programmes. This was similar to beginning teachers reported in Smyth's (1995) study, they consciously altered both their teaching behaviours and teaching objectives so that they would be more suitable to what they perceived could be done in their workplace. This decision seemed to be intentional and indicated that if their situation changed they would return to their earlier teaching methods (Curtner-Smith, 1997; Williams & Williamson, 1998). It can be argued that the participants purposely utilized socializing strategies when facing condition that inhibited them to teach in ways they were taught. As some of them reinforced "this is not the appropriate period to try the innovative teaching methods they learned in the institute" and they seemed to wait for a more suitable time to implement these ideas. In response to the views of their teaching, most appreciated the first year teaching experiences were

hard and challenging and they believed these experiences would help to provide better teaching in future. It is likely most of them do not abandon what they have learnt in their teacher education!

Implications

Findings of this study might provide insights for understanding how contextual conditions influence the practices and problems faced by the Hong Kong beginning physical education teachers. The range of practices and problems expressed by the teachers in this study reflects the individuality of the teachers and the uniqueness of specific schools. A teacher's early years experience may affect whether the teacher continues in teaching or seek another career. It is especially true to those teachers who have difficult teaching environment in the first few years. Gold (1996) asserts that continued reinforcement of unpleasant experiences may result in a decision to end a teaching career. Educators found that beginning teachers are often placed in difficult teaching situation where they were working with unmotivated and disruptive students (Huling-Austin, 1990). Huling-Austin and his associates commented the influence of the teaching experiences of beginning teachers, "Which classes a first-year teacher is assigned to teach will be extremely influential in how successful a year that teacher is likely to have" (Huling-Austin, Putman, & Galvez-Hjornevik, 1986, p. 48). In the present study, six participants have changed the workplace after the first year of teaching. It seems that they are not satisfied with their first teaching schools and they believe the new school might provide better working conditions.

Since most participants did face problems during their teaching, these findings confirmed the need for support for beginning physical education teachers (Hardy, 1999; Smyth, 1995; Wright, 2001). The type of support needed by new teachers was wide-ranging. The teacher educators have responsibilities to prepare the student teachers to make a success transition into their workplace. As remarked by the teachers in the study, there is a need to improve the arrangement of the field experiences in the teacher education programmes. The teacher educators should review their offered classes and courses sequences and adjust schedule accordingly in order to provide multiple and early field placements for pre-service teachers. Broadening the experiences and understanding about teaching and learning will help to understand some

of the possibilities that may emerge in their own practice. As Loughran, Brown, and Doecke (2001) suggested that “telling does not lead to learning, therefore teacher educators need to create episodes whereby the theory being espoused can be portrayed in realistic and memorable ways” (p. 19-20).

Learning to teach in teacher preparation and learning through experience as a beginning teacher are not independent of one another. They should be explicitly linked in ways that all the experiences of learning to teach influence their future practice of teaching. The pre-service teachers should be equipped how to apply their practices with changing contexts.

Regarding the implementing of the physical education teacher education, it is suggested to include the humanistic approach apart from adopting the knowledge based and disciplinary approach. Teacher educators should care and maintain close relationship with their students. Listening to beginning teachers’ voices will also help to understand their needs and difficulties in teaching.

To support the growth and development of new teacher, teacher education institutes and schools should share responsibilities to provide professional support for teacher development and maintain highly qualified teachers. The teacher educators should extend their presence beyond the pre-service programmes to in-service teaching by providing specific ongoing support to student teachers after graduation (Cochran-Smith, 1991). When schools and teacher education institutes recognize the difficulties that new teachers experience, they might work together and assist the teachers to solve the problems.

The findings of the present study also invite school administrators to consider how they might make schools more supportive of new teachers. Do the new teachers teach their specialized subject? Are they assigned reasonable workload and duties in the first year? Are they provided appropriate assistance if they have problems? Moore Johnson and Birkeland (2003) confirm that a good workplace can increase a teacher’s success in their study and remark that “an unsupportive principal can interfere with good teaching and make it hard for teachers to achieve the intrinsic rewards they seek” (p. 584).

Educators also call for mentoring programme to help beginning teachers gain professional knowledge and address problems they encounter (Gold, 1996). The main purpose of mentoring programme is to provide support to the new teachers in the form of a colleague who is a “helping teacher”. Gagen and Bowie (2005) underscore the importance of mentoring to novice teacher. They argued that mentors could provide critical support for a novice teacher by establishing an environment of empowerment, and by offering reassurance that the novice teacher was capable of performing the job. Moir (2003) supported the need of mentors, “The real-life classroom presents questions that only real-life experience can answer. Mentors help provide those answers” (p. 3). Yet, research findings indicated very few physical education teachers have a mentor during their first year of teaching (Mawer, 1996; Tannehill & Coffin, 1996). In the present study, most participants were also not assigned mentors in the first year. The two teachers who were provided mentors appreciated the help from these colleagues. Therefore, Wright and Smith (2000) argued for formalizing the mentoring process, “...physical education students and beginning professionals have special needs and, therefore, should be provided with mentoring models that cater specially to them” (p. 211).

The responsibility of supporting new teachers does not lie solely with teacher education institute and schools. Government (Education Bureau) should also play a part in helping the beginning teachers. Education Bureau is suggested to set up policies or guidelines to help beginning teachers’ transit from teacher training to effective professional practice, such as requiring schools reduce workload and assign experienced mentors for the beginning teachers. School administrators would then follow these guidelines and develop quality induction programmes for their beginning teachers.

Finally, more research should be conducted as to understand more about the relationship between teacher preparation and the transition into teaching, as well as other contextual factors that influence teachers throughout their career. There is need for studies to track beginning teachers after they have completed their years in the workplace. We need to understand the practices of teachers who are inducted by physical education teacher education and face some years of socialization once they start work. Do they strategically adjust their practices? Are their learnt teaching skills washed out? Longitudinal

studies are recommended as to track the change of teachers over time. The design will help to understand the patterns of change and the factors that contribute to these changes.

Conclusion

The beginning teachers in the study were facing difficulties within their first year of work. Their practice of teaching was related to their school contexts. The confrontations were mainly come from their school colleagues, students, administrators, work responsibilities and school culture. They employed survival strategies within their own school settings. The organizational socialization process of the teachers was highly dynamic and individualized. The results of this study are useful to teacher educators and school administrators by helping them to understand the concerns and problems of beginning teachers. Such understanding will lead to collaboration among schools, teacher education institutes and government as to provide professional support for beginning teachers.

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