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Maintaining Skill Development of Newly Qualified Physical Education Teachers: Mentorship After Graduation

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Abstract

High percentages of newly qualified teachers drop out during their first 5 years of teaching in the classroom. Often, formal support systems are put in place to overcome ‘practice shock’. Yet this practice shock is generally associated with traditional academic subjects such as mathematics, humanities and science. The often-marginalised subject of physical education can be largely neglected when newly qualified teachers are considered. One strategy to reduce practice shock is that of an established mentoring program. The large volume of literature on mentoring across an array of education subjects suggests that mentoring is a valued skill. However, while mentoring is acknowledged as an essential prerequisite for successful teacher induction, its effectiveness in physical education may vary depending on the mentor’s quality of support and the mentee’s initial professional beliefs. This article draws on a structured analysis of research-based articles on mentoring for newly graduated physical education teachers and explores the discipline between mentee and mentor to make more valid inferences about the roles, responsibilities and outcomes of mentoring. The need for clarity around a physical education teacher’s role as a mentor and associated responsibilities relative to the provision of emotional support and guidance are examined along with suggestions for explicit transmission-oriented mentoring approaches to support beginning teachers’ professional development.

Keywords/key phrases: mentorship, physical education, graduate teachers.

1. Introduction

Recent graduates of a Physical Education (P.E.) teacher education undergraduate bachelor’s degree may be underprepared and overwhelmed when starting work in metropolitan and regional, rural schools. This especially applies to graduate teachers who have had little to no prior practical professional experience or those whose experience was ultimately compromised by poor mentorship and guidance during practical placement as part of their teaching degree. There remains a significant increase in teacher and education-focused research on the influence P.E. teacher education has on overall physical education. Nevertheless, keeping recently qualified physical education teachers in front of a classroom (or on a football pitch or cricket oval) is not an easy task. Arguably, the task is becoming more complex due to the increasing demands placed on the contemporary teacher.

Figures imply that teacher attrition rates have been rising steadily since the 1970s, although there continues to be a wide variation across countries (e.g., McKenzie et al., 2005). A more recent analysis shows that 30–50% of teachers exit the profession in the first 5 years of their career (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Delvaux et al., 2013). Meanwhile, others have verified that little has changed to stem the attrition. For instance, Martinez (2004) found that one in six Australian teachers departed the profession in the first two years of employment. In actuality, the number of teachers leaving the profession within the first five years could be higher. For this attrition, different reasons have been suggested such as the increased possibility for teachers to take different jobs, but also the practice shock for which they are not adequately prepared theoretically, practically, or mentally (Høigaard et al., 2012).

It has also been suggested that one reason for the high attrition rates among commencing teachers lies in inadequate guidance and support (Gaikhorst et al., 2014). The authors reasoned that a support structure such as those activities that schools undertake to assist their beginning teachers, including guidance from a coach, opportunities to gradually grow into the teaching profession and the provision of an introductory handbook may make a difference. In most schools, this support is offered in the form of ‘mentoring’. Yet implicit is the assumption that the mentor and mentee relationship is one that is mutually beneficial for both. Also implied, or assumed, is that the mentor has the designated knowledge and skills, both practical and personal, to provide the mentee with the resources needed to navigate the early years of teaching.

2. Methods

The current integrative review has a staged approach. The first stage focused on elaborating what definitions have been applied to a physical education teacher mentor and the associated responsibilities relative to the provision of emotional support and guidance. Articles were then examined for suggestions of explicit transmissions of mentoring approaches to support beginning physical education teachers’ professional development. For this study, when reviewing the research literature, the researcher (the author of this study) interpreted each author’s notion of what a quality mentor in physical education might be. The researcher moved iteratively between interpretations of parts of the text and interpretations of the whole text to gain an emerging understanding of each author’s perspectives and views (Ellis et al., 2020). The aim of reviewing the literature on the mentoring of newly graduated physical education teachers and mentorship was to identify the elements that constitute mentorship for newly qualified physical education teachers. However, a broader view of the literature on the machinations of mentorship included publications focussing on the perceptions of physical education as a subject discipline, the roles, behaviours and responsibilities expected as a mentor, the existing mentoring frameworks, and the ongoing support needed by both the mentee and the mentor.

The literature was studied and synthesized in a methodical and transparent manner. There is a systematic presentation, and amalgamation, of the findings of all the studies included and the implications are discussed. On the other hand, a deliberate focus attempting to assess the validity, or judge the quality, of the findings of the studies included in the review did not occur. As Kennedy (2007) notes, this decision may help to avoid the possibility of limiting the range of themes that might emerge through the analysis of data. Further to the approach used by Ellis et al. (2020), the rationale of this approach was to capture the full range of ideas and themes articulated in the scholarly literature.

2.1. The Literature Search

A search of the literature was conducted using the data bases Google Scholar, Scopus and Informit. A combination of the following key terms was initially used: “mentor” OR “mentorship” AND “graduate physical education teacher” OR “newly qualified physical education teacher” AND “mentee”. The search was later expanded to include related terms such as: “beginning teaching”, “early career teacher”, “graduate teacher” and “graduate teacher physical activity”. The search was restricted to journal articles, chapters, and books, written in English, that had been peer-reviewed and published. Work from other sources, such as unpublished theses and dissertations, was not included in the search. While the review might not be exhaustive, it was felt that it was comprehensive and methodical enough to present a sound overview of contemporary notions of what constitutes mentorship and the determinates of mentorship in physical education.

2.2. The Selection of Articles

The above search generated, in total, almost 109 publications, however, 67 of these publications were largely focused on conceptualising the roles of mentor teachers during student teaching, examined mentoring from a pre-service teacher perspective and not a recently graduated teacher perspective; or examined the socialisation of newly graduated teachers not the explicit role of mentoring. Of the remaining 42 publications, the titles and abstracts of these publications were scrutinised to determine if the work was relevant to the research question. Those publications which identified one or more optimal features of the concept of mentoring and the common frameworks of mentoring combined with clarity around the mentor’s role and associated responsibilities relative to the provision of emotional support and guidance were deemed suitable for selection. Publications deemed suitable were then targeted to be read in full and included in the analysis of data. Nevertheless, during the process, a small number of publications were eliminated from the review as a reading of the complete text found the focus of the work not to be relevant to the research topic.

2.3. Analysis of the Articles

The analysis used grounded theory, rather than thematic analysis, wanting theory generation to emerge from, rather than exist before, the data (Cohen et al., 2011). Specifically, Cohen et al. (2011) advocate this methodology for developing a theory that is grounded in data systematically gathered and analysed. An open coding (Ezzy, 2013) was used to label the different concepts that emerged in the analysis of the literature. This was then carefully reflected on and was used to label the different concepts that emerged in the analysis of the literature, and which were subsequently presented as themes. Finally, the results were interpreted, and a final report was compiled.

3. Review Findings

In this section, the results are summarized and explained with examples from the publications reviewed and discussed. Initially, an overview of the reviewed paper characteristics (e.g., journal type, concepts) was completed before different elements or indicators emerged in the analysis of data. Subsequently, the paper assesses types of career development outcomes, and relationships between types of outcomes and mentoring approaches in physical education as well as exploring how the mentor is supported in what can be an underrepresented subject. Each of these indicators was then grouped under one of seven major themes and discussed below.

3.1. Theme 1: The Concept of Mentoring

The data indicated that the formative years in a teaching career have been identified as a decisive influence on professional learning. Anspal et al. (2012) identify that the primary concern for student teachers during a teacher education program and into the first years of teaching focuses mainly on the self. For example, a novice teacher may want to confirm and authenticate their image as a teacher, although arguably this may have been formed, rooted in the teacher's own schooling and learning experiences. To support this transition into teaching, a mentor can act as a sounding board, can supply guidance and can assist in supporting beginning teachers to learn and implement curricula. A mentor can support with non-teaching related issues that commencing teachers may face in the transition to the workplace. Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) indicate that reflection is established as a means by which teachers can become more in tune with their sense of self and with a greater understanding of how these fit into a larger context which involves others. So, reflection is a component in the shaping of character which shares important pedagogical, practical and cultural ground, and mentoring has become a vital tool with which to develop confidence, self-reflection and problem-solving capabilities in early career teachers.

3.2. Theme 2: Existing Mentor Models and Frameworks

Awareness of the mentees' experiences in the mentoring programme – for instance, the successes and challenges – is suggested to contribute to ongoing planning for effective transition for teachers. In Australia, there is an emphasis on the importance of the mentor teacher who supports the trainee teacher during professional experience as part of their initial teaching education program. This mentorship role is monitored by appointed university staff to help with wellbeing and satisfaction (from a school and student perspective) and to meet the requirements of the trainee teacher's undergraduate degree. However, once the trainee gains qualification to teach, the oversight or lack of rigour applied to the mentor-mentee relationship is largely determined by the school by which the person gains employment.

To facilitate the transition from university to work, a range of theoretical frameworks have been applied to the much-contested notion of mentoring. This focus has changed over time due to mentoring models that have evolved due to necessity, or from a transmission orientated focus to one of professional responsibility (Parker et al., 2021). Others have introduced the importance of a range of aspects including an institution's commitment, values and ethos.

Orland-Barak and Wang (2021) classify the mentoring approaches in initial teacher education as personal growth, situated learning, core practice and critical transformation. The authors conclude that it is not possible to limit the mentoring experience to a single approach, but that a multi-dimensional experience exists. Yet the approaches and frameworks provide an underpinning architecture for mentoring (Cunningham, 2007). Such frameworks are noble and adaptable, but it is argued that mentoring for a newly qualified teacher requires further analysis, and therefore a more rigorous and theoretical approach is needed that supports the newly qualified P.E. teacher. However, specific models and frameworks for mentoring programs have been developed alongside observational learning opportunities that permit those in attendance to display role-model desired behaviours (Table 1).

TABLE 1. COMMONLY USED MENTORING MODELS

Mentoring model	Description	Sources
OSCAR Mentoring Model	<p>Acronym for Outcome, Situation, Choices, Actions, and Review.</p> <p>Used for coaching, and personal and professional development.</p> <p>Individual goal setting and achievement of goals.</p> <p>Group goal setting and achievement of group goals.</p>	<p>Gilbert, A. & Whittleworth, K. (2009). <i>The OSCAR Coaching Model</i>. Lulu.com.</p>
GROW Mentoring Model	<p>Acronym for Goal, Reality, Options, and Will.</p> <p>Designed to help mentees clarify their goals, assess their current reality, explore their options, and commit to their goals.</p>	<p>Whitmore, J. (2019). <i>Coaching for performance</i>. London: Brealey.</p>
CIGAR Mentoring Model	<p>Acronym for Challenge, Insight, Goal setting, Action-planning, and Review.</p> <p>For coaching processes, help ensure that each coaching session is productive and focused.</p> <p>Challenge focuses on setting objectives and identifying areas for improvement.</p>	<p>Greene, J. & Grant, A. M. (2003). <i>Solution-focused coaching: Managing people in a complex world</i>. London: Momentum Press.</p>
STRIDE Mentoring Model	<p>Acronym for Self-awareness, Target setting, Reflection, Innovation, Development, and Evaluation.</p>	<p>Thomas, W. & Smith, A. (2009). <i>Coaching solutions: Practical ways to improve performance in education</i> (2nd ed.). New York: Continuum International Publishing Group.</p>

While all these models offer benefits and limitations, they are not a ‘one size fits all’ approach. Critical to the success of a mentorship program is valuing the experiences of people in the field and permitting leaders to obtain the capacity of others through the lens of those experiences (Filatov & Pill, 2015). These experiences could be positive and negative and might negatively influence the newly qualified P.E. teacher if left unabated. The provision of formal opportunities to build leadership capacity and expertise that experiences constant change (Leggett & Joll, 2007) is seen as imperative for teacher success, motivation and ultimately teacher retention. There is also the consideration of adapting and compensating for constant change and how this is communicated to the mentee within an appropriate framework that can be adequately monitored.

These frameworks vary in duration and intensity in that mentoring programs can vary from a single meeting between mentor and proteges at the start of a school year, to an extremely structured program including frequent meetings over a couple of years amongst mentors and proteges who are offered time away from their normal teaching timetable (Ingersoll & Smith,

2004). Mentoring programs also differ concerning how much consideration they assign to the match between mentor and mentee. Though some mentoring programs endeavour to see that new primary school P.E. teachers are assigned mentors with experience, other programs do not. Finally, Ingersoll and Smith (2004) state that a mentorship program should consider a battery of items designed to elicit information on the varieties of possible induction and mentoring supports received by new teachers within the structure of a formal mentorship program. These include information on whether the candidate was :

- Supplied with a mentor and whether the mentor was in the same subject area.
- Briefed on experience of the mentor provided.
- Required to have participated in common planning time with other teachers in their subject area.
- Required to have collaborated with other teachers on issues of instruction.
- Expected to have participated in a network of teachers (e.g., one organized by an outside agency or over the internet).
- In regular supportive communication with their principal, other administrators, or department chair.

Does receiving any of these supports matter to P.E. teacher retention? Notwithstanding data that indicates that the number of new P.E. teachers who receive some kind of formal induction and mentorship has expanded, the level of attrition amongst newly qualified teachers has risen. Within this context, a largely unknown level of variability exists within P.E. mentorship programs, and the type of support offered by the schools frequently contrasts.

3.3. Theme 3: The Student Physical Education Teacher

Arguably the perception of physical education emphasises adventure pursuits, team-based movement, athletics, dance, games, gymnastics, sport, and health related physical activity. It is largely a truism that a typical physical education curriculum is less burdened by the formalities of other curriculum foci. Therefore, it is appealing to conclude that from an outsider's vantage point, a P.E. teacher engages in a less formal learning environment. This perception remains contentious as the formal learning environment will vary depending on the learning institution. In Australia, some universities offer a Health and Physical Education specific bachelor's degree in which students undertake subjects in physiology, biomechanics, motor control, P.E. pedagogies, sport and movement analysis, and kinesiology to name but a few. Other institutions do not offer such a broad suite of subjects available for the student P.E. teacher. In the latter example, for students wanting to become a P.E. teacher specialised subjects are offered as elective subjects only, and commonly elective subjects are offered in years 3 and 4 of a teaching qualification. Here, student P.E. teachers could, in some instances, have to wait until the 3rd year of their bachelor's degree before they have opportunity to put into practice the pedagogical theories they have learned in years 1 and 2. Given that P.E. requires that students have basic movement analysis skills, dynamic and static ability to measure and assess motion and the ability to correct human movement from primary to high school level, there is a strong argument that student P.E. teachers are essentially, albeit perhaps unintentionally, destined for failure.

The combination of the decline in fitness standards of young people, high drop-out rates, and inadequate pathways to accessing physical activity (Hardman, 2008) and the substantial increase in the prevalence of overweight and obesity among children and adolescents around the world remains a concern (Eisenmann, 2006). Notwithstanding this, many schools have reduced their physical education programmes in recent years, putting a substantial focus on

academics to further equip students for college and the career (Harris, 2019). Yet the oxymoron is that while it is commonly acknowledged that there is a decline in physical activity levels, inclusive of strength and conditioning in both young children and adolescents, schools have reduced the duration of time allocated for children to pursue physical activity. The work of today's student P.E. teacher has ostensibly become harder in that they need to do more with less (time). The support network by way of P.E. mentorship is seldom afforded strategic oversight for the right of P.E.'s equal standing amongst the more academic-oriented subjects.

Why physical education is not always regarded as an academic discipline or given the same equal stature as to well-learned subjects is a matter of conjecture. Physical education teachers are responsible for teaching movement, which is a science – the science of how we move, why we move proficiently (or not), the forces of such movement (kinetics) and analysis of motion (kinematics) requires just as much subject matter knowledge as a mathematics teacher. However, this scientific approach to physical education is commonly not perceived by the student nor the mentor.

In the contemporary Australian school curriculum context, the Health and Physical Education (HPE) learning area is being called upon to serve many diverse purposes. It is apparent that physical educators are becoming more accountable than ever before as their role continues to evolve as many pursue opportunities to facilitate activities that engage students and provide education on lifestyle choices and healthy behaviours. Traditional approaches to teaching HPE in schools have been characterised by content structured around popular sports and recreational activities and teaching approaches that have focused on the development of prerequisite skills (techniques) and tactics and strategies.

Across Australia, there is a growing trend to structure school curricula and pedagogy, at least in the compulsory years of schooling, around the promotion and development of more generic educational outcomes, rather than those that have a specific discipline or learning area focus. Newly qualified P.E. teachers require pedagogical, practical, and cultural support when they graduate and enter the teaching workforce. Mentoring has become a vital tool with which to develop confidence, self-reflection and problem-solving abilities in trainee and early career teachers. The caveat being that while mentoring is needed, the mentor assigned to this role should be equipped with the necessary experience, skills and knowledge. Regrettably, it is at this juncture that little oversight is given to the core skills and appropriability needed to make the role sustainable and accessible to the graduate.

3.4. Theme 4: Marginalisation

Research that focuses on enhancing the professional development of teachers has revealed that both physical education teachers and their subjects are marginalised (Ferry & Westerlund, 2023). Marginalisation refers to a social phenomenon in which a person or group is given a low status or position outside the central focus or functioning of a culture or social group (Lux & McCullick, 2011). Notably, in physical education, marginalisation occurs when school structures prioritise traditional cognitive subjects like science, mathematics, and language (Sakalli & Senel, 2024). Furthermore, physical education has been given a low priority relative to other academic subjects (Beddoes et al., 2014). Therefore, teachers may experience physical and intellectual isolation from their colleagues, contributing to their feelings of marginalisation (Stroot & Ko, 2006). In other words, physical education can be marginalised in schools by being considered less academic than other disciplines and by being perceived as having less educative value.

Examining the contributing factors and relationships to improve this situation is critical (Ferry & Westerlund, 2023), particularly for a novice entering the profession. This raises a frequently overlooked question: if the mentor has experienced marginalisation and has had little support provided by the school to mitigate or reverse this social phenomenon, to what extent is the marginalisation essentially being handed to the next generation of physical education teachers? The baton of marginalization should not be handed nor passed but discussed, addressed and mitigated. Failure to do so may well increase the revolving door of teachers and add to the misconception that physical education is of a less academic focus. This could mean that role socialisation, or strategies to increase the teacher's social role within the school environment is needed.

Role Socialisation Theory (RST; Richards, 2015) addresses how physical education teachers' expectations of their roles are socially constructed and contextually linked to the school environment. Teachers may experience role ambiguity when school administrators neglect to provide clear guidelines for evaluation (Washburn et al., 2020) and role overload when their responsibilities are too numerous to account for during the school day (Richards et al., 2018). From here, role conflict can occur. Role conflict has been described as when teachers receive insufficient support from their principals and colleagues (Blankenship & Coleman, 2009). It is associated with feelings of marginalisation. What can follow is a negative perception from other teachers assuming that physical education is not considered teaching in the traditional sense; or that other teachers see the subject as a release from 'high status' subject work rather than an integral aspect of students' education (Milić et al., 2022). This can result in the discipline of physical education receiving less emphasis, time and resourcing compared to traditional subjects such as mathematics, science and humanities. The role of a mentor in this situation can serve many purposes. For instance, Hobson and Maxwell (2020) highlight the significance of a supportive school environment for the mentoring process. This process should be supportive and collaborative and is determined by local conditions.

3.5. Theme 5: Roles and Responsibilities

Regardless of any approach adopted for mentoring, it is apparent that an accurate and clear understanding of roles and terminology is important. To raise the profile and elucidate the role of a physical education mentor, emphasis on identifying the key responsibilities of the mentor is important in delivering reliability in the quality and experience of newly graduated teachers. For instance, mentors should have excellent subject knowledge that is based on the latest pedagogical developments and at a minimum, a rudimentary understanding of the scientific disciplines applied to physical activity, exercise and sport. A mentor should be an excellent teacher, evidenced by a strong report card. A mentor should be able to support early career teachers by identifying needs, providing constructive feedback, and creating an environment where the newly qualified teacher can progress and learn. This environment should not be one of marginalisation. Heikkinen et al. (2018) identify three roles of a mentor: (1) supervision, to assist new teachers pass through probation, (2) professional and emotional support, and (3) collaborative self-development through the social construction of professional skills and competence.

3.6. Theme 6: Personal and Professional Support

Typically, physical education teachers hail from a sporting background and have an interest in physical activity, exercise and sport. This focus on skills and competitive activities can mean they are not tuned in to the needs and feelings of less 'sporty' students. Having a sport-centric background could also mean that such teachers could be unable to make a clear distinction between physical activity, exercise and sport, as each component differs in psychological, physiological and biomechanical aspects of task achievement and purpose. As noted by

Whewell (2022), there is a significant domination of content-focused teaching in school physical education, and there remain challenges for early career teachers when mentors favour traditional-content-led approaches to teaching. This could mean that early career teachers feel obliged to conform to socio-cultural norms in the school and department within which they work. Thus, if the mentor is marginalised or believes that they are marginalised and imparts this bearing onto the early career teacher, the stigma of marginalisation will continue. This has been dubbed teacher occupational socialisation where probable physical education teachers establish and mirror the traits and attitudes of those around them rather than forming their own beliefs and practices (Whewell, 2022).

Schatz-Oppenheimer (2017) states that the role of a mentor is to support the novice teacher in understanding and adapting to the school norms and aid with socialisation. Yet this will be a challenge if the physical education department and mentor prescribe a more traditional method of teaching or is marginalised. It is suggested that early career teachers infrequently question or contest the existing practices in a school, particularly if employment at the school has only recently commenced. However, assumptions that new teachers are powerless to make change are inaccurate. Although this may appear in a minority of cases, early career teachers can be regarded as active strategists and agents of change who challenge traditions and assumptions. An active strategist can be an active reformer. Thus, the mentor can help to support the early career teacher to understand and perhaps challenge conflicting discourses. The significance of this is that early career teachers may come to recognise and reduce historical poor habits and develop skills of empathy and understanding of the needs of their diverse student population.

3.7. Theme 7: Emotional Support and Guidance

The early stages of a teacher's career are essential for fostering teaching skills and learning to adeptly apply pedagogical models. A mentor teacher fulfils a role that is multifaceted and highly influential. When a positive relationship is forged with a mentor, they can offer many significant influences such as offering advice, developing confidence, and guidance related to workload and time management. Spooner-Lane (2016) is clear in that a mentor only offers emotional support to reflect on their progress. This does not fulfil the role of a mentor completely. This means that there needs to be appropriate performance monitoring to ensure that role responsibility is being applied.

Meaningful teacher well-being and retention can be intrinsically combined to permit early career physical education teachers to express their true feelings about a situation and environmental context, regardless of whether they are positive or negative. After all, it is a teacher's obligation to control the emotional climate of their lesson, and if a teacher is showing negative sentiments, then this will in turn influence the climate in the classroom and reduce student motivation; the reverse is realised where positive emotions are established. A goal for the mentor should be to provide sage advice about good practice, that is – emotive control, application of teaching strategies and support to acquire both a deep knowledge of students and the institution. An early career teacher who exhibits emotional exhaustion will often display negative emotions or will likely struggle to regulate their emotions due to fatigue. The effects of enduring negative emotions due to exhaustion and fatigue are feasible pathways to burnout and an early exit from the profession.

Teacher burnout is a phenomenon whereby teachers experience feelings of emotional exhaustion during their career and is purported to be caused by high levels of stress associated with the job (Roloff & Brown, 2011). Emotional exhaustion is a leading cause of teachers leaving the profession alongside increasing expectations, increasing numbers of children with emotional and other needs, and increasing class. Recognising burnout prior to it happening can

be notoriously difficult, and it is not the role of the mentor to informally diagnose if burnout is occurring. Despite this, a fundamental responsibility of the mentor could be to be cognisant of the warning signs of this occurring and to offer support and guidance, and ensure the situation is taken to a higher level within the institution. An effective mentor teacher could integrate aspects of teacher knowledge through demonstrating social norms, classroom practice, and organisation of learning through examples of effective teaching. Effective mentoring processes do not assume that early career teachers are passive in these processes; on the contrary, early career teacher's actions are critical to success.

Mentors should be acutely aware of the range of opportunities that present possibility for learning and know how to maximize these for the benefit of their mentee. One way of managing this during the early stages of a new P.E. teacher's career would be to deliver opportunities for the mentee to experience a range of teachers, curriculum areas, pedagogies, and educational philosophies. For these reasons, a mentor whose practice and dispositions match the mentee should occur, but that is not always the case. Mentor standards, expectations and goals aligned with the P.E. curriculum should be defined so that they can provide a safe learning space for the new P.E. teacher where he/she is free to take risks and explore praxis (theory-informed practice) in a variety of contexts.

Bartell (2005) proposed that an effective mentoring program could reduce high attrition rates in newly qualified teachers. While this may be true, the underlying personal and societal qualities and responsibilities needed by the mentor arguably necessitate a greater skill set than previously acknowledged due to the complexities and demands on contemporary teaching and classroom management both in practical and theoretical settings. This is especially true in a subject often marginalised such as physical education.

4. Limitations

Finally, it is important to note that limitations exist. This review focuses on recently qualified students, that is – graduate physical education teachers and their role as a mentee. For existing school-based physical education teachers, classified as the mentor, this review did not obtain first-hand empirical research from either the mentee or the mentor. Therefore, this review was not able to attain every distinction in the mentee-mentor physical education development relationship such as directly examining geographical differences, socioeconomic factors, gender (i.e., male versus female) or ethnicity that may influence this relationship. A lack of data in the literature, as well as limitations pertaining to the subject of physical education, prevented this analysis. Nonetheless, where possible, the review does provide an insight into mentoring modalities in physical education teachers. Further research is recommended to expand on the results that have emerged here relating to mentoring modalities, roles and responsibilities, and personal and professional support. Future research could focus on conducting leading research with newly qualified PE teachers and their mentors to assess the practical application of these models and frameworks suggested.

5. Practical Implications

The findings have inferences for both policy and mentoring practice. The results, for example, imply that universities, industry associations and schools need to continue to work proactively to forge a more collaborative and dialogic relationships between recently graduated physical education teachers and existing physical education teachers; a shared view of good, contemporary teaching in physical education, and a shared vision of each participant's roles and responsibilities. The findings also suggest that a greater focus on role identification and clarification is needed prior to appointing a mentor along with expectations from the mentee. Also, how the mentee-mentor relationship aligns with professional practice and experience in

primary and secondary schools should be clarified along with the possibility of milestones or established targets to increase transparency and effectiveness of the process.

6. Conclusion

To assume the role of a physical education mentor, individuals should be proficient and competent teachers with both excellent teaching skills and high levels of subject-matter competence. Here, it is argued that to become a physical education mentor an established framework should be established to ensure that the mentor has the relevant knowledge, experience and both practical and theoretical nous to undertake a mentorship role. This may include a strategic approach whereby the aspiring wannabe mentor has gained suitable experience or obtained professional and practical development prior to taking on the role of mentor. However, the themes presented in this paper represent an inventory of factors that may play a role in the mentee and mentorship relationship.

There remains a connection between teacher success and the mentor-and-mentee relationship. Positive relationships are critical in fostering successful mentoring partnerships. Recruiting high calibre P.E. teachers has been shown to be just the first step in providing a quality workforce. It is vital to maintain and retain quality physical education teachers in the profession. The focus on recruitment, retraining and professional development schemes can often overshadow the issue of retention of teachers in schools. Effective yet robust mentoring practices can lead to the effective construction and formation of identity in newly graduated physical education teachers. However, ongoing adherence to a mentoring program with explicit guidelines for both mentee and mentor is relatively unexplored among new physical education teachers entering the profession. More empirical research is needed to address the ongoing issues with attrition.

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