The Physical Educator Vol. 78 • pp. 43–60 • 2021
https://doi.org/10.18666/TPE-2021-V78-I1-10190

THE PROFESSORSHIP

The Transition Into Professorship: Beyond the Three-Phase Approach to Socialization

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Abstract

This article outlines a brief review of literature of occupational socialization theory. Specific to physical educators, occupational socialization theory examines the ways individuals are recruited into, prepared for, and socialized in the profession. It represents a dialectical perspective on socialization, acknowledging that educators are shaped by the institutions that seek to socialize them, but that they can resist the influence of this socialization. This article also discusses the key issues affecting physical education teacher education (PETE) doctoral programs and the means by which PETE doctoral students are socialized into the role of university educators.

Occupational Socialization

Defined broadly, the study of socialization as related to the general teaching profession refers to "that field of scholarship which seeks to understand the process whereby the individual becomes a participating member of the society of teachers" (Zeichner & Gore, 1990, p. 329). Beginning with Lawson (1983a, 1983b) and Templin and Schempp (1989), investigators have studied the ways the physical education (PE) profession recruits, trains, and socializes its teachers. Specific to physical educators, occupational socialization theory (Richards et al., 2014; Templin & Schempp, 1989) examines

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the ways individuals are recruited into, prepared for, and socialized in the PE profession. It represents a dialectical perspective on socialization, acknowledging that physical educators are shaped by the institutions and actors that seek to socialize them, but that they can resist the influence of this socialization while exerting a counterforce that seeks to change the nature of the socializing agents (Schempp & Graber, 1992).

Traditional Three-Phase Approach

Scholars have traditionally adopted a three-phase approach to occupational socialization: acculturation, professional socialization, and organizational socialization (Lawson, 1983a, 1983b). These phases are often represented on a time-oriented continuum (Richards et al., 2014).

The first phase, *acculturation*, represents the period when recruits learn about the profession from teachers, coaches, and other significant individuals, before entering a teacher education program (Templin & Richards, 2014). The second phase, *professional socialization*, refers to the time when future teachers are enrolled in a teacher certification program at a college or a university (Templin & Richards, 2014). *Organizational socialization* is the third phase and is the time when individuals assume the role of teacher in K–12 schools (Richards et al., 2014). The sum of these three phases results in the process by which a person is taught and learns the ropes of a particular organizational role.

Scholars have argued for the addition of a fourth phase referred to as secondary professional socialization (Lee & Curtner-Smith, 2011), to describe the socialization experiences of doctoral PE students seeking careers as members of the professoriate (Casey & Fletcher, 2012; Templin & Richards, 2014).

Secondary Professional Socialization

The secondary professional socialization phase of occupational socialization theory focuses on graduate education in preparation for a career in academia (Richards & Templin, 2016). Due to the need to present and publish research and make professional contacts, professional organizations likely serve an important socializing function during graduate education (Richards & Templin, 2016). Because much of the literature on teacher socialization has focused

on "traditional" undergraduate students (age 18–22; O'Bryant et al., 2000), there has been a call for scholars to explore the secondary professional socialization of prospective members of the PE teacher education (PETE) professoriate (Casey & Fletcher, 2012; Templin & Richards, 2014). Of particular interest and practical use would be a focus on the types of practices and perspectives doctoral students acquire by graduation, the components that facilitate this acquisition, and the relative strengths of the various phases of socialization on these practices and perspectives (Lee & Curtner-Smith, 2011).

Anticipatory Socialization

The original studies along this line of interest initially sought to explore the anticipatory socialization (recruitment) of graduate students into the field of PE (O'Bryant et al., 2000). Templin et al. (1982) referred to recruitment as anticipatory socialization, suggesting sociocultural as well as psychological factors might influence or facilitate an individual's decision to enter a given field. From those findings, a base point of reference can be made about the future of the PETE professoriate using Lortie's (1975) concept of occupational choice.

Doctoral students in PETE programs have expressed that what mostly influences their decision to become PE teachers is the knowledge they want to teach, the enjoyment of working with children, having motivators (teachers, coaches, family members, friends) encouraging them (Casey & Fletcher, 2012), and past sporting participation experiences (O'Bryant et al., 2000). An important finding is that doctoral students enter their programs in very different stages of socialization. For example, not every doctoral student in PETE undergoes initial professionalization in PETE or holds experience as a PE teacher, thus not being organizationally socialized. This could be problematic and PETE faculty agree that K–12 teaching experience is essential for positive socialization experience during doctoral work (Parker et al., 2011). Also, not every student pursues graduate work specific to PETE content (i.e., sport management, foundations of education, and public administration) and so their secondary professional socialization is restricted to their doctoral work (Lee & Curtner-Smith, 2011). Findings have also suggested doctoral students within PETE have very different perceptions on what being a PE teacher means and have different goals of what they want to do

with their doctorate degree. Students decide to pursue a doctoral degree for a number of reasons; some want to be researchers, whereas others want to train teachers (Lee & Curtner-Smith, 2011).

Transition Into the Professoriate

Although few studies have described the socialization experiences of doctoral PE students transitioning into careers as members of the professoriate, several generalizations can be made from the few studies that do exist. These studies have suggested, foremost, that this pattern of socialization is similar to that of previously studied preservice teachers and practicing teachers (see Curtner-Smith, 2009). Specifically, the influences of acculturation and organizational socialization are much more powerful than those of professional socialization (Lee & Curtner-Smith, 2011). However, doctoral students' secondary professional socialization can be relatively potent and powerful to the extent that it could overcome moderate coaching orientations that had survived to that point in a teacher/teacher educator's career. The potency is likely the result of influential faculty, a practitioner focus in master's degree programs, and engagement in undergraduate PETE (Lee & Curtner-Smith, 2011; Richards & Templin, 2016). The content within coursework highlighted as influencing practices and perspectives on socialization includes research on PETE, research on the curriculum course, and reading research articles for the formation of pedagogical content knowledge (Lee & Curtner-Smith, 2011). Both PETE doctoral students and PETE faculty strongly agree that programs must "prepare people with the content knowledge of the field of PETE" (Parker et al., 2011). In this sense, the students and the faculty are on the same page.

Doctoral Programs

Research results have raised significant concerns about the preparation of aspiring faculty members (Austin, 2002a). Even when they are gaining experience and knowledge in important areas of faculty work, such as research and teaching, the approach to their preparation is often not systematic nor designed to provide developmentally more challenging experiences. Institutional leaders who hire new doctoral graduates for faculty positions, analysts of higher education, and potential faculty members, including graduate students,

have raised questions about the appropriateness of graduate program preparation (Austin, 2002b; Richards & Sinelnikov, 2019).

Today, this challenge of coupling attention with quality teacher education and attention with a productive research agenda remains equally difficult for tenure-earning faculty in the United States (Yendol-Hoppey et al., 2013). Teacher training is becoming a larger issue, with universities increasing the number of teaching assistants for a variety of reasons (June, 2011). It has been suggested that the socialization process in graduate school must adapt for new faculty members to work effectively in the ever-changing world of higher education (Austin, 2002b). Although teaching and research responsibilities surely can provide training opportunities for future faculty, these assistantship roles are sometimes structured more to serve institutional or faculty needs than to ensure a high-quality learning experience for graduate students (Austin, 2002a). However, research is scant on how much formal training professors receive to teach at the collegiate level or how much experience they gain before taking their first teaching post after leaving the doctoral institution (Roach et al., 2015). Murray and Male (2005) found that two of the main challenges new teacher educators in England face are developing a pedagogy for teaching teachers and becoming productive in research and scholarship.

Given the expanding roles associated with being a teacher educator, Zeichner (2005) argued that the next generation of teacher educators should receive greater attention. He advocated that "the research universities that supply colleges and universities with the faculty who staff the vast number of teacher education programs throughout the United States need to take the preparation of teacher educators more seriously" (p. 335). Other research has concluded that becoming a teacher educator involves several complex and challenging tasks: examining beliefs and values grounded in personal biography, including those associated with being a former schoolteacher; navigating the complex social and institutional contexts in which they work; and developing a personal pedagogy of teacher education that enables construction of a new professional identity as a teacher educator (Williams et al., 2012). This research provides beginning teacher educators with a reference point for understanding

their personal and professional transition to university-based teacher education.

A study in survey journalism and mass communication explored full professors' views on doctoral education. They believed mentoring involves passing on the behaviors that professors learned as graduate students themselves. Additionally, they looked at graduate students as "colleagues in training" rather than graduate assistants (Pardun et al., 2015). With mentorship established as a key facilitator of professional socialization for athletic trainers, Mazerolle et al. (2015) presented three elements necessary during a doctoral training program. First, the relationship between the student and the faculty mentor needs to be supportive yet be viewed as yielding autonomy and collaboration. Second, the relationship between the student and the faculty mentor needs to include opportunities for professional development specifically related to skill acquisition and development related to a future academic role. Third, the relationship between the student and the faculty mentor must demonstrate a mutual investment in the educational experience. Like previous research in socialization, Mazzarolle et al.'s research shows that doctoral students not only want autonomy in their roles but also value their mentor's feedback and support. Therefore, doctoral faculty mentors should demonstrate strong communication skills and provide doctoral students opportunities for diverse learning experiences.

The University of Maryland School of Public Health developed a Preparing Future Faculty and Professionals program to enrich the graduate education and professional development of its doctoral students. Key elements of such a program include foundational seminars to enhance students' knowledge and skills related to teacher; research and service activities designed to foster career exploration and increased competitiveness in the job market; and independent, faculty mentored teaching and research experiences. An important goal of doctoral education is to prepare graduates to face the challenges of academic and professional careers. Yet reproach from multiple disciplines including public heath has indicated that many doctoral graduates feel ill-equipped for the demands of academic and other postgraduate positions (Koblinsky et al., 2015).

Issue of Research/Teaching in Physical Education Teacher Education

The history of doctoral PETE (D-PETE) programs is relatively short, only about 40 years; this program is likely in its infancy compared with other academic doctoral programs (Rikard et al., 2011). Little is known about the preparation of PETE doctoral students, their experience, and the extent to which D-PETE programs serve the needs of higher and public education. In 2009, van der Mars raised a concern regarding what is really known about D-PETE and, in doing so, suggested that "becoming more reflective about our actual practices in doctoral PETE education is warranted" (p. 71). This article attempts to address this concern. With a decrease in doctoral PETE programs, an increase in nontenured part-time faculty, and a decrease in funding doctoral PETE programs (Boyce et al., 2015), addressing this concern should be a priority. Studies exploring the reactions of PETE faculty on PETE doctoral education in the United States have suggested there is pressure to increase student enrollment to save programs from elimination (Parker et al., 2011; van der Mars, 2011). It seems the goal of some programs is to provide their doctoral students with the knowledge, skills, and experiences to work at a research university. Yet the majority of doctoral students are not hired by research universities; this phenomenon of nongoal congruence between the doctoral student and the university likely negatively influences the socialization of the student into the professoriate.

As mentioned, doctoral students are well trained in research but not in teaching. Notable is an absence of the study of teacher education in most programs. If the majority of PETE graduates are hired as teacher educators but few study teacher education theory and practices, what will inform their own practices (Ward, Parker, et al., 2011)? These teacher educator expectations are further complicated by pressure within many universities to engage in research.

Recruitment and training efforts targeting individuals for the PETE profession should strive to provide educational, teaching, and scholarship experiences that develop the skills and dispositions desired by the profession (Woods et al., 2011). Doctoral PETE

programs follow the accepted operating model for doctoral education in the United States, which has been heavy on coursework, some engagement in research, and the use of apprenticeship and modeling. It is to be expected that this framework would vary. Yet data collected by Ward, Sutherland et al. (2011) show that future PETE faculty "do not study the same content, to the same extent, or for the same purposes; nor are they prepared to do research to the same degree. Moreover, students in doctoral programs do not have the same experiences or have similar faculty expectations of their performance" (p. 153). These findings raise significant questions for the field of PETE (Lee & Curtner-Smith, 2011).

Transition to PETE Educators

Although preparation programs vary, recent studies have shown that doctoral students struggle with the transition from teacher to teacher education. Analysis has shown that they struggle with the transition from teacher to teacher educator, primarily in navigating the different pedagogies required in teacher education. Future D-PETE students may benefit from learning where they can discover and explore teacher education theory and practice. They could also benefit from having opportunities to observe experienced colleagues and to engage in discussion about PETE programming and practice with mentors. Therefore, it has been proposed that doctoral students could benefit from more opportunities to play the role of PETE educator (Casey & Fletcher, 2012).

Doctoral Training Impact

Mitchell and Lawson's (1986) finding that doctoral education has little effect on the teacher educator's role as a professor is cause for concern. However, cited in 2011, by Lee and Curtner-Smith, doctoral student orientations to teaching and research are strongly influenced by those of their faculty mentors. Doctoral students are more likely to focus on research if they are overtly encouraged to do so, if their mentors are active researchers, and if performance in coursework is de-emphasized (Weidman et al., 2003). Key socializing processes and agents for doctoral students include formal and informal meetings with and mentoring/modeling by supportive faculty with whom they connect, mentoring/modeling by other doctoral students, classes, a generally positive departmental environment, and

opportunities to practice the role of faculty member while receiving feedback (Antony, 2002; Antony & Taylor, 2001; Bess, 1978; Parker et al., 2011; Weidman et al., 2001).

It is no longer enough to be able to teach a traditional elementary or secondary methods course, a professional activity course, a sport skill analysis course; coordinate and deliver a pre-student-teaching practicum experience; and supervise student teachers. PETE faculty must be able to prepare future physical educators for roles and responsibilities that are fundamentally different from those of their predecessors (McKenzie & Kahan, 2004).

Through the lens of occupational socialization theory, 40 years of research has documented the experiences and perspectives of teachers and prospective teachers. However, little is known about the perspectives and practices of doctoral students and faculty in higher education. This line of inquiry also suggests a need for further investigation of occupational socialization in relation to actions at the higher education level (Parker et al., 2011).

Mentorship

Mentoring is a relationship that allows a novice to gain insight and training through the experience of an expert in any particular field. The idea of mentoring can be traced back to Greek mythology (Kram & Isabella, 1985) and has commonly been linked to the business world (Jacobi, 1991). However, these relationships easily transfer to higher education contexts. According to Long (1997), components of a mentoring relationship should include emotional and psychological support, assistance with professional development, and role modeling. There are three commonly used theoretical frameworks concerning mentorship: *attachment theory*, *theory of planned behavior*, and *occupational socialization theory*. First, attachment theory (Bowlby, 1988) investigates relationships based on the bond individuals develop with their childhood caregivers (Harmon et al., 2019). Second, the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 2012) examines manifestation of behavior based on attitudes, intentions, and involuntary behavior. Finally, occupational socialization theory (Templin & Schempp, 1989) observes the process by which novices are socialized into the role of teacher.

Mentoring relationships form in two ways: informally and formally. Initially, mentoring relationships came about organically

(Kram & Isabella, 1985), but it was not until organizations recognized the benefits of mentoring and the problem of homosocial reproduction that formal relationships were developed (Ehrich et al., 2004). Informal connections form naturally and tend to be a selective process because individuals are attracted to those with similarities (Ehrich et al., 2004). On the other hand, formal programs assign mentors and mentees via a third party (Jacobi, 1991). More importantly, research has suggested these programs must be carefully designed and implemented for the potential benefits to come about. In some cases, poor mentoring has been shown to be worse than no mentoring (Ehrich et al., 2004).

The pairing of mentors and mentees is key to a productive experience (Campbell & Campbell, 2007). Bernier et al. (2005) suggested that the most positive relationships come from mentors and mentees having dissimilar attachment orientations. Additionally, social class, race, orientation, gender, and ability should also be considered in pairing (Fassinger & Hensler-McGinnis, 2005). Although evidence suggests that these programs must be thoughtfully implemented (Ehrich et al., 2004), Richards and Templin (2011) found that a beginning PE teacher gained more from an informal relationship. Nevertheless, there are various methods of pairing and relationship styles within mentoring. Shapiro and Blom-Hoffman (2004) mentioned different types of mentoring systems. The most relevant to the current discussion are peer-to-peer networks (Sánchez et al., 2008) and faculty-to-student networks (Strayhorn & Terrell, 2007).

Peer-to-Peer Networks

A relationship in which a more experienced student mentors a less experienced student is referred to as peer mentoring (Sánchez et al., 2008; e.g., a doctoral PETE student mentoring an undergraduate PETE pupil). In a peer mentor relationship, inexperienced students gain career advice and social support, as they would in a faculty-to-student network, but a peer mentor relationship often provides a less intimidating atmosphere (Hall & Jaugietis, 2011). This is likely due to the absence of status between the mentor and mentee. Additionally, peer mentors can often offer assistance from recent experiences. Casey and Fletcher (2012) emphasized the importance of graduate students in teacher education having the opportunity to mentor preservice undergraduates, to form their own

pedagogical practices. In addition to seeking candidates who have socialized future teacher educators into their new role, many employers seek out candidates with experience working with preservice teachers (Woods et al., 2011).

Faculty-to-Student Networks

Graduate student mentees and faculty mentors have emphasized the benefits of the faculty-to-student network and pointed out the importance of similar career paths (Richards & Sinelnikov, 2019). Additionally, Gardner and Barnes (2007) suggested that the mentorship between graduate students and faculty gives a feeling of belonging to the students and an opportunity to be socialized into the faculty role. There is the possibility for multidirectional reciprocal benefits of levels of mentorship in D-PETE programs: the D-PETE student is mentored by a PETE faculty member, while the D-PETE student mentors undergraduate PETE pupils (Woods et al., 2011). During this process, the undergraduate PETE pupil learns the role of being a physical educator during their professional socialization under support, while the doctoral PETE student learns the role of educating college/university pupils from an experienced faculty member. This form of mentoring relates to the occupational socialization of teachers in the way many beginning teachers are paired with an experienced mentor during their induction into the school context, which eases their transition (Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004; Richards & Templin, 2011; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004).

Conclusion

The university may serve as the ideal catalyst for promoting advancement in PE. PETE faculty can use socialization theory to institute societal improvement and foster the university's responsibility to the community of optimally preparing future PE practitioners. Through understanding the process of socialization, PETE faculty learn how to intervene when necessary and institute change. To that end, further exploring how prospective members of the professoriate are inducted and socialized into the role of PETE faculty is the first step in analyzing what PETE programs are doing to initiate a positive socialization experience of future PE practitioners.

Mentoring can also play a critical role during professional socialization if preservice teachers are intentionally paired with faculty or

peer mentors to guide them through program experiences. An extension of the peer mentoring relationship is for undergraduate pupils to be paired with graduate student mentors (Richard & Sinelnikov, 2019). In such an arrangement, undergraduate pupils receive targeted feedback and support, while graduate students learn how to work in a teacher education program and relate to preservice teachers. It should not be assumed that the mentoring provided to preservice or in-service teachers through mentoring will have positive effects. The outcomes of participating in these programs depend, in part, on the organization of the programs and the dispositions of the mentor and mentee. If, for example, the mentor approaches PE from a traditional perspective, the mentoring relationships may serve to enhance the institutional press (Zeichner &Tabachnick, 1983) and expedite the washing out (Blankenship & Coleman, 2009) of practices and values learned in teacher education. The same caution goes for peer and graduate–undergraduate mentoring relationships constructed during professional socialization.

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