Where We Go from Here: Developing Pedagogies for PETE and the Use of Self-Study in Physical Education and Teacher Education

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Introduction

The physical education teacher education (PETE) research field is in trouble. The research base of PETE has not grown much in recent years and this is not a healthy sign for the field. I hope this text can bring greater focus to how we think about and facilitate more research on teacher education, and how teacher educators can better support those learning to teach. Many physical education and sport pedagogy researchers are currently more focused on building research careers around how pedagogies of the body and pedagogies of new media impact on young people's understandings of and engagement with sport and physical activity. There is a primary interest for a cohort or early career academics. There is also a small cadre of academics interested in professional development of physical education teachers (Armour and Yelling 2004; Parker et al. 2012) but this research is not a focus of this commentary. I am delimiting my documents to teacher education as in initial teacher education. This focus does not suggest the research topics alluded to above are not important for physical education. They are.

However, we also need more programmatic research focused on how to prepare physical education teachers for the challenges of contemporary schools and society. PETE research is not developing at a pace to match the challenges faced by teacher educators in school or in higher education institutions in helping the next generation of teachers learn to teach or in supporting and facilitating them as lifelong learners. I want my contribution together with the other contributors to this edited volume on self-study to encourage a greater focus on PETE research and the preparation of physical education teacher educators in an increasingly complex and challenging educational environment.

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The evidence base for professional learning in PETE needs to grow. In preparing a presentation for the 2013 *Association Internationale des Ecoles Superieures d'Education Physique /International Association for Physical Education in Higher Education* (AIESEP) specialist seminar in Finland on teacher education in physical education (O'Sullivan 2013), I completed a short (non-scientific) analysis of three major English language journals in our field (*Journal of Teaching in Physical Education, Sport, Education, and Society, and Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*) over the last 4 years. I had sought contemporary PETE research and was dismayed to find less than 10 % of 400 plus articles reviewed could be classified as research on PETE. My analysis complimented an extensive 10-year review of sport pedagogy literature by Kulinna et al. (2009) who found less than 15 % of sport pedagogy research, published in a more extensive range of English language journals worldwide (1996–2005), was PETE related.

Thus the editors of this edited volume, Alan and Tim, should be thanked for bringing a focus to the need for and relevance of self-study methodology in exploring contemporary PETE practices and understandings of physical education teacher educators. The text is an important addition to the PETE literature. The chapters evidence a cohort of teacher educators passionate about PETE, and shares their understandings and efforts at improving their practices in support of teacher education students.

The authors' interests in teacher education research mirror a focus on general teacher education worldwide. For example, the European Commission (2012) recently called for more research on teacher educators to ensure they have the versatility and competencies to cope with changing times and expectations for schooling. The British Education Research Association (2013) has highlighted a concern about the status of teacher education, and is undertaking a major inquiry into the relationship between educational research and teacher education and how both work to improve outcomes for children and young people. The Dutch have a long history of research in teacher education and Fred Korthagen's writings on reflective practice have been influential in the writings of some PETE academics (Korthagen et al. 2006; Tsangaridou and O'Sullivan 1997). Dutch universities support regional 'expertise networks' of teacher educators that provide professional development support for teacher educators and promote high quality teacher education. PETE has much to learn from their efforts. For example, the Flemish Association of Teacher Education (VELOV) provides professional development programmes for teacher educators (broadly defined) and the Antwerp network (ELANT) was given the responsibility to create a *Profile for Teacher Educators* (VELOV 2012); a tool for professional development with teacher educators. They describe the profile as:

> Providing a solid basis and a common language for teacher education, supervision and for the professional development of teacher educators. Beginning teacher educators can use it as a means of establishing their initial situation and experienced teacher educators can use it to identify which areas they wish to develop further. (VELOV 2012, p. 6)

Such efforts specifically call for the establishment and further development of organised professional groupings and networks of teacher educators both to strengthen professional identity and ensure that the profession is fully represented

in social and professional dialogues. I welcome this attention on teacher education and teacher educators. The work of the teacher education authors in this text focus on the potential of self-study in building a contemporary PETE research base and hopefully will motivate other sport pedagogy academics to consider studying PETE practices and 'build a community of practice in which teaching and scholarship are intertwined' (Kitchen et al. 2008, p. 161). Later in this chapter I share a potential PETE research agenda, considering how different self-study research designs can contribute to the agenda. In the remaining sections of this chapter, I:

- Share insights generated from my readings of the self-study chapters and self-study literature more generally;
- Share some concerns my reading and reflections have raised about contemporary teacher education and PETE research, and;
- Present ideas on future research agendas for contemporary PETE in the hope some readers will take up these challenges.

Some Insights

To underpin policy and practice developments in PETE, it is necessary to further develop the knowledge base about PETE and physical education teacher educators in a changing higher education landscape. There is need for more probing and theoretically driven research on PETE programmes and the work of teacher educators including school mentors, university tutors, and pre-service teachers. The authors' narratives throughout this volume highlighted the complexities of doing teacher education and in aligning practices and contexts with contemporary students' needs and interests. The chapters highlight value in researching teacher education practices and programmes to be better informed in the reshaping of future practice for contemporary schooling. The PETE research complements many of the findings from classroom self-study literature (Donche and van Petegem 2011).

The narratives presented by the authors suggest self-study is a valuable research tool in at least three ways. It helps teacher educators build their capacities as educators, allows for experimentation with pedagogies of teacher education, and provides space for exploration of how/if PETE programme goals are fit for purpose. I address these briefly below.

Studies of Self: Being a Teacher Educator and Doing Teacher Education

There is a knowledge base to teacher education (Cochran-Smith et al. 2008). The chapters by Casey and Attard (early career academics) and MacPhail (an experienced teacher educator) provide powerful illustrations of how self-study allowed

teacher educators to develop/refine their knowledge base and the skills needed as teacher educators. The systematic focus on practice provided opportunities to produce knowledge to inform the nature of those practices with the potential to reframe future practice beyond themselves and their departments.

The self-study process (via reflexive diaries and emails with colleagues) provided space for Casey and Attard (who had been successful secondary school teachers) to manage their transition to novice teacher educators. They note how unprepared they were for the substantively different knowledge, skills, and capacities needed between first and second order teaching responsibilities (European Commission 2012). Their story, unfortunately, is all too common. Much of the published self-study literature provide examples of novice teacher educators seeking colleagues with a shared commitment to learning about and doing teacher education (Casey and Fletcher 2012; Elliott-Johns and Tidwell 2013; Kitchen et al. 2008). What should be a concern is how little preparation is part of the doctoral training of so many novice teacher educators and the recruitment processes do not seem to hold such a knowledge base and experience as essential criteria for the post. I will come back to this later in discussing concerns about self-study in teacher education.

MacPhail, whose doctoral preparation was not in teacher education, noted how the self-study process allowed her to better understand her own practice as a teacher educator and to appreciate the value of a community of practice with experienced teacher educators in the development of her teacher educator expertise. There are lessons in this chapter for departmental leaders from this narrative in relation to the need for formal and informal strategies to build the capacities of newly recruited teacher educators. How can these leaders create support structures between the teaching demands required in delivering on a PETE programme and increased research expectations for a successful academic career? Can self-study research clusters support this effort? The authors in this volume provide some positive evidence in this regard.

Signature Pedagogies in Teacher Education

Self-study as a methodology allows for the exploration for signature pedagogies in teacher education. Signature pedagogies involve taking 'the best practices that we… employ in teacher education and more deeply understand what makes them wise and what makes them flawed' (Falk 2006, p. 76). Four authors (Bruce, Forgasz, Garbett, and Cameron) have shown the value of self-study to explore pedagogies of teacher education. Bruce used self-study to consider the effectiveness of service learning in her teacher education programme and what can and cannot be delivered using this pedagogy. She found the possibilities and limitations of service learning as a counter-hegemonic practice (Cipolle 2004).

The editors included contributions from drama and science educators as to the value of new pedagogies in professional learning of new teachers. Forgasz draws on her drama background and a commitment to the 'wisdom of the body' as a

pedagogical strategy to help prospective teachers understand and learn to cope with the complexities of leading and supporting change in schools. Her students wrote and reflected on their feelings and bodily sensations during their teaching situations, what Forgasz referred to as 'felt sense', noting how reflecting on feelings and self-knowledge helped these teachers learn about teaching and potential learning challenges for students. Garbett, a science educator, used her experience of and reflections on learning to ride a horse as a pedagogical tool to help her science education students learn to teach. She used the self-study approach to critique the effectiveness of this strategy. Cameron used a critical auto-ethnographic case study approach (narrative diaries, emailing expert pedagogues) to understand how and why the critical pedagogy approach she was using as a teacher educator was being resisted by some students and how she could best address their resistance via a social justice pedagogy.

These studies highlight contemporary pedagogies and explore how we can better expose teacher candidates to the complexities of teaching, the uncertainty of knowledge, and the changing needs and interests of the young people they are preparing to teach. We need to work to determine which pedagogies have the potential to develop what Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) refer to as teachers' social, emotional, and decisional capital – critical variables of highly effective teachers. We need to look at the benefits of these pedagogies for pre-service candidates and for the specific objectives of our PETE programme (e.g. content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, social, or decisional capital). Larger scale studies and programmes of research across teacher education departments would allow the investigation of teacher education pedagogies across contextual and cultural environments. This would build a knowledge base of signature pedagogies specific to programme goals and curricular outcomes. I will discuss the value of signature pedagogies for teacher education later in the chapter.

Departmental Self-Studies and Communities of Practice

Although an advocate of self-study, Ken Zeichner (2007) has been critical of self-study methodology in teacher education. His concern has been with the overly individualistic and introspective nature of the self-study literature, and has called for larger sample sizes and programmes of research that have the credibility to change policy and practice beyond the individual person. Metzler's 20-year commitment to a collective/departmental approach to PETE programme assessment, as discussed in his contribution in this volume, is a rare example of longitudinal work in PETE research. Metzler and his departmental colleagues have created a substantial database on student knowledge, attitudes, and teaching practices over the course of their teacher education programme. More importantly, the data have been the basis for individual and collective reflection at the departmental level with a strong individual and collective commitment to programme improvement. Metzler does not speak explicitly about how this commitment has impacted on teacher educator identities

and teacher educator capacities in his department over the duration of this work, but it does present an interesting research question with implications beyond their department.

Departmental self-studies with small cohorts of PETE staff present opportunities to discuss, create, and reshape their visions for teacher education by drawing on systematic exploration of their practices. It allows exploring the values and skills of the partnership schools with which they work and the subsequent outcomes of their graduates. The early work from the Flemish teacher education networks, such as ELANT, allows teacher educators to take time out as groups of staff to consider their teaching and programme vision. It helps them keep their knowledge current and their practices relevant to the needs of their pre-service and in-service teachers, and to the changing educational policy contexts (see VELOV 2012). The collective nature of self-study envisioned in this way would include researching practice with (a) teachers in the field, (b) other researchers, and (c) departmental colleagues and would allow teacher educators to bond (see chapters by MacPhail and Casey). Practices could be explored and assumptions critiqued and challenged (Cameron). An advance in self-study would be to ensure more critical discussion of practice and how the processes engaged have impacted on learners.

Limitations of Self-Study

In this section I briefly explore some concerns with self-study. While appreciating the benefits of the research tradition in teacher education and its potential as a transformative process in teacher education, there were issues that emerged from my readings of the self-study literature including the chapters in this volume. Alan and Tim made a strong case for the benefits of self-study in their introductory chapter and others have noted the 'transformative potential' in being and becoming a teacher educator (Kitchen et al. 2008). Raising these concerns is not meant to diminish the value of self-study as presented to teacher education; rather, I seek to bolster its value as part of a growing evidence base for contemporary challenges to PETE and teacher education more generally.

Self-Study Is Not a Substitute for Formal Preparation in the Discipline of Teacher Education

I noted earlier the existence of a substantial knowledge base on the broad landscape of teacher education with comprehensive reviews of the latest research for major domains of practice (see Cochran-Smith et al. 2008). This literature has provided evidence on what teachers should know, preferred settings for learning to teach, evidence on which pedagogical practices are productive for particular learning outcomes (e.g., teaching for diversity) and what kinds of experiences can better prepare

teachers for which school settings (Seidl 2007). We know about the format and sequencing of school placements and about how specific kinds of partnerships with schools can lead to more effective outcomes (Moran and Clarke 2012).

Despite this knowledge base too many early career academics are being recruited into PETE to educate the next generation of teachers, yet gained little if any knowledge of this literature knowledge as part of their doctoral training. Indeed for some, the nature of their doctoral preparation was focused on a specific research question that may have had little to do with the teaching of prospective teachers of physical education in schools. There is evidence (European Commission 2012) that many teacher educators enter academe from successful teachers as teachers and not as a planned career as a teacher educator. Rather, they had been highly effective second level teachers and in completing post-graduate degrees found the opportunity to work with teacher education students and progress a research career as an attractive proposition. The recent European Commission (2012) report notes teacher educators are different from teachers and have:

> …to deploy specific, additional competences, which set them apart from other teaching staff or academics. In fact, their competences have to do not only with first-order knowledge – about schooling, as related to specific subject areas – but also second-order knowledge – about teacher education itself, teachers as adult learners and related pedagogies, as well as organizational knowledge of their own and their student teachers' workplaces (p. 54).

Most teacher educators disapprove of teachers learning to teach on the job as in the Teach First (UK) or Teach for America schemes (USA). Yet it seems in many higher education institutions that we allow teacher educators to learn their profession/discipline on the job. Does senior leadership believe this learning can/should be done appropriately on the job? What does it say about the legitimacy of a knowledge base in teacher education? What self-study does is provide a space to explore one's understanding of becoming and being a teacher educator. It should not, however, be understood as a substitute for careful study of the existing teacher education knowledge base.

Inclusivity or Exclusivity: Can I Play Too?

The examples of self-study in the previous chapters show clear benefits to the authors from interactions with staff mentors (be they experienced or more senior staff with teacher education expertise). But what of those staff members who are not engaged in a self-study within a department that has such a community? What about members of staff who have not been invited to participate in these 'self-study groupings'? Are there implications for programme cohesion? Is it possible that those not invited to participate (or who do not feel able or willing to join) could become increasingly isolated from their colleagues? I was unable to find studies that address this issue. If self-study groups within departments include influential members of staff, what are the power dynamics both within and outside the group and is there

potential for exclusivity or isolation of staff? Members of self-study communities in either formal contexts or informal groupings must have a degree of sensitivity around these issues but I was unable to find studies that address the impact of self-study communities of practice on department staff. It is in my view an issue that should not be underestimated and is worthy of exploration.

Self-Study Within a Broader Landscape

The commitment to teacher education was quite evident among the authors and editors who contributed this volume. Each, in their own way, made time in increasingly pressurised academic settings to think about, understand, and improve their practice. They created spaces to discuss (if not interrogate) their experiences and feelings on being and becoming teacher educators. Their analyses were situational in that they focused on how their teaching decisions impacted on their students and their own learning.

I had expected to read more about how programme content, assessments of students' professional learning, or engagement with schools and school mentors was influenced (either positively or negatively) by external factors. In other words, I wondered how state and/or national policies impacted on the day-to-day practice of teacher educators. I did not find this analysis. Can or should self-study projects consider such analysis? While teacher education has been in the educational spotlight in many countries in recent years and much of it for the wrong reasons (Furlong 2013), the self-study work reported here was mostly silent on how economic or education policies had (or had not) impacted their work. Such policies may function at the micro level (within departments), meso level (across departments with other subject specialists or within the university) or macro level (national accreditation parameters or funding and education polices for teacher education). Physical education policy research, which is focused on teacher education, is much needed. How policy influences the day to practice of teacher education and the lives of physical education teacher educators is almost non-existent. Self study research with a meso and/or macro policy focus has a contribution to enable better understanding of how teacher education gets done and what the factors are that enhance and/or inhibit that work.

The Value Added of Self-Study Needs To Be More Visible

Teacher education is a labour-intensive enterprise. With few exceptions mentoring of student teachers is done with little or no compensation to the teacher/school/school district. This situation contrasts sharply with the preparation of health professionals. In nursing and therapies, cohorts of clinical tutors work with health care trainees on clinical placement sites. The health service providers pay these clinical tutors. They view a cohort of health professionals in training at their teaching

hospital site as a status symbol. In other funding models, medical schools allocate a significant portion of the income generated (student fee/state funding) to teaching hospitals for clinical tutor staff support and staff development of the consultants who provide additional teaching on site. How might we conceive of self-study research projects to examine how cohorts of teacher education students add value for teachers and pupils in schools? Finland's education system, acclaimed worldwide as an exemplar, supports 'teaching schools' and part of the teachers' job description is the mentoring and support of pre-service teachers (Salberg 2010). Could collaborative self-study research programmes facilitate professional development for a cohort of school and university teacher educators while also creating robust and meaningful school placements for student teachers and better learning outcomes for their pupils? After all, the aim of self-study research as noted by Attard in this volume is to 'provoke, challenge, and illuminate' teacher education practices (Bullough and Pinnegar 2001, p. 20).

Future Possibilities: A PETE Agenda Supported by Self-Study Research

There is no doubting the value of self-study to the authors in this text. This supports Zeichner's (2007) contention that self-study as a methodology has been important in effecting change in teaching practices and understandings of teacher educators. In this text Metzler suggests self-study scholarship in PETE can be described fairly as predominantly: individual, introspective, practice-oriented, and short-term. The early career and experienced teacher educators showed how the self-study process allowed them space to think, reflect on, and discuss their practice with colleagues (both peers and experts). These interactions helped them refine understandings of their role as teacher educator and the appropriateness of teacher education practices and pedagogies to meet their expectations and the needs/expectations of their students who were learning to teach in a variety of school contexts. Other teacher educators (science, physical education, and drama educators) used self-study methodology to study the impact of their pedagogies on students' knowledge, dispositions, and/or practices in learning to teach.

As important as this work was to the authors, self-study research must aspire to more expansive formats, thereby providing the added value that can impact changes to policy and practices across departmental, regional, and national levels. This might include the completion of more longitudinal studies and cross-programme collaborations. Zeichner (2007) called for a shift from careful studies of one's own practice to looking across studies for patterns that might best inform the field. The departmental approach to self-study and the longitudinal nature of work conducted by Metzler and his departmental colleagues is an important example of this work. PETE needs more cross-programme collaborations that can focus on what and how specific programme pedagogies such as case-based teaching (Meldrum 2011) can deliver on key programme outcomes.

This approach to PETE research calls for new self-study designs. First, PETE could benefit from projects focused on key challenges in the preparation of physical education teachers. These would be cross-programme self-study designs interrogating how pedagogies work and for what purposes. This calls for an analysis of 'signature pedagogies' across a number of PETE programmes. These pedagogies (e.g., case-based learning, use of teaching metaphors, school ethnographies) are characteristic forms of teaching/learning in a given professional field and are the types of teaching that organise the fundamental ways in which future practitioners are educated for their profession (Shulman 2005). A recent PETE study by Meldrum (2011), while limited to one programme, is a nice example of studying the value added of a signature pedagogy that looked at how problem based learning might prepare pre-service physical education teachers for an uncertain future. In his chapter Metzler detailed a departmental study that sought to explore the nature of the learning outcomes for pre-service students, some of whom experienced micro teaching while others had a school practice experience. Other aspects of teacher education would benefit from cross-institutional and cross-national collaborative research initiatives. Self-study methodology could allow us to look at key pedagogies that might support important teacher education outcomes such as: teaching diverse learners and teaching for social justice outcomes. In PETE, specific programme outcomes to be studied might include pedagogies to promote lifelong physical activity (see Harris 2013) or teaching for socio-emotional learning in physical education (Klemola et al. 2013).

A second programme of research where self-study methodology would be appropriate is where communities of teacher educators commit to interrogate and challenge habits of practice and allow for alternative readings of teaching/learning contexts in PETE. The added value of the critical self-study approach might best be achieved via engagement within a community of teacher educators in the interrogation of departmental policies and practices and PETE programme goals. In Holland, higher education institutions support an infrastructure of expertise networks to engage teacher educators in professional development. The Flemish Teacher Education network 'ELANT' is a nice example (VELOV 2012).

A final example to be mentioned here is the use of a self-study approach to build a knowledge base on physical education teacher educators. Who are physical education teacher educators and how well prepared are they to support the professional learning of pre-service physical education teachers? What are their signature pedagogies and how effective are they for what learning outcomes? Taylor et al. (2013) reported on the development of a scheme that characterised pedagogical practices in initial teacher education classes. Such a study could be done with particular reference to physical education teacher education. This research could produce detailed and layered representations of pedagogical practices through video recordings (across PETE programmes) and opens a new approach to research on physical education teacher education.

The editors are to be thanked for bringing a focus back to the doing and researching of teacher education. If the text brings awareness to others of self-study methodology in teacher education and generates the potential for transformative pedagogies in PETE, it has been worth the effort. I thank the editors for giving me the opportunity to comment on these possibilities for PETE into the future.

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