

A career in teaching: Decisions of the heart rather than the head

O'Sullivan M., MacPhail A., Tannehill D.

University of Limerick, Limerick, Ireland

Abstract: There is a growing body of research and scholarship highlighting the importance of teachers and teaching to children's learning and life opportunities (Bransford, Darling-Hammond and LePage 2005). More specifically what teachers do in classrooms is a function of many things (e.g., content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge) including their belief about students, the subject, and the teaching process (Calderhead 1996). The focus of this research was to understand why young people in Ireland are attracted to teaching physical education and what factors contribute to their decision to enter a teacher education programme. A cohort of 75 physical education teacher candidates wrote brief narratives summarising key factors that influenced their decision to be teachers of physical education. Most of these students chose teaching as a career because of their interests in sport and physical education, love of working with children, and the a number of significant others telling them they would be good at teaching. Their leadership roles on teams (captaincy) and their personal athletic success also promoted a keen sense of wanting to help others be as successful as they had been. While a number of the teacher candidates wrote about negative experiences in physical education or receiving negative comments about a teaching career from teachers, they wanted to be physical education teachers as they believed they could provide positive experiences for pupils when they became teachers. A number of implications for teacher education programme design and delivery are discussed. © 2009 Educational Studies Association of Ireland.

Author Keywords: Physical education; Teacher candidate beliefs; Teacher education; Teacher selection

Year: 2009

Source title: Irish Educational Studies

Volume: 28

Issue: 2

Page : 177-191

Cited by: 1

Link: [Scopus Link](#)

Document Type: Article

Source: Scopus

Authors with affiliations:

1. O'Sullivan, M., University of Limerick, Limerick, Ireland
2. MacPhail, A., University of Limerick, Limerick, Ireland
3. Tannehill, D., University of Limerick, Limerick, Ireland

References:

1. Boyer, E.L., (1990) *Scholarship reconsidered: Priorities of the professoriate*, , Princeton, NJ: The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching

2. Brew, A., Teaching and research: New relationships and their implications for inquirybased teaching and learning in higher education (2003) *Research and Development*, 22 (1), pp. 3-18
3. Armour, K., The way to a teacher's heart: Narrative research in physical education (2006) *Handbook of research in physical education*, pp. 467-85. , ed. D. Kirk, D. Macdonald and M. O'Sullivan, London: Sage
4. Borko, H., Putnam, R., Learning to teach (1996) *Handbook of educational psychology*, pp. 673-708. , ed. D.C. Berliner and R.C. Calfee, New York: Macmillan
5. Brown, D.H., An economy of gendered practices? Learning to teach physical education from the perspective of Pierre Bourdieu's embodied sociology (2005) *Sport, Education and Society*, 10 (5), pp. 3-25
6. Brown, D.H., Complicity and reproduction in teaching physical education (1999) *Sport, Education and Society*, 4, pp. 143-59
7. Brown, D.H., Evans, J., Reproducing gender? Intergenerational links and the malePE teacher as a cultural conduit in physical education (2004) *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education*, 23, pp. 48-70
8. Calderhead, J., Teachers: Beliefs and knowledge (1996) *Handbook of educational psychology*, pp. 709-25. , ed. D.C. Berliner and R.C. Calfee, New York: Macmillan
9. Capel, S., Katene, W., Secondary PGCE students' perceptions of their subject knowledge (2002) *European Physical Education Review*, 6, pp. 46-67
10. Charmaz, K., (2006) *Constructing grounded theory*, , London: Sage
11. Coolahan, J., (2003) *Attracting, developing, & retaining effective teachers: Country background report for Ireland*, , Paris: OECD
12. (2005) *Preparing teachers for a changing world: What teachers should learn and be able to do*, , Darling-Hammond L. and J. Bransford, eds., London: Jossey-Bass
13. Darling-Hammond, L., Bransford, J., Page, P., Introduction (2005) *Preparing teachers for a changing world: What teachers should learn and be able to do*, pp. 1-39. , ed. L. Darling-Hammond and J. Bransford, London: Jossey-Bass
14. Dewar, A., (1989) *Recruitment in physical education teaching: Toward a critical approach*, pp. 39-58. , Inv Learning to Teach, ed. T. Templin and P. Schempp, Indianapolis, IN: Benchmark Press
15. Doolittle, S., Dodds, P., Placek, J., Persistence of beliefs about teaching during formal training of pre-service teachers (1993) *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education*, 12, pp. 355-65
16. Drudy, S., (2006) *Men in the classroom: Gender imbalances in teaching*, , London: Routledge
17. Drudy, S., Gender differences in entrance patterns and awards in initial teacher education (2006) *Irish Educational Studies*, 25 (3), pp. 259-73
18. Flynn, S., (2007) What is up and what is down, p. 20. , *Irish Times*, August
19. Goodson, I., Hargreaves, A., (1996) *Teachers. professional lives"*, , London: Falmer
20. Heinz, M., The composition of applicants and entrants to teacher education programmes in Ireland: Trends and patterns (2008) *Irish Educational Studies*, 27, pp. 223-40
21. First destination of award recipients in higher education (2000), , <http://www.hea.ie/>, Higher Education Authority (HEA) 2000, Dublin: HEA. Available at, (Accessed August 27, 2007)
22. Hutchinson, E., Prospective teachers' perspectives on teaching physical education: An interview study on recruitment phase teacher socialization (1993) *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education*, 12, pp. 344-54
23. Killeavy, M., (1998) *The professional development of primary teachers*, , Unpublished PhD dissertation, Education Department, Trinity College, Dublin
24. Lortie, D., (1975) *Schoolteacher: A sociological study*, , Chicago: University of Chicago Press
25. Loughran, J., (2006) *Developing a pedagogy of teacher education: Understanding teaching and learning about teaching*, ,

London: Routledge

26. Macphail, A., O'sullivan, M., Halbert, J., Physical education and education through sport in Ireland (2008), 2, pp. 188-201. , www.revue-eps.com, Physical education and sport education in the European Union, ed. G. Klein and K. Hardman, Paris: Editions Revue E.P.S. Available at, (Accessed November 15, 2008)Matanin, M., Collier, C., Longitudinal analysis of beliefs about teaching physical education (2003) *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education*, 22, pp. 153-68
27. O'connor, A., Macdonald, D., Up close and personal on physical education teachers' identity: Is conflict an issue? (2002) *Sport, Education and Society*, 7 (1), pp. 37-54
28. O'Sullivan, M., Beliefs of teachers and teacher candidates: Implications for teacher education (2005) *The Art and Science of Teaching in Physical Education and Sport*, , ed. F. Carreiro da Costa, M. Cloes and M. González Baleiro. Lisbon: Faculdade de Motricidade Humana
29. O'sullivan, M., (2007) Current Research on Physical Education Teacher Education, , Presentation to the European Council of Sport Sciences Annual Conference, July 11-14, in Jyvaskyla, Finland
30. (2005) *Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers - Final Report*, , OECD., Teachers matter. Paris: OECD
31. (2006) *Education Policy Analysis: Focus on Higher Education - 2005-2006 Edition*, , OECD., Paris: OECD
32. Pajeres, M.F., Teachers' beliefs and educational research: Cleaning up a messy construct (1992) *Review of Educational Research*, 62, pp. 307-32
33. Richardson, V., The role of attitudes and beliefs in learning to teach (1996) *Handbook of Research on Teacher Education*, pp. 102-19. , ed. J. Sikula, T. Buttery and E. Guyton, New York: Macmillan
34. Rovegno, I., Teaching within a curricular zone of safety: School culture and the situated nature of students' pedagogical content knowledge (1994) *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, 65, pp. 269-79
35. Sanders, W., Rivers, J., (1996) *Cumulative and Residual Effects of Teachers on Future Student Academic Achievement*, , Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Value Added Research and Assessment Center
36. Sugrue, C., Student teacher lay theories: Implications for professional development (1996) *Teachers' professional lives*, pp. 154-177. , ed. I. Goodson and A. Hargreaves, London: Falmer Press
37. Tannehill, D., O'sullivan, M., Ni Chroinin, D., (2006) *Developing a Community of Practice in Physical Education*, , Presentation at the British Educational Research Association Annual Conference, September, in Warwick, England
38. Templin, T., Teacher isolation: A concern for collegial development of physical educators (1988) *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education*, 7, pp. 197-207
39. Tinning, R., Theoretical orientations in physical education teacher education (2006) *The handbook of physical education*, pp. 369-85. , ed. D. Kirk, D. Macdonald and M. O'Sullivan, London: Sage
40. Tinning, R., Toxic jock syndrome? An exploration of PE department culture (2006) *The role of physical education and sport in promoting physical activity and health: Abstract book*, p. 288. , ed. P. Heikanaro-Johansson and E. McEvoy, July 5-8, at AIESEP World Congress, in Jyvaskyla, Finland
41. Tsangaridou, N., Teachers' beliefs (2006) *Handbook of Physical Education*, , ed. D. Kirk, D. Macdonald and M. O'Sullivan. London: Sage