



‘It’s already set in my mind’: Investigating the acculturation of secondary school pupils aspiring to teach physical education

Andrew Sprake¹ , Alan Thomson¹ , Jessica Louise Macbeth¹ ,
and Kevin Andrew Richards² 

Abstract

The occupational socialisation of physical education (PE) teachers has received limited scholarly attention in the UK, and even less is known about the influence of acculturation on their ideological preconceptions of PE teaching. Most research investigating PE teachers’ acculturation has relied on the retrospective accounts of PE teacher education (PETE) students or in-service teachers, what we call reflection-on-acculturation. Understanding the pre-existing ideological orientations that prospective recruits bring to PETE is vital for the disruption of conservative practice. Given that PE in England exceeded recruitment targets for trainee teachers in 2023/24 and 2024/25, establishing how these preconceptions are formed is increasingly important. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the acculturation of prospective pre-service PE teachers while they are still in secondary school, and how it has shaped their perceptions of PE before formal recruitment into PETE. We call this reflection-in-acculturation. Data were generated through focus groups ($N = 9$) with secondary school pupils aspiring to become PE teachers ($N = 62$) from eight different secondary schools in the North of England. Data were analysed using reflexive thematic analysis and principles of collaborative qualitative analysis. Findings suggest that acculturation is profoundly influential to prospective recruits’ ideological preconceptions. Far from being ‘blank slates’, the prospective recruits had developed strong anticipatory ideas about, and fixed ideological preconceptions of, what PE teaching is or should be. We recommend that PETE programmes facilitate prolonged opportunities for recruits to critically reflect on their experiences, potentially disrupting and unlearning detrimental orientations developed during acculturation.

Keywords

Physical education, occupational socialisation, acculturation, reflection-in-acculturation, prospective pre-service teachers

¹University of Lancashire, UK

²University of Illinois Urbana–Champaign, USA

Corresponding author:

Andrew Sprake, School of Health, Social Work and Sport, University of Lancashire, Fylde Road, Preston PR1 2HE, UK.
Email: asprake@lancashire.ac.uk

Introduction

Physical education (PE) has persistently occupied a marginal and somewhat precarious position in schools. Despite being a compulsory subject in the National Curriculum in England (Department for Education, 2014), PE is routinely stigmatised as a ‘non-serious’ educational pursuit (Stolz, 2014: 1) with a low status in the subject hierarchy (Bleazby, 2015). The habitual sense of surviving in a marginal role (Hendry, 1975) has resulted in PE teachers experiencing stress, burnout and early career attrition (Richards et al., 2018). Amid the uncertainty about PE, Kirk (2010) outlined three potential futures for the subject – more of the same, radical reform or extinction – advocating for radical reform to secure its future (Stolz and Kirk, 2015). At the chalkface, however, PE has been notoriously resistant to change (Gerdin and Pringle, 2015; Kirk, 2010). This is evidenced by the widespread and enduring dominance of the multi-activity sport-techniques model (Stolz and Kirk, 2015), which is dominated by games and competition (Griggs and Fleet, 2021). Resistance to change is compounded by the *doxa* of PE – the ‘collective beliefs, norms and attitudes’ within it that are widely known yet rarely questioned (Larsson et al., 2016: 117). Pre-service PE teachers hold firmly established preconceptions about what PE teaching is or ought to be, and most intend to replicate their own PE teachers’ practice when they enter the profession (Curtner-Smith, 1999, 2017; Curtner-Smith et al., 2024). Consequently, the future of PE could be jeopardised by its deeply entrenched structural, cultural and social traditions. Without deliberate disruptions to their internalised blueprints, prospective and pre-service PE teachers will likely preserve the ‘normative order’ (Kirk, 2020: 61) when they enter the profession, perpetuating the cycle of teaching how they were taught.

Research investigating the lives and careers of PE teachers has largely been informed by occupational socialisation theory (OST) (Richards et al., 2019). OST comprises three main phases: *acculturation*, *professional socialisation* and *organisational socialisation* (Lawson, 1983a, 1983b). Studies focused on PE teachers’ acculturation – the influence of their biographies prior to PE teacher education (PETE) – have uncovered what attracts them to the role and how they are socialised into the profession before PETE (Curtner-Smith, 2017), suggesting that pre-service teachers (PSTs) enter PETE with well-established beliefs, values and assumptions about the role of the PE teacher (Merrem and Curtner-Smith, 2017). Most research investigating PE teachers’ acculturation, however, has relied on the retrospective accounts of PETE students or in-service teachers (Richards and Gaudreault, 2017a, 2017b). For the purpose of this paper, we call this reflection-*on*-acculturation. Furthermore, research exploring PE teachers’ acculturation has predominantly been nested within studies that incorporate other phases of OST, resulting in the scholarship of acculturation being ‘somewhat diluted’ (Curtner-Smith et al., 2024: 149).

To date, only three studies have focused exclusively on acculturation. Firstly, Hutchinson’s (1993: 353) research in the USA, involving seven seniors (aged 17–18), two juniors (aged 16–17), and one sophomore (aged 15–16), found that prospective PE teachers held ‘narrow perspectives’ on teaching PE. By implication, if prospective PE teachers’ preconceptions are not expanded during PETE, they will be bound to conservative orientations, with shallow and sportified curriculum intentions, having a lack of regard for planning and conflating participation with learning (Hutchinson, 1993). Secondly, Merrem and Curtner-Smith (2017: 139) investigated the acculturation of 10 prospective PE teachers in Germany (aged 18–28) and revealed that, despite two displaying ‘progressive teaching orientations’, the remaining eight held ‘well-developed conservative teaching orientations’. These conservative orientations, which often view curricular PE as synonymous with sport, serve to perpetuate the prevalence of coaching-oriented PE teachers, which is an underlying cause of ineffective PE teaching (Curtner-Smith, 2009). Thirdly,

Curtner-Smith et al. (2024: 159) investigated the acculturation of six PSTs in England (aged 21–29), who espoused ‘mostly traditional’ orientations that were closely tied with sport. The authors underline the significant challenges faced by teacher educators when attempting to disrupt or break the cycle of conservative practice. Within this limited body of research spanning over 30 years, no attention has been paid exclusively to the acculturation of secondary school pupils in the UK who self-identify as prospective pre-service PE teachers, referred to hereafter as prospective recruits.

According to census data on initial teacher training in England (Department for Education, 2024), PE exceeded recruitment targets in 2023/24 (181% of target) and 2024/25 (211% of target). In effect, PETE programmes recruited 1323 PSTs in 2023/24 and 1320 in 2024/25. There are considerable numbers of ‘acculturated’ PSTs entering the profession, but little is known about the occupational socialisation of PE teachers in the UK, and even less is known about their acculturation (Curtner-Smith et al., 2024). Understanding the ideological preconceptions that prospective recruits bring to PETE is vital for the disruption of conservative practice. Together with the dearth of research focused on prospective recruits in secondary school, establishing how these preconceptions are formed during acculturation is crucial. For the purpose of this paper, we call this reflection-*in*-acculturation.

This study aimed to investigate the acculturation of prospective recruits in secondary school, and how it has shaped their ideological preconceptions of PE before formal recruitment into PETE. Our reflection-*in*-acculturation approach, which amplifies the voices of prospective recruits during their school years, offers a timely response to the call for more acculturation research in PE (Richards and Gaudreault, 2017a, 2017b) and may help the profession ‘disrupt the perpetuation of traditional practices and perspectives passed from one generation of teachers to the next’ (Richards and Gaudreault, 2017b: 264). Significantly, this is the first study to focus exclusively on the acculturation of prospective recruits in the UK while they are still in secondary school.

Theoretical framework: Occupational socialisation theory

Lawson (1983b: 107) defines occupational socialisation as ‘all kinds of socialisation that initially influences persons to enter the field of physical education and that later are responsible for their perceptions and actions’. Establishing a dialectical theory of occupational socialisation, he refuted the idea that PE teachers are ‘blank slates waiting to be filled with contents of professional socialisation’ (Lawson, 1983a: 7). Instead, the dialectical approach assumes that PE teachers are capable of asserting their sense of agency in resistance of socialisation influences (Schempp and Graber, 1992). Studies of PE teachers’ socialisation now often relate to one or more OST phases. For instance, research has focused on their *acculturation* (Merrem and Curtner-Smith, 2017), *professional socialisation* (Graber et al., 2017), and *organisational socialisation* (Blankenship and Coleman, 2009). These phases represent the temporal contexts of PE teachers’ socialisation, and, despite being presented as conceptually discrete, they are interconnected and overlapping.

Acculturation begins in childhood, where young people’s conceptualisations of PE are formed, and begin to stabilise, based on their experience as pupils. While at school, children are exposed to the everyday realities of, and dominant discourses within, PE. These early encounters and protracted interactions with PE teachers shape prospective recruits’ beliefs about what PE is or should be. Lortie (1975) called this the *apprenticeship of observation*, through which individuals learn the ‘folkways of teaching’ (Buchmann, 1987: 151). Acculturation is also known as anticipatory socialisation (Lacey, 1977), where prospective recruits envisage the potentialities of life as a PE teacher, based on their subjective experiences. This entanglement with PE culture leads to the integration of ‘a body of values, commitments, orientations, and practices’ (Calderhead and Robson, 1991: 1),

which persists until PETE (Curtner-Smith, 1999) and may also supersede its influence (Richards et al., 2013). Long before PETE, therefore, prospective recruits have already integrated the *doxa* of PE (Larsson et al., 2016) and formed strong preconceptions of its nature and purpose, which have lasting impressions on their teaching orientations (Woods et al., 2016). This ‘latent culture’ is reinforced when teachers enter the workforce, where the effects of PETE are often *washed out* (Calderhead and Robson, 1991: 1–2) due to reality shock (Richards et al., 2014) or praxis shock (Kelchtermans and Ballet, 2002) when the realities and responsibilities of teaching challenge their previously held beliefs. Unsurprisingly, therefore, acculturation has been characterised as ‘the most potent type of socialisation’ that PE teachers experience (Curtner-Smith et al., 2008: 99).

Despite its significance, acculturation has received less scholarly attention than other OST phases (Flemons, 2017; Templin et al., 2017). The predominance of research that facilitates reflection-*on*-acculturation is understandable given the challenges of identifying, approaching and recruiting school-age prospective recruits. If perceptions, beliefs and attitudes go unexamined, however, it can lead to self-fulfilling cycles of custodial practices (Kim et al., 2025) and non-teaching orientations (Crum, 1993). Considering the enduring influence of acculturation (Amorim and Ribeiro-Silva, 2024), and that many PE teachers revert back to teaching how they were taught (Parkes and O’Leary, 2022), it is crucial to understand how these orientations are shaped at the point(s) of origin.

Methodology

Subscribing to the view that children are experts in their own lives (Mason and Danby, 2011), and that realities are socially constructed (Bogdan and Biklin, 1998), we employ an interpretivist approach underpinned by a relativist ontology and constructivist epistemology (Denzin et al., 2024). Since individuals experience the social world through their own frame of reference (Krauss, 2005), we recognise the existence of multiple realities (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003). From this perspective, individuals construct meaning through negotiated interactions with the world, and single events can produce varied individual meanings (Gray, 2009). The methodology is therefore congruent with the dialectical view of socialisation. We also adopt a Bayesian perspective on belief updating processes, characterised by Oeberst and Imhoff (2023: 10):

people hold beliefs (i.e., priors), and any new information will either solidify these beliefs or attenuate them depending on its consistency with the prior. Importantly, however, strong prior beliefs will not be changed dramatically by just one weak additional bit of information. Instead, to meaningfully change firmly held beliefs requires extremely strong or a lot of contradictory evidence.

For positionality, Andrew and Alan were previously teachers of secondary PE, which has inevitably shaped our perspectives and interpretations as researchers. We acknowledge and embrace that our *brought selves* (Reinharz, 1997) are the embodied legacies of acculturation, and rather than viewing these as a ‘*contamination of the data*’, they enabled us to recognise the influence of our biographies throughout the research (Attia and Edge, 2017: 35). We are also mindful that this is a cross-sectional study, and that socialisation is ‘responsive to cultural and social norms, which are fluid and changing over time’ (Richards and Gaudreault, 2017a, 2017b: 263).

Participants

We used our professional networks to identify ‘gatekeepers’ (Ashley, 2025), comprising eight PE teachers from eight different secondary schools in the North of England. Purposive sampling was

then used to identify, invite and recruit participants (Kenneavy and Harnois, 2023). The teachers were given inclusion criteria, requiring participants to (i) be aged 15 to 16 years, (ii) attend secondary school in the North of England, (iii) be studying for a General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) in PE – that is, high-stakes examinable PE – and (iv) aspire to become a PE teacher. The teachers used these criteria to invite suitable participants. Consistent with Hutchinson's (1993) work, therefore, we used reputational case selection, a criterion-based sampling process (Goetz and LeCompte, 1984), to recruit 'key informants' (Miles et al., 2019: 321). Participants were recruited from academies and state-maintained schools, from both secular and faith schools, including Muslim, Catholic and Church of England schools, and, while they were not selected based on their diversity, a degree of heterogeneity emerged through their sociodemographic identities. Of the 62 participants, there were 44 males (comprising 32 White, five Black and seven British South Asian boys) and 18 females (comprising 14 White, one Black and three British South Asian girls). For the purpose of this study, sociodemographic data did not inform the analysis. We recognise that pupils' voices were representative of, and confined to, their socially situated environments, but primacy was given to *what* was said rather than *who* said it. Once the participants were identified, dates were agreed for Andrew to visit each school to undertake the focus groups in-person, on school premises, during the school day.

The research gained ethical approval from the institutional ethics committee at the University of Lancashire (BAHSS2 0376). Adhering to an 'ethic of respect' (British Educational Research Association, 2024: 11), we followed three stages of informed consent, including school, parental, and participant consent. All participants were given pseudonyms, and, while we are mindful that 'the act of naming is an act of power' (Guenther, 2009: 412), which is a 'micro-ethical' issue (Wang et al., 2024: 2), the assigned pseudonyms were respectful of their sociodemographic identities, including gender, ethnicity, social class and location (Heaton, 2021).

Data generation

Data were generated through nine focus groups in eight secondary schools, with one being visited twice to interview two separate groups. Focus groups were selected because of their capacity for 'yielding a collective rather than an individual view' (Cohen et al., 2017: 532). Participants were presented with a range of questions relating to their acculturation, such as: 'In what ways do you think your PE teachers have influenced your views about PE?', 'Do you think that your approach to teaching PE in the future might be influenced by your experiences of PE today?' and 'Do you anticipate that college, university and teacher training will change your views about how to teach PE?' Focus groups took place in unoccupied classrooms, a small conference room and a PE office, lasting between 24 and 48 minutes, with an average time of 38 minutes. Noticeably comfortable with expressing their viewpoints, all but one focus group lasted over 30 minutes, with one group being somewhat less vocal, which can be typical when conducting research with young people (Ennis and Chen, 2012). Furthermore, schools are dynamic environments in which priority is rightly given to students' learning over research (Wright and O'Flynn, 2012). Operating within the fixed confines of the school day and around gatekeepers' and pupils' schedules, Andrew conducted each focus group during prearranged and mutually agreed timeslots. Therefore, data were collected within relatively compressed timeframes, typically during timetabled lessons. With pupils' lesson time being sacrificed in support of the research, we remained cognisant that access to the field is not a *right* (Cohen et al., 2017) but a *privilege*.

Being sensitive to the challenges of conducting focus groups with young people, particularly the potential for power dynamics, self-censorship and both dominant and suppressed voices, we strived

to create a supportive environment that gave voice to all participants. PE teachers were present in five of the focus groups and were absent in the remaining four. Each teacher agreed to adopt a neutral and non-participatory role but inevitably became another significant adult in the room. This is a common challenge for researchers to navigate when working with children (Pyer and Campbell, 2013). Invariably, adults collecting data from children present unequal power relations (Mauthner, 2006), and the teachers' presence potentially added another dimension of power. However, when comparing participants' responses across all focus groups, including those with and without teachers present, their responses were remarkably similar, and there was no evidence to suggest that their teachers' presence hindered their expressions. In fact, whilst participants did not confirm this directly, the teachers appeared to serve as 'familiar adults', enabling them to settle in and feel comfortable (Adler et al., 2019: 6). Focus groups took place at a considerable distance from the teachers. Participants could arrange the desks as they liked and were encouraged to speak freely. Andrew explained to participants that their teachers were not there to contribute to the discussions, but were available to support the researcher and would not judge any responses. This appeared to empower participants without disempowering the PE teachers (Pyer and Campbell, 2013). Whilst on the periphery of each room, and potentially out of audible range, the teachers were fully engrossed in their administrative duties. In fact, most teachers regularly left the room to address other school-related matters and paid minimal attention to the discussions at all. Consequently, we were confident that participants were speaking freely in all focus groups.

Data analysis

Data were analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2022) six-phase process for reflexive thematic analysis (RTA), emphasising the 'centrality of researcher subjectivity' (Braun and Clarke, 2019: 590). We concur that themes do not emerge but are 'actively crafted by the researcher and shaped by their interpretative choices' (Smith and Sparkes, 2020: 1007). Principles of collaborative qualitative analysis (CQA) (Richards and Hemphill, 2018) were also applied, specifically the use of consensus coding and peer debriefing. The first phase involved data familiarisation, where Andrew, Alan and Jessica individually read and re-read the data transcripts. In phase two, they independently coded the transcripts using Microsoft Word, adding initial codes and comments in the margins. We held regular meetings to reflexively discuss our individual interpretations and develop a shared understanding of the data. A collaborative codebook was then created for each author to share their codes. In phase three, Andrew identified patterns across the codes to generate initial themes. Saldaña's codes-to-theory model (2025) assisted with developing categories, themes and assertions. Phase four involved collaborative meetings held every two weeks to review, scrutinise and name the themes, as well as the audit trail leading to their construction. Phase five involved refining, defining and naming themes, where we collectively agreed upon the final themes. The sixth phase, writing up and reporting, is presented in the following sections.

Carving out the analytical space for multiple interpretations of, and perspectives on, the data took a considerable investment of time, and there were variations in how data were coded. For example, we assigned three different codes to a single data excerpt, including (1) 'future practice highly influenced by PE teachers', (2) 'somewhat fixed idea of future practice' and (3) 'emulate teachers'. Despite the differences between our individual phrasing of these initial codes, they proved useful for the collaborative discussions in which we developed consensus. In fact, this process was relatively unproblematic because all three authors' interpretations were closely aligned and were sensitive to the same patterns of meaning within the data (Braun and Clarke, 2022). When deliberating and refining the themes, however, we did agree to consolidate the three initial

themes that Andrew developed into two overarching themes, because of their shared narrative essence. Applying principles of CQA provided a rigorous and transparent approach to data analysis (Richards and Hemphill, 2018) whilst capitalising on multiple researchers' perspectives (Cornish et al., 2014).

Findings

RTA and CQA led to the construction of two major themes which, to amplify participants' voices, are presented as direct quotes (Eldh et al., 2020). The major themes were (1) 'It's already set in my mind how I would teach' and (2) 'I think I'm fixed and open-minded at the same time'. In this section, like Morley et al. (2020), we 'show' the data and invite readers to construct meanings that resonate with them (Smith, 2017). Findings are represented through verbatim quotes for sincerity, credibility and meaningful coherence, which are hallmarks of qualitative research (Tracy, 2010). We then provide the analytical 'tell' in the Discussion (Morley et al., 2020).

'It's already set in my mind how I would teach'

Participants overwhelmingly expressed their intention to emulate their PE teachers' practice. Asked whether their teaching orientations will be influenced by their current PE teachers, participants remarked, 'Yes, definitely' (Ryan), 'I'd do it the same way' (Jamie), 'I'd probably teach the same way as him' (Ismail), and 'To be honest, I'd teach the same way Miss does' (Paige). Highlighting the protracted influence of his PE teachers, Harry commented:

I think it will be the same because that is all I have seen, and that is all I really know... I've enjoyed the way I've been taught by these teachers, so I obviously want to do the same for the other students that I teach.

Reece echoed this, stating, 'That is how we've been taught in the past, like, four or five years'.

Referring to their teachers' experience, ability to explain and provide good learning experiences, participants also justified their intentions to emulate their PE teachers. Abbie remarked, 'I would keep it the same way as Miss ... because, obviously, she's done it for so many years and it's working for her, and I think it will be better to follow someone else's footsteps'. Hassan added, '... because the way she teaches, I actually understand it. I like the way she teaches. If it was someone else, I might not understand it ... so I wouldn't want to teach it that way'. These views were reinforced by Matty:

It's just better to be like your old teacher because, in some ways, you will look up to them, if you genuinely want to do that job ... you obviously look up to your PE teachers so you take advice from them, ask them any questions and then ... you try and set your learning on them, because if you know you've had a good experience with that one, you'd hope it would affect many people and have a good experience with you.

In addition, Nathan highlighted the perceived 'risks' of deviating from his PE teacher's approach:

The way she teaches, it helps me learn. So, because I know she helped me, like, the way she taught me, I wouldn't really change that, because if I added my own twist to it, it might not work the same, which might not teach the children properly, so I'd just keep it the same.

Participants also insisted that their PE teachers are inspirational role models who are widely respected, and who promote the value of relationships, maintaining standards, and have a genuine care for the interests of pupils. Explaining why their future practice will mirror that of their PE teachers, participants stated:

[It is] because you look up to them. When you're in year seven, you look up to them as role models and think you want to be like that. If you do that, a lot of people will look up to you. (Kieran)

[My PE teacher] pushed me on that extra bit and I really didn't want to do it, but ... once I'd done it, I'd trained to do it, and then I'd done it, and I did well. (Connor)

They have inspired us to do sport, and we want to inspire kids like they did. (Ellie)

My teaching will definitely be the same. You want your students to stay fit and healthy, but you also want to educate them, like, what they can do later in life. (Tyrese)

My teaching will stay the same because, from my experience, my PE teachers have encouraged me ... and I would want to do that for children as well. (Kelsey)

The formulation of relationships with pupils, as well as the standards and expectations in PE, were emphasised as justifications for emulating their PE teachers:

What [PE teacher] does well is he just, sort of, fits in with them, like, if they aren't behaving so well then you always see him approach it differently, and that's something I would do. (Lee)

So, you know the PE teachers, you can laugh and joke around with them so it's like you can actually be yourself and be happy. (Jamie)

The way Miss teaches, I wouldn't consider it 'bad strict', I would say it's more like a discipline, like, reasonable and a bit disciplinary, as in, it's not like 'oh do this, do that' but it's like ... she knows how to deal with people, students that mess about, so it makes you not want to mess about as much and focus. (Nathan)

I definitely want to be a teacher like Miss because, say if somebody's talking when she's trying to do the register, she'll tell them off, she'll punish them – well she'll give them the 'stage' but, like, when you're actually out there she'll, like, come round, encourage you so she can be strict and, like, people do listen to her but at the same time she's dead, like, chilled out as well. She is not like always like nagging at people. (Libby)

[My PE teacher] is firm but fair, like, he knows when to try to change a class of kids who don't want to be there and just mess around, into a class of kids that turn up wanting to do PE. (Kieran)

Participants were also alive to the importance of the social and emotional learning potential in PE, and feeling cared for by their PE teachers:

I feel like sometimes, with PE teachers, it doesn't feel like they're just doing their job, like what they're obligated to do, because they're naturally invested in what's going on, they actually care about it. Like, they actually want you to win in sport. Like, for another teacher, when they're teaching you, it doesn't really

feel like they care, it feels like they're just doing their job, they're just doing what they have to do. But with PE teachers it actually feels like they care about what they do. (Malik)

I like how they encourage you to get involved. Say if you're not in the best mood, you're just like 'I don't want to do it', and the teacher says, 'just sit out', it makes you feel like they don't really care if you're doing it or not. But when they're encouraging you to get involved, it shows that they care about your education and how you do in that lesson. (Skye)

This theme demonstrates that prospective recruits intend to emulate their PE teachers' practice, and that PE teachers are highly influential role models for aspiring PE teachers. Through their reflection-*in*-acculturation, prospective recruits shared how their apprenticeship of observation has shaped their preconceptions of PE.

'I think I'm fixed and open-minded at the same time'

While most participants displayed strong ideological preconceptions of PE, the openness of the focus groups enabled some to voice with confidence more critical perspectives on how their acculturation will influence their future practice, stating: 'I think I'm fixed and open-minded at the same time, because I've got a good idea of what I would like to do with my future students and things I would change in the lesson' (Aisha), 'I would try to be less shouty, so the students like me more, so they are more inclined to listen to me' (Zainab), and 'I'd probably be open to change in a few years' time' (Jay).

Some participants also anticipated that college, university, and PETE will influence their general teaching orientations. Ryan commented:

When you go to college or university, you obviously pick more stuff up, and you'd be more knowledgeable of, like, the whole idea of being a PE teacher, but I feel like I've got some sort of idea of what it would be like.

Jake elaborated:

I have got ideas but when you go further on into college and university, you're obviously going to learn new stuff that you didn't know before. Obviously, I've got a fixed idea of what I have to do to get started, but once I do all the training and everything, I'm obviously going to learn more and more stuff which is going to develop me even further to be a better teacher.

Kieran astutely predicted that the orientations of the teaching staff at these institutions will further influence his preconceptions, suggesting: 'It all just depends on, like, say you go to college and university ... it all depends on the teachers you get there as well ... and, you know, your perspective on how to teach might change from doing your teaching classes'. However, some participants expressed that, while PETE may develop their confidence, it will not influence their teaching orientations:

I feel like teacher training, in the sense of actually teaching, won't be as useful as high school, like how we have seen our teachers teach, but I feel like teacher training would be good for building your confidence. (Harley)

If I was to just go into a classroom now and try and teach, I don't think I'd be as confident as the PE teachers are now, so I feel like we're there to develop confidence but in terms of teaching, I feel like the way I teach PE will be the same. (Hassan)

Offering more criticality, some participants asserted their intention to blend aspects of their PE teachers' practice with their own orientations, stating, 'I'll take the best bits from everything. Because this [being a pupil] is like a base for us for teacher training, so I'll take the best bits from that' (Hamza), and 'If you're taught in a certain way, and you like the way you're being taught, then you obviously go into teaching and continue that, but if you're taught in a way you don't like, you do the complete opposite' (Scott). Determined to avoid the sense of repetition in PE, Kayleigh justified this further:

I think I'm a bit of a mix. Because I get taught by Miss [PE teacher], Miss [other PE teacher], she's a lot less strict. But I still wouldn't be just the same as her, I'd change a few things. I'd probably change... I don't know, like, the way she starts a few of the lessons. I like it, but it could be a bit better. When we practise our skills, we just do drill after drill after drill and it's always the same ones every time, and then we go into a match. So, I'd probably swap them and do it differently.

Aisha shared this opinion, and aims to integrate her PE teacher's motivational qualities, while doing things differently:

Lessons like, let's just say random sports like badminton, rounders, basketball and games that we've played, it motivated those students to do well, and it actually made them better at the game and the sport, so I'd like to do that as well to motivate my students to do better in sport. But then I'd do other things instead of running all the time, I'd do other starters in the lesson, warm-ups and stuff. And I'll change the lesson a bit as well.

Some participants also suggested that they plan to be adaptable and claimed that their teaching orientations will depend on the classes and situational contexts, stating, 'It's going to be similar but not the same, because I want to be adaptable to my class, not just what I've been taught. Because it might not work for them' (Kieran), 'Obviously, it depends on what type of kids I'm teaching because it all depends on the different personalities' (Chloe), and 'It's just like other people said, it depends on the class to be honest' (Mason). Others commented on how pupils' motivation and behaviour will influence their practice:

I think it depends on the class, really. Like, you might have the idea of you go in all nice and everything and you've got a class or kids who just don't want to be there, and they would, like, mess around all the time, so you're going to have to change the way you are because you might have to be a bit firmer. (Harry)

It just depends on what the kids are like, because if they're better behaved then I'd be more relaxed, give them more leeway, but if they're not then I'd have to be more strict. (Dylan)

In addition to the situational contexts, some participants expected their future practice to be shaped by the geographical location and socioeconomic context of the school. For instance, Chloe predicted that, while she would remain open-minded, her teaching would vary based on stereotypical preconceptions of pupils from either middle-class areas or areas of socioeconomic deprivation:

I think I'd be very open-minded because it depends where you're working really doesn't it? Like, with different kids, if you have a load of soft kids from [middle-class area] then you have to do it differently to make them actually do something but if you're in a more deprived area, or where the kids are a bit more 'rough', I think you have to do a different kind of style to make them look up to you, listen to you, make them understand what's going on.

She also emphasised the performative role that she intends to adopt as a PE teacher:

In a socially deprived area, I think that I'd have to approach it in more of a brutal way rather than a soft way because I think that I could become a target, or they could end up targeting another pupil that is maybe not as hard as them, you know what I mean? I would make sure that they know that they can't outstep their boundaries with me because I'm the teacher.

This theme demonstrates that some prospective recruits, while having strong preconceptions, were open-minded about their future practice. By intending to blend their PE teachers' practice with their own orientations, and by claiming that their future practice will depend on their classes and contexts, some prospective recruits held more critical and balanced views about their future teaching orientations.

Discussion

In view of our findings, this section discusses four important insights into the acculturation of prospective PE teachers in England and how it has shaped their preconceptions of PE. Firstly, building on the assertion that PSTs do not enter the profession as 'blank slates' (Lawson, 1983a: 7), our findings suggest that prospective recruits have already developed strong anticipatory ideas about, and, in most cases, fixed ideological preconceptions of, PE teaching. Most prospective recruits have *firm intentions to replicate entrenched practices*, having passively internalised the *doxa* of PE through their apprenticeship of observation. Secondly, our findings serve to *problematise the dialectical perspective of OST*. Thirdly, we discuss how prospective recruits are *anticipating the wash-out effect*. Finally, we discuss how some prospective recruits are more balanced and willing to integrate multiple perspectives, suggesting they are perhaps more *receptive to professional socialisation*.

Firm intentions to replicate entrenched practices

Teacher socialisation processes are never static, as school cultures and contexts evolve over time (O'Leary, 2019; Richards et al., 2014). Nevertheless, through reflection-*in*-acculturation, the prospective recruits in this study overwhelmingly expressed ideological preconceptions of PE teaching. Our findings support the notion that prospective recruits hold well-established perspectives on teaching PE that are largely inherited from their PE teachers (Hutchinson, 1993). Advancing this work, our findings also suggest that most prospective recruits in secondary school have already developed a steadfast commitment to emulating their PE teachers' practice when they enter the profession. The prospective recruits emphasised the protracted influence of their acculturation (Lortie, 1975) and, together with insights from PSTs (Wrench, 2017) and in-service teachers (Parkes and O'Leary, 2022), our findings strengthen the claim that acculturation is a profoundly influential phase of occupational socialisation (Curtner-Smith et al., 2008). Consequently, it seems highly likely that, without deliberate disruptions to their preconceptions, we can expect *more of the same* from future PE teachers (Kirk, 2010).

Problematizing the dialectical perspective of OST

Significantly, having already integrated the ‘body of values, commitments, orientations, and practices’ associated with the subject (Calderhead and Robson, 1991: 1), most of the prospective recruits appear to have passively internalised the *doxa* of PE (Larsson et al., 2016), strengthening their taken-for-granted assumptions about PE teaching. Most of the prospective recruits have passively absorbed their nascent teaching orientations through the observation and vicarious reinforcement of their PE teachers (Bandura, 1977). The prospective recruits also regard their PE teachers as widely respected, which contrasts with international research tracing the marginality of PE teachers and their subject (Sakallı and Şenel, 2024). The apprenticeship of observation, therefore, inevitably leads to prospective recruits having only partial, and in some cases erroneous, understandings of PE and the realities of PE teaching. Such limited preconceptions should be amended at both root (acculturation) and stem (professional socialisation).

Consequently, research employing the dialectical view of acculturation should not assume or overstate the degree to which prospective recruits *actively* negotiate their acculturation, nor should it overlook or underestimate their proclivity to *passively internalise* the custodial norms espoused in PE, and to subsequently justify them as part of their orientations. With such firmly established preconceptions, these prospective recruits may be the ones whose orientations are most resistant to change. Furthermore, there are numerous psychological factors that may hinder prospective recruits’ belief updating dispositions, such as *belief perseverance bias* (Siebert and Siebert, 2023) or the *backfire effect* (Trevors et al., 2016) – the ironic strengthening of erroneous beliefs in the face of refuting evidence. These factors may present further challenges for PETE programmes to inspire lasting change.

Anticipating the wash-out effect

The prospective recruits also described their PE experience as a ‘base’ for PETE, reinforcing the influence of acculturation (Curtner-Smith et al., 2008). For those entering the profession with fixed preconceptions, concerns that they might *revert back* to teaching in the same way they were taught (Graber et al., 2017) may not go far enough. Most prospective recruits in this study had no intention of deviating from their PE teachers’ practice. The issue of reverting back to custodial practices following PETE is explained by the *wash-out effect* (Blankenship and Coleman, 2009), but this assumes that recruits’ orientations have been *washed-in* to begin with. Given that the prospective recruits recognised the profound influence of their acculturation, further research exploring how and whether teaching orientations are *washed-in* during PETE would be valuable. To inspire meaningful change, PETE programmes should not only strive to understand the influence of their PSTs’ acculturation (Richards et al., 2013) but should facilitate prolonged opportunities for recruits to critically reflect on their experiences, potentially disrupting the detrimental orientations developed through acculturation. Considering that PETE programmes typically last one year, and that there are many years of acculturation influencing PSTs’ teaching orientations (Amorim and Ribeiro-Silva, 2024), this is a particularly important avenue for future research.

Both teacher educators and in-service teachers share some responsibility for proactively disrupting the continuation of undesirable practice. Attempts to modify PSTs’ orientations during PETE are perhaps inefficacious. We suggest that the PE profession should avoid the perils of passive recruitment – that is, relying on those prospective recruits who arrive at PETE based on their sporting biographies – and should employ more active and deliberate approaches (Bert and Richards, 2018). PETE providers could identify potential recruits while they are still in secondary school,

particularly those who are interested in a wide range of activities, creating a more proactive invitation to the profession. These approaches could also utilise in-service PE teachers who support pedagogical pluralism as agents of recruitment (Woods et al., 2016) to guide prospective recruits toward appropriate teaching orientations.

Receptive to professional socialisation

Some prospective recruits were more balanced about their future teaching orientations. While accepting the influence of their teachers, some anticipated the influence of college, university and PETE as well as the need to adapt to different classes in different contexts, such as the socio-economic circumstances of the school or individual class behaviour. Interestingly, most of these points related to adapting their teaching based on pupils' behaviour and class traits, not their diverse needs or abilities. The concept of *inclusion*, therefore, is currently absent from their preconceptions, which may reflect the prevalence of ableism in schools generally (Goodley et al., 2019). Nevertheless, by acknowledging that their orientations could be influenced by college, university and PETE, as well as the orientations of staff in these institutions, some prospective recruits signalled what we call *anticipatory professional socialisation*. These prospective recruits also displayed an open mindset about their future orientations. Perhaps, therefore, it is the mindset of prospective recruits, rather than their specific orientations, that warrants further consideration.

There are various avenues inviting our attention for important research in this field. Firstly, future research could investigate prospective recruits' acculturation in other regions and contexts, both in the UK and internationally. Secondly, while this study gave primacy to *what* was said rather than *who* said it, there is currently a dearth of research investigating the acculturation of prospective and pre-service PE teachers with a deliberate consideration of their sociodemographic identities. With 44 male and 18 female participants, our sample was male-dominated, which reflects the typical gender divide between UK pupils choosing to study GCSE PE, with 63% being male in 2022 (Farrell, 2022). Nevertheless, future research could consider sociodemographic identities as part of the research design, utilising wider theoretical perspectives. For instance, research may consider acculturation from a gendered perspective, or with a focus on special educational needs and disabilities, or how the neoliberalisation of education is leading to a culture of performativity (Ball, 2003). Incidentally, eight of the 62 participants volunteered to participate in follow-up studies to trace the durability of their beliefs. Thirdly, given the deeply entrenched views of most prospective recruits, it is important to note that their acculturation occurs at earlier stages of education, and that future research focused on early secondary school, even primary school, would add considerable value to the OST literature. Furthermore, the prospective recruits in this study have only their own PE teacher(s) on which to base their preconceptions, which is inevitable when facilitating reflection-*in*-acculturation. Finally, future research could utilise the growing repertoire of qualitative methods to broaden the scope and further illustrate the complexities associated with acculturation in PE.

Conclusions

The findings of this research suggest that acculturation exerts a profound influence on the preconceptions of prospective PE teachers, which challenges the capacity for PETE programmes to inspire lasting change. These findings could serve as a fresh impetus for PETE programmes to work with recruits to establish, understand and critically interrogate their preconceptions. In addition to preparing PSTs for careers as PE teachers, we agree that PETE programmes should encourage recruits

to reflect on their own experiences and scrutinise their underlying assumptions about PE teaching (Richards et al., 2013). These approaches should facilitate prolonged opportunities for PSTs to develop reflexive self-awareness by confronting the detrimental elements of their acculturation, because, as Oeberst and Imhoff (2023: 10) maintain, ‘to meaningfully change firmly held beliefs requires extremely strong or a lot of contradictory evidence’. Key questions that PETE providers could ask PSTs might include: ‘What specific beliefs are you bringing with you to PETE?’, ‘Which of these beliefs are firmly held?’, ‘What, if any, evidence supports your beliefs?’, ‘What, if any, evidence contradicts your beliefs?’, and ‘Would extremely strong or contradictory evidence alter your beliefs?’ These questions would facilitate meaningful reflections for PSTs, potentially disrupting their internalised blueprints and mitigating the *wash-out* effects of reality shock and praxis shock.

This research has made a timely, original and internationally significant contribution to the body of knowledge on occupational socialisation research. As the first study to focus exclusively on the acculturation of prospective PE teachers in England while they are still in school, it has addressed a significant gap in the occupational socialisation literature. Furthermore, by distinguishing between reflection-*on*-acculturation and reflection-*in*-acculturation, our research has made a unique contribution to the theoretical and methodological framing of occupational socialisation research in PE. In addition, our findings have challenged any taken-for-granted assumptions about the extent to which prospective recruits actively negotiate their own socialisation. In doing so, we have problematised the dialectical perspective of OST. Finally, this research has provided important evidence upon which to develop future policy and practice informing both PETE programmes and the recruitment of pre-service PE teachers. These insights have both national and international implications for researchers concerned with OST. We invite PE scholars to build on our findings in their own unique contexts, and to undertake research that promotes reflection-*in*-acculturation.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all the prospective recruits who participated in this study and generously shared their experiences and perspectives. We also extend our thanks to the PE teachers who kindly gave their time to facilitate access to the participating schools.

ORCID iDs

Andrew Sprake  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5164-770X>

Alan Thomson  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4742-4885>

Jessica Louise Macbeth  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2564-2267>

Kevin Andrew Richards  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3045-6001>

Ethical approval and informed consent statements

This study was approved by the institutional ethics committee at the University of Lancashire (BAHSS2 0376) on 9 December 2022.

Author contributions

Andrew conceptualised and led the study, gained ethical approval, conducted the focus groups and was responsible for most of the writing. Alan and Jessica generously gave up a significant amount of time to support Andrew with (i) further conceptualisations, (ii) the collaborative qualitative analysis and (iii) the provision of invaluable constructive feedback on numerous drafts of the paper. Kevin was invited as a fourth author

and, going beyond the role of a 'critical friend', he scrutinised and enhanced the quality of the paper, both conceptually and stylistically.

Funding

The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Declaration of conflicting interests

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

References

- Adler K, Salanterä S and Zumstein-Shaha M (2019) Focus group interviews in child, youth, and parent research: An integrative literature review. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 18: 1–15.
- Amorim C and Ribeiro-Silva E (2024) Preservice physical education teachers' perceptions of initial teacher education. *European Physical Education Review* 31(3): 355–373.
- Ashley LD (2025) Planning your research. In: Coe R, Waring M, Hedges LV, et al. (eds) *Research Methods and Methodologies in Education*. 4th ed. London: Sage Publications, pp. 31–40.
- Attia M and Edge J (2017) Be(com)ing a reflexive researcher: A developmental approach to research methodology. *Open Review of Educational Research* 4(1): 33–45.
- Ball SJ (2003) The teacher's soul and the terrors of performativity. *Journal of Education Policy* 18(2): 215–228.
- Bandura A (1977) *Social Learning Theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Bert G and Richards KAR (2018) Developing a future teachers' club to facilitate physical education teacher recruitment: Do you hear the call? *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance* 89(7): 9–15.
- Blankenship BT and Coleman MM (2009) An examination of "wash-out" and workplace conditions of beginning physical education teachers. *Physical Educator* 66(2): 97–111.
- Bleazby J (2015) Why some school subjects have a higher status than others: The epistemology of the traditional curriculum hierarchy. *Oxford Review of Education* 41(5): 671–689.
- Bogdan R and Biklin S (1998) *Qualitative Research for Education: An Introduction to Theory and Methods*. 3rd ed. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Braun V and Clarke V (2019) Reflecting on reflexive thematic analysis. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health* 11(4): 589–597.
- Braun V and Clarke V (2022) *Thematic Analysis: A Practical Guide*. London: Sage Publications.
- British Educational Research Association (2024) Ethical guidelines for educational research (5th edition). Available at: <https://www.bera.ac.uk/publication/ethical-guidelines-for-educational-research-fifth-edition-2024> (accessed 28 October 2025).
- Buchmann M (1987) Teaching knowledge: The lights that teachers live by. *Oxford Review of Education* 13(2): 151–164.
- Calderhead J and Robson M (1991) Images of teaching: Student teachers' early conceptions of classroom practice. *Teaching and Teacher Education* 7(1): 1–8.
- Cohen L, Manion L and Morrison K (2017) *Research Methods in Education*. 8th ed. Oxon: Routledge.
- Cornish F, Gillespie A and Zittoun T (2014) Collaborative analysis of qualitative data. In: Flick U (ed) *Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis*. London: Sage Publications, pp. 79–93.
- Crum BJ (1993) Conventional thought and practice in physical education: Problems of teaching and implications for change. *Quest* 45(3): 339–356.

- Curtner-Smith MD (1999) The more things change the more they stay the same: Factors influencing teachers' interpretations and delivery of national curriculum physical education. *Sport, Education and Society* 4(1): 75–97.
- Curtner-Smith MD (2009) Breaking the cycle of non-teaching physical education teachers: Lessons to be learned from the occupational socialization literature. In: Housner LD, Metzler M, Schempp PG, et al. (eds) *Historic Traditions and Future Directions of Research on Teaching and Teacher Education in Physical Education*. Morgantown, WV: Fitness Information Technology, pp. 221–225.
- Curtner-Smith MD (2017) Acculturation, recruitment, and the development of orientations. In: Lux Gaudreault K and Richards KAR (eds) *Teacher Socialization in Physical Education*. London: Routledge, pp. 33–46.
- Curtner-Smith MD, Hastie PA and Kinchin GD (2008) Influence of occupational socialization on beginning teachers' interpretation and delivery of sport education. *Sport, Education and Society* 13(1): 97–117.
- Curtner-Smith MD, Theodoulides A, Chappell A, et al. (2024) "I want kids to have the same feeling as I do towards physical activity": Acculturation of British preservice physical education teachers. *European Physical Education Review* 31(1): 147–162.
- Denzin NK and Lincoln Y (2003) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Denzin NK, Lincoln YS, Giardina MD et al. (2024) Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research. In: Denzin NK, Lincoln YS, Giardina MD, et al. (eds) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. 6th ed. London: Sage Publications, pp. 1–28.
- Department for Education (2014) National curriculum in England: Key stages 1 to 4. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-framework-for-key-stages-1-to-4/the-national-curriculum-in-england-framework-for-key-stages-1-to-4> (accessed 28 October 2025).
- Department for Education (2024) Initial teacher training census. <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/initial-teacher-training-census/2024-25> (accessed 28 October 2025).
- Eldh AC, Årestedt L and Berterö C (2020) Quotations in qualitative studies: Reflections on constituents, custom, and purpose. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 19: 1–6.
- Ennis CD and Chen S (2012) Interviews and focus groups. In: Armour K and Macdonald D (eds) *Research Methods in Physical Education and Youth Sport*. Oxon: Routledge, pp. 217–236.
- Farrell F (2022) GCSEs: How gender norms influence what young people choose to study at school. <https://theconversation.com/gcse-how-gender-norms-influence-what-young-people-choose-to-study-at-school-171903> (accessed 28 October 2025).
- Flemons M (2017) Occupational socialisation and the subjective warrant of physical education teachers. PhD Thesis, University of Bedfordshire, UK.
- Gerdin G and Pringle R (2015) The politics of pleasure: An ethnographic examination exploring the dominance of the multi-activity sport-based physical education model. *Sport, Education and Society* 22(2): 194–213.
- Goetz JP and LeCompte MD (1984) *Ethnography and Qualitative Design in Educational Research*. Orlando, FL: Academic Press.
- Goodley D, Lawthorn R, Liddiard K, et al. (2019) Provocations for critical disability studies. *Disability & Society* 34(6): 972–997.
- Graber KC, Killian CM and Woods AM (2017) Professional socialization, teacher education programs, and dialectics. In: Lux Gaudreault K and Richards KAR (eds) *Teacher Socialization in Physical Education*. London: Routledge, pp. 63–78.
- Gray D (2009) *Doing Research in the Real World*. 2nd ed. London: Sage Publications.
- Griggs G and Fleet M (2021) Most people hate physical education and most drop out of physical activity: In search of credible curriculum alternatives. *Education Sciences* 11(11): 701.
- Guenther KM (2009) The politics of names: Rethinking the methodological and ethical significance of naming people, organizations, and places. *Qualitative Research* 9(4): 411–421.

- Heaton J (2021) “*Pseudonyms are used throughout”: A footnote, unpacked. *Qualitative Inquiry* 28(1): 123–132.
- Hendry LB (1975) Survival in a marginal role: The professional identity of the physical education teacher. *The British Journal of Sociology* 26: 465–476.
- Hutchinson GE (1993) Prospective teachers’ perspectives on teaching physical education: An interview study on the recruitment phase of teacher socialization. *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education* 12: 344–354.
- Kelchtermans G and Ballet K (2002) The micropolitics of teacher induction: A narrative-biographical study on teacher socialisation. *Teaching and Teacher Education* 18(1): 105–120.
- Kenneavy K and Harnois CE (2023) *Social Research Methods: Sociology in Action*. London: Sage Publications.
- Kim Y, Simonton KL, Mercier K, et al. (2025) Examining the relationships among preservice physical education teachers’ beliefs, emotions, and professional identity. *European Physical Education Review* 32(1): 3–20.
- Kirk D (2010) *Physical Education Futures*. Oxon: Routledge.
- Kirk D (2020) *Precurity, Critical Pedagogy and Physical Education*. Oxon: Routledge.
- Krauss S (2005) Research paradigms and meaning making: A primer. *The Qualitative Report* 10(4): 758–770.
- Lacey C (1977) *The Socialization of Teachers*. London: Methuen.
- Larsson L, Linnér S and Schenker K (2016) The doxa of physical education teacher education – set in stone? *European Physical Education Review* 24(1): 114–130.
- Lawson HA (1983a) Toward a model of teacher socialization in physical education: The subjective warrant, recruitment, and teacher education (part 1). *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education* 2(3): 3–16.
- Lawson HA (1983b) Toward a model of teacher socialization in physical education: Entry into schools, teachers’ role orientations, and longevity in teaching (part 2). *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education* 3(1): 3–15.
- Lortie D (1975) *Schoolteacher: A Sociological Study*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Mason J and Danby S (2011) Children as experts in their lives: Child inclusive research. *Child Indicators Research* 4(2): 185–189.
- Mauthner M (2006) Methodological aspects of collecting data from children: Lessons from three research projects. *Children & Society* 11(1): 16–28.
- Merrem AM and Curtner-Smith MD (2017) Acculturation of prospective German physical education teachers. *European Physical Education Review* 25(1): 125–142.
- Miles MB, Huberman AM and Saldaña J (2019) *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook*. London: Sage Publications.
- Morley D, Banks T, Haslingden C, et al. (2020) Including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities in mainstream secondary physical education: A revisit study. *European Physical Education Review* 27(2): 401–418.
- Oeberst A and Imhoff R (2023) Toward parsimony in bias research: A proposed common framework of belief-consistent information processing for a set of biases. *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 18(6): 1464–1487.
- O’Leary N (2019) Teacher socialization in physical education: New perspectives. *Sport, Education and Society* 24(6): 668–671.
- Parkes C and O’Leary N (2022) What socialization experiences influence how high school physical education teachers deliver games? *The ASHPERD Journal* 43(1): 10–20.
- Pyer M and Campbell J (2013) The ‘other participant’ in the room: The effect of significant adults in research with children. *Research Ethics* 9(4): 153–165.
- Reinharz S (1997) Who am I? The need for a variety of selves in the field. In: Hertz R (ed) *Reflexivity and Voice*. London: Sage Publications, pp. 3–20.

- Richards KAR and Gaudreault KL (2017a) Socialisation into physical education: Learning from the past and looking to the future. In: Richards A and Gaudreault K (eds) *Teacher Socialisation in Physical Education: New Perspectives*. Oxon: Routledge, pp. 3–10.
- Richards KAR and Gaudreault KL (2017b) Future directions for the study of teacher socialization in physical education. In: Richards KAR and Gaudreault KL (eds) *Teacher Socialization in Physical Education: New Perspectives*. Oxon: Routledge, pp. 262–273.
- Richards KAR, Gaudreault KL, Starck JR, et al. (2018) Physical education teachers' perceptions of perceived mattering and marginalization. *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy* 23(4): 445–459.
- Richards KAR and Hemphill MA (2018) A practical guide to collaborative qualitative data analysis. *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education* 37(2): 225–231.
- Richards KAR, Pennington CG and Sinelnikov OA (2019) Teacher socialization in physical education: A scoping review of literature. *Kinesiology Review* 8(2): 86–99.
- Richards KAR, Templin TJ and Gaudreault KL (2013) Understanding the realities of school life: Recommendations for the preparation of physical education teachers. *Quest* 65(4): 442–457.
- Richards KAR, Templin TJ and Graber K (2014) The socialization of teachers in physical education: Review and recommendations for future works. *Kinesiology Review* 3(2): 113–134.
- Sakallı D and Şenel E (2024) The role of marginalisation and role stressors in physical education teachers' perceived mattering. *European Physical Education Review* 31(1): 3–17.
- Saldaña J (2025) *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. 5th ed. London: Sage Publications.
- Schempp PG and Graber KC (1992) Teacher socialization from a dialectical perspective: Pretraining through induction. *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education* 11(4): 329–348.
- Siebert J and Siebert JU (2023) Effective mitigation of the belief perseverance bias after the retraction of misinformation: Awareness training and counter-speech. *PLoS One* 18(3): e0282202.
- Smith B (2017) Generalizability in qualitative research: Misunderstandings, opportunities and recommendations for the sport and exercise sciences. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health* 10(1): 137–149.
- Smith B and Sparkes AC (2020) Qualitative research. In: Tenenbaum G and Eklund RC (eds) *Handbook of Sport Psychology*. 4th ed. Chichester: Wiley, pp. 1001–1019.
- Stolz SA (2014) *The Philosophy of Physical Education: A New Perspective*. Oxon: Routledge.
- Stolz SA and Kirk D (2015) David Kirk on physical education and sport pedagogy: In dialogue with Steven Stolz (part 1). *Asia Pacific Journal of Health, Sport and Physical Education* 6(1): 77–91.
- Templin TJ, Padaruth S and Sparkes AC (2017) A historical overview of teacher socialization in physical education. In: Richards KAR and Gaudreault KL (eds) *Teacher Socialization in Physical Education: New Perspectives*. Oxon: Routledge, pp. 11–30.
- Tracy SJ (2010) Qualitative quality: Eight “big-tent” criteria for excellent qualitative research. *Qualitative Inquiry* 16(10): 837–851.
- Trevors GJ, Muis KR, Pekrun R, et al. (2016) Identity and epistemic emotions during knowledge revision: A potential account for the backfire effect. *Discourse Processes* 53(5-6): 339–370.
- Wang S, Ramdani JM, Sun S, et al (2024) Naming research participants in qualitative language learning research: Numbers, pseudonyms, or real names? *Journal of Language, Identity & Education* 25(1): 86–99.
- Woods AM, Richards KAR and Ayers SF (2016) All in: Teachers' and college faculty's roles in recruiting future physical educators. *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance* 87(4): 18–23.
- Wrench A (2017) Pre-service teacher identity formation and socialisation. In: Richards KAR and Gaudreault K (eds) *Teacher Socialization in Physical Education: New Perspectives*. Oxon: Routledge, pp. 47–62.
- Wright J and O'Flynn G (2012) Conducting ethical research. In: Armour K and Macdonald D (eds) *Research Methods in Physical Education and Youth Sport*. Oxon: Routledge, pp. 66–78.

Author biographies

Andrew Sprake is a Lecturer in Physical Education and Sport at the University of Lancashire, UK, where he is the Programme Leader for the MA Physical Education and Leadership.

Alan Thomson is a Senior Lecturer in Physical Education and Sport at the University of Lancashire, UK, where he is the Programme Leader for the BA (Hons) Physical Education and Sport.

Jessica Louise Macbeth is a Senior Lecturer in Sports Studies at the University of Lancashire, UK.

Kevin Andrew Richards is an Associate Professor in the Department of Health and Kinesiology and Co-director of the Pedagogical Kinesiology Laboratory at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Urbana, USA.