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**Physical Education in Universities
Researches – Best Practices – Situation**

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Editors

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Physical Education in Universities: Researches – Best Practices – Situation

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Introduction

You are holding a book “Physical Education in Universities: Researches - Best Practices - Situation” prepared by FIEP, Slovak Technical University and Comenius University in Bratislava.

The book is part of the 4th Physical Education World Wide Survey, which is carried out by UNESCO in cooperation with FIEP and its partners. The publication is part of one of its lines, focusing on mapping the basic characteristics of physical education and physical activities of children and youth in the world at individual levels of schools, from pre-school education to universities.

In 2017 the book "Physical Education in Primary School: Researches - Best Practices - Situation", edited by D. Collela, B. Antala and S. Epifani, was published by Pensa Multimedia in Italy and has 502 pages. 102 authors from 27 countries and 5 continents participated. In 2018, it was followed by a publication "Physical Education in Secondary School: Researches - Best Practices - Situation", published by the University of Montenegro in cooperation with the Montenegrin Sport Academy. The editors were S.Popovič, B.Antala, D.Bjelica and J.Gardašević. It had 343 pages and was prepared by 84 authors from 24 countries and 5 continents. The publication "Physical Education in Early Childhood Education and Care: Researches - Best Practices - Situation" was published in Slovakia by the Slovak Scientific Society for Physical Education and Sport in 2019. Its editors were B. Antala, G. Demirhan, A. Carraro, C. Oktar, H. Oz and A. Kaplánová. It had 464 pages. 120 authors from 32 countries from 5 continents participated. A series of these 4th Physical Education World Wide Survey publications will continue in 2021 with the publication of "Physical Education and Sport for Children and Youth with Special Needs: Researches - Best Practices - Situation".

This book is divided into four parts. In the first part of the publication called "Researches", we bring the latest research findings aimed at exploring the physical activity in universities, faculties and institutes. The second part, the “Best Practices” brings examples of good practice from different countries of the world and the third part “Situation” is focused on presenting knowledge related to the characteristics of the state of the issue in various countries in the world. Last, fourth part of the book is focused on French language write articles. Due the agreement between FIEP and CONFES, the book was open for articles write in French language also. Seven articles, especially from African countries, are situated in this last part of the book.

136 authors from 28 countries and five continents participated in the book, of which 13 were European countries/regions (France, Italy, Ireland, Kosovo, Nord Macedonia, Portugal, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine, United Kingdom), 2 countries from America (Mexico, USA), 4 countries from Asia (Lebanon, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore), 6 countries from Africa (Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, RSA, Senegal, Tunisia) and 3 countries from Oceania (Australia, New Zealand, Samoa). Therefore, the publication brings a broad international perspective on the issue of university physical education and physical activities.

A book “Physical Education in Universities: Researches - Best Practices -Situation” is prepared also for celebration of 60th anniversary of Faculty of Physical Education and Sports Comenius University in Bratislava in Slovakia where FIEP have already many years its European seat. Book celebrate also 80th anniversary of Faculty of Chemical and Food Technology from Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava. Its Department of Physical Education and Sport is a partner for preparation of this book. More complex information about these two important Slovak institutions are presented in the beginning of book in the part Introduction.

A thank you goes also to the reviewers who, through their comments and advice, helped the authors improve the quality of their contributions. We thank also the Foundation for Development of Faculty of Chemical and Food Technology of Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava and the faculty management for financial and moral support in publishing this publication.

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UK Perspectives: Physical Education Teacher Education

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the UK perspective of Physical Education Teacher Education, yet what is the UK? The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is the official title of the state that consists of 4 'Home Countries' (or 4 Home nations) these are: England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. All of these named places are referred to as countries or nations, yet currently none of them are officially independent states, although Scotland have currently called for a new vote of independence.

This differentiation of 4 nations / countries and 1 nation / country, may appear confusing to those outside of the UK, especially with world wide tournaments such as the World Cup for Rugby or for Football, where the nations compete as independent countries, yet for the Olympics and Paralympics the team is the team of GB and Northern Ireland! In the UK there is a devolved country models for each of the 4 home countries, in that there are different curriculum within the schools and within teacher education, there are also different statutory powers for decision making powers, these are given to the 'Assemblies' which are the devolved Parliament for each nation.

Also, to add to the complexity of the UK perspectives, at time of writing the UK, has just completed a general election and a new government has been implemented with new Ministers, who may make future changes. A general election is normally undertaken in May time, and every 5 years, yet after chaotic Brexit negotiations, and the call for a People's Vote on the terms of the negotiations, with the possibility and hope of remaining in the EU, Parliament was dissolved in November and therefore any changes in curriculum both for school settings or for teacher education have been paused in terms of time until the election process, new Minister positions have been appointed and the Christmas break has been completed. Randall et al. (2016) described Physical Education as a contested concept that struggles "to find its identity within the crowded political spaces of sport, health and education" (p.7). However, this paper offers the current context and the UK perspectives of Physical Education within Teacher Education and seeks to explain Physical Education and the influence of Teacher Education within the UK context.

Key words: UK, Physical Education, Teacher Education, National differences

Background

Green (2008) suggested that the organisation of Physical Education within the UK was complex! Kirk (2009) tries to explain this complexity (as in the UK) as “there are national structures and systems that are specific to the four home countries” and “these in turn have particular administrative and geographical regions within each home countries” (p.1). There are also different governmental department and these each have an influence on Physical Education and ultimately the training of Physical Education teaching. Table 1 outlines the current UK Governmental departments and their roles linked to Physical Education, physical activity and school sport (developed by Howells & Coppinger 2020). Physical Education is a mandated curriculum subject in all four home nations. In England and Northern Ireland Physical Education forms part of the National Curriculum at all four key stages / station (age phases) and legislation in Scotland has made it compulsory for 2 hours a week within curriculum time. In Wales Physical Education is a named subject for children aged 7 – 16, although curriculum undergoing significant reform with the aim of new curriculum to underpin all children aged 3 – 16. It could be argued that Northern Ireland places the highest profile on Physical Education in that their curriculum focuses on empowering and encouraging children to make informed and responsible choices linked to the role of physical activity in their lives and this is developed within Physical Education, according to the All Party Parliamentary report (2018) on Physical Education.

Table 1 UK Governmental Departments and Roles (taken from Howells & Coppinger, 2020)

Department	Role
Department of Culture, Media and Sport – (DCMS)	Department in charge of sport
Department of Health (DoH)	Focus on key health benefits to be gained through PA
Department for Education and Skills (DfES)	Department in charge of school sport and Physical Education, as well as life-long learning.
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM)	Department in charge of local government funding and performance
Department for Transport (DfT)	Department given the importance of walking and cycling as physical activities
Home Office (HO)	Focus on using sport in crime prevention
Sport England (SE), Sport Wales, Sport Scotland, Sport Northern Ireland (SNI)	Agency responsible for grassroots
New Opportunities Fund (NOF)	Lottery distributor responsible for facilities development in schools

PE defined within UK school settings

Within the UK context physical education appears to be the place or the vehicle for everything! The All-Party Parliamentary Group (2018) define Physical Education as education in, about and through the physical. “Education in movement, physical activity and sport to ensure that children

maximise their potential”. “Education about movement, physical activity and sport to develop scientific, social and cultural knowledge and understanding”. “Education through movement physical activity and sport to nurture enjoyment, confidence, social skills, wellbeing and values and attitudes to serve each individual and society.” (p.11) The Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills (OFSTED) that inspects services providing education and skills for all ages reported in 2013 that Physical Education is central part of the lives of pupils of all ages. OFSTED also suggested that teachers must take a lead in securing the nation’s sporting future beyond 2012 and that they are best placed to stimulate pupils’ early interest and enthusiasm for play, physical activity, Physical Education and school sport. Yet there is no statutory requirement for schools to devote a specific amount of time to Physical Education, however aspirational targets for schools were introduced by previous Government for 2 hours of PE and school sport to occur for every child each week. It could be questioned how are teachers supposed to secure the nation’s sporting future, to encourage pupils to lead healthy lifestyles and to inspire and motivate them with such a small amount of curriculum time dedicated to this time? In Scotland the role for Physical Education teachers is to help children develop healthy relationships with sport and exercise, to also promote healthy lifestyles, team work and positive attitudes towards nutrition according to Teach in Scotland (2019).

The Association for Physical Education (AfPE), define the three areas (in England, 2015) and four areas (in Scotland, AfPE, 2010) that teachers are involved in that are key for teacher education. Physical Education is the “planned, progressive learning that takes place in school curriculum timetabled time and which is delivered to all pupils. This involves both learning to move and moving to learn” (AfPE, 2015). Physical activity is defined as a “broad term that describes bodily movement, posture and balance. All require energy. It includes all forms of physical education, sports and dance activities. It includes indoor, and outdoor play, work related activity, and active travel” (AfPE, 2015). They suggest that teachers encourage children to travel to school in an active manner such as walking, cycling, rollerblading and scootering, so these become lifelong habits and encourages sustainable travel for all. Howells (2012) has previously proposed that physical activity has numerous definitions as it is a complex behaviour variable and difficult to measure especially for young children, yet one of the aims of the English physical education curriculum is “sustained physical activity” (DfE, 2013). Kollé et al. (2009) found that children find it difficult to describe their own physical activity levels, this may be due to them moving from one intensity level to another very sporadically. Time is often spent in teacher education, ensuring teachers understand what is meant by sustained physical activity, to allow them to plan these into their physical education lessons and ways to ensure that teachers are able to support in developing the pupils’ language and descriptive skills within physical education, this is often described as becoming physically literate.

The third definition is school sport, which is the “structured learning that takes place beyond the curriculum.” It can form a vital link with “community sport and activity” (AfPE, 2015) which is encouraged within the secondary curriculum. There is also physical development, this is a term that is used within the English early years’ curriculum, and a term found within early years settings including the first years of primary school setting. Howells et al. (2018) describe physical development as one of the areas of learning and development identified in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework (DfE, 2014a), this is similar to the Welsh curriculum. Physical development is regarded as one of the prime areas which are interwoven and interconnected within specific areas of literacy, numeracy, understanding the world and expressive arts and design. The specific requirements of physical development include ensuring that young

children have opportunities to be “active and interactive” (p.8, DfE, 2014a). Howells et al. (2018) summarised the early learning goals as the ‘3cs’ – moving with control; coordination; and confidence. Teachers and practitioners within their teacher education need to focus on ensuring movement opportunities occur for the children to be able to physically develop, these can be structured or unstructured learning that can be indoors, outdoors and be supported through using small and large equipment. This will aid with large and small motor skill development. It is important for teacher education to ensure that teachers and practitioners understand the importance of learning physically and how this can help with other learning opportunities. Child development sessions within teacher education allows for understanding of how vital it is to learn to grip and manipulate objects and how object control to help support writing and using the correct grip. The Welsh Assembly Government (2008a) advises practitioners and teacher education that they need to “provide active, experiential learning through careful planning, organising, facilitating, challenging, observing, interacting, intervening and evaluating”. Almond & Lambden (2016) proposed these ideas of the Welsh Assembly could be achieved through purposeful play.

The fourth definition that is focused specifically by the national subject association (AfPE) within Scotland is the focus that Physical Education is for lifelong learning, in that it should set out both “lifelong and life-wide process to help individuals of all ages to develop the movement skills, the physical activity habits, the knowledge, the motivation and the social skills that lead to a rich, active lives” (AfPE, 2010, p.3). Scotland have also started to introduce a curriculum of excellence linked to Physical Education to ensure that Physical Education can make a significant contribution to both “the overall education and the health and wellbeing of children and young people of Scotland”. The curriculum in Scotland is designed with a focus on health and wellbeing and Physical Education is part of this area, similar to the changes occurring within the Welsh curriculum. What this means in terms of Teacher Education for Physical Education, is that there is now much more of a focus on health and wellbeing as well as the skills of Physical Education itself. New teachers need a wider and broader understanding of both physical as well as mental health and wellbeing to help support children for the future.

The Government has recently started to use the phrase ‘Movement’ (which links to the fourth definition) when they are referring to physical education, physical activity, school sport, health education and wellbeing and now including even more within the curriculum. From 2020, the Department of Education for England have added health education to the new curriculum area of relationships, sex education and health education, within health education there is more of a focus on physical health and fitness, as well as health eating and physical and mental health. Wales are still currently within their consultation period and the changes proposed that will take place within their new curriculum from 2022, includes Health and Wellbeing as a key area of the curriculum, designed to help children develop their physical and mental health and wellbeing.

Qualifications for teaching Physical Education within the UK

Children currently throughout the UK attend pre-school settings such as kindergarten / nurseries / preschools from the age 0 – 4 years. They stay up to 8 – 11 hours a day, 5 days a week within these settings. The qualifications of those supporting the children’s learning have previously been analysed by Howells & Sääkslahti (2019) who found that most have level 3 qualifications, with some having level 4, 5 or level 6 Bachelor degrees or early years’ practitioner teacher status or Masters’ qualifications. From the September after the child’s fourth birthday, they then start school setting, and progress through the different curricula, known as key stages. The teachers

have bachelor degree in primary education or a post graduate qualification in primary education teaching. The teachers are trained within Physical Education, as part the core of their curriculum provision in Teacher Education, and some trainees specialise in Physical Education as a subject within their training. The primary education teachers also have to pass professional skills tests in literacy and numeracy before they are qualified. Children spend 6 – 6.5 hours a day, 5 days a week within these settings. For secondary education you can become a Physical Education teacher through teacher education, and by completing a University course, this can be through completing a Physical Education or sports degree and then working as a sports coach in a school, then moving into a teacher training programme. There are a few courses within the UK that allow you to specialise in secondary Physical Education as a Bachelor degree. You can also become a PE teacher, through an apprenticeship or working towards the role. Within England, the only country of the four home countries, you need to have qualified teaching status to take up a teaching post in a state funded school system. In Wales, qualified teacher status is awarded by the Education Workforce Council and this is recognised within England, whilst if you have been trained in Scotland or Northern Ireland you have to apply for qualified teacher status if as a teacher you want to take up a post in England (DfE, 2019a). Each of the four home countries have separate National Curricula and there are age differences and terminology that vary and are illustrated in table 2. Within teacher education student teachers specialise in specific age ranges which either has physical education as the sole subject or as part of the curriculum of many subjects. The age ranges include often referred to as early years 3 – 7 years; then primary focused is 5 – 11 years; 7 – 14 years this spreads across both primary and secondary age ranges, and then secondary 11 – 18. Teacher education has an influence on all aspects and all age ranges of children’s education and teacher training, the current breakdown of curriculum is illustrated in table 2.

Physical Education within the curriculum

When the curriculum is considered in more detail, there is a vast amount of responsibility undertaking within the subject area of Physical Education, ranging from health through to character building, which has massive implications for the responsibilities set to teacher education to ensure the future generations of teachers are ready to teach *all* of the Physical Education curriculum. OFSTED (2013) reported that most primary schools included within their Physical Education provision a wide range of traditional games, dance, gymnastics and swimming. It was noted that some rural schools due to the lack of space indoor and lacking specialist equipment did struggle to teach gymnastics. Within secondary provision it reported that there was more dominance in the curriculum to traditional team games at the expense of aesthetics and athletics activities, this may be due again to the lack of suitable indoor spaces. Within secondary provision qualifications in Physical Education (in England) can be undertaken as either a full or short course these are known as GCSE Physical Education or BTEC sport, and also A Level (Highers in Scotland) and BTEC Diplomas are undertaken, although the numbers of pupils taking these qualifications has dramatically reduced since 2008.

For England, there is a key element of being healthy and being physically activity within the national curriculum. The purpose according to the Department of Education (2013) for Physical Education is to “inspire all pupils to succeed and excel in competitive sport and other physically-demanding activities. It should provide opportunities for pupils to become physically confident in a way which supports their health and fitness. Opportunities to compete in sport and others activities build character and help to embed values such as fairness and respect” (p.1). For teacher education, this has meant that Physical Education needs to focus not only on the physical domain

Table 2 Current UK breakdown of curriculum according to age and country

England	Scotland	Wales	North Ireland
Reception: 4 – 5 years Foundation Stage: 3 – 5 years	Primary 1: 4 – 5 years	Foundation Phase: 3 – 7 years	P1: 4 – 5 years
Year 1: 5 – 6 years Key stage 1: 5 – 7 years	Primary 2: 5 – 6 years	Key Stage 2: 8 – 11 years	P2: 5 – 6 years
Year 2: 6 – 7 years Key stage 1: 5 – 7 years	Primary 3: 6 – 7 years	Key Stage 3: 12 – 14 years	P3: 6 – 7 years
Year 3: 7 – 8 years Key stage 2: 7 – 11 years	Primary 4: 7 – 8 years	Key Stage 4: 15 – 16 years	P4: 7 – 8 years
Year 4: 8 – 9 years Key stage 2: 7 – 11 years	Primary 5: 8 – 9 years		P5: 8 – 9 years
Year 5: 9 – 10 years Key stage 2: 7 – 11 years	Primary 6: 9 – 10 years		P6: 9 – 10 years
Year 6: 10 – 11 years Key stage 2: 7 – 11 years	Primary 7: 10 – 11 years		P7: 10 – 11 years
Year 7: 11 – 12 years Key stage 3: 11 – 14 years	S1: 11 – 12 years		Year 8 (1 st year): 11 – 12 years
Year 8: 12 – 13 years: Key stage 3: 11 – 14 years	S2: 12 – 13 years		Year 9 (2 nd year): 12 – 13 years
Year 9: 13 – 14 years Key stage 3: 11 – 14 years	S3: 13 – 14 years		Year 10 (3 rd year): 13 – 14 years
Year 10: 14 – 15 years Key stage 4: 14 – 16 years	S4: 14 – 15 years		Year 11 (4 th year): 14 – 15 years
Year 11: 15 – 16 years Key stage 4: 14 – 16 years	S5: 15 – 16 years		Year 12 (5 th year): 15 – 16 years
Year 12: 16 – 17 years	S6: 16 – 17 years		Year 13 (lower 6 th): 16 – 17 years
Year 13: 17 – 18 years			Year 13 (lower 6 th): 16 – 17 years
Year 14: 18 – 19 years			Year 14 (upper 6 th): 17 – 18 years

of learning, but also on the social, and emotional as well as the cognitive elements (Howells et al., 2018). So that teachers and trainee teachers can plan for all these elements to then physically educate the children in a holistic way within Physical Education lessons in school settings and developing knowledge and understanding of the whole child within teacher education.

For Northern Ireland, the curriculum focuses on enabling young people to “learn through movement so that they develop, extend and refine their skills in a range of movement contexts” also to help “develop positive attitudes toward participation in physical activities in their pursuit of a healthy lifestyle.” The Council for the Curriculum Examinations and Assessment (2019) prescribe specific areas of sport to be included within the curriculum including: athletics, dance, games and gymnastics as well as swimming. The curriculum objectives include helping young people develop as: individuals, contributors to society and the economy and environment, as well as connecting learning to personal health, personal understanding, mutual understanding and moral character.

For Scotland, the Scottish government have legislated that schools have to deliver at least 2 hours of Physical Education for all pupils in primary school and then at least two periods (2 time slots) of Physical Education for all pupils between Secondary 1 and Secondary 4 (those aged 11 – 15 years). 98% of schools are currently meeting this target, which is much higher than the other 3 home countries. Scotland have a new curriculum, called Curriculum for Excellence, introduced from 2019, which focuses on young people becoming successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. Physical Education now is situated within the key area of the curriculum Health and Wellbeing in which children and young people develop knowledge, understanding and skills in which they need now and in the future. Physical Education contributes to health and wellbeing through “inspiring and challenge children and young people to experience the joy of movement, to develop positive attitudes both individually and as part of a group to enhance their quality of life through active living” (Education Scotland, 2019, p.6)

For Wales (as previously stated, the curriculum is currently under revision and due to be used throughout Wales in 2022) therefore the current physical education curriculum dates back to 2008 and has cross cutting themes that allows the subject to contribute to the whole Curriculum Cymreig. The curriculum guidance is very detailed (77 pages long, on just physical education for key stage 2 and 3) and offers illustrated examples throughout the guidance, also provides aspects of progression and examples of making judgements at the different key stages, which is very supportive for teachers and teacher education alike. Physical education contributes to the whole curriculum by “applying learners’ knowledge and understanding of cultural characteristics of Wales through creative activities such as dance, and the use of different musical and literacy stimuli to develop dance ideas. Adventurous activities, initiative challenges and journeys promote a knowledge and understanding of the rich and varied environmental characteristics of Wales” (Welsh Assembly Government, 2008a, p.12). Physical education contributes to learners’ “personal and social education by prioritising activities that contribute to health, fitness and well-being throughout life. The adoption of different roles in activities such as performer, leader and official, contributes significantly to the challenges of active citizenship and moral development. Working closely with others in cooperative and competitive situations develops effective relationships and self-assurance, while coping with the increasing influence of peer pressure” (Welsh Assembly Government, 2008a, p.13). There are found main areas of experience that occur in the physical education of Wales – health, fitness and wellbeing activities; creative activities; adventurous activities and competitive activities. There is a clear importance and link to the culture and

environment within the curriculum, that teacher education needs to provide to ensure the physical education teachers are ready to teach the next generation of pupils. For key stage 4 the curriculum moves to refer to the pupils' 'learning pathway' on which the subject is identified as learning core to help "foster a growing sense of personal responsibility for a health and active lifestyle through developing activities that can be enjoyed and sustained in the school and the community" (Welsh Assembly Government, 2008b, p.27).

Specialist vs generalist Physical Education teachers within primary school

There is much debate around who is the right person to be teaching physical education especially within primary school setting, and this impacts on teacher education of Physical Education and the time allowed for developing skills within teacher education. Within primary schools within the UK, traditionally the class teacher was the person who undertook teaching of all subjects and all classes, both the children and the class teacher are all based within one class, however due to the specialist knowledge needed for Physical Education, some schools introduced a specialist who took the class just for Physical Education. Those who took the class for Physical Education have varied in qualifications to those who have undertaken further study within teacher education and have attended specialist classes to extend their knowledge and understanding of Physical Education through to sport coaches, who have been hired by schools, who have specific sport expertise but who may be lacking an educational background, and lacking pedagogical age appropriate knowledge of the children they are trying to teach. The influx of sport coaches being used has been from the introduction of the Sport Pupil Premium funding (DfE, 2014b) that has allowed schools funding to bring in specialist sport coaches to support the teaching of PE within schools. The funding was designed to improve the breadth and quality of Physical Education and sport provision within schools (DfE, 2015) and to upskill teachers and to help improve teachers' confidence and competency within Physical Education.

Griggs (2010) suggested that in his opinion that sport coaches may lack pedagogical skills which could disadvantage children and cause a conflict in their physical education lessons not being taught by a qualified teacher, who had studied at a primary education and primary physical education within their teacher education training. Parnell et al. (2016) echo Carney & Howells' (2008) earlier claims that it might be reasonable to suggest that generalist primary teachers who teach all subjects within primary education have certain advantages over coaches as they understand the learning and development needs of children. However, Parnell et al. (2016) propose on the other hand, that football and sport coaches can bring enthusiasm and expertise to teaching sporting activities, whilst Carney & Howells (2008) proposed that every primary school should have a primary physical education specialist. Both sets of authors identify the struggle that some teachers experience and propose that support is needed for continuous professional development of teachers within physical education. Also, that support is needed for coaches if they are to be continued to be used in the future to help with their construction of knowledge linked to both pedagogy and child development.

Physical Education Training within Teacher Education

The difficulty for teacher education has been the number of hours allocated to the provision and development of Physical Education in particular within primary school settings. Talbot (2007) estimated at that time that 40% of primary school teachers within teacher education receive as little as 6 hours of Physical Education training within their 3 years courses, and she proposed that

teachers are dangerously under skilled to teach Physical Education both effectively and safely. Rainer et al. (2012) found that postgraduate trainee teachers on average received 6 – 8 hours of Physical Education training within teacher education, which undergraduate trainee teachers on average received approximately 24 hours. New teachers often comment that they do not feel confident in then teaching Physical Education when they have a class of their own. Yet, Randall et al. (2016) found that confidence was highest in “areas of knowledge relating to health, fitness, wellbeing, safe practice, fundamental movement skills and games activities” but lowest in “swimming activities and assessment” (p.4).

Many teacher education providers offer continuous professional development opportunities for teachers to return to help support their confidence and competence levels, to help move away from just sport focused physical drills to head towards more progression and development (Elliot et al., 2013). Despite many challenges currently faced by Physical Education in teacher education across the UK, there are many excellent examples of practice that occur within the ever-changing policy and political landscape. There is a strong Physical Education Teacher Education network and Initial Teacher Education subject association that both meet regularly throughout the four home countries and work together to change and challenge policy to ensure that Physical Education stays as a core subject within both the school curriculum and teacher education curriculum.

The Department of Education (2019b) emphasises the importance of training to teach Physical Education (in particular within a secondary education setting) and suggest that is “plays a vital role in promoting physical activities and a healthy lifestyle in a positive and enjoyable way for all pupils”. They continue identifying some of the responsibility linked to teaching physical education as “honing pupils’ abilities in a range of physical activities and sports – helping them to develop their personal fitness and learn important life skills”. The All-Party Parliamentary report on Physical Education (2018) recommend that the “knowledge of the aims and practice of Physical Education to be embedded into all teacher training and ongoing continual professional development from early years to secondary level”. They also recommend that within teacher education when designing teacher training programmes that Physical Education feature within the placement school. Many teacher educations programmes, especially since the All-Party Parliamentary report (2019) now set core tasks for training teachers to complete that include a structured progression in terms of teaching Physical Education, within their school placements. This includes observing and learning from significant others within the school setting, building and developing lessons and teaching and receiving feedback from their mentors within schools, to then developing consecutive lessons, so that student teachers can see the intent of their lesson, the implementation of their teaching and the impact they are having on the children’s learning. The core tasks were a key recommendation from the report (2019). The All-Party Parliamentary report (2018) also suggested to increase the amount of time allocated within teacher training for Physical Education. This is most welcomed by teacher education providers within the UK. As this would help to continue to increase the confidence and competence of future teachers. The 2019 report that focused on Primary Physical Education recommend that Physical Education to be “taught by qualified teachers whose training gives them an understanding of the whole children and for teacher education to be remodelled and extended to provide a grounding in Physical Education theory and practice for every primary teacher” (p.7).

Overall, this paper has presented the complex nature of both the UK itself and then Physical Education in Teacher Education within all the 4 home countries. It has identified the differences within teacher education, and offered the key recommendations for future education and highlighted how Physical Education now has a role in the key areas of Health and Wellbeing of children's development and lifelong and life-wide choices. Physical Education is beyond the traditional game play and the new demands on teacher education now include educating the next generation of teachers about both physical and mental wellbeing as well as child development in particular physical development, the importance of being physically active alongside how to physically educate the children. Physical Education needs to be a core subject which is valued highly by all involved to ensure that teacher education can support future generations of teachers to be confident and competent, in the vehicle that is all encompassing the subject area of Physical Education.

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