

A Qualitative Analysis of Primary School Teacher's Experiences of Teaching Physical Education (PE).

Sophie Louise Turner
BSc (Hons) Sport Coaching
School of Health, Science and Wellbeing

INTRODUCTION

UNESCO (1978) states that the practice of physical education and sport (PES) is a necessary right for all and forms a crucial element of the education system. Although PE has many benefits Kirk (2009) asserts that PE must acquire its place within the national curriculum. PE and sport premium funding for primary schools has the aim to improve the quality and range of PE and sport provision, including increasing participation of students so that they are more likely to develop healthy, active lifestyles (Callanan et al., 2015). However, issues concerning sustainability of this funding are highlighted by Griggs (2016, 2018). This could be due to the unintended consequences of the funding being used for external sports coaches who generally lack pedagogical skills (Harris, 2018). Conversely, Hall (2022) states that there is lack of knowledge and confidence of primary school teachers. This could be a result of inadequate initial teacher training (Harris, 2018) and limited continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities (Elliot et al., 2013).

METHODOLOGY

Six primary school teachers that had experience of teaching PE lessons were selected by utilising purposive and convenience sampling methods. A disadvantage of convenience sampling is that it is more likely to be biased (Gass and Mackey, 2005). Nonetheless, due to the time limit and specifications of participants I accept the limitations of the chosen methods. The teachers who participated in the qualitative semi-structured interviews were aged between 27 years old and 38 years old (four female and two male). This is a consequence of the limited gender diversity of primary school teachers (Cushman, 2010). The years of teaching experience of these participants also varied from three years to sixteen years. Five out of the six interviews were conducted face-to-face at the school as this was convenient for participants. One interview was conducted on a Microsoft teams call due to the participant being on leave from their teaching role. All interviews were audio recorded to be transcribed. Subsequently, the interview transcripts were then analysed utilising Braun and Clarke (2013) six phases of thematic analysis.

RESULTS

After analysing the data, the most significant themes throughout are showcased within the following (Figure 1). Five out of six teachers shared substantially similar perspectives such as external coaches have more expertise; however, they do not provide assessment, participants didn't have great understanding on how the PE and sport premium funding was spent and they had limited CPD opportunities alongside inadequate content on PE within their teacher training. Conversely, one participant had a different perspective due to their role of PE department leader. This participant shared what improvements have been made to the delivery of PE, how the PE and sport premium funding is spent whilst also explaining what opportunities and improvements will be made in the future for students and teachers.

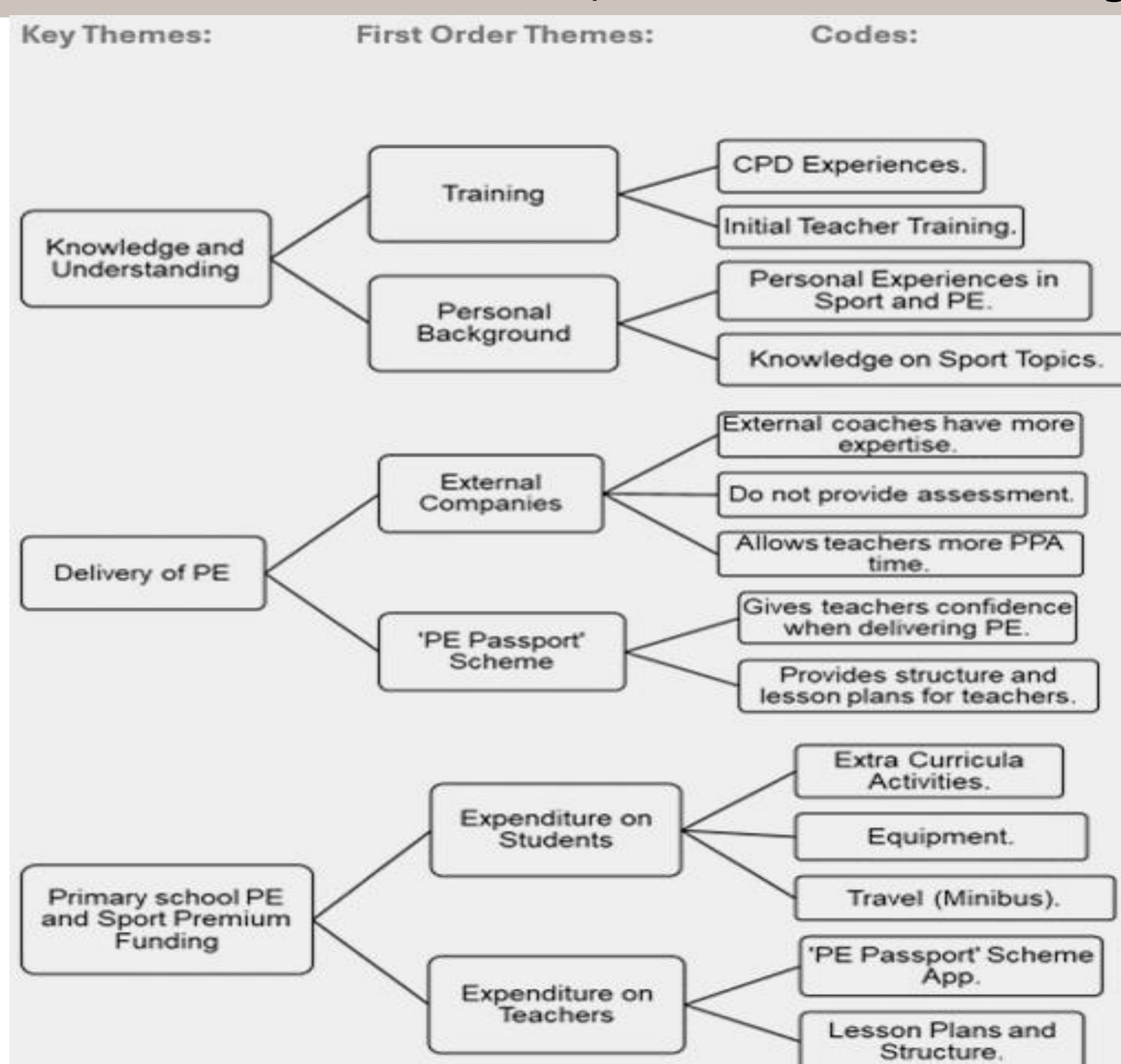


Figure 1: Interview Results after analysis (themes and codes).

CONCLUSIONS

Conclusion:	Professional Recommendations:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The most significant result relates to there being a major lack of PE-based CPD opportunities for schoolteachers (Elliot and Campbell, 2015). - PE within this school is more recently delivered mainly by classroom teachers that use a scheme of work known as 'PE Passport'. - Knowledge and understanding of PE for primary teachers was dependent upon their personal backgrounds and the training or lack of training that they have received (Poulou, 2005; Blair and Capel, 2011). - Primary school PE and sport premium funding is spent mainly on opportunities and facilities for students and there is limited funding spent on teacher education for long-term impacts on PE. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Utilise the PE and sport primary school premium funding to provide teachers with CPD. - Primary PGCE providers should ensure there is sufficient practical and theory content dedicated to PE within ITE. - For consistency across primary schools a programme similar to 'PE Passport' could be implemented.

Figure 2: Conclusions and professional recommendations.

REFERENCES

- Blair, R., & Capel, S. (2011). Primary physical education, coaches and continuing professional development. *Sport, Education and Society*, 16(4), 485-505.
- Callanan, M., Fry, A., Plunkett, M., Chanfreau, J., & Tanner, E. (2015). The PE and sport premium: An investigation in primary schools. *Department for Education: London, UK*.
- Clarke, V., & Braun, V. (2013). Teaching thematic analysis: Overcoming challenges and developing strategies for effective learning. *The Psychologist*, 26(2).
- Cushman, P. (2010). Male primary school teachers: Helping or hindering a move to gender equity? *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 26(5), 1211-1218.
- Elliot, D. L., Atencio, M., Campbell, T., & Jess, M. (2013). From PE experiences to PE teaching practices? Insights from scottish primary teachers' experiences of PE, teacher education, school entry and professional development. *Sport, Education and Society*, 18(6), 749-766.
- Elliot, D. L., & Campbell, T. (2015). 'Really on the ball': Exploring the implications of teachers' PE-CPD experience. *Sport, Education and Society*, 20(3), 381-397.
- Gass, S., Mackey, A., & Ross-Feldman, L. (2005). Task-based interactions in classroom and laboratory settings. *Language Learning*, 55(4), 575-611.
- Griggs, G. (2016). Spending the primary physical education and sport premium: A west midlands case study. *Education 3-13*, 44(5), 547-555.
- Griggs, G. (2018). Investigating provision and impact of the primary physical education and sport premium: A west midlands case study. *Education 3-13*, 46(5), 517-524.
- Hall, A. (2022). No title. *Staff Perspectives on the Strengths and Weaknesses of the Primary Physical Education and Sport Premium: The Case of Three Suffolk Schools*.
- Harris, J. (2018). The case for physical education becoming a core subject in the national curriculum. *Physical Education Futures*. Routledge.
- Kirk, D. (2009). *Physical education futures*. Routledge.
- Poulou, M. (2005). Educational psychology within teacher education. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*, 11(6), 555-574.
- UNESCO. (1978). *International charter of physical education and sport*. Retrieved 21/03/2023, from https://www.sportanddev.org/sites/default/files/downloads/17_intl_charter_of_pe_and_sport.pdf