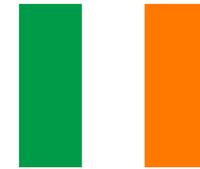




Learning to teach Physical Education: Answering research questions across borders

Magali Descoedres¹, Frances Murphy², Susan Marron² & Maura Coulter²
¹Haute Ecole Pédagogique du Canton de Vaud, UER EPS, Switzerland ;
²Dublin City University, Institute for Education, Ireland



Introduction, theoretical framework and research questions

Introduction

Since 2015 **lecturers** and **students** from two institutes of education have been collaborating on **short mobility projects** together in the field of Physical Education (PE). The Haute Ecole Pédagogique in Lausanne (HEP) and Dublin City University (DCU), Institute of Education are collaborating together in PEERS projects, which aim to prepare each student teacher to become **a global teacher in a global world**. This is an innovative initiative offered to the students and the researchers of the HEP Vaud within the framework of the PEERS programs. PEERS projects constitute **an essential opening to the world** for all the participants. An international project is planned by alternating face to face and distance learning with peers 'who live on the other side of the world'. Topics were broadly concerned with **inclusion of children with special needs in PE lessons** and enhancing **quality teaching and learning within PE**. Themes explored were: critical incidents in PE, academic learning time in PE lessons, formative assessment in PE and inclusion of children with special needs in PE lessons.

Research questions

- What did the PEERS project bring to you as a future teacher?*
- What did the PEERS project bring to you as a person?*
- What is your understanding of being a global teacher in a global world (reflecting one of the aims of the PEERS project)?*

Theoretical framework and its application in practice (Coulter *et al.*, 2019)

This research drew on experiential learning theory (Kolb, 1984) with a focus on students' professional learning. Reflection-on-learning underpinned the process and supported students each year in making sense of the experiences that were part of their PEERS related work. Making sense of their experiences involved four stages of Kolb's learning cycle (1) beginning with concrete experiences: visiting schools where PE was being taught (2) stepping back and engaging in *reflective observation*: after each school visit students discussed their experiences with their peers (Swiss and Irish) (3) Making sense of their experiences through *abstract conceptualisation*: this involved interpreting and making connections leading to reframing their understandings. This occurred both formally and informally throughout their study visit weeks, and (4) considering new actions and ways to implement new understandings: this prompted them to engage in *active experimentation* by (a) moving forward with their teaching of PE underpinned by these new understandings, and (b) undertaking research projects related to this experimentation.

Method

Data collection

1. **40 PE lesson observations** in Ireland and Switzerland
2. **10 reflective discussions** (*post-Irish lesson observation and post-Swiss lesson observation*)
3. **10 semi-structured interviews** informed by the three research questions



Findings

Students' personal reflections on their understandings of being global teachers:

Respect for others views and different ways of teaching. You see others teach and you may learn things and be open to changing how you do things or how you perceive things should be done. You can adapt as you observe what others do. You become more adventurous. Become a more rounded teacher because you are seeing other ways of doing things and maybe bringing together good practice from two countries and improving your teaching. Not stick to the one way of doing things. Embrace the Swiss way! Children are hardy and you can expect more from them (Irish student, 2016)

I think that if you're a Global Teacher you have to be a Teacher, you have to be an educated Teacher, you have to be a Manager Teacher, you have to be a Political Teacher and you have to be really equal, you have to work on every subject not only on class or on gym but you have to speak with political, you have to speak with the Boss. You are a global teacher in a global world, not a teacher alone in your class (Swiss student, 2015).

Findings reported in outputs below focus on:

- Similarities and differences between PE classes in Ireland and Switzerland:
- Critical incidents
- Students' observations on inclusion in PE classes in both countries
- Students' personal research project findings related to assessment in PE, quality PE lessons, inclusion in PE, Academic Learning Time (ALT) in PE lessons and critical incidents in PE

Outcomes

Journal Publications

- Coulter, M., Kealey, F., Langan, S. L., McGarvey, J., & Padden, S. (2019). Seeing is believing: Primary generalist pre-service teachers' observations of physical education lessons in Ireland and Switzerland. *European Physical Education Review*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1356336X19839412>
- Marron, S. & Morris, S. (2018). Inclusion in Physical Education: Perceptions of Irish and Swiss Student Teachers Following Participation in a European Exchange Program. *European Journal of Adapted Physical Activity*, 11(1), 1-14

Presentations

- Murphy, F., Pendred, S., Warren, L. & Gavin, M.C. (2016). *Physical Education Initial Teacher Education for Primary Pre-service teachers in Dublin*. HEP, Switzerland.
- Descoedres, M. & Marron, S. (2015). *Peers program: Toward Its Institutionalization*. Lausanne PEERS Summer Symposium, June-July, HEP Vaud.
- Descoedres, M. (2017). *The emotional aspects regarding the professional development of physical education teachers in training (PETT): Methodology and results*, Institute of Education, DCU, Ireland.
- Marron, S. (December, 2017) *Creating Global Physical Education Teachers: The Swiss-Irish PEERS Programme*. Poster Presentation Higher Education Authority (HEA) and Quality and Qualifications Ireland 'Internationalisation-a driver of quality in Irish Higher Education'. Dublin Castle.
- Thomi, N. (2017). *Swiss Education Systems with focus on SEN*, Institute of Education, DCU, Ireland.

Further publications

- 4 **professional papers** in the *Journal of the Comenius Association: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018* (Coulter, M.; Descoedres, M.; Marron, S.; Murphy, F).
- 3 **professional papers** in *Zoom* (April 2017, February 2018, May 2019).
- 3 **movies** created by **Swiss students** recording aspects of visits 'OUT' to Dublin (October 2015, October 2017, October 2018)
- 7 **theses** written by **Swiss students**; 16 **Action Research Projects** written by **Irish students**
- 2 **research studies** undertaken by **Swiss students** (October 2018: ALT and self-confrontation interview / instruction double).