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Résumé

En utilisant la théorie du changement (Fullan, 1992; Guskey, 2002) et la théorie de la socialisation (Lacey, 1977; Zeichner and Gore, 1990), notre groupe de recherche s'est centré sur le développement professionnel d'enseignant du secondaire à propos de leur apprentissage du modèle d'éducation par le sport (Sidentop, Hastie & van der Mars, 2004). Les données ont été collectées à la fois de façon quantitative et qualitative à l'aide d'un test psychométrique et d'interviews. Dans l'ensemble, le niveau d'adhésion des enseignants et d'engagement à l'éducation par le sport varie selon les niveaux scolaires. Cet article commente le processus de changement par rapport aux données empiriques et aux connexions théoriques à travers les quatre principaux résultats obtenus à ce jour.

Abstract

Using change theory (Fullan, 1992; Guskey, 2002) and socialization theory (Lacey, 1977; Zeichner & Gore, 1990), our research team focused on the professional development of middle and junior high teachers relative to learning the Sport Education model (Siedentop, Hastie, and van der Mars, 2004). Data were collected both quantitatively and qualitatively via psychometric instruments and interview processes respectively. In aggregate, teacher level of adherence and commitment to Sport Education varied across school levels. This paper comments on the change process relative to both empirical data and theoretical connections across four major findings to date.

An organizing principle in the economics of professional team sports is the uncertainty of outcome hypothesis. In its general form, originally put forward by Rottenberg (1956), the hypothesis maintains that spectators are more likely to be attracted to sporting encounters involving evenly matched opposition. In essence, while we all love our special teams and want them to win, generally, sports fans are risk lovers and love the thrill of close contests. We are beginning to think that such a hypothesis may apply to the study of teachers and continuing professional development. That is, as we look at the dynamics of the continuing professional development (CPD) through grants targeted to improve physical education teachers and reform the programs within which they work, we wonder if here, too, we aren't entering a game that involves high risk and great uncertainty. While grant agencies or researchers may not be attracted to entering such contests, we believe the research literature (Armour and Yelling, 2007; Day,1999) is clear that there are few guarantees in CPD and the teacher socialization process (Lacey, 1977; Zeichner and Gore, 1990). While we know the basic tenets of successful school reform, teacher change, and the aspirational model of CPD (Day, 1999; Fullan,1992; Guskey; 1995; Leat, et. al, 2006) are foundational, we believe the complexities of the school culture and the idiosyncratic nature of teacher socialization process or teacher agency promote great uncertainty.

This was born out throughout our team's experience in a federally funded programmatic grant over the last 8 eight months working with the CPD of eight middle school and junior high school PE teachers.

We have learned that school and program culture as well as the identities of each teacher play an important role here. To the extent that it provides a focus and clear purpose for the school, a positive and supportive school culture becomes the cohesion that bonds a program and its faculty members together as it goes about its change mission. However, a negative school culture and sub-cultures within, such as a PE staff mired in negative routines, can be counterproductive and an obstacle to educational reform. Without a culture composed of committed teachers that value their subject, reflection, independent thinking, knowledge creation, accountability, and true professionals that value career-long learning, improved programs through CPD are near impossible.

As Armour and her associates (Armour, Makopulous & Chambers, 2008; Armour &Yelling, 2007) have found, the quality of PE and pupil learning rests on the quality of PE teachers' responsible attitude and accompanying behavior toward career long professional learning. They argue that unless teachers are committed to and engage in life-long learning, their knowledge and skill base becomes obsolescent and teachers are deskilled. As Armour

and her colleagues state, "The problem, of course, is that such teachers don't become obsolete. Instead, they continue to practise for many years and, as a result, their pupils lose out and the integrity of the physical education profession is undermined." This finding is not surprising and appears time and time again in the literature and in our study.

1. Purpose and method

Our research team joined the challenge to enhance PE teachers' CPD and attempted to improve school PE through a federal grant program in the U.S. whereby school districts can apply for funding targeted to improve school physical education. The program entitled, the Carol M. White Physical Education Progress grant, has funded over 900 school districts over the last eight years in the U.S. More the 500 million dollars have been distributed with the aim of instructional and curriculum enhancement of physical education that will ultimately improve the skill, knowledge, and dispositions of children relative to sustained involvement in physical activity. We focused on introducing and implementing three curricular models to the teachers: Sport Education, Health-Related Fitness Education, and the Personal-Social Responsibility model. Initially, we joined the teachers in learning about Sport Education (Siedentop, Hastie, and van der Mars, 2004).

Our project, conducted at a middle school and a junior high school, just concluded its first phase of three years of funding. Four physical education teachers at each school were engaged in specialized workshops, on-site mentoring, periodic reflection or focus group discussions, and individual conversations that focused on learning Siedentop's Sport Education model. Our hope was that teachers would improve their instructional and curricular knowledge, skills and dispositions relative to sport education and apply the model within their curriculum. Importantly, we hoped that pupils would profit from such innovation by engaging in a new model that motivates the children to be more active and more sport literate.

To assess our progress, our team developed a year-long research design that would examine the teachers' perceptions and behaviors related to the reform/change process. This research involved psychometric measurement of teacher attitudes toward change and their self-efficacy as well as the examination of teacher perceptions of the change process through 4 individual and 3 group interviews with teachers from both school settings. Equally, interviews were conducted with school administrators and our team observed the eight teachers over an eight month period to assess how they implemented the Sport Education model. Data have been and continue to be inductively analyzed and in the time

remaining I will share but a sampling of our findings that center around four themes and the lessons we have learned:

Theme 1 - Who asked us? Skepticism and concern abounds

Theme 2 - We already do sport education.

Theme 3 - Communities of practice, reflection and commitment: Real and unreal

Theme 4 - Kids like Sport Education

2. Findings

2.1. Theme one - Who asked us? Skepticism and concern abounds

An important tenet of teacher change forwarded by Guskey (1995) is that teachers have ownership in the change process. While our team interacted frequently with school administrators and teachers upon our first submission of a grant that had been rejected two years ago, this wasn't the case in the submission of a subsequent grant application. While we interacted with school administrators, we learned that teachers had not been informed of the second application and the award Hence, our first task was to clear up miscommunication and apparent lack of communication. It needed to be addressed and clarity of project goals agreed upon after learning that we were awarded the grant - this, of course, wasn't easy. As one teacher stated: "While I'm excited about it, but I'm a little nervous, of course, obviously for change. We are so use to the way things are, but I think all of us are ready for new things….I think the way, the way it was presented to us wasn't in the best…it could have been handled better. Nobody informed us – at least me about it and I am the department chair. So I feel I should have been told [about the grant application and award]."

So despite this rough patch, the teachers and our university team were able to get on the right pathway by engaging in multiple discussions sessions about the intent of the grant, curricular models, teacher and university faculty roles, and by acquiring and distributing reading materials to orient the teachers about the models and particularly the first model, Sport Education. While the teachers were generally enthused about the project, there was some caution and even cynicism about this reform effort as just another fad. We call this "drive by" or "drive through" CPD. As one skeptical teacher stated: " I'm always skeptical with new. At my age when I see new programs coming down the tube and especially not so much in PE, but program development that we have in different realms in education….everybody says we are going to get on the bandwagon. Well , it lasts about a year and a half and then it fizzles out."

Lessons learned: 1) make sure everyone has ownership in a reform project and are clear about goals, objectives, roles and plans to improve their program and teaching and 2) make sure you have a real partnership – one based on mutual respect and enthusiasm for your project – anything less will result is awkwardness and diminished goals that will ensure your efforts "fizzle out". In contrast to Rottenberg's premise of risk and uncertainty, one must try to insure as much certainty as possible as where people are going and how to get there.

2. 2. Theme two: We already do Sport Ed!

While many of the teachers claimed that they already "did" sport education, it certainly wasn't the model designed by Siedentop and his colleagues. To clarify what the model represents, reprints from journal articles about the model were collated and distributed to the teachers at both schools and the text, the Sport Education: A Comprehensive Guide (Siedentop, Hastie, and van der Mars, 2004) was purchased for each school. This includes an extensive DVD complete with instructional materials. This was followed by a two-day workshop on Sport Education conducted by Hans van der Mars, one of the developers of the model. Subsequently, teachers at each school conducted a nine week season of volleyball using the Sport Ed. Model. Our team assisted in the development of materials and instructional approaches to varying degrees at each school and one graduate student was assigned full time to rotate between schools to assist and observe the implementation of the model. As preparation and initial implementation unfolded in a nine week season of Volleyball, the teachers began to understand that their Sport Education was very different from the Sport Education.

We were very pleased that the teachers at both schools implemented the Sport Education model in some hybrid form. The teachers at the middle school went full speed in developing materials and implementing the model in its pure form while the junior high teachers opted to implement certain elements most suited to their students and importantly, their own comfort levels. While this model is clearly different from what they implemented in the past, these teachers still weren't initially convinced. As one teacher stated: "Well, it's not actually that much different from what we did in Volleyball before. We had fitness and scorekeepers, and the participants – only fair play points [are different]."

Nonetheless, the teachers at both schools did see the greater utility of the model for shaping student leadership and decision making opportunities – a shift from a teacher centered to student centered model of instruction as kids took on various roles during a season. Various teachers commented:

"Definitely the kids take over leadership roles"

"Most of the coaches did a nice job. Some got frustrated during the pre-season because people were not listening to them."

"I think the kids, look like and act like, and say that they feel more ownership in it."

"[Duty teams] I would keep all of them [various roles]….I think they are important and would definitely keep them."

Lesson learned: Teachers will define their own pathway to reform. Providing CPD opportunities via workshops, reading materials, group discussions, etc. are all helpful. Ultimately, teachers will shape CPD in the forms they wish to pursue, not those that others expect them to follow. We began seeing a bimodal tendency between enthusiasm on part of the middle school teachers and concern and strategic compliance (a kind of 'we will do this because it's expected of us' by school administrators and our university partners). It reveals the dialectical nature of the socialization process and the agency of the teachers. That is, while one group of teachers appeared to reflect and redefine their situation, the others attempted to accommodate the innovation slightly while holding tightly onto their existing beliefs and behaviors for the most part. This reminds of the research by Doolittle, Dodds, and Placek (1993) with pre-service teachers who held onto established beliefs throughout their teacher education. Finally, it also suggests as Griffin and Patton (2008) found in their study that change involves risk – some teachers are more willing than others to "risk" a change in routine. In terms of Rottenberg's thesis, we see both sides of the coin. We found that some teachers are more comfortable with the uncertainty that goes along with learning new approaches to teaching while others prefer more certainty by holding onto routine versus innovation.

2. 3. Theme Three: Communities of Practice, Reflection and Commitment: Real and Unreal

One of the things that impressed us most as researchers was the middle school teachers' ability to coalesce around the Sport Education model. They worked closely as a team and created an environment that facilitated student learning and enjoyment through the model. When concerned about one teacher being too controlling in the model, the other teachers encouraged the teacher to adjust her teaching strategies to fit the model; that is, allow pupils more ownership and control in implementing a lesson. As opposed to past history of working independently, this group really pulled together in discussing plans, developing student manuals and materials, building on each others strengths, and sharing the work load, and overcoming difficulties. As one teacher stated: " I think it's great being able to

work with them [other teachers] and I believe that everybody has really jumped in wholeheartedly at doing it and likes what's going on. I feel like we all kind of blend together and we all, you know….we can get upset with one another and we can, you know, not like this, but we will work it out and go on."

In contrast, while the junior high teachers claimed they were on the "same page", there was dependence on the university team to provide lessons and direction for the season. In fact, our team did develop the season plan and the materials used by each team within the season. Initially, all four teachers were present to oversee the lessons, but this changed over time as only two of the teachers appeared in the gym. While acknowledging the value of the model, the teachers appeared less enthusiastic and reflective about the merits of the model during the season. And we began to observe differentiated and lessened work load and wondered about the degree of collective commitment and caring to the reform effort – a concern even the chair of the department expressed from time to time. Once again, holding on to the past ruled the day for the most part.

Lesson learned: The most productive way to bring about reform is when a "true" community of practice (O'Sullivan, 2007) and reflection related to an aspirational model of innovation and CPD that is enthusiastically embraced. While the middle school teachers were collaborative, reflective, enthusiastic, and more certain about the model and are likely advocates of Sport Education, in contrast and regardless of some supportive rhetoric from junior high teachers, they appeared to be mostly "playing the PEP game". That is, they displayed strategic compliance to a new curricular model that didn't engender a real commitment to reform or situational redefinition (Lacey, 1977). This was evidenced in subsequent activities where they opted not to implement sport education in activities clearly quite suitable to the use of the model. This may be tied to their late career stage and the lack of connectedness between the teachers as well as lack of accountability and responsibility linked to their daily performance. Needless to say we are very concerned what the future holds in years two and three of this project for this school.

2. 4. Theme Four: Kids like sport education,

The final theme I will address is that both middle school and junior high school students appeared to genuinely enjoy the Sport Education model. Naming their teams, assuming duty roles, and engaging in more student vs. teacher centered activity made their experience more enjoyable. It was clear that some students really got into their leadership roles as captain, coach, referee, linesperson, and fitness trainer and came to their team with well-defined plans. Teachers at both schools recognized the value of the model for

their students and observed students' comfort and accompanying effort to learn volleyball in a different mode. One teacher stated: "I think they really like it …they were just kind of like the teachers, hesitant at first, just because they didn't understand all the responsibility that was being put on them. But now, I mean they sit together at lunch in their teams, I mean they talk in the hallways about this stuff… so I think they are definitely on board." Lesson learned: While teachers may recognize the enthusiasm by pupils for a certain curriculum or instructional model, that doesn't mean they will implement the model to meet student needs. In the case of the junior high teachers, teacher behavior was shaped to meet their own needs and routines – what was most comfortable to them. Caring for themselves had priority over caring for the students – doing what was best for the kids. In contrast, the middle school teachers' enthusiasm and instructional delivery carried over to the students. Again, in contrast to Rottenberg's uncertainty thesis, we saw investment in the certainty of the potential of the model by the middle school teachers, and prioritization of the certainty of their long held routines in teaching by junior high teachers. While implementing the model to an extent, the junior high teachers' actions seemed to connote more uncertainty and less value of the model, particularly after the volleyball season.

3. Summary

In closing, it appears in its own unique way, the uncertainty of outcomes hypothesis applies to work in continuing professional development. While more certainty may be assured by following some of the basic tenets of teacher change theory, the complexity of school and program cultures along with the idiosyncratic nature of teacher identities and behavior, makes reform rather problematic versus automatic. We have learned that:

1. Individual and group ownership in the change process impacts the degree of success in changing the culture of a program. Successful change calls for active initiation and participation of all teachers in partnership with one another and with support groups in communities of practice in order to elevate the possibility of sustained commitment, behavior change, and a vision for the future. As Huberman (1995, p. 207) found, "teachers were most uniformly enthusiastic when they were in the throes of a major innovation of which they approved." Armour and Yelling (2007) suggests that for CPD to be successful, teachers must lead the charge both by establishing communities of practice and demanding experiences of learning. While we couldn't agree more, such an ethic has to be part of a teacher's inner soul and personal value system. Without it, we will not observe a "change" of any kind.

2. While there needs to be pressure to bring about change, it may result in compliance and personal and interpersonal conflict rather than collaboration and a genuine change in teacher beliefs and behavior. Hence, the degree of commitment and accompanying behavior and beliefs varies across individuals and groups. In one way or another, our project or perhaps CPD in general can generate paradoxes of sorts: reform stimulates enthusiasm and internal conflict; brings people together or moves them further apart; expands learning opportunities for teachers or erodes others; and in some cases intensifies professional unions and has the potential to bring about professional conflict.

3. To the extent that it provides a focus and clear purpose for the school, again culture becomes the cohesion that bonds the school or a program together as it goes about its mission. HOWEVER, culture can be counterproductive and an obstacle to educational success. One culture was clearly about improvement facilitated by a steadfast effort to learn and reflect on how to make things better, while the other was one of compliance and few signs of reflective practice, and mostly discomfort with breaking from previous routines of practice.

4. Finally, the process has a powerful potential to impact how teachers learn and behave. While it clearly involves risk for both teachers and CPD providers and researchers, it is risk worth taking. As partners, we have learned what to do and what not to do, when to push ahead and when to back off, and what to provide and what not to offer. It has taught us a little more about the world of teaching and how teachers wish to engage in their work – both good and bad. It has reinforced the many shades of teaching and teachers – the pedagogical, emotional, intellectual, political and moral dimensions that affect teachers work.

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