

1 **RESEARCH ARTICLE**

2 **Teacher educators' perspectives on the implementation of Beginning**
3 **Teacher Standards for Physical Education in Ireland: developing and**
4 **regulating the profession?**

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24 **Abstract**

25 The Physical Education Teacher Education community in Ireland has developed Beginning
26 Teacher Standards for Physical Education (BTSfPE) at the post-primary (secondary) level.
27 This study explored teacher educators' perspectives on how the BTSfPE could be
28 implemented and considered the possible impact on the profession **within the discourses of**
29 **power**. Data collection involved semi-structured interviews with teacher educators in
30 physical education (n=13). Data were analysed inductively and trustworthiness issues were
31 considered. Participants suggested that the teaching standards could serve as a developmental
32 tool to guide individual teacher education programmes and beginning teachers as well as an
33 assessment function to support quality assurance and to hold programmes accountable. **The**
34 **teacher educators were committed to addressing issues of quality and status in physical**
35 **education in Ireland. However, an agreed vision of how the teaching standards would be**
36 **used to develop and regulate the profession is necessary to ensure that the intended benefits**
37 **emerge.**

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39 Key words: physical education; teaching standards; power

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47 **Introduction:**

48 *Teaching children...The nation's future depends, in large part, on how well it is done (National*
49 *Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education 2009, 357).*

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51 With the emergence of a global knowledge-based economy, teacher quality and the
52 preparation of teachers for schools in teacher education contexts have received greater
53 attention than before as education has been elevated on the political agenda (Adams 2008;
54 Cochran-Smith and Fries 2005; McKinsey and Company 2007; OECD 2005). Education
55 reform and the addressing of issues of teacher quality are framed within the 'regulating
56 discourses of economic necessity' (Maguire 2010, 60). They are reflected in a shift from an
57 input to an output model of both education and teacher education and increased regulation of
58 initial teacher education (Newby 2003; Stotsky 2006; Thiessen, 2000) where focus has been
59 placed on quantifying the knowledge, skills and dispositions needed by beginning teachers.
60 Teaching standards are used for the purposes of professional accreditation and review of
61 teacher education programmes, to license individual teachers and as a basis for advanced
62 teacher certification. In some countries generic standards are used to regulate physical
63 education teacher education programmes but subject-specific teaching standards have been
64 developed for physical education in the USA (Butler 2006; Curtner-Smith 1999; Lumpkin
65 2008; Mozen 2005; Ward, 2001). Beginning teacher standards for physical education
66 (BTSfPE) have been developed by a group of the physical education teacher educators in
67 Ireland (Appendix 1). Physical education teacher educators in Ireland are supportive of
68 adopting a standards-based approach to build consensus and quality assurance within the
69 profession (Ní Chróinín et al. 2012). However, whether adoption of a standards-based
70 approach will result in these outcomes is uncertain. This paper explores teacher educators'
71 perspectives on how the BTSfPE should be implemented within an Irish context. This paper

72 considers how the BTSfPE might impact on the profession where techniques of power
73 (Foucault 1977) inscribed in and associated with policy documents can serve to impact on the
74 practice of teacher educators in their everyday lives (Gore 2002).

75

76 **Background: Viewing standards through the discourses of power**

77 The use of teaching standards to regulate teacher quality and to support teacher development
78 has been promoted by some as a necessary quality assurance to promote the
79 professionalisation of teaching and as a lever to reform teacher education (Cochran-Smith
80 2001b; Cochran-Smith 2004a; Cochran-Smith 2004b; Darling-Hammond 2000; Darling-
81 Hammond and Bransford 2005; Darling-Hammond 1998; Diez 1998; Furlong et al. 2000;
82 Ingvarson 1998; Ingvarson 2002; McNally et al. 2008; National Council for Accreditation of
83 Teacher Education 2010b). Others in education question whether this standards- based
84 model is the best way to describe and evaluate the complex multi-dimensional learning
85 processes involved in teaching and teacher education (Cochran-Smith 2004a; Cochran-Smith
86 2004c; Maguire 2010; Sachs 2001; Sachs 2003). They challenge the idea that all learning of
87 value can be framed in learning outcomes or predetermined standards and reject the
88 implementation of policies in ways that could result in a model of teacher education that
89 forces a ‘teaching to the standards’ (Apple 2001a; Conway et al. 2009; Maguire 2010).

90

91 Some physical education teacher education (PETE) researchers have emphasised
92 issues of power and privilege within standards-based models (Macdonald and Hunter 2005;
93 Macdonald et al. 2006; Rossi et al. 2009) suggesting that often the ideals of policy documents
94 do not translate into practice (Curtner-Smith 1999; Rossi et al. 2009). Recognition of an
95 intricate set of connections between knowledge and power highlight the political and value

96 laden nature of teaching standards documents (Apple 2001b; Cochran-Smith and Fries 2002;
97 Cochran-Smith and Fries 2005; Foucault 1980). Macdonald et al. (2006) emphasise the
98 importance of considering teaching standards within the discourses of power suggesting that
99 this is crucial to understanding their impact within the education system. Foucault's concept
100 of disciplinary power explicitly shifts analyses of power from the 'macro' realm of structures
101 and ideologies to the 'micro' level of impact on the individual allowing power to be viewed
102 in a relational way rather than as simply involving the imposition of one will on another.
103 From this viewpoint, power relations, for good or bad, serve to govern and regulate
104 individuals and knowledge. Gore (1998; 2002) uses [Foucaultian procedures](#) to identify the
105 enactment of power relations at the micro-level allowing the complexity of the relationship
106 between parties to be viewed and also giving access to mechanisms whereby broader societal
107 power relations are imposed and reproduced (Gore 2002). These techniques include 1.
108 Surveillance (monitoring behaviour, making comparisons) 2. Normalisation (defining the
109 normal; conforming in relation to standards) 3. Exclusion (limits of difference) 4.
110 Classification (differentiating individual and groups) 5. Distribution (arranging, locating,
111 ranking) 6. Individualisation (individual character) 7. Totalisation (collective character) 8.
112 Regulation (controlling, subject to restrictions/ rewards and punishment (Gore 1998; Gore
113 2002). Regulation is considered the culmination of the other techniques. [Macdonald et al.](#)
114 [\(2006\) emphasised the importance of viewing standards through the lens of power.](#)
115 [Regulatory processes \(Gore 1998; 2002\) can be applied in physical education contexts to](#)
116 [allow for an exploration of the impact of power on the decisions taken at the level of courses](#)
117 [and students in the everyday lives of teacher educators \(Webb et al. 2004; Macdonald et al.](#)
118 [2006; Webb and Macdonald 2007\).](#)

119

120 In some contexts (e.g. Finland and Poland) standards are seen as a loose outline of
121 teaching competencies and are *'illustrative and indicative of performance'* (Conway et al.
122 2009, 151). In these contexts they are used to guide teacher development, promote reflective
123 practice and lifelong learning and focus on improving the quality of teachers' and teacher
124 educators' knowledge and practice (Darling-Hammond 2004; Koster and Dengerink 2008;
125 Yinger and Hendricks-Lee 2000). In other contexts (e.g. England and New Zealand) teaching
126 standards are articulated in ways that allow direct comparison of performances against a set
127 of benchmarks with an emphasis on monitoring, regulating and measuring performance. In
128 these contexts there is often a failure to support consideration of the broader social context of
129 teaching and learning in higher education (Cochran-Smith and Fries 2002). In some
130 countries, such as the UK and USA, the standards were initiated with a strong developmental
131 focus but as they evolve *'...there is an emerging drift from developmental to regulatory*
132 *approaches to standards'* (Sachs, 2005, 5). Coolahan (2007a) highlights the importance of
133 considering the balance between the developmental and regulatory purposes of standards:

134 *Depending on the mode devised, the competency approach can be professionally, positive and*
135 *benign, or it can, alternatively, be of a narrow, check-list character and be professionally malign*
136 *(Coolahan, 2007a, 34).*

137

138 Sachs (2005) highlights how the mechanism of accountability can ultimately determine
139 whether the standards are tightly prescribed or open and flexible resulting in more emphasis
140 being placed on either teacher development or regulation.

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142 Once established, it seems that teaching standards become the legitimising structure for
143 all knowledge (Macdonald and Hunter 2005) and influence how learning experiences are

144 created within teacher education programmes (Delandshere and Arens 2001; Mergler 2008;
145 Sachs 2005; Sheldon and Biddle 1998; Yinger and Hendricks-Lee 2000). Whether this power
146 to legitimise is perceived and exercised in ways that are useful (establishing a knowledge
147 base for the profession) or ways that restrict, normalise, regulate and control is often
148 dependent on their context and who is responsible for judging them (Gore 1998; 2002;
149 Mahony and Hextall 2000). As Apple (2001a) reminds us:

150 *We need to remember that none of this occurs on a level playing field...there are very real*
151 *differences in power in one's ability to influence, mediate, transform, or reject a policy or a*
152 *regulatory process (Apple, 2001a, 191).*

153

154 Some research on the impact of standards in PETE has focused on issues around
155 programme alignment and assessment (Banville 2006; Everhart and McKethan 2008; O'
156 Meara and MacDonald 2004). Compliance with teaching standards has been considered from
157 the perspective of the programme (Senne 2006) and the reviewer (Martin and Judd 2006).
158 Delandshere and Arens (2001) found that 'as teacher educators uncritically participate in the
159 standards-based movement it becomes impossible for them to entertain alternative
160 perspectives on teaching and education outside of the framework provided to them by the
161 standards' (p.547). O Meara and Macdonald (2004) highlight that teacher educators have a
162 key role in how standards are framed within their teacher education programmes. The
163 threat of being labeled sub-standard or the threat of withdrawal of programme accreditation
164 may force compliance where 'courses like coats will be cut and trimmed accordingly' (Pring
165 1992, 22). The consequences of non-compliance through surveillance and normalisation
166 serve to regulate the actions of the individual teacher and teacher educator in ways that are
167 not evident from examination of teaching standards documents.

168

169 Traditionally, teacher educators were seen as the ‘gatekeepers of legitimate professional
170 knowledge’ (Macdonald and Tinning 1995, 100) which included an inbuilt assumption of the
171 quality of their practice based on inputs. In many countries the adoption of a standards-based
172 approach (based on outputs), directed by government policy and implemented by Teaching
173 Councils and agencies such as the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education
174 (NCATE) has marginalised teacher educators from the process of reform in their local
175 context by shifting accountability to the national level (Bales 2007; Maguire 2010). Standards
176 are typically developed at a policy level and teacher educators are required to accommodate
177 them in their programmes. While The Teaching Council in Ireland has recently been assigned
178 a statutory role in the accreditation of teacher education programmes it is suggested that there
179 are still significant gaps in teacher education policy in Ireland (Harford 2010). A group of
180 physical education teacher educators, aware of this regulatory shift in Ireland, developed a set
181 of Beginning Teacher Standards for Physical Education (BTSfPE) which detail what
182 beginning teachers should know and be able to do in a physical education context. The
183 BTSfPE frame what physical education teacher educators think the outcomes of teacher
184 education in physical education should be within an Irish context thus bringing a shared sense
185 of vision to PETE in Ireland across the three PETE programmes nationally.

186

187 Given that teacher education policy in Ireland is at ‘a critical juncture’ (Harford, 2010:
188 357) this attempt to influence the national agenda responds to Collier’s (2006) call for
189 Physical Education teacher educators to ‘anticipate how to be active stakeholders in the
190 process of political reform and policy generation’ (p.389) and responds to calls for teacher
191 educators to take an activist and leadership role (Furlong et al. 2000; Imig and Imig 2007;

192 Levine 2006; Metzler 2009; Sachs 2005; Stotsky 2006). These teacher educators, aware of
193 the political nature of their work and informed by those with significant experience of
194 standards development and implementation in other contexts, have taken this proactive step
195 to preempt and influence policy formation by trying to have their version of what is important
196 legitimised, and how and by whom they should be judged.

197

198 Macdonald et al. (2006) address the issue of finding a balance within teaching standards
199 that allows for regulation and accountability without controlling teacher education
200 programmes and teacher educator performance:

201

202 *A key question associated with an analysis of the standards discourse is the degree to which it*
203 *extends beyond what can be seen as a narrow form of normalising (i.e. compliance), to a broader*
204 *form of classification that defines in publicly acceptable ways the complex nature of teachers’*
205 *learning and work (Macdonald et al. 2006, 236).*

206

207 The potential of teaching standards to support moving beyond ‘normalising’ to ‘a broader
208 form of classification’ is considered within an Irish context where it is recognised that
209 regulatory processes can serve to impact on practice in the everyday life of the teacher
210 educators (Gore 2002). It is important to consider how development of the subject-specific
211 BTSfPE could shape, limit or undermine future educational policy development in Ireland.
212 This paper explores teacher educators’ perspectives on how the BTSfPE should be
213 implemented in an Irish context and what the consequences of their implementation might be
214 for PETE and the wider physical education community.

215

216 **Methodology**

217 *Research context and participants*

218 Ethical approval for the research study was obtained from the Faculty of Education and
219 Health Sciences Research Ethics Committee at the University of Limerick. Thirteen physical
220 education teacher educators drawn from nine teacher education institutions on the island of
221 Ireland participated in the research. This represents a significant proportion of the Physical
222 Education teacher educator population in Ireland (approximately 30 in total). This sample
223 included five teacher educators at the primary level and eight at the post-primary (secondary)
224 level. Both primary and post-primary level teacher educators were included to ensure
225 balanced representation. Issues of anonymity and confidentiality were addressed through
226 informed consent and assurances that no participant would be identifiable by institution.
227 Participants had varying knowledge and experience of standards-based education. A number
228 of the post-primary participants were members of the PETE Ireland group that developed the
229 BTSfPE and were involved to varying degrees in their development. Two of these post-
230 primary participants had extensive experience teaching standards in other contexts. Many of
231 the participants had some knowledge of the use of standards-based education in other
232 countries though the majority of teacher educators involved in this study had not engaged in
233 the debate around teaching standards in the literature. Participants were aware that
234 accreditation of all teacher education programmes by the Teaching Council was imminent
235 and would be required, though it was not known at this point what this process would
236 involve.

237

238 *Gathering the Interview Data*

239 This qualitative study involved semi-structured interviews of approximately one hour
240 duration with each of the teacher educators (ten face to face and three phone interviews). The
241 interview guide focused on the participants' previous experience of standards and
242 consideration of the benefits and drawbacks of standards-based education. Research and
243 developments elsewhere were drawn on to allow for consideration of other perspectives. The
244 potential impact of the implementation of these standards for PETE, teacher educators and
245 physical education in schools was explored. Copies of the transcript were sent to participants
246 to confirm the accuracy of the text, to allow for clarification of thinking and to approve use of
247 the text in the analysis phase. The interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed and
248 organised using nVivo 8 Qualitative Analysis Package.

249

250 *Analysis of the Data*

251 An inductive approach to the analysis and interpretation of the interview transcripts was used
252 (Creswell 2009). Initially, the data were examined in relation to the research questions to
253 provide a framework for the construction of themes through open coding using the constant
254 comparison method (Lincoln and Guba 1985). Reading and rereading of transcripts to avoid
255 fragmentation of the data allowed for understandings to emerge and ensured that the social
256 context of the data was not lost. Memos were used to avoid drift in code definitions (Gibbs
257 2007). Interview transcripts were re-examined to check for discriminant cases to allow for
258 presentation of these data (Creswell 2009, Miles and Huberman 1994). Quotes from
259 participants are used to provide a balance of views on the issues involved. **Trustworthiness of**
260 **the findings, interpretations and conclusions was enhanced through member checking. This**
261 **process included sharing of findings with the PETE Ireland group who developed the**
262 **BTSfPE and sharing of a completed draft of this paper with both primary and post-primary**
263 **participants. In addition, the findings were presented through a conference to the wider PETE**

264 and physical education community in Ireland. Feedback and discussion from these three
265 fora informed the findings and discussion presented below.

266

267 **Findings and Discussion**

268 The support of the physical education teacher educators for the use of BTSfPE in PETE at the
269 post-primary level reflects the trend in physical education in other countries towards
270 embracing the standards-based model (Dodds 2006). Participants emphasised the value of the
271 teaching standards development process being led by the teacher educators themselves
272 (Ingvarson 1998):

273 *'it gives us strength if we are one of the people to start the ball rolling... we have that opportunity*
274 *to go in partnership to get these standards established rather than the ivory tower deciding what it*
275 *is the standards should be' (Participant 3, Post-Primary).*

276

277 This reflects other contexts where the teaching profession themselves have been most active
278 in developing standards (Yinger and Hendricks-Lee 2000). Participants anticipated that the
279 teaching standards would impact positively at all levels within the profession by providing a
280 quality assurance through standardisation rather than creation of sameness within the
281 profession (Macdonald et al. 2006). However, the outcomes desired by this group of teacher
282 educators cannot be guaranteed without a clear vision of how the teaching standards will be
283 implemented within PETE, how they will be applied within the wider physical education and
284 teacher education community, by whom the BTSfPE will be used and for what purposes.
285 Teacher educators' perspectives on how the BTSfPE should be implemented are presented
286 and discussed in relation to their potential to (a) guide and develop and (b) regulate and
287 assess the physical education profession in Ireland.

288

289 *1. To guide and develop*

290 Participants suggested the BTSfPE could act as a flexible, thinking tool to guide and inform
291 PETE policy and practice as well as providing a benchmark for beginning teachers within the
292 profession. Each post-primary institution could apply their own professional judgment in
293 meeting the teaching standards while still broadly ‘ticking the boxes’ of the standards:

294 *... it allows people to think... ‘what is going to work well within this context?’, rather than saying*
295 *‘I am rule driven and I will take this and I will teach it. (Participant 3, Post-Primary)*

296

297 This supports the suggestion that a ‘light touch’ approach may be desirable in a teacher
298 education context (McNeill 2000) and most appropriate in an Irish context (Conway et al.
299 2009). Participants rejected the idea that the use of teaching standards might legitimise one
300 way of thinking about teaching, asserting that the content of the standards was essential
301 knowledge but that it would still be possible to include aspects outside the standards within
302 their programmes: *‘I would say that these are ten standards that are essential..., but I wouldn’t see*
303 *that...I can’t go beyond that, [of] course you can’ (Participant 5, Post-Primary)*. The dismissal of
304 issues of epistemic privilege for the benefit of consensus is indicative of a desire to address
305 current fragmented practice.

306

307 McNeill (2000) argues that teaching standards permit ‘criticism aimed at fine-tuning the
308 mechanism but does not permit critique that challenges its premises’ (p.268). However,
309 participants were not concerned that use of teaching standards would restrict change and
310 development suggesting that embedded reviews could accommodate new knowledge and new

311 contexts (Darling-Hammond and Bransford 2005; Darling-Hammond 1998). One participant
312 outlined how a new curriculum model was included in a textbook in another context, even
313 though it was not within the standards. This example demonstrates that teacher educators can
314 have a role in legitimising new knowledge, even where a standards-based approach is in
315 operation.

316 Participants were confident in the teacher educator's ability to retain autonomy to make
317 decisions about the content and emphasis of the programmes in their own context and resist
318 compliance. This confidence may be based on the teacher educators' current role in
319 controlling the development of the standards. However, the reality of assessment may force
320 compliance on the programme content and [delivery in unanticipated ways as surveillance and](#)
321 [classification are translated into regulation](#) (O' Meara and MacDonald 2004). As one
322 participant suggested: '...one of the other disadvantages is that you would need to standardise
323 the people who are delivering the teaching of physical education' (Participant 8, Primary).
324 This quote highlights the potential role of distributive power associated with ranking of
325 institutions and individual teacher educators.

326

327 *2. To regulate and assess*

328 The teacher educators suggested that each individual beginning teacher's learning on exit
329 from the post-primary PETE programme could be assessed to 'check' the standards where
330 quality assurance is based on learning rather than claims of teacher quality (Levine 2006).
331 Each beginning teacher could map evidence of his/her learning in a portfolio document.
332 Portfolios are used in this way in other contexts (Tillema and Smith 2007; Zeichner and Wray
333 2001) where the teaching standards form a part of performance assessment of teacher
334 education (Cochran-Smith 2004a).

335

336 Participants suggested that a combination of internal monitoring using professional
337 bodies and external monitoring by The Teaching Council would support a transparent system
338 of accountability. Participants saw regulation as a necessary and integral part of being
339 accountable: ‘...we need a system for them to know’ (Participant 7, Primary). The acceptance
340 of monitoring and regulation as a component of their professionalism reflects the current
341 climate of accountability in education (Maguire 2010): ‘I think it would be too insular to keep
342 them to ourselves...This is almost like patting ourselves on the back...’ (Participant 9,
343 Primary). However, there is a danger that acceptance of external regulation could restrict the
344 ability of teacher educators to make decisions in their own context. Teaching standards have
345 been used to impact on the status of the teaching profession in other contexts (Australian
346 Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) 2011). Participants pointed to where
347 this has been done elsewhere in PETE:

348

349 *‘...those whom are more internationally renowned as effective physical education teacher*
350 *education programmes are...having to provide evidence on how they actually teach...’ (Participant*
351 *1, Post-Primary).*

352

353 Participants suggested that the external assessment function of the teaching standards was
354 crucial to increasing professionalism and enhancing the status of the teaching profession. The
355 possible implications of external regulation for practice were considered:

356

357 *‘...somebody should ultimately have the power to be able to say “now hang on that’s not really*
358 *very effective and it’s going to have to change”’ (Participant 9, Primary).*

359

360 Participants suggested that if an institution did not meet the standards they could work
361 with the Teaching Council who could provide a framework to support the institution in order
362 to achieve compliance. The fate of institutions that opted out of or did not buy into the
363 teaching standards was considered but focus was placed on how these institutions could be
364 supported to comply with the regulations rather than a consideration of legitimising these
365 alternatives outside the teaching standards. This suggests that normalisation (meeting the
366 standards) and exclusion (placing limits on difference) could become significant aspects of
367 regulating the PETE programmes: ‘...if the Teaching Council is going to have that much
368 power, or whatever you want to call it, what are the penalties?...’ (Participant 11, Primary).
369 This is an indication that the teacher educators in this research were already thinking of
370 solutions from ‘within’ the standards framework as has been found elsewhere (Delandshere
371 and Arens 2001).

372

373 While participants did not perceive a future where course design and delivery would
374 be driven by assessment and compliance to the teaching standards they recognised that
375 comparisons between programmes based on compliance were inevitable. Some concern was
376 expressed in relation to how the results of any assessment would be disseminated. The group
377 was eager to avoid any ‘ranking’ of individual institutions. However, it seems that even when
378 official ranking is not adopted, comparisons are still made. This highlights the potential role
379 [of distribution to regulate how teacher educators approach](#) evaluation in relation to the
380 BTSfPE. One of the participants described their experiences in another country where the
381 reality of unofficial ranking impacted on programme decision making and forced an
382 inevitable response to the standards. One concern in relation to ranking in making all

383 programmes conform to the same standards is that any difference could be equated with
384 inadequacy rather than considered as a legitimate alternative (Apple 2001b). **The operation of**
385 **Foucaultian procedures of power** could force an unintended normalisation of programmes
386 through distribution, surveillance and normalisation depending on how the standards are
387 assessed, by whom and with what consequences. Some of the participants cautioned against
388 assessment of the standards that were too narrow or restrictive:

389 *‘...we have to do something but we have to be careful we don’t create a stick that is going to beat*
390 *us later in terms of like having a type of inspection going on’ (Participant 4, Post-Primary).*

391

392 However, the need for the teaching standards to be defined in a way that allows access to
393 those outside the profession for regulatory purposes may force the standards to be more
394 explicit than participants currently imagine. There is a possibility that the desire to quality
395 assure the profession and eliminate “poor” practice could also stifle and restrict the very best
396 of **current practice through the impact of regulatory processes in practice at the local level**. It
397 must be questioned whether teaching standards, that are open to a level of interpretation that
398 would allow each institution to individualise them as suggested by participants, can truly be
399 used to hold the teacher education programme or the individual accountable.

400

401 **Be careful what you wish for...**

402 *Power is neither a force for good or bad but rather an ability to act in a particular way. The*
403 *impact of these actions can yield positive or negative results. The implementation of the*
404 *BTSfPE seems to hold the potential to impact positively or negatively, or both, at the same*
405 *time, on the physical education profession. The teacher educators in this study are committed*
406 *to adopting a standards-based approach to impact positively on the profession. However, the*

407 findings of this study highlight a number of ideas that merit further consideration and will
408 need to be carefully balanced if the standards are to serve a developmental and regulatory
409 function simultaneously. These teacher educators have been proactive in influencing policy
410 development in relation to how their teacher education programmes may be judged by
411 developing subject-specific teaching standards. This action in itself demonstrates the
412 commitment of the teacher educators and may enhance their professional status. However, it
413 is important to keep the political nature of teacher education (Bates 2007) central to this
414 discussion. Teaching standards can be ‘...powerful “message systems” with far-reaching
415 influences’ (Conway and Artiles 2005, 22) within teacher education for teacher education
416 programmes, teacher educators and beginning teachers, as well as having a broader impact in
417 schools.

418

419 The concept of accountability can be viewed as a positive developmental agent linked to
420 reflective practice but it can also be linked with external control, restriction and compliance
421 (Yinger & Hendricks-Lee, 2000). The tension between autonomy and regulation within
422 teacher education is often framed within a discourse that links improvement with
423 accountability mechanisms (Bates 2007). The teacher educators in this study seem to align
424 with this latter way of thinking. Their acceptance of the accountability arguments and
425 language perhaps reflects how pervasive this discourse has become in education more
426 generally. It may also reflect one result of a long-standing surveillance process which
427 ultimately sees actors coming to internalise the gaze of their watchers. They have linked
428 improvement of physical education and an associated positive impact on status with quality
429 assurance through accountability mechanisms. However, though standards are linked to the
430 rhetoric of professionalism, the reality may be that standards can be used as instruments of
431 increased external control and may not result in the improved quality desired by the reform

432 (Apple 2001a). Rossi et al (2009) found that implementation of standards in physical
433 education did not necessarily align with the ideals they espoused. It is acknowledged that the
434 teacher educators in this study were being strategic in trying to influence the policy agenda in
435 their area. However, it could be asked whether these physical education teacher educators
436 have gone too far by 'imposing' the standards on themselves, and by aligning too much with
437 managerial perspectives (Maguire 2010) and internalising the gaze of the watchers.

438

439 In other countries accountability mechanisms, designed compliance with the standards, have
440 impacted negatively on the teaching profession, teacher educators and the programmes on
441 which they teach (Bullough, Clark, & Patterson, 2003; Codd 2005; Delandshere & Arens,
442 2001; Møller 2002; Simons & Kelchtermans 2008). These studies highlight the impact of
443 macro level power at the micro level through required compliance (through high stakes
444 implications of non-compliance) to narrow accountability mechanisms in teacher education.
445 Consideration of the possible impact of the BTSfPE through the lens of power results in a
446 number of unanswered questions and a series of cautions about how the BTSfPE might be
447 further developed. The question remains whether it is possible for teacher educators to
448 maintain autonomy over decision-making in relation to the content and approaches within the
449 programme when external regulation of the BTSfPE is proposed. Also, is it possible to allow
450 a large degree of flexibility in relation to the content and approaches within teacher education
451 programme while requiring all programmes to meet the same standards? Part of the issue here
452 is that things which are referenced in the standards become "legitimate" in arguing for
453 additional space on already packed programmes while things not referenced on the standards
454 are more likely to get squeezed out. This may well limit the possibility for being creative and
455 doing other things not directly referenced in the standards, despite the hope of the

456 participants. The extent to which a variety of different approaches can be legitimized remains
457 uncertain.

458

459 Teaching standards usually identify minimum levels of achievement (Sachs 2005). As
460 currently written, the BTSfPE do not include a metric or a rubric that describes or quantifies
461 levels of achievement. Once a rubric articulating performance levels is developed, is it
462 inevitable that programmes will try to score as highly as possible on an evaluation and meet
463 all standards? In addition, concerns that have been expressed in relation to the difficulty in
464 finding a mechanism that adequately accounts for complexities of teaching and learning
465 within individual social context remain (Apple 2001; Cochran-Smith 2004a). The use of a
466 variety of metrics in assessing teacher performance is an approach being explored in the USA
467 through the Teacher Performance Assessment Consortium (TPAC) (scale.stanford.edu).
468 Perhaps piloting and developing a similar mechanism to explore how the checking of
469 standards might work would be a useful first step in exploring how the BTSfPE might
470 operate in practice.

471

472 The Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor (1993) maintained that rules do not contain the
473 principles of their application. He argued that the implementation of rules draws on
474 unarticulated understandings of social and historical context. In the current study, the
475 teaching standards can be seen as an agreed set of rules for PETE. However, they do not
476 contain any clear direction on their implementation. Without the principles of implementation
477 for the BTSfPE, it is uncertain whether they will achieve their intended purpose in relation to
478 enhancing the status of the profession through consensus and quality assurance. Thorpe
479 (2003, 131) cautions that the best of intentions in reforming PETE ‘will be dense with effects

480 we may not comprehend until they have betrayed us'. The delicate balance between forcing
481 all programmes to look the same through narrow compliance and 'a broader form of
482 classification' (Macdonald et al. 2006, 236) is central to this struggle to define the profession
483 and cement its legitimacy. Though it may be desirable, and is desired by these teacher educators to
484 build consensus on 'what counts' and provide evidence of its achievement, promotion of high
485 standards that all must meet while embracing difference is a difficult balancing act to achieve.

486

487 Regulatory processes of checking compliance (Gore 1998; Gore 2002; Macdonald et al.
488 2006) and the inevitable making of comparisons between programmes raises questions
489 around how the standards might evolve. It is worth being mindful of Apple's (2001a, 191)
490 assertion that 'there are very real differences in power in one's ability to influence, mediate,
491 transform, or reject a policy or a regulatory process'. The complexity of the enactment of power
492 relations through Foucaultian procedures in practice points to the relative power at
493 programme level to enact change once the mechanism of governance and regulation is in
494 place. Questions around how new ideas can be legitimised through a review process need to
495 be answered before any official status is sought. Since development of the BTSfPE the
496 Teaching Council has completed a mandatory accreditation process with all teacher education
497 programmes in Ireland. In addition, they have recently published Criteria and Guidelines for
498 all teacher education programmes (The Teaching Council 2011). These include a detailed list
499 of required learning outcomes for all programmes and narrows the space in which the
500 BTSfPE may operate. These developments suggest that careful consideration needs to be
501 given to the merit of seeking official status for the BTSfPE.

502 While participants emphasised the importance of review it is unclear how this might
503 happen and who might be involved. Can the teacher education programmes review the
504 standards themselves and determine what should be added or omitted? This approach would

505 not seem to align with the level of external accountability desired by participants in the study.
506 However, an externally led review process could make the profession vulnerable to political
507 and policy changes in the wider educational discourse. While the current emphasis in the
508 Irish educational system is on literacy and numeracy (Department of Education and Skills
509 2011), one cannot predict what future trends might emerge. One such scenario might involve
510 external agencies imposing criteria in relation to fitness levels in response to the ‘obesity
511 crisis’ that could result in mandatory fitness testing of all beginning teachers on exit from the
512 programme. While the merits of this scenario are debatable, what is significant is
513 consideration of the relative agency of teacher educators in influencing the decision-making
514 process.

515

516 The BTSfPE are subject-specific. Questions must be asked about what is lost in using
517 physical education, rather than teacher education as the frame to define the profession. Could
518 this framing actually decrease rather than increase the ability of physical education teacher
519 educators to exert influence? Bates (2007) cautions that narrow framing could result in
520 accountability with an emphasis on regulating ‘the technical detail of teacher education as an
521 administrative service’ (Bates 2007, 139) rather than the potential contribution of teacher
522 education to wider social and ethical concerns (Furlong et al. 2000). Preservation of the
523 autonomy of teacher educators to be responsive to the wider social and cultural context seems
524 central to this enterprise. In defining what counts in PETE contexts, the potential of PETE to
525 influence wider teacher education debates needs to be carefully considered.

526

527 **Conclusion**

528 ‘Teaching standards owned and developed by the profession will ensure that we have quality
529 teachers for the future’ (Sachs 2005, 10). The teacher educators in this study are committed to
530 enhancing the status of the profession through adoption of a standards-based approach in line
531 with Sach’s vision. However, it is questionable whether a standards-based approach will
532 produce the desired impact, allowing a broader form of classification rather than narrowing
533 practice through normalisation and regulation (Macdonald et al. 2006), within the PETE
534 community in Ireland without a clear vision of how the teaching standards would be
535 regulated, by whom and with what consequences. The findings of this study reveal how the
536 operation of regulatory processes could result in unintended negative consequences. In
537 particular, even though the BTSfPE have been developed voluntarily by the PETE
538 community an approach that allows for external accountability and regulation at national
539 level in the future should be carefully considered to ensure that the impact is in the best
540 interest of teaching and learning in physical education.

541

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547

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768 613-621.
- 769
- 770 **Appendix 1: Beginning Teacher Standards for Physical Education**

771 **What a beginning teacher should KNOW and BE ABLE TO DO upon exiting a teacher**
772 **education programme.**

773 1. Commitment to students and their learning

774 a. Education and learning focused

775 b. Identify steps to develop as a competent, caring and reflective practitioner

776 c. Seek connections with the community to stimulate and support student
777 opportunities

778 d. Work within a community of practice with the goal of enhancing student
779 growth and development

780

781 2. Reflection

782 a. Personal / professional development through use of a reflective cycle that
783 allows understanding teaching practice and making changes to meet
784 thoughtfully identified goals

785 b. Make use of colleagues, professional organizations, and resources to develop
786 as a reflective practitioner

787

788 3. Content knowledge

789 a. Good knowledge of the major skills and tactics central to the various strands
790 of the relevant curricula.

791 b. Prioritise content appropriate to the needs of the students.

792 c. Ability to demonstrate correctly, or provide a correct demonstration through a
793 third party, of all major skills and tactics central to the relevant curricula

794 d. Ability to recognise and correct errors in performance of major skills and
795 tactics areas central to the relevant curricula

- 796 e. Knowledge of and ability to debate current educational issues related to
797 physical activity
- 798 f. Ability to describe and apply physiological and sociological concepts to
799 physical activity
- 800
- 801 4. Pedagogical content knowledge
- 802 a. Knowledge of relevant curricula (e.g., sport education, TFFU, adventure
803 education, etc)
- 804 b. Knowledge of JCPE, SCPE, LCPE standards and their application
- 805 c. Knowledge of the learner
- 806 d. Knowledge of approaches that may be taken to teach content of relevant
807 curricula
- 808
- 809 5. Communication
- 810 a. Who
- 811 1. With students
- 812 2. With staff members
- 813 3. With parents
- 814 4. With the wider community
- 815 b. How
- 816 1. Oral, written, and electronic skills
- 817 2. Listening skills
- 818 3. Verbal and non-verbal
- 819 4. Visual / media
- 820 c. What

- 821 1. Managerial information
- 822 2. Instructional information
- 823 3. Sensitivity to all learners
- 824
- 825 6. Planning for teaching, learning, and assessment
- 826 a. Recognise the importance of both short and long term planning that is linked
- 827 to programme goals and student needs
- 828 b. Develop a coherent, cohesive and instructionally aligned programme
- 829 c. Progressive learning experiences aligned with programme and lesson goals
- 830 and allow learners to integrate knowledge and skills
- 831 d. Identify appropriate cues and prompts to support learning
- 832 e. Design appropriate explanations and demonstrations to reinforce learning
- 833 f. Encourage critical and varied types of assessment of the physical education
- 834 curriculum
- 835
- 836 7. Teaching ALL learners
- 837 a. Recognise the importance of inclusion in the PE class
- 838 b. Knowledge of inclusion principles and practices
- 839 c. Knowledge of approaches that may be taken to adapt content of relevant
- 840 curricula to suit all needs / understand how individuals differ in their
- 841 approaches to learning
- 842 d. Ability to monitor individual and group performance to design safe and
- 843 appropriate learning experiences
- 844
- 845 8. Lifelong learners

- 846 a. Commitment to the profession by actively participating in the professional
847 physical education community
- 848 b. Commitment to ongoing professional development through the design of a
849 professional development plan to guide your own growth as a physical
850 education teacher
- 851 c. Actively advocate for physical education in the school and beyond in the
852 community
- 853
- 854 9. Managers of learning environment
- 855 a. School, community, classroom
- 856 b. Design of preventive management routines that facilitate a smoothly
857 functioning learning experience
- 858 c. Manage resources in ways that provide equitable experiences for all learners
- 859 d. Facilitate learners becoming self managers of their own behaviour and
860 physical activity experiences
- 861 e. Design an effective behaviour management strategy
- 862
- 863 10. Change agents
- 864 a. Ability to persevere
- 865 b. Practicalities of teaching within the Irish system
- 866 c. Strategic change management skills
- 867