

# *Teaching Practice: Pre-service Physical Educators' Perspectives*

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of the study was to investigate student teachers' perspectives about teaching practice in order to understand its significance in their professional socialisation. Additionally, a cross-cultural comparison was made between student teachers in teacher training programmes in Hong Kong and Australia. Because understandings about physical education teaching practicum have mainly been derived from north American and British research, it was also intended to test the universality of issues identified in the literature. The first research question (RQ1) was: how did the practicum contribute to physical education student teachers' professional socialisation, in terms of the students' perceptions of practicum usefulness in the successful (and unsuccessful) construction of their skills and beliefs? The second research question (RQ2) was: how did the practicum contribute to physical education student teachers' socialisation into the role of physical education teacher, in terms of their perceptions of an ideal physical education teacher? The third research question (RQ3) was: in what ways are concepts about effective teaching identified primarily in north American-based research held as important by selected Hong Kong and Australian student teachers, and in what ways are such concepts culturally specific? A questionnaire on 'Teaching Practice Experiences' was distributed to 120 physical education students in three teacher preparation programmes within two weeks following their teaching practice. The inventory contained four open-ended questions seeking perceptions from the student teachers about perceived usefulness of teaching practice, successes and difficulties experienced during teaching practice, and characteristics of an ideal physical education teacher. Content analysis of the responses about teaching practice experiences revealed three central themes and they were personal orientation, teaching methodology, and pupil-centred concerns. The results showed that student teachers saw more successes than difficulties in their teaching practice, issues concerned with pupil learning being most salient. Furthermore, their perceptions about an ideal physical education teacher remained intact after teaching practice. Lastly, differences existed in the importance of those teaching characteristics across the sites.

## **Introduction**

Stroot and Williamson (1993: 337) argue that studying socialisation processes 'provides insight into how educators learn to understand and fulfil professional responsibilities'. Socialisation theory has been used to study students of physical education teacher education (PETE) programmes and physical education (PE) teachers (Kirk, 1997). The most prevalent theoretical construct used to describe the socialisation of PE teachers is the occupational socialisation model (Lawson & Stroot, 1993). Lawson (1986: 107) has defined occupational socialisation as 'all of the kinds of socialization that initially influence persons to enter the field of PE and that later are responsible for their perceptions and actions as teacher educators and teachers'. Under this model, PE teachers are, and have been, socialised in three phases (Lawson & Stroot, 1993). Potential teachers first learn about teachers during their own schooling days; all experiences prior to PETE are known as 'anticipatory socialization'. Lortie (1975) called this pre teacher education stage of learning about the profession an 'apprenticeship-of-observation'. Socialisation at this recruitment stage of becoming a teacher is less overt than the second phase: 'professional socialization', when teacher preparation programmes engage people in many activities explicitly designed to shape them as teachers. Third, 'organisational

socialization' takes over once student teachers graduate. Then, all professional interactions continue to shape teachers, but neophytes are quickly inducted into the social structures of specific school and school system cultures,

Across all these socialising experiences PETE was generally found to exert little influence on pre-service teachers (Graber, 1989). Schempp (1983, 1989) found the apprenticeship model to be particularly strong among PETE students, This 'weakness' of pre-service teacher education programmes, the professional phase of socialisation (Lawson & Stroot, 1993), continues to be of concern, given that they focus on formal induction into the role of teacher, including construction of its professional, knowledge, beliefs and practices.

One specific component of formal teacher preparation, however, has gained widespread recognition as being critical in the professional socialisation of teachers. This area is field experience, also known as the practicum or teaching practice (TP) – the focus of this article. TP represents the closest link between formal teacher education in universities and on-the-job training in schools. Students and faculty members alike report student teaching as the most important socialising effect on pre-service teachers (Su, 1992). Accordingly, Zeichner (1987) investigated student teachers' perspectives of their pre-service education and their professional ideology. He suggested that teacher educators need to know if trainees are malleable, or if new ideals put forward in teacher preparation programmes are 'washed out' during fieldwork experiences. The washout effect is when new ideas and beliefs appear to be developed in university-based teacher education pedagogy, but are then not held on to by student teachers once they enter the field.

Dodds (1989) proposed a teacher socialisation model that includes trainees' field experiences. Five construct categories, describing trainees' developing views of teachers and teaching (teaching perspectives) that are centred on key features of educational settings (conceptual forces of teaching perspectives), emerge as important. In turn, these views are shaped by numerous people (socialising agents) through various experiences (external agents' socialising strategies). At the same time, the trainees themselves also undergo internal processes (self-socialising strategies) in the formation of their professional image. It is particularly noted that cooperating teachers (Hill & Gilchrist, 1984; Tannehill & Zakrajsek, 1990; Zeichner, 1986) and pupils (Placek & Dodds, 1988) are powerful socialising agents acting on student teachers during their field experiences. This is not to say that student teachers are passively inculcated; they are active agents in controlling the direction of their own biographies and social structures within broader socialisation processes (Solmon, Worthy, Lee & Carter, 1990).

Recruits' personal meanings about their potential place in a profession are termed their 'subjective warrants' (Lawson, 1983a; Lortie, 1975). More recent research suggests that PE recruits enter teacher education with well-formed beliefs about what constitutes teaching (Doolittle, Dodds, & Placek, 1993; Hutchison, 1993; Zeichner & Gore, 1990). Furthermore, their personal beliefs and images of the self as teacher are stable throughout most pre-service programmes (Hollingsworth, 1989; Kagan, 1992), so indicating that their formal professional preparation may be having insignificant impact on many areas of professional socialisation.

In a study of influences on student teachers' subjective warrants, Schempp (1989) found that pre-service teachers were particularly concerned with lesson operations during the majority of their field experiences. Curtner-Smith (1996) also found that, after an early field experience, pre-service teachers were concerned with class management, pupil participation, and pupil enjoyment. Such teaching

perspectives were termed the 'busy, happy, good' syndrome (Placek, 1983). Locke (1984) found that student teachers' perspectives were custodial, authoritarian, and utilitarian, characteristics showing little regard for pupils' learning. Similarly, in a study conducted in two Australian university programmes researchers reported that pre-service PE teachers were preoccupied with class management, not with the intricacies of their pupils' learning (Glover & Macdonald, 1997).

Investigations of teacher socialisation in PETE programmes have been mainly conducted in the United States (USA) (for review see Templin & Schempp, 1989; Stroot, 1993) and more recently in Great Britain (GB) (Hardy, 1999). There have been lessons learnt about the need to include self-reflective strategies in USA (Hellison & Templin, 1991) and Australian (Tinning, Kirk, & Evans, 1993) teacher preparation, in order to bring to the fore neophytes' preconceptions about PE teaching. Assumptions about the global applicability of PE teacher socialisation theories are yet unfounded in research. Questions arise about the influences on socialisation of pre-service teachers in other parts of the world, for example in Asia, as opposed to those in the Western world, as exemplified by the USA. Patterns of teacher socialisation might not be consistent across cultures.

Until recently, understandings about the influence of the practicum in PE teacher socialisation have mainly been derived from American studies. In his investigation of the PETE practicum, Wright (1999) collected primary data at a Singapore university; he then compared his findings with those of previously published studies in the USA and GB. Areas investigated through open-ended survey included: preparedness for TP, expectations of TP and support during TP. Wright (1999) found differences between the experiences of students in the Singapore context and those of students reported in the literature. Because variation in PETE programme duration across those three countries was significant, it is difficult to make valid generalisations about specific cultural differences, nor does Wright (1999) attempt to do so.

The current research is also a cross cultural investigation. An attempt was specifically made to fill the international research gap by learning about perspectives of the practicum held by selected PETE students in Hong Kong and in Australia as well as to consider teacher socialisation in these different geographic locations. The following research questions (RQs) were addressed. RQ1: How did the practicum contribute to physical education student teachers' professional socialisation, in terms of the students' perceptions of practicum usefulness in the successful (and unsuccessful) construction of their skills and beliefs? RQ2: How did the practicum contribute to physical education student teachers' socialisation into the role of physical education teacher, in terms of their perceptions of an ideal physical education teacher? RQ3: In what ways are concepts about effective teaching identified primarily in North American-based research held as important by selected Hong Kong and Australian student teachers, and in what ways are such concepts culturally specific? Data were collected using open ended and closed survey techniques. They were analysed using qualitative and quantitative methods. Then comparisons were made across the sites. The findings have application both for PETE faculties and for their supervising teachers.

## METHOD

### *Site Selection and Sample Description*<sup>1</sup>

This research rose out of the principal investigator's own cross-cultural experiences

in PETE in Hong Kong, the USA and Australia. She had personal curiosity (Goetz & Lecompte, 1984) in examining constructs about the role of teaching practice in PE teacher professional socialisation (Lawson & Stroot, 1993) in those contexts outside North America. 'Purposeful sampling is also a strategy to be used to help manage the trade-off between a desire for in-depth, detailed information about cases and the desire to be able to generalise about the program' (Patton, 1980: 101). The PETE programmes, selected as the sites for the investigation, were purposefully chosen on the basis of compatibility of their curriculum emphasis and course duration. Each was founded on a 'sports ethic'. Each had an emphasis on preparing PE teachers who were competent in, and able to teach, a wide range of games and sports. Each had an emphasis on developing content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1987) where PE was defined in terms of developing skills in a variety of physical activities. Review of their pedagogy subject outlines revealed that each PETE programme in this study contained lectures and class discussion on teacher qualities. This was confirmed by personal communication with lecturers at these sites. All three PETE programmes were of three years' duration. Although this is typical of the length of teacher preparation courses in Hong Kong, in Australia pre-service teacher education is usually four years of full time study. PETE courses in other Australian institutions were not included in the study because of this incompatibility. The programmes were also partially selected through convenience (Goetz & Lecompte, 1984). At time of data collection the lead author was working at one site and had professional contacts who could facilitate access to the other two sites.

Two programmes were in Hong Kong, while one was in Sydney, Australia. The focus in each site was on developing technically competent teachers, in terms of graduates being skilled in and being able to teach a range of physical activities; there was minor emphasis on developing reflective teachers. In each context students had to pass some kind of physical fitness test as a PETE admission requirement. All programmes included TP. In no site were teachers paid by the institute to supervise student teachers. The practicum contexts differed somewhat among the three institutes. These distinctions are outlined below in each site description.

### **Sample 1**

The first group (n=62, 51% response rate) were second and third year PETE students at a government funded teacher certificate course in Hong Kong (HK1). This host institution had more than fifty years of history prior to amalgamation of four colleges in 1994. The oldest parent college opened in 1939 with its first student cohort taking PE as an elective in 1952 (Wong, 1995). HK1 prepared generalist primary and secondary teachers; that is, its graduates were employed to teach a range of school subjects, including PE. However, the secondary education program contained two electives, one of which could be PE. Since data collection for this paper has been completed, HK1 has been accredited to award degrees (1998). Its graduates were prepared for employment in either primary or secondary schools. At HK1 the average PETE class size was around 24 with the range from sixteen to 47; additionally, 800 full time elementary and secondary teacher education students took PE electives. Most HK1 lecturers were graduates from the same teachers' college programme, but had masters degrees from overseas institutes/universities.

HK1 directly recruits from high schools in Hong Kong,<sup>2</sup> where, for the most part, little value is placed on PE. Their high school curriculum focuses on games,

particularly learning traditional sport skills. The most recent high school syllabus (published in 1988) includes the following areas: athletics, dance, gym, racquet games (core: badminton, table-tennis), swimming, team games (core: basketball, football, handball, volleyball), and other activities (core: fitness twining). These Chinese students were mainly of middle or lower socioeconomic status (SES). Most students lived at home or with relatives while studying at HK1.

The curriculum of HK1 contained general education subjects, methods and foundations subjects of the specialised study, which for some was PE and TP. Content knowledge for PE was focused on developing skill in a range of physical activities in which most teacher education students had little prior experience. Strong emphasis was placed on pedagogical knowledge – how to teach those practical activities. Teaching qualities and effectiveness (student organisation and management) were stressed in pedagogy subjects through class discussions, micro-teaching activity and teaching practicum. For all first year students there was no teaching practice, but they observed two formal demonstration lessons in schools or on campus. In the second year of the general primary course, PETE involved six to eight hours of peer micro-teaching aspects of PE lessons. There was also a six to eight week TP period of subjects other than PE (such as Chinese, English, mathematics, social science). It was in their third year that HK1 primary education students first taught PE to school pupils in a six to eight week block, but other subjects were also taught during this time. The secondary teacher education program followed a similar pattern to that for primary student teachers, however, the second and third year secondary TP periods (six to eight weeks) were undertaken in the two curriculum specialisations, one of which could be PE.

Depending on their specialisation, HK1 student teachers were placed for these TP blocks in either primary or secondary schools at various times throughout the year. Short periods of lesson observation generally preceded student teaching. Cooperating teachers (TP advisers) in Hong Kong are unpaid. The practicum was graded on a five-point scale (A-E), E being the failing grade. University supervisors were responsible for formal assessment and visited each student teacher at least twice. Their dual role of advisor and assessor were seen to be in conflict. Students were usually assigned for TP in schools close to their homes which for middle to low SES families were often in new housing settlements. Secondary schools in these locations were band 4 and band 5. This being the case, HK1 students would have had to face considerable classroom management issues while on TP.

## Sample 2

The second sample (HK2, n=32, 80% response rate) was from a relatively new (two years in operation) government funded degree course in Hong Kong; its annual specialist PETE intake was about twenty students. HK2 was established as a university with the amalgamation of three colleges in 1963, the earliest college being inaugurated in 1945. Its academic admission requirements were higher than those for HK1. The lecturers were mostly discipline-orientated, with sport science backgrounds; most had doctoral degrees from overseas universities.

HK2 also drew high school graduates from Hong Kong where they experienced the same PE curriculum as the HK1 sample. They were also Chinese of middle and low SES backgrounds. Unlike their HK1 counterparts, some of these students lived in university residences.

Similar to the situation at HK1, the HK2 curriculum contained three PE pedagogy subjects as well as core sport science foundation studies and general

education electives. Course content also included activity modules on sixteen different sports skills such as aerobic dance, track and field, badminton, swimming and basketball. Developing teaching effectiveness in 'practical' lesson delivery and professional qualities in terms of classroom management were planned outcomes of PE pedagogy subject content, This was achieved through group discussion, micro-teaching and master teacher observation" Graduates of HK2 had multiple career paths – into the teaching profession or into sport science/fitness industries. At the end of the first year, HK2 students experienced four weeks of micro-teaching in junior secondary classes (usually two student teachers per class). At the end of second and third year, they had a four week TP block in a primary then in a secondary school. Students at HK2 were required to submit a video-taped lesson. Visiting TP students at least twice, university lecturers at HK2 assessed TP on an A-F scale with eleven subdivisions. Again this might be seen as conflicting with the notion of supervisors providing students with support in practicum settings. The HK2 practicum sites were more equally distributed across the range of school bands than those for HK1.

### Sample 3

This group (AUS, n=26, 93% rate) was from a full fee paying degree course (\$A9,000 a year) at a private PETE college in Sydney, Australia. This course annually admitted four small cohorts, averaging in the 20s with sixty being the maximum intake. In the intake surveyed by this study there was a preponderance of mate students. Small cohorts and nearby college residences made for a high level of social interaction and bonding among the students.

It is important to consider this course in its historical context, because although many other PETE programs in Australia had moved toward preparation of health and PE teachers,<sup>3</sup> AUS was bound in teaching the activity aspects of FE and so provides a sound basis for comparison with the Hong Kong samples, AUS had been originally established as an elite fencing school in 1919. It then became a women's physical education college drawing its students from, and preparing them to teach in, private girls' schools. In the mid-1960s it was again opened to male students. The curriculum became increasingly more games and sports based; that is, what Kirk (1998) calls a strong 'games ethic' was entrenched. In the late 1970s AUS was accredited with employment status by the state education department. About this time it was also turned into a commercial enterprise with an active overseas recruitment programme. Degree awarding status came in the early 1990s. Half the full-time lecturers had doctoral degrees, the other half master degrees. Often AUS employed its own graduates as academic staff; in this way its curriculum was replicative. Since the time of data collection for this study, AUS has been purchased by a leading private K-12 school board.

Mainly Anglo-Australian, AUS students typically came from commercial, professional or pastoralist<sup>4</sup> class families, although scholarships were occasionally afforded applicants from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Recruitment for AUS was by direct application, not through the unified university admission scheme; almost always its students attended non-state schools of a range of social status. If the cost of school fees were compared with the Australian Higher Education Contribution Scheme (then A\$2,000) payable for four years in other institutions and offset against \$27,000 of a first year teacher's salary, these costs were attractive to families who could afford to pay 'up front'. Often AUS PETE students were taught by PE teachers, graduates of AUS who still continue to be employed primarily in

independent schools. Competitive sport is strong in most Australian independent schools where, at the time of the study, the PE curriculum was mainly sports-oriented.

The AUS course curriculum had an emphasis on sociological rather than scientific aspects of human movement. It is unclear if this was an ideological position or if the cost of sports science equipment was prohibitive. Given that the contemporary Australian context of teacher education was driven by outcomes-based learning with clearly defined beginning teacher competencies, there was some discussion of the desirable teacher qualities<sup>5</sup> in pedagogy lectures and tutorials. At this time graduates from AUS had strong content knowledge expertise in a wide range of physical activities, as evidenced by comments from AUS TP advisers and TP supervisors to the second researcher. As school students they would not have experienced a health and PE syllabus (*personal development, health and physical education* (PDHPE), Board of Studies, 1990, 1992), addressing broader cultural and social issues, that was implemented in New South Wales schools from the early 1990s. At college they had limited preparation for the health education components of the newly mandated state syllabus. In this way the PETE program emphasis was strongly on PE preparation, similar to the situations at HK1 and HK2.

The AUS focus was on PE pedagogy with reputedly greater time spent on the practicum than in other Australian PETE courses. Field experiences were embedded in pedagogy course work early in their studies through paired teaching and small group teaching of young children. In first year, paired students spent one day a week of their second term in schools, first in observations and then in small groups micro-teaching. In term 3 this was extended to two days a week with increasingly more responsibility taken on by student teachers. The second year field placement was for 2½ days weekly across terms 1 and 2. This was extended in the first two terms of the third year to full teaching responsibility three days a week. Block placements came at the end of second and third year when each respective cohort was placed in elementary or secondary schools for a five-week or a ten-week block. Some lecturers from AUS have criticised these partial week placements, in that they do not allow student teachers to build up the rapport with pupils necessary to establish effective learning environments. Also, when AUS students had TP placements in state, as opposed to private schools similar to those of their own schooling, they frequently encountered unmotivated and disruptive students.

The relationship between AUS students and the college TP supervisor was less strained than that in either HK1 or HK2. At AUS the practicum was ungraded in the sense that college supervisors, in consultation with advisory teachers, categorised each student teacher's TP performance as either 'satisfactory' or 'unsatisfactory'. The teacher adviser also wrote an extensive report on the student teacher's performance. The final TP was often completed in private schools overseas; it had to be undertaken at a site fifty km away from the students' home town or city. The Australian practicum sites, which in the past decade were more frequently state schools, were almost always those where graduates of the AUS were available to act as advisers.<sup>6</sup> This practice further strengthened the AUS student-graduate network.

### **Researchers' Cultural Lenses**

Both researchers have taught secondary school PE and have been teaching in PETE programs since the early 1990s. The principal researcher is Hong Kong

Chinese, a graduate from HK1. Her value orientation for PE is skill focused. At the time of data collection she was teaching sports science and research methods subjects at AUS. However, she has not been involved in TP placement or assessment. Originally graduating from an Australian PETE programme, the second author is an Anglo-Celtic Australian. Her values toward PE are social justice oriented. Although she has not been formally associated with any of the research PETE programmes, among her colleagues are former lecturers and graduates from AUS. Her areas of expertise are health and physical education pedagogy, research methods and dance. She has supervised TP in schools where AUS students were also placed. Both researchers have undertaken postgraduate studies in PE in the United States. The study grew out of the lead author's own cross cultural experiences and interest in testing the applicability of constructs about teacher socialisation developed from north American research.

### **Data Collection**

Contextual data were gained through a number of formal and informal means, Course documents were collected. Ongoing personal, telephone and e-mail conversations have been held with past and current pedagogy lecturers from the three sites. Analysis of this information was used to build a picture of each of the three PETE programs provided above. A survey using qualitative and quantitative items was constructed in order to address the three research questions. The questionnaire block first contained four open-ended items about perceived usefulness of the TP (relating to RQ1); success (if any) experienced during the teaching process; difficulties (if any) experienced during the teaching processes (relating to RQ1); and the perceived image of an ideal PE teacher (relating to RQ2). In the second part of the questionnaire, students were asked to rank four broad categories of effective teaching: *personal attributes*, *classroom management*, *interpersonal skills* and *teaching methods*. These constructs were derived from the research findings of Arrighi and Young (1987) Curtner-Smith (1996), Schempp (1989) and Sherman (1989); each category could be found in at least two out of those four studies. This prioritising of effectiveness categories supplemented information obtained from the item about the perceived image of an ideal PE teacher (relating to RQ2). The survey was trialed in both countries among a small group of students. However, for the Hong Kong sites it was translated by the lead researcher, who is bilingual in Chinese and English, from English into Chinese.

Student data were collected over a six month time span. Within two weeks of the end of their TP and on students' return to university based studies, the principal researcher distributed the questionnaires to the different cohorts. In a quiet classroom environment, students were asked to complete an anonymous questionnaire on 'Teaching Practice Experiences'. PETE students volunteered to participate in that they returned questionnaires. Given that names of respondents were not identified, reasons were not sought for non-return. The total data pool comprised 54 females (45%) and 66 males (55%). Two-thirds (67%) of them had secondary school TP experience, five per cent had only primary TP experience, and 28 per cent had both. The types of schools used for TP are shown in Table 1.

### **Analysis of Data**

The lead author first conducted a preliminary typological analysis (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984: 183-4) on the basis of categories in part predetermined from the

PETE socialisation literature. External reliability was insured through her reference to definitions of the constructs cited in the literature. Being bilingual, she also undertook all data analysis, because the AUS data were in English where as the HK1 and HK2 data were in Chinese. This strategy also maintained internal reliability (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984: 211-20). She tried to code the sense of a students answer to each question<sup>7</sup> within the above effective teaching categories central in the professional socialisation of PE teachers. However, she found that many of the student responses did not fall easily into one the four predetermined areas. Next she used analytic induction (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), clumping together like statements about perceived usefulness of TP, about successes experienced in TP and about difficulties encountered in TP. Then she checked through all other responses for similar and discrepant ideas. In this way three themes emerged as important in understanding how the students perceived TP which enabled the first research question about professional socialisation through the practicum (RQ1) to be addressed. A similar approach was used to respond to RQ2. From it, four themes were found to frame what the students saw as an ideal physical education teacher, Next, descriptive statistics in terms of frequencies and percentages of written responses were calculated. For this quantitative data analysis of ideal teaching characteristics, the results were interpreted from the order of mean ranks. Both researchers were engaged in cross cultural analyses. RQ3 was addressed by separating institutional cohort data and comparing across groups as well as with themes from published studies.

## RESULTS

This section is divided into two parts. The first contains qualitative and quantitative data analyses for the total sample, generated in order to address RQ1 and RQ2. Each is then compared across the three samples to respond to RQ3. The second part focuses on quantitative analysis, again followed with cohort comparisons. The first three open-ended items of the questionnaire were concerned with student perceptions of the *usefulness of TP*, *successes experienced* and *difficulties encountered* during TP. For each item, discussion follows focusing around themes elicited through analysis. These are: *personal orientation*, *teaching methodology* and *pupil-centred concerns*. Frequencies for the distinctive statements, or descriptors, cited by students in response to each questionnaire item are summarised in separate tables.

### Usefulness of TP

The majority of subjects (72%) agreed that TP was very useful with nine per cent perceiving it as somewhat useful. No student saw TP as a useless exercise. Overall, the results reconfirmed TP as a critical socialising element of PETE in that students perceived it as a time where they developed essential professional qualities; this echoes other research (Dodds, 1989; Locke, 1984; O'Sullivan & Tsangaridou, 1992).

The pre-service teachers indicated the usefulness of TP through a total of 263 statements. Because several students often made similar statements, there were 52 different codes generated from replies to this questionnaire item. The average statement rate per respondent was 2.0, with 6.0 being the maximum. The largest category of statements (with highest frequency) pertained to personal orientation (47%; 122 out of 263 total cases), followed by teaching methodology

(28%) and pupil-centred concerns (24%). Two statements 'handle crisis' and 'help from lecturer', did not belong solely to any identified theme. A summary of statements generated for this question is contained in Table 2.

**Personal orientation:** Nineteen different statements were made about useful teaching experiences related to personal issues manifest during TP (eg. gain in confidence, know own shortfalls) or attitudes regarding occupational duties (eg. whether suitable to be a teacher, understand responsibilities of a teacher). The most common personal orientation statement, 'experience as a teacher/teaching', was identified by forty pre-service teachers as a useful aspect of TP. In a similar fashion, 'understand the actual situation in school' was the second most frequent statement of personal orientation ( $n=17$ ). One student (AUS) commented:

*It was useful in the way that TP enabled you to become part of the school—as a whole, ie. not just popping in to teach ½ hour classes 1-3 per week. You definitely become more aware of the responsibilities of a teacher. And generally you develop teaching skills.*

**Teaching methodology:** Fourteen statements about the usefulness of TP were concerned with teaching methodology. Specific teaching tasks identified in the TP experience included practice of teaching skills and class operations such as establishing classroom order. The most frequently made statement was 'experience in classroom management' ( $n=17$ ).

The pre-service teachers also wrote (ten out of fourteen statements) on issues about instructional skills and practices as useful TP experiences. 'To practise from theory' ( $n=16$ ) and 'to learn lesson planning and design' ( $n=7$ ) were the second and third most frequently occurring statements. The higher percentage of responses (65% for instructional concerns as opposed to 35% for class operations) conveyed an impression that these pre-service teachers were not only concerned with classroom management, but also with improving teaching skills. This is illustrated in the following responses:

*Use of time and resources to achieve effective teaching (HK1); and Gives time to practice [sic] and implement strategies acquired through college time in a real working model (AUS).*

**Pupil-centred concerns:** Eighteen statements about useful TP experiences were categorised under pupil-centred issues as related to understanding/handling of teacher/pupil relationships (58%) and understanding of different aspects (eg. learning style, attitude, problems) of pupils (42%). The most frequent statement made was 'understand pupils' behaviour and thinking'. Other responses such as 'understand needs of pupils' ( $n=3$ ), 'deals with different pupils' personalities and characteristics' ( $n=2$ ) revealed that a few pre-service teachers were aware of the individuality of students, as illustrated by the following comment:

*Facing different abilities and attitudes of pupils during teaching, one has to adjust and adapt (HK2).*

However, most pre-service teachers' pupil-centred concerns were not explicitly linked with enhancing pupils' learning.

### **Successes Experienced in the TP**

There were 57 statements about successes experienced in the TP. (See Table 3.) The average statement rate per person was 2.0, with 4.0 the maximum. More than half of the success statements was related to pupil-centred issues (62%; 111 out of 178 total cases) with 25 per cent under teaching methodology and twelve per cent under personal orientation. This order of weighting of response categories was exactly opposite to the useful experience results.

**Personal orientation:** Five unique statements related to personal attributes or attitudes toward occupational duties were classified under the personal orientation category. 'Gain confidence' ( $n=7$ , all AUS) and 'experience in teaching' ( $n=7$ , all AUS) were the most often cited successes in TP. However, differences across the sites were noted. Except for one case from HK1 in 'enjoy teaching result', all personal orientation comments were made by pre-service teachers at AUS.

**Teaching methodology:** A total of 25 distinct success statements related to teaching methodology (instructional skills and class operation skills) were identified. About one third of responses (31%) were concerned with classroom operations with 'success in classroom management' ( $n=12$ ), as the most often cited; this was consistent with the usefulness of TP result. Pre-service teachers again related to usefulness or success in teaching when they had classroom control. The result was consistent with Schempp's study (1989) which indicated that pre-service teachers came to believe controlling the setting and enforcing class rules are crucial to life as a teacher. Another aspect of successes experienced was related to technical teaching skills (69%) with frequencies mostly ranged from one to three. The diversity of instructional comments is illustrated by:

*fully applied pre-lesson planning and preparation into real class teaching ( $n=2$ , HK1);  
achieve pre-set classroom teaching objectives (HK1); and  
an improvement in my theory lesson setting, ie. use of aids and general lesson structure (AUS).*

**Pupil-centred concerns:** The majority of the successes (62%) focused on pupil issues. The result was not surprising since pre-service teachers have to interact with pupils on a daily basis. The immediate successes a teacher gained would be those related to the learning atmosphere, whether the children behaved well in class and the skill attainment of the pupils. The pupil-centred responses had three sub-categories: teacher/pupil relationships (30%), pupil interest/compliance (64%), and pupil learning (6%). (See Table 3.) The most frequently cited success comment in this theme was related to pupil interest/compliance which was 'able to control the pupils' discipline' ( $n=17$ ) as illustrated by the comment:

*Areas of success for me was to control the pupils whilst in the classroom (AUS).*

A high percent of pupil-centred success responses was related to teacher/pupil relationships (30%). The most cited statement in this sub-category was success in 'having good relationships with pupils' ( $n=14$ ) or being 'able to communicate with pupils' ( $n=7$ ). Furthermore, a few pre-service teachers ( $n=3$ ) felt success when they gained trust from pupils.

**No success experienced:** A total of fifteen pre-service teachers (12.5%) reported no success experienced during TP; these were ten in HK1 (16%), three in HK2 (9%) and two in AUS (8%). One student in AUS had no success when the staff in the school (independent secondary school) did not accept her as a staff member. Another AUS male student, attached to a state primary school, had experience with disruptive pupils. The following showed his feelings:

*The pupils of my school were the most disruptive group of children I have ever come to meet. It was hard to have success with only ½ hour classes, when most of the time was spent with disciplinary procedures (AUS).*

### **Difficulties Encountered in the TP**

A total of sixty discrete difficulty statements was given. (See Table 4). The category with highest frequency was pupil-centred concerns (53%; 81 out of 154 total cases), followed by teaching methodology (36%) and personal orientation (11%); this shows the same pattern of distributions as the success responses. Twelve pre-service teachers did not report any difficulty (10%) with seven in HK1 (11%), one in HK2 (3%) and four in AUS (15%). One AUS student mentioned travelling time as a difficulty encountered. This was not categorised in any theme.

**Pupil-centred concerns (53%):** A total of 25 distinctive statements were obtained in this category. The sub-categories were teacher/pupil relationships (15%), pupil attitude/behaviour/non-compliance (81%) and pupil learning (4%). The most overwhelming difficulty statement was associated with 'having disciplinary problems with pupils' ( $n=23$ ) which was categorised under the pupil attitude/behaviour/non-compliance sub-category.

**Teaching methodology (36%):** Twenty-three different statements were categorised under this theme. As in the conception of usefulness and success experienced during TP, pre-service teachers had the most difficulty encountered in 'classroom management' ( $n=13$ ). The other frequently cited statements were 'difficult to manage with pupils having different skill levels' ( $n=7$ ), 'planning for curriculum' ( $n=5$ ) and 'time allocation and management' ( $n=5$ ). Most concerns were related to instructional skills (63%) with a few (21%) about classroom operation.

**Personal orientation (11%):** This category comprised twelve difficulty statements. The most cited were 'inadequate knowledge' ( $n=4$ ), 'relationships with other teachers' ( $n=4$ ) and 'being nervous' ( $n=2$ ). Each of the other six statements had one response, but no cohesive meaning was generated from them.

### **Comparisons of TP Perspectives across Three Samples**

Comparisons were made across the three groups in order to address RQ3.

Differences in perceptions of the usefulness of TP were found across the samples: only half of the HK2 students (50%) perceived TP to be very useful as compared with 77 per cent of HK1 and 85 per cent of AUS. One possible explanation for this discrepancy might be the HK2 students' multiple career options. Following the footsteps of the majority of prior graduates from their programmes, most students in HK1 and AUS take up teaching careers, but HK2 students (in a programme then only operating for 2.5 years) could also orient themselves toward sport or fitness industry career tracks. This may explain why a higher percentage of HK1 and AUS students found TP as very useful: central to their professional preparation, they see that TP inducts them into many desired beliefs and practices of a PE teacher.

Written comments about TP experiences in the three PETE programmes were compared. (See Table 5.) Across the sites, usefulness of TP statements focusing on personal orientation had highest frequencies. Australian pre-service teachers, however, made more statements (60%; 31 out of 52 total cases) about personal orientation than did HK1 (43%; 37 out of 86) and HK2 (43%; 54 out of 125). This difference was accentuated in the responses related to personal orientation of the success comments, with 39% (21 out of 54 total success cases) under this theme in AUS, but only 1% in HK1 and 0% in HK2. From this it is evident that the AUS sample was considerably more verbose than either Hong Kong group. Possible explanations relate to differences in cultural values about focus on self and others. Cultural orientation might also explain the greater emphasis of Australian students on personally oriented success: such as gain confidence with its focus on the individual. Both Australia and Hong Kong can be described as capitalist societies, however, open displays of individual competitiveness evident in Australia are tempered in Hong Kong by Chinese inference. Australian students from middle SES backgrounds are encouraged to be outgoing and express themselves, whereas Chinese students tend to be more reserved and less likely to talk about their own strengths. Certainly the NSW PDHPE school syllabus (Board of Studies, 1990, 1992) has as one of its goals the development of pupil self-esteem and, although the AUS PETE curriculum was still grounded in physical skill acquisition, some of the broader PDHPE values may have 'washed off' on the student teachers.

In difficulties associated with teaching methodology, AUS pre-service teachers had all statements related to instructional skill, with none related to classroom management, while for HK1 (59% and 41%) and HK2 (50% and 50%) approximately half of their responses fell in these two sub-categories. This greater concern with instruction in the AUS context may be derived from an orientation toward cultural transmission of sports skills, given the popular myth that Australia is a sporty nation (McKay, 1991) and the games ethic (Kirk, 1998) backgrounds of these PETE students. The differences between emphases of AUS and those of HK1 and HK2 students may also be linked to the Australian students being more comfortable with talking about self as teacher in terms of their instructional practices, whereas some Chinese students with instructional difficulties might save face by couching their teaching difficulties in terms of management problems.

When the pre-service teachers reported difficult experiences in classroom management (HK1:  $n=10$ , HK2:  $n=3$ ) and disciplinary problems (HK1:  $n=12$ , HK2:  $n=6$ ), the pre-service teachers in AUS had concern only for the latter issue ( $n=5$ ) (see Table 4). This emphasis by the Hong Kong PETE students on managing the 'classroom' could well be derived from the situation that most of the TP sites were band 4 and band 5 schools (particularly for HK1) where pupil motivation is low. From discussions with field work supervisors it appears that a key element of TP

assessment is a student teacher's ability to handle classroom situations, The HK1 and HK2 students could be judging their TP experiences against situations from their own schooling in higher band schools, where pupil compliance and attitudes to learning are higher. Also relevant in the context of the present study were Wright's findings (1999) about the sources of frustration experienced by Singapore student teachers: nearly half were concerned with student misbehaviour, other major concerns were with student motivation and lack of resources.

Although HK1 and HK2 shared more similarities than dissimilarities, differences in their success responses were noted. Under the teaching methodology theme, HK2 had markedly more success responses in instructional skill (90%) than in classroom operation (10%), compared with HK1 (63% & 37%) and AUS (57% & 43%) in these two respective sub-categories (see Table 5). Lastly HK2 also showed a higher percentage of success responses for the pupil-centred theme (85%) under the sub-category of pupil interest/compliance (HK1: 53%; AUS: 47%). An example of such success was:

*A group of pupils followed your order to do tasks (HK2).*

Explanations for these differences are unclear, however, HK2 students were required to supply a video-taped lesson as part of their TP assessment. Opportunities to see themselves teach may have provided more reinforcement of the successful aspects of their TP. Alternative explanations could be related to variance in PETE programme delivery not identified in this study.

### **Image of an Ideal PE Teacher**

The pre-service teachers indicated 52 descriptors about an ideal PE teacher. Their comments were diverse and represented a broad spectrum of human attributes and teaching skills. Table 6 lists 23 descriptors with more than one frequency. These characteristics were categorised into *personal attributes* (60%), *classroom management* (10%), *teaching methodology* (21%) and *inter-personal relationships* (9%). Here, the majority was concerned with personal qualities (14 out of 23 statements or descriptors). 'Knowledgeable' was most often cited ( $\bar{n}=25$ ), which was found to be an important personal attributes as perceived by pre-service teachers in Hong Kong (Chow & Louie, 1992). Other frequently cited personal quality descriptors were enthusiastic ( $\bar{n}=15$ ), love and caring, friendly, good role model and being responsible (last four with  $\bar{n}$  ranged from 5 to 10). Gallahue (1993) listed eight personal traits characteristic of effective teachers, of these 'interested', 'honest', 'enthusiastic' and 'confident' were identified by the pre-service teachers.

The class management category included two descriptors that were 'good management/organised' ( $\bar{n}=10$ ) and 'good discipline' ( $\bar{n}=6$ ). The teaching methodology category was concerned with PE instructional skills, included six descriptors such as 'effective teaching method' ( $\bar{n}=15$ ), 'good communication skill' ( $\bar{n}=7$ ) and 'new teaching method' ( $\bar{n}=5$ ). Lastly, the inter-personal relationships category comprised one descriptor, 'relate to pupils' ( $\bar{n}=15$ ). These all appear to be directly derived from the PETE programme emphases on management and physical skill delivery which were common across the three institutes.

Comparing across the three samples, the most frequently cited descriptors were all related to personal attributes. AUS students (46 cases, mean response rate per person = 4.5, maximum = 8) responded with more ideas about what constituted an ideal teacher than did HK1 (39 cases, mean response rate per person=2.2,

maximum=6) and HK2 (16 cases, mean response rate per person=2.7, maximum=6). A possible explanation is that through longer institutional histories of teacher preparation AUS and HK1 students could well have been more embedded in what constitutes teaching and ideal teachers than were those in a relatively new PETE course at HK2 that also offered alternative career paths.

To summarise, the descriptors identified by the pre-service teachers were often cited as important characteristics for successful teaching. Most PETE programmes include discussions on what constitutes an ideal teacher and the ways ideal teachers operate. For example, most pedagogy texts contain a chapter on teaching effectiveness. However, differences that emerged across courses about PE teacher image suggest that institutional history plays a part in shaping PETE students' images of ideal PE teachers. In institutions where teacher preparation is the primary focus student teachers may invest more in the practicum and come to a deeper understanding of what constitutes teaching. The following discussion shows that some students come to a deeper understanding of the complexities of the teaching role through the practicum.

### **Ideal PE teacher image change**

Analysis of responses to this section of the survey indicated that less than a fifth of these PE student teachers saw that the practicum contributed to their understanding of the PE teacher role, in terms of constructing their perceptions of an ideal physical education teacher. When the pre-service teachers were asked if their perceptions about an ideal teacher changed after TP, only 22 out of 120 (18%) so indicated, with similar proportions subjects across the sites (HK1: 18%, HK2: 19%, AUS: 19%). Responses about change occurring could indicate reflective thinking among those pre-service teachers. Six dealt directly with pupils such as 'to be more involved' or 'sensitive to kids' (AUS) or 'care for kids' (HK1). Two responses were:

*[I] found myself becoming more involved with the children on different levels, rather than just standing out the front and dictating skills and drills (AUS); and*

*before practicum I believe[d] that the PE teacher should try to remain aloof from students and be someone unreachable. They should be there for the students and not someone completely out of touch from the students (AUS).*

The remaining perceived change responses (16 cases) were directed toward the teacher role. Examples were to 'be aware of own conduct' (HK1), 'teacher being a leader' (HK1), 'teacher should express maturity' (HK1), 'many faces for the teacher image' (HK2), 'teacher should keep a stern image so that pupils will obey' (HK2) and 'to be more organised or outgoing in teaching' (AUS). One comment illustrated changed understanding of the teacher role:

*beforehand I didn't realise how much work was involved in being a PE teacher. I have a lot of respect for them, hopefully I can pass/get that through to others (AUS).*

From the discussion above it is evident that TP did contribute to professional socialisation. Analysis of student responses suggest that the practicum was active in broadening some students' conceptions of the PE teacher role, rather than merely affirming established professional constructs (their subjective warrants).

### **Quantitative Analysis of Important Teaching Characteristics**

These pre-service teachers defined an ideal PE teacher more in terms of personal qualities (60% of responses) than the other three descriptive categories (classroom management, teaching methods, interpersonal relationships). This pattern was consistent among the three samples. In this part of the study, the pre-service teachers were asked to rank the importance of the four categories of teaching characteristics as mentioned. The groups did not show a consistent pattern of ranking personal attributes highest. Instead, the Australian sample ranked classroom management as the most important category, but for the Hong Kong sites it was only second or third. (Refer to Table 7.) Discussions with AUS practicum supervisors suggest that the partial week TP placements are not always successful. From their observations student teachers do not build up effective teaching relationships when they 'drop in'. Pupils do not see them as teaching staff, but rather as 'prac. students'. This situation does not make for instructional continuity and is exacerbated with six-day timetables (for a five-day teaching week) in many Australian schools.

The most distinct institutional disparity was found in the ranking of personal attributes. The respective ranks by HK1, HK2 and AUS for this category were one, three and four. Possible explanations for this could be programme differences in instructional contexts or in cultural orientations toward the importance of personal attributes and elaborating to others about these. However, teaching methods was consistently rated as the first or second most important teaching characteristic, while the interpersonal relationship category was viewed as either least or second least important (See Table 7 for mean ranks). This could be that it takes role maturity to see teaching as collegial, where establishing effective relationships with fellow teachers is an important professional attribute.

## **DISCUSSION**

As stated by Templin (1985), field experiences (or TP) provide organised and supervised role-playing possibilities to enrich trainees' images of themselves as teachers. The most common conception of TP ('experience as a teacher') was indicative of how strongly these pre-service teachers felt about gaining this teacher image. Teacher advisor-student teacher mentoring systems may help pre-service teachers construct positive experiences in practicum contexts and grow into the role of a successful teacher. Partnerships with experienced teacher mentors (currently being planned for a one year full-time postgraduate diploma (primary) course in HK1, shown in its 1999 course document) can consciously contribute to testing and reforming pre-service teachers' subjective warrants. Similarly, HK2 now has a teacher-advisor scheme (first time implemented in 1998) through which partnerships between university advisors and experienced teachers have been established to mentor PETE students in the field. This works strongly in the AUS context where most students are placed with AUS graduate field mentors for TP.

This could also operate, however, to entrench the *status quo* of the games ethic, if advisory teachers are unable to move their instructional position in a climate of curriculum change. Given the shift in emphasis in Australian curriculum policy and documents from traditional sports-oriented PE to encompass deeper

understandings of community health and personal development, questions arise about the socialisation of student teachers into this broader role. There is some evidence to suggest that this cultural shift is influencing some of these student teachers' perspectives. However, further study is required here about the extent to which AUS graduates are able to implement a syllabus with a different focus to the curriculum that they experienced themselves as school students.

Some pre-service teachers voiced their concerns about managing class order in their TP experiences. This finding is consistent with previous research conducted in the USA (Curtner-Smith, 1996; Placek & Dodds, 1988; Schempp, 1989). Curtner-Smith (1996) found that pre-service teachers' perceptions about significant issues during their early field experience were mostly concerned with management. Placek's (1983) research suggested that pre-service teachers tended to become custodial during their practice teaching periods. Some pre-service teachers perceived successes when 'pupils were active in class' ( $n=2$ ), when 'pupils were happy/enjoy/interested in class' ( $n=15$ ) and when 'pupils react/understand/follow/love what I taught' ( $n=6$ ). Such comments, as well as concerns with student management indicate that many of these Australian and Hong Kong conceptions of successful teaching mimicked Placek's (1983) notion that USA PE teachers' orientations about effective class teaching as pupils being 'busy, happy, and good'. Some North American pre-service teachers' perspectives have tended to be custodial and utilitarian (Locke, 1984). In this study, only six per cent of pupil-centred success statements were related to pupil learning, to teaching tasks concerned with skill attainment or to providing knowledge and feedback. The most cited statement of successful experience was 'pupils learn new knowledge and skills'. Moreover, pupil learning as in concrete terms of skill improvement was found in only two responses. As in previous USA research (Curtner-Smith, 1996; Schempp, 1989), these pre-service teachers in Hong Kong and Australia seemed to equate teaching successes with pupils' interest. However, rather than being associated with motivating pupils to learn, it was linked with keeping students on task and enjoying themselves, as shown by the low percent of pupil learning responses. The findings were dissimilar to those of O'Sullivan and Tsangaridou (1992). In their study of PETE students, data were collected using the critical incident technique and open-ended questionnaire. Using an inductive data analysis the results showed that pupil learning, quality lesson planning to ensure pupil learning, and efficient lesson management were major characteristics of successful lessons for USA pre-service teachers.

Furthermore, Curtner-Smith's (1996) study about pre-service teachers' conception of unsuccessful lessons during early field experience showed that 52 per cent of perceptions signifying lack of success were concerned with management. Similarly, our investigation found that the pre-service teachers had difficulty in handling non-compliant behaviour of pupils when the pupils 'did not cooperate in class'.

As proposed by Lawson (1983a, 1983b), prior to enrolling in PETE courses, recruits may have firm beliefs about the roles that physical educators fulfil. The question is whether or not such prior perceptions remain intact during teacher education. The current research suggests that across the group nearly one in five did come to a deeper understanding through the TP. As stated by Dodds (1989), student teachers form and refine their views of teaching based on congruent, competing and conflicting data from their pre-PETE experiences, their PETE course work influences and their PETE field experiences. After the practicum, the pre-

service teachers indicated a range of broad and varied descriptors about teacher roles. However, the results also seemed to indicate that the good proportion of both Australian and Hong Kong student teachers' perceptions about what constitutes an ideal teacher remained the same during teaching practice. Other researchers have had the same findings in the USA (Doolittle, Dodds, & Placek, 1993; Hutchison, 1993; Tan, 1995). The challenge to PETE programmes is to maximise teaching practice as an opportunity to reinforce practices and beliefs put forward in university-based course work.

The professional ideology of student teachers, as illustrated by Dodd's (1989) model of socialisation constructs, includes beliefs, values, attitudes, dispositions and commitments about their potential career. Cultural differences may account for varying teaching perspectives across the samples. The present findings indicated that AUS students ranked classroom management much higher than did HK1 and HK2 students. The perception among AUS of the importance of classroom management as characteristic of effective teaching might be traced back to the origin of Australian PE. Australian PE has its origins in military physical training as well as private schools' sports programs and movement education of Britain. The first is bound in developing discipline and responsibility in both physical and social senses; the second assumes character building as a sports participation outcome; the third shows an interest in free flowing qualities of movement with a focus on individual autonomy (Hargreaves, 1986; Kirk, 1998). These three historical dimensions produce tensions that characterise contemporary PE in many Australian schools, in spite of broad values about personal and community well-being expressed in recent syllabus documents (Fry, 1997). In the AUS programme, the disciplining and regulating discourse seemed to dominate in a context of developing sports skills (Kirk, 1998). These pre-service teachers were required to wear a PE uniform and compete in college athletic activities. These values could well be reflected in professional attitudes with a particular emphasis on pupil control. Thus, the professional socialisation of the AUS programme reinforces values that recruited these future PE teachers to teaching generally and specifically to this course.

Another possible cultural difference between Australian (Western) and Hong Kong (Eastern) personal orientations was detected when AUS students attributed TP experiences categorised as personal orientation, such as 'gain confidence', as being more successful. From the principal researcher's own PETE teaching experiences in Hong Kong and in Australia, Hong Kong students (influenced by Eastern culture) are more reluctant to talk about self-feelings than are Australian students steeped in Western culture with more stress on expression of self-worth and individuality. The importance of personal orientation could be seen in the PDHPE syllabus (Board of Studies, 1990, 1992) in NSW, Australia. Although 62 per cent of pre-service teachers in AUS taught PE as a separate component of PDHPE, rather than integrated within the broader syllabus content, 88 per cent of them (23126) perceived themselves as PDHPE teachers. However, the extent to which this is impression management (a strategy whereby a person adopts preferred behaviours in order to comply to current institutional demands) is unclear. Besides differences in professional socialisation through the practicum and other course work in these PETE programmes of Hong Kong and Australia, broader cultural differences in the appropriateness of emphasising own personal worth to others might also account for the disparity.

## CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The following conclusions are drawn from this study. First, the practicum contributed to physical education student teachers' professional socialisation, in terms of the students' perceptions of practicum usefulness in the successful (and unsuccessful) construction of their skills and beliefs. All students report TP as useful: particularly 'the experience as a teacher' is found to be meaningful. 'Being a teacher' allows pre-service teachers to apply theory in practice, to incorporate new teaching methods into their professional repertoire as well as to develop new teaching styles. Experience of the managerial aspect of teaching is also perceived to be highly useful. The practicum also allows pre-service teachers to experience the cultural context of schools and become aware of different aspects of pupils and teacher-pupil relationships. Pre-service teachers tend to perceive TP as a useful experience associated with developing professional beliefs and practices, particularly those centred on student management.

In addition, the majority of pre-service teachers experience both successes and difficulties in the TP. Pre-service teachers seem to identify more successes and difficulties in terms of pupil-centred issues than those related to either personal orientations or teaching methodology. However, these Australian pre-service teachers perceive successes concerned with personal attributes, such as 'gain in confidence'. This observation does not apply to the Hong Kong samples. Although pre-service teachers have success in 'classroom management', they are also concerned with instructional aspects of teaching practical skills. Pre-service teachers seem to conform to the 'busy, happy, and good' syndrome for PE teaching and equate success with active pupil enjoyment. However, these perceptions of class enjoyment do not tend to be in much association with pupil learning, as in skill development. Difficulties encountered in TP are similar to successes experienced. Classroom management and discipline are still difficult areas for pre-service teachers to handle.

Second, the practicum contributes to physical education student teachers' socialisation into the role of physical education teacher, in terms of their perceptions of an ideal physical education teacher. Pre-service teachers on the whole can identify a wide array of descriptors which, for them, constitute an ideal PE teacher. Most descriptors of teacher quality are concerned with personal attributes, with being knowledgeable the most cited. Moreover, their views of an ideal PE teacher remained intact after TP since very few pre-service teachers reported changing their perceptions. This tends to suggest that, in the main, those values about teaching which PETE students bring to the practicum are uninfluenced by those field experiences. A further implication is that field experiences do not fade earlier established professional beliefs. However, for a smaller group of students practice teaching afforded opportunities to develop deeper understanding of the complexities of the teaching role.

Third, many concepts about effective teaching identified primarily in north American-based research are seen as important by these Hong Kong and Australian student teachers, but in other ways culturally specific meanings are evident. Students from these Hong Kong and Australian sites have different views on the importance of various teaching characteristics. Personal attributes are perceived as the least important by this Australian sample, but perceived important by one of the Hong Kong samples. Classroom management is perceived only at the Australian site as the most important set of characteristics.

There were a number of implications drawn from this study. Teaching practicum seems to have differential influences on pre-service teachers. As stated by Dodds (1989), we seem to know little about the ecology of field experiences. The complexity of influences in the socialisation processes undergone by the pre-service teachers is illustrated in Dodds' model. Successful and non-successful experiences of the pre-service teachers in the TP are construed under the premises of the contexts of school environment, student characteristics, personal teaching skills and interactions of all these factors. In other words, socialisation processes in schools interact to have complex influences on student teachers. The current educational practice of school-university partnerships such as those with a graduate mentoring system can be one way of making a conscious effort in shaping the pre-service teachers' views about the teacher role. Active role analysis and construction can be a positive influence in the socialisation processes of pre-service teachers. This needs to be done when school and university-based personnel work in concert; for instance, teachers need professional development around the issue of advising student teachers. University graduate studies are usually required for teachers to become TP advisers in the USA. This is not the case in Australia or Hong Kong. Implemented since the present study was completed, a new HK2 teacher adviser programme is designed to operate in this way.

Other researchers (Hellison & Templin, 1991) suggest, however, that changing beginning teachers' professional understandings is most effective when pedagogical knowledge is combined with reflective tasks as part of university lectures. Dodds (1989) offered teacher educators advice about socialising pre-service teachers. She suggested teacher educators 'must design deliberately progressive, sequential, and well-timed field experiences that clearly support the programmatic teaching perspective' (p. 99). The inclusion of reflective activities during the field experiences can prompt pre-service teachers to compare and contrast their own beliefs with those found in school cultures and PETE programmes. The results of this study show that pre-service teachers had numerous opinions about teaching experience and it seems that pre-service teachers are receptive and will probably find discussions involving reflections about their TP experiences as helpful in their understanding of the teaching role.

The above may be more effective for western PETE students with stronger individualist focus, than it is for Chinese. Given what could be interpreted as reticence among the Hong Kong Chinese PETE students in discussing teaching qualities as they apply to themselves, culturally appropriate ways of developing discussion and using reflective tasks need to be developed. Writing and projection exercises rather than open class and group discussion might be more relevant ways for student teachers to discuss personal successes and difficulties in the Hong Kong context.

Although these pre-service teachers often focus success on pupil-centred issues, their relating success to pupil learning is infrequent. PE teacher educators have to ensure that pre-service teachers gain an understanding of teaching effectiveness, which is directed toward explicit educational outcomes. The ultimate goal of teaching should be defined in the numbers of pupils who increase their learning. Students from the only programme in this study to require video-taping of practice teaching focused their perceived teaching methodology successes on instructional skill. There are many practical and ethical issues associated with video-taping in schools, however, providing students with opportunities to see themselves in operation in naturalistic settings may assist many students in become more

instruction-focused rather than discipline-oriented in their teaching concerns. Again, where small group discussion might be appropriate for most Western students, written individual or group responses might be more appropriate for Eastern students who are uncomfortable with discussing their own attributes,

Finally, further research questions are posed. Do pre-service teachers change their role perceptions during their years of teacher education? Studies could track student teachers across the different years of their programmes in order to monitor potential changes in their perceptions about teaching practice and teacher characteristics. What can be done to socialise pre-service teachers in ways that facilitate their becoming effective teachers? Future research may involve other approaches to investigating the social context of PETE. Ethnographic techniques (participant observation and life history interviews) could identify the differential impact of teacher educators, cooperating teachers and pupils in schools on the professional socialisation of student teachers.

Although this cross-cultural study has been exploratory, similarities and differences have been identified across these three programme settings, but broader generalisations are problematic. Further study needs to be undertaken in other Australian PETE programmes. Similarities and differences also exist between the ways the practicum has socialised these Australian and Hong Kong student teachers into their professional roles and those reported about the professional socialisation of USA PETE students. Use of survey questionnaires is limited because they give limited insights into the lived TP worlds of student teachers. Contextually appropriate in-depth interviewing and reflective exercises, such as analysis of critical incidents on the practicum, may help develop a deeper understanding of the perspectives of pre-service teachers. We need to know why, for example, pre-service teachers in Hong Kong do not perceive practicum success in terms of helping 'gain confidence as a teacher'. Deeper culturally specific understandings are required.

### **Notes:**

1. Questions from anonymous reviewers of earlier drafts were helpful in shaping these program profiles.
2. In Hong Kong secondary schools are classified into five bands. Pupils are assigned to their school band on the basis of school performance and an academic aptitude test taken at the end of primary school. Lower band secondary schools are seen to be stressful places to teach. Similarly; managing and teaching students labelled as 'low academic achievers' is considered more difficult than working with students in upper band schools.
3. A national health and physical curriculum statement (Curriculum Corporation, 1994) has been introduced. It has been variously taken up by Australian state departments of school education, but the New South Wales personal development, health and physical education syllabus (Board of Studies, 1990, 1992) is seen to be similarly intent on expanding student learning in PE beyond sports skills outcomes (Fry, 1997).
4. Middle SES rural land owners.

5. A set of these, then mooted for national teacher registration, has since been published by the Australian Teaching Council (1996).
6. Although school education in Australia is a state issue, the federal government funds the preparation of teachers through its annual grant to universities. Part of the agreement between universities and the teachers' unions is that teachers will be paid for supervising students on practicum. Not being in the unified university system, AUS did not receive federal funding and did not pay supervising students. It relied on the goodwill of its graduates to maintain the practicum as a cost neutral enterprise.
7. A statement is used to refer to each separate idea given in a response; for example, in reply to 'What was the usefulness of teaching practicum for you?' a student might have written, 'have the experiences of a teacher, understand way kids behave in school'. Each of the two parts to the answer would have been coded separately—giving two separate statements,

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Table 1: Background Information of Subjects (frequencies) and School Types for TP

Sample	Gender		School Attachment			School types*		
	Male	Female	Sec.	Prim.	Both	Gov.	Subs.	Both
HK1	32	30	42	2	18	8	51	3
HK2	17	15	16	0	16	2	30	0
						State	Indep.	Catholic
AUS	17	19	22	4	0	12	7	7

\*HK: Gov = government schools, Subs. = subsidized schools; AUS: indep. = independent schools

Table 7: Rankings of Four Categories of Important Teaching Characteristics

Categories of Teaching Characteristics	Rank (Mean Rank)		
	HK1 (n=53)	HK2 (n=32)	AUS (n=26)
Personal Attributes	1 (1.79)	3 (2.53)	4 (3.27)
Teaching Methods	2 (2.30)	1 (1.44)	2 (2.27)
Classroom Management	3 (2.53)	2 (2.44)	1 (1.65)
Interpersonal Relationship	4 (3.38)	4 (3.59)	3 (2.62)

Table 2: Selected Statements\* on the Usefulness of TP (Total responses = 263 Cases)

Category (Total Statements = 52)	HK1 (f)	HK2 (f)	AUS (f)
<i>Personal Orientation</i>			
<i>Personal Attributes</i>			
Prepare for future	9	2	0
Gain confidence	1	1	3
Know weaknesses/strengths	2	3	0
& 3 others	1	0	3
<i>Attitude toward occupational duty</i>			
Experience as a teacher	25	13	11
Understand school situation	6	4	7
Experience teaching problems	3	5	0
& 10 others	7	9	7
<b>Subtotal Responses:</b>	<b>54 (44%)</b>	<b>37 (43%)</b>	<b>31 (60%)</b>
<i>Teaching Methodology</i>			
<i>Instructional Skills</i>			
Practice from theory	8	8	5
Improve on teaching method	4	0	1
Lesson plan & design	1	6	0
& 7 others	13	4	3
<i>Class operation</i>			
Classroom management	10	6	1
Handle accidents/emergency	4	1	0
Classroom experience	3	0	0
Classroom preparation	0	1	0
<b>Subtotal Responses:</b>	<b>43 (34%)</b>	<b>21 (24%)</b>	<b>10 (19%)</b>
<i>Pupil-centred Concerns</i>			
<i>Teacher/pupil relations</i>			
Communicate with kids	3	4	1
Handle kids' problems	5	1	1
Face different kids	4	1	2
& 7 others	6	7	4
<i>Understanding different aspects of pupils</i>			
Understand kids' behaviour	6	3	0
Know kids' learning attitudes	1	2	1
Know kids' abilities	1	2	0
& 6 others	2	8	2
<b>Subtotal Responses:</b>	<b>28 (22%)</b>	<b>28 (33%)</b>	<b>11 (21%)</b>

\* only three statements with highest frequencies (all samples) in each sub-category were reported, frequencies of non-selected statements were grouped as 'others'.

Table 3: Selected Success Statements\* Experienced during TP (Total responses = 178)

Category (Total Statements = 57)	HK1 (f)	HK2 (f)	AUS (f)
<i>Personal Orientation</i>			
<i>Personal Attributes</i>			
Gain confidence	0	0	7
Good relations with staff	0	0	4
Enjoy teaching result	1	0	0
<i>Attitude toward occupational duty</i>			
Experience teaching	0	0	9
Learn from mistakes	0	0	1
<b>Subtotal responses</b>	<b>1 (1%)</b>	<b>0 (0%)</b>	<b>21 (38%)</b>
<i>Teaching Methodology</i>			
<i>Instructional Skills</i>			
Teaching method	4	0	2
Lesson plan	1	2	0
Practice from theory	2	0	1
& 19 others	5	7	7
<i>Class Operation</i>			
Classroom management	7	1	4
Group control	0	0	1
Learn discipline techniques	0	0	1
<b>Subtotal Responses:</b>	<b>19 (27%)</b>	<b>10 (20%)</b>	<b>16 (29%)</b>
<i>Pupil-centred Concerns</i>			
<i>Teacher/pupil relations</i>			
Relationship with kids	8	1	5
Communicate with kids	6	1	0
Trust by kids	2	1	0
& 9 others	4	0	5
<i>Pupil interest/compliance</i>			
Control kids discipline	7	3	7
Kids understand what I taught	5	0	1
Kids' interest	2	4	0
& 9 others	13	28	1
<i>Pupil learning</i>			
Kids learn new skills & knowledge	3	2	0
Kids improve by positive feedback	1	0	0
Kids with successful experience	0	1	0
<b>Subtotal Responses:</b>	<b>51 (72%)</b>	<b>41 (80%)</b>	<b>19 (34%)</b>

\* only three statements with the highest frequencies (all samples) in each sub-category were reported, frequencies of non-selected statements were grouped as 'others'.

Table 4: Selected Difficulty Statements\* Encountered during TP (Total Responses = 154)

Category (Total Statements = 57)	HK1 (f)	HK2 (f)	AUS (f)
<i>Personal Orientation</i>			
<i>Personal Attributes</i>			
Inadequate knowledge	2	0	2
Relation with other teachers	0	0	4
Nervous	1	0	1
& 6 others	1	2	0
<i>Attitude toward occupational duty</i>			
Unsure of teacher role/duty	0	2	0
Work load	0	0	1
Not treated as teacher by staff	0	0	1
<b>Subtotal responses</b>	<b>4 (5%)</b>	<b>4 (8%)</b>	<b>9 (30%)</b>
<i>Teaching Methodology</i>			
<i>Instructional Skills</i>			
Plan curriculum	2	2	1
Time allocation & management	4	1	0
Limited resources & facilities	0	1	2
& 17 others	16	2	4
<i>Class Operation</i>			
Classroom management	10	3	0
Kids different in skills	5	2	0
Decrease management time	0	1	0
<b>Subtotal Responses:</b>	<b>37 (49%)</b>	<b>12 (25%)</b>	<b>7 (22%)</b>
<i>Pupil-centred Concerns</i>			
<i>Teacher/pupil relations</i>			
Relationship with kids	1	0	0
Communicate with kids	2	2	1
Not trusted/respected by kids	1	0	2
& 2 others	1	1	1
<i>Pupil attitude/behaviour/non-compliance</i>			
Discipline problem	12	6	5
Kids no cooperative in class	1	6	0
Hard to motivate kids	0	3	1
& 15 others	16	12	4
<i>Pupil learning</i>			
Evaluate kids' level	1	1	0
Kids not meet expectations	0	1	0
<b>Subtotal Responses:</b>	<b>35 (46%)</b>	<b>32 (67%)</b>	<b>14 (47%)</b>

Table 5: Percentages of Teaching Practice Responses by Samples

Aspects of TP Experiences	HK1 (f & %)	HK2 (f & %)	AUS (f & %)
<i>Usefulness</i>			
<i>Personal Orientation</i>			
Personal Attributes	13 24%	6 6%	6 19%
Attitudes toward occupational duties	41 76%	31 84%	25 81%
<i>Teaching Methodology</i>			
Instructional skills	26 60%	13 62%	9 90%
Class operation	17 40%	8 38%	1 10%
<i>Pupil-centred Concerns</i>			
Teacher-pupil relationships	18 64%	13 46%	8 73%
Understanding different aspects of pupils	10 36%	15 54%	3 27%
<i>Successes</i>			
<i>Personal Orientation</i>			
Personal Attributes	1 100%	0 0%	11 52%
Attitudes toward occupational duties	0 0%	0 0%	10 48%
<i>Teaching Methodology</i>			
Instructional skills	12 63%	9 90%	10 63%
Class operation	7 37%	1 10%	6 37%
<i>Pupil-centred Concerns</i>			
Teacher-pupil relationships	20 39%	3 7%	10 53%
Pupil interest/compliance	27 53%	35 85%	9 47%
Pupil learning	4 7%	3 7%	0 0%
<i>Difficulties</i>			
<i>Personal Orientation</i>			
Personal Attributes	4 100%	2 50%	7 78%
Attitudes toward occupational duties	0 0%	2 50%	2 22%
<i>Teaching Methodology</i>			
Instructional skills	22 59%	6 50%	7 100%
Class operation	15 41%	6 50%	0 0%
<i>Pupil-centred Concerns</i>			
Teacher-pupil relationships	5 14%	3 9%	4 29%
Pupil interest/behaviour/non-compliance	29 83%	27 85%	10 71%
Pupil learning	1 3%	2 6%	0 0%

Table 6: Selected Descriptors\* on ideal Physical Education Teachers

Teacher Quality	HK1 (f)	HK2 (f)	AUS (f)	TOTAL
<i>Personal Attributes</i>				
Knowledgeable	10	6	9	25
Enthusiasm	8	0	7	15
Love and caring	6	0	3	9
Friendly	1	1	7	9
Good role model	0	2	6	8
Responsible	6	1	0	7
Fair	0	4	0	4
Humour	2	1	1	4
Funny	0	0	4	4
Confident	1	0	3	4
Initiative in learning	4	0	0	4
Motivator	0	0	3	3
Approachable	0	0	3	3
Patience	1	1	0	2
<i>Subtotal Responses (%)</i>	39 (60%)	16 (64%)	46 (59%)	101 (60%)
<i>Classroom Management</i>				
Management/organised	4	1	5	10
Good discipline	1	0	5	6
<i>Subtotal Responses (%)</i>	5 (8%)	1 (4%)	10 (13%)	16 (10%)
<i>Teaching Methodology</i>				
Effective teaching method	7	4	4	15
Good communication skill	1	2	4	7
New teaching method	1	0	4	5
Good observation skill	3	0	0	3
Adaptive skill to handle problems	3	0	0	3
Help pupil to solve problem	2	1	0	3
<i>Subtotal Responses</i>	17 (26%)	7 (28%)	12 (15%)	36 (21%)
<i>Interpersonal Relationships</i>				
Relate to pupils	4	1	10	15
<i>Subtotal Responses</i>	6%	4%	13	9%
<b>TOTAL %</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%

\* descriptors with frequency > 1.