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Irish Physical Education Cooperating Teachers' Experiences of Learning to Become a 'Teacher of Teachers'

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Abstract: This article presents case studies detailing the learning trajectories of two physical education (cooperating) teachers as they strive to establish and maintain their identity as competent and confident supervisors to pre-service teachers on school placement. The cooperating teachers who participated in the study share their experiences in attempting to construct a professional identity within the school placement triad. Lave and Wenger's (1991) theory of situated learning and the concept of legitimate peripheral participation were employed to investigate each of the cooperating teacher's journeys in their attempt to shape their professional identity through participation in a variety of professional learning communities. The data revealed that the cooperating teachers experienced various forms of legitimate peripheral participation and, as a result, their learning trajectories and attempts to construct professional identities were diverse. The cooperating teachers' learning did not always follow a positive trajectory, often meeting obstacles, resulting in the teachers experiencing both highs and lows during the supervision process.

Keywords: Professional identity, legitimate peripheral participation, professional learning communities.

1. INTRODUCTION

Internationally, there is a growing trend to move towards a system of school-based teacher education, resulting in the role of the cooperating teacher (CT) becoming more prominent [1]. Currently, a large number of countries, including the United States, Australia and England, recognise and utilise qualified physical education teachers as 'supervisors' or 'mentors' to pre-service teachers (PSTs) on school placements [2-5]. In an Irish context, CTs work voluntarily as informal, untrained, unpaid supervisors during a school placement [6]. CTs, in a gesture of goodwill, offer learning support to PSTs in the area of classroom management and pedagogical content knowledge [7]. As a result of this there is great inconsistency in both the quantity and quality of learning support offered to PSTs by CTs. Just as importantly, CTs remain untrained and appear to be confused about their intended role as a supervisor [8-10]. Close working relationships between teacher education institutions and schools can lead to the development of learning communities where collaboration can be extended to the CT. Traditionally, in an Irish context, the focus has been on the relationship between the university tutor (UT) and the PST, and the CT has been relatively invisible in the process. In Ireland, schools provide placements to PSTs on a voluntary basis and assessment is solely undertaken by the UT. It is acknowledged that teachers' formal involvement in the supervisory process can expand their learning and impact them professionally. Sivan and Chan (2003) support this by acknowledging that the partnership between the teacher education institution and the school can facilitate and enhance a teacher's professional identity [11]. Wenger (1998) argued that identities are constructed through a participant's pathway or learning trajectory through communities [12]. Ideally, the relationships established during a school placement practicum would involve all three members of the triad, i.e. CT, UT and PST, where each of the stakeholders would *"form and alliance and partnership to learn from each other"* [13]. Williams and Ritter (2010) agreed by stating that people are defined by the relationships they establish and are therefore involved in a process of identity construction that is *'evolving, dynamic and an ever constant process of becoming'* [14]. As Lave and Wenger (1991) argued that learning and identity are inseparable, then, it is through evolving relationships with others that identities are constructed [15]. It is, therefore, crucial to analyse if, and how, CTs develop professional working relationships with the PST and the UT on a school placement.

To transform teacher identity, teachers need to learn how to become a 'teacher of teachers' [16], and to do so confidently and competently. In an Irish context, the construction of teacher identity within the school placement process is difficult due to the lack of tradition or culture of supervision. The extent to which CTs develop a professional identity is very much dependent on their own personal experiences and the context in which they work, particularly the school environment and the support they receive from

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senior staff and colleagues. This supports McKeon and Harrison's (2010) definition of identity as *"a socially and culturally constructed self, formed through a life's experiences and through communication about these experiences"* [17]. The same authors also stress that identities should not be seen as stable entities as they can be influenced by social practices and participation in communities.

Feiman-Nemser (2001) suggested that *"good teachers are not necessarily good teacher educators"* [16], and it is with this in mind that CTs need support in their quest to form an identity as an effective supervisor. The transition from physical education teacher to a CT is a complex journey which requires communities to be established, communication between the teacher education institution and the school, recognition for the role and regular continuous professional development opportunities. Williams *et al.* (2001) refer to this as *"structural collaboration"* [18].

Research shows that a lack of 'structural collaboration' can result in many CTs reverting to supervisory behaviours encountered during their own school placement experiences [19, 20]. The variety of these experiences can have negative implications on the formation of a teachers' identity as a competent supervisor. Beck and Kosnik (2002) highlighted that CTs should be given adequate preparation for their role as supervisor and be given the opportunity to develop a critical stance toward their own teaching to positively impact that of the PST [21].

To develop a strong identity as a supervisor there must be shared power among all members of the triad. All three participants of the triad, i.e. CT, UT and PST, must be involved in the process and become aware of the potential of providing professional development for one another. This shared process can result in three-way conversations where all written and verbal feedback and evaluations are shared among the group, *"sharing of information encourages open and honest interactions, thus fostering a community involved in the student teaching experience"* [22]. It has been recognised that CTs can, with sufficient training and guidance, form a professional identity and become effective supervisors in the school placement experience. It is hoped that the process of supervision can evolve to address the professional development needs of the CT to enable them to construct strong supervisory identities.

The study employed a situated learning framework, utilising Lave and Wenger's (1991) concept of legitimate peripheral participation in communities of practice [15]. The extended study involved five phases and included eighteen qualified physical education teachers. Using a social constructivist approach two case studies are presented to elicit and analyse CTs experiences in attempting to develop a professional identity within the supervisory triad. The two participants were chosen because of the diverse nature of their experiences. The results are then presented under a number of themes which emerged from the data analysis and suggestions are made as to how to enhance the role and identity of the CT in the supervisory process.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Lave and Wenger's (1991) concept of legitimate peripheral participation in communities of practice will be used to illustrate the learning trajectory of Irish CTs and the possibilities for the development of a strong professional identity as a supervisor [15]. Hoffman-Kipp (2008) define teacher professional identity as 'the intersection of personal, pedagogical, and political participation and reflection within a larger socio-political context' [23], thus playing a key role in a school context. As a CT, teacher identity can play an important role in the decisions they make about their supervisory practices and the relationships they maintain with other stakeholders [24]. Hammerness *et al.* (2005) also recognise that professional identity will determine whether a teacher seeks out professional development opportunities [25]. This will ultimately impact a CT's level of participation within a supervisory community.

The development of a teacher professional identity and the utilisation of situated learning can encourage the mapping of teachers' learning and development as CTs in order to identify how their experiences as legitimate peripheral participants can inform what support and training is necessary for them to become effective, confident and competent CTs in functioning communities of practice. Research suggests that teacher identity is not stable [24] and can be determined by context and prior experiences, for this reason it is imperative that CTs reasons for becoming a supervisor are investigated and school support is put in place to ensure they feel confident in their learning of the supervisory role.

Legitimate peripheral participation provides a context through which learning can take place. Qualified physical education teachers can be provided with opportunities to learn and master the skills of an effective CT when supported in the school placement process, thus strengthening their professional identity. This can be delivered by teacher education institutions providing structure and guidance and allowing opportunities for qualified physical education teachers/CTs to undertake the role of an apprentice or 'newcomer'. Lave and Wenger (1991) propose legitimate peripheral participation as a way of understanding learning and characterises the shifts in learning engagement in communities of practice [15].

Whilst appreciating the differing roles and relationships within the school placement triad (CTs, PSTs and UTs) in a community of practice, the main concern of this paper is with the learning trajectories of CTs and their quest to develop a professional identity as a supervisor. We acknowledge that a CT's positioning as a legitimate peripheral participant is reliant to some extent on the PST and the UT. Legitimate peripheral participation occurs in a school placement whereby *"learning does not occur in isolation, rather it is a social and active process"* [26] between the CT, the PST and the UT. Similarly, Korthagen (2004) reveals that professional identity is shaped through interaction with others and the environment [27]. This social and active interaction also includes the politics of the school, the school context and communication between the school

and university, which effectively links back to the definition of professional development at the beginning of this section. Legitimate peripheral participation will be used to understand how teachers' learning trajectories enhance or inhibit the move towards full participation in a community of practice. Famsworth (2010) and Trent (2010) reported the importance of creating an atmosphere of collaboration in learning communities to impact on the construction of teachers' professional identity [28, 29]. This collaboration and participation will determine the extent to which each of the CTs involved in the study develop a positive or negative sense of supervisory identity.

3. METHODOLOGY

This paper is part of an extended study examining the learning trajectories of Irish physical education CTs. The purpose and significance of this study was to investigate CTs understanding of the development of a professional identity within the school placement process. Data was collected across five phases and the results of this paper are drawn solely from the fifth phase. The research methodology employed, and the methods selected were chosen to elicit information to determine and understand CTs development of professional identity. To portray the subjective assessment of the attitudes and opinions of CTs it was decided that a social constructivist paradigm was the most appropriate research design to employ [30]. Using a social constructivist approach can reveal how CTs experienced or viewed the process of supervision.

3.1. Research Methods

A case study approach was used to yield maximal information and provide an in-depth analysis of the role of the CT in the supervision process. This primary data collection method enabled the exploration of the participants' experience and provided access to *"the lived world of the subjects"* [31]. Case studies aim to capture individual differences and variations from one setting to another, thus revealing a range of experiences [32]. Individual interviews were used to acquire rich, detailed data from the participants in the study.

Each of the participants agreed to be interviewed five times throughout a ten week school placement period. The individual interviews took place at each participant's school site and lasted approximately 45 minutes to one hour in length each time. The interviews were semi-structured in format [33]. The interviews were structured to initiate a dialogue and the participants were encouraged to reply to questions freely and openly. Each of the interviews began with a series of closed questions to determine the demographics of each participant. Information such as gender, school environment, teaching experience and supervision experience was elicited from each of the participants to set the scene. Following this, a set of open-ended questions were posed to the participants to determine their thoughts and perceptions. The participants were encouraged to discuss the topics and themes extensively and follow up questions were adapted based on the participant's responses. At various points during the interviews probes and prompts were used to encourage in-depth answers and to elicit more information on certain topics. Interviews allowed for detailed responses from the participants and as a result rich, detailed data was obtained.

3.2. Participants

A total of five CTs were recruited for phase five. Data from two of the CTs is reported in this paper. The case studies represent two very distinct and different experiences of the development of a professional identity as a supervisor. In each case study a final year PST was hosted at the school for a period of ten weeks to complete their final school placement practicum.

3.2.1. Daniel – A Misguided Opinion on Professional Development

Daniel teaches in an all boy's urban school in the mid-west region of Ireland with 600 pupils. He is a full-time physical education teacher with seven years teaching experience. He has supervised PSTs every year since he qualified as a teacher and views himself as being a competent and effective CT. There are three physical education teachers in the physical education department and each play a role in the supervision of PSTs.

3.2.2. Steven: Building on a Strong Professional Identity

Steven works in an all-boys school in the mid-west region of Ireland. The school has 430 students and two full-time physical education teachers, both involved in the supervision of PSTs. Steven has twenty years teaching experience and has been a CT for the past nine years.

3.3. Data Analysis

To carry out the analysis in a coherent and structured manner a computerised coding system, ATLAS.ti, was utilised. ATLAS.ti is a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis programme which allows initial analysis of the raw data, organising the data into codes (open coding) and then combining the codes into broader themes/categories, referred to as 'families' (axial coding). The computer programme helps to build up levels of analysis and view the relationship between the raw data and the broader themes [34]. The interview transcripts were read repeatedly to identify codes. When a new code emerged each of the other transcripts were re-analysed for this particular code. This continued until saturation occurred. Some examples of codes included the CTs perception of supervision and their role in the process, successes and difficulties in collaborating, learning opportunities and intended and actual enactment of relationships. When this was complete, codes were conceptualised into broader themes/categories (families) to aid further analysis. The identified themes emerged as (1) prior CT experience, (2) the evaluation process, (3) CT-PST relationships, (4) CT-UT relationships, and (5) CT learning.

4. RESULTS

The following are two case studies of the CTs' experience of legitimate peripheral participation in the communities they established during a school placement

practicum and their attempts at building a professional identity as a supervisor. Each detail the CTs' learning trajectory, highlighting factors that either supported or hindered their professional identity as supervisors under each of the themes identified. The data revealed that both CTs experienced a diverse range of learning experiences which impacted their ability to construct meaningful identities as effective supervisors.

4.1. Daniel – A Misguided Opinion on Professional Development

4.1.1. Prior Cooperating Teacher Experience

Daniel, in the first interview, was of the opinion that he had understood the role of supervisor due to past experiences with PSTs on placement suggesting that he had a strong identity as a supervisor. Daniel described his approach to supervision as 'hands on' in the first interview. He stated that in the past he had excellent PSTs who came to him for advice throughout the placement, which he felt reinforced, his position as a supervisor. He also believed that when they looked for help and he responded it allowed relationships to be established. When asked about his previous role, he commented; *"You become very much involved, giving them ideas and giving feedback and I would watch a couple of lessons and give them feedback and take that kind of approach"* (interview 1). However, in discussing his role further, he also stated;

"*You can't bombard a guy in his first few weeks of teaching practice, you just have to let them go with it and give them tips here and there, organisational things, things I might have done, but again it's his own teaching practice and he has to learn his way so I can't, I wouldn't like to interfere too much*" (interview 1).

It is unclear as to what Daniel's understanding of professional identity was and how his role would work effectively in a professional learning community. He stated that the physical education department in the school brought PSTs into their group *"because we have a good old laugh together"* (interview 1). There was no mention of providing a supportive environment for the PST, sharing resources and information or exploiting opportunities for learning. When probed about the possibility of having a role in the evaluation process, Daniel remarked;

"*Should they observe and give feedback and for it to be counted towards their grade, if so then no problem but you will have to pay me for it. I would think I would have a far better impression of the students than anyone coming out to assess them. At the end of the day a tutor comes two times, classes are prepared twice, they are staged, they are the ultimate classes. I found, especially with a weaker student, the second visit, I made her class for her. Did she get a grade over and above what she was, no doubt. I'm always going to try and look after the student*" (interview 1).

In previous supervisory experiences, supervisory identity for Daniel meant providing support, but only when asked. He was clear that he would not give feedback to a PST who did not look for it. Relationships were dependent on the PST's confidence in asking for support. This is in contrast to the reason he gave for agreeing to act as a CT. Daniel felt he had a responsibility to help PSTs reach their potential due to having a bad experience on a school placement in the second year of his degree. He had an ineffective CT who was negative in all his feedback and, as a result, he stated that he would "*never do that to a student teacher because at the end of the day they are trying, so you got to be positive"* (interview 1). When asked what made him feel valued and legitimate in his role as a CT, he mentioned the fact that past students had bought him gifts. The provision of the school placement booklet was not a contributory factor in legitimising his positioning in the supervision process, acknowledging that the booklet had been sent but pointed out that *"it was kind of useful but at the end of the day that is me doing work for the lecturer, that's of no benefit to me"* (interview 1).

4.1.2. The Evaluation Process

Whilst Daniel believed that UTs should ask and take into account CT's opinions, he thought that a CT's role in the evaluation process should be on the periphery. The reasons he gave included the fact that CTs were not trained to effectively grade PSTs and they were not paid to carry out the role. Interestingly, he was also cognisant of the effect it may have on the relationship with the PST following the visits. Daniel stated it was easier for UTs to "*come in and lay down the law and walk away"* (interview 1). However, when questioned about his confidence in becoming involved in the grading process, he acknowledged that he would require training but believed that;

"*I mean if I'm honest I'm probably more qualified than 70 to 80% of the tutors in [name of institution] to grade teaching practice because there are an awful lot of tutors who haven't taught. So from a teaching point of view, am I qualified to grade them? I am way more qualified than most*" (interview 1).

4.1.3. Cooperating Teacher-University Tutor Relationship

Daniel stated that previous interactions with UTs had mainly been positive and he was appreciative that they had taken the time to seek his opinion on the PSTs' progress. When this occurred it seemed to have a positive effect on his professional identity. Conversely, he noted that the lack of communication with the teacher education institution restricted his role. The interaction between Daniel and the UT was described as *"the tutors just come out, assess and leave"* (interview 1), thus curtailing any possibility for meaningful learning to occur.

4.1.4. Cooperating Teacher-Pre-service Teacher Relationship

In discussing his approach to supervising the current PST, he stated that while he would be willing to interact with the PST during the two timetabled double classes, he was limited in his time to offer any additional help outside of the scheduled class due to other teaching and coaching commitments.

By week three of the placement, Daniel had spent limited time with the PST due to the PST only teaching two of his

classes. He mentioned that he was not always present in the class, but would be *"floating in and out and watching from the balcony"* (interview 2). Feedback up to this point had been verbal, with no written accounts of the PST's teaching. When questioned about the development of a relationship, Daniel remarked that he offered help on a number of occasions but that the PST did not take him up on his offers. The PST not instigating a relationship with Daniel negatively impacted his participation in the school placement process. Daniel did not feel legitimate in the process unless the PST sought his assistance and, as a result, Daniel remained very much on the periphery in the first three weeks, thus having a negative impact on the development of an identity as a supervisor. Daniel felt that he was approachable as a CT but the PST seemed to be *"going it alone"* (interview 2) in the learning process. When asked whether he could initiate the development of a relationship to open up learning opportunities for both stakeholders, Daniel replied;

"*No, I am not in a position to force myself upon him, do you know what I mean? It's his teaching practice, if he does well it's on his back, if he doesn't and decides to go it alone, then fair enough*" (interview 2).

Daniel highlighted that the PST was struggling with classroom management issues, especially discipline, but rather than discuss these issues with the PST, he was hoping the UT would bring it up during the first visit. He was hoping that the issues would come up in the post lesson appraisal but the PST taught a very good lesson and the classroom management issues Daniel had noticed were not 'flagged'. Daniel did not feel in a position to bring this up with the UT as he felt that he was not officially part of the process. This seemed to be the reason as to why Daniel chose to remain on the periphery as he did not feel legitimate in the school placement process. Daniel equated legitimacy with acknowledgement and payment from the teacher education institution.

Discussing Daniel's interaction with the PST in week seven of a ten week placement, he admitted to only observing him three times in the previous four weeks. The reasons for his increased distance and peripherality were that the PST did not, at any stage, ask for help and his attempts at giving advice (although limited) went largely unimplemented. This lack of collaboration with the PST had a negative effect on the development of a professional identity. The issue of legitimacy was brought up again in relation to discussing the PST's teaching with the UT. Daniel stated that it was not his place to *"prevent him from getting an A grade"* (interview 3) as he had no official role as a CT. In week seven, the absence of a community was attributed to the PST's lack of engagement;

"*I wouldn't even say it was personality, he just doesn't put himself out there. At break-time he goes down to set up a class, we just never see him. I don't think he is socially comfortable around us either, being honest, we can be an intimidating group of lads*" (interview 3).

When questioned if there was anything they could do as a department to make the PST feel like part of the department and establish a community, Daniel commented;

"*Sure, I mean we sat here with him yesterday having the craic, you know what I mean, like we can't do more than that. We are all busy so we sit down and have a laugh, ask how things are going*" (interview 3).

4.1.5. Cooperating Teacher Learning

When questioned post school placement about his role as a CT, Daniel remarked;

"*I didn't do a lot to be honest, initially I watched his classes and offered feedback, feedback wasn't really taken on board, and then I left him to his own devices because it was obvious he didn't overly want me in the room*" (final interview).

He explained that this was in contrast to the previous year where he felt he had contributed to the PST's development. Daniel attributed the lack of a relationship to the fact that the PST *"just wasn't open"* (final interview). He felt that the PST was given support in the beginning but did not seem to appreciate it. There was also absence of a relationship with the UT, again acting as a restriction in the development of a professional identity and the establishment of a community. There was no communication or interaction on the day of the UT visits and his opinion was not sought at any stage. Daniel strongly believed that a CT should have a voice but at no time did he attempt to interact with the UT to air his comments. In discussing opportunities for learning, Daniel stated that they were restricted due to *"a combination of the fact that the student wasn't interested in getting feedback and a tutor who wasn't interested in communicating with us"* (final interview).

Daniel did not experience any form of learning throughout the supervision process and seemed to have a misguided opinion of what a CT's professional identity should look like. The fact that neither the PST nor the CT valued or engaged in developing a working relationship hindered each of the stakeholders' opportunity to learn. A supportive and nurturing environment was not created to allow for legitimate participation and, as such, each of the stakeholders remained on the periphery throughout the ten week placement, negatively impacting opportunities to develop a clear professional identity. Legitimacy, and learning to some extent, did not occur due to Daniel's involvement in the practices of a community not being deemed meaningful to him as an individual.

Daniel, ultimately, had a negative supervisory experience whereby he failed to negotiate an understanding of what an appropriate identity of a supervisor should be. The absence of relationships with the PST and UT attributed to this and, as a result, Daniel developed a negative attitude towards the goal of becoming a 'teacher of teachers'. The working practices of the school placement process and the fact that learning did not occur, did not facilitate the formation of an effective supervisory identity.

4.2. Steven – Building on a Strong Professional Identity

4.2.1. Prior Cooperating Teacher Experience

Steven's experience with PSTs has mainly been positive and he is very motivated to provide an educational and supportive environment during school placements. As a result of previous successful experiences with PSTs, Steven viewed himself as a competent CT and as a result portrayed a strong professional identity as an effective supervisor. In his interactions with PSTs he developed his professional identity as a facilitator and his learning trajectory was mainly consistent. He experienced a number of peaks when collaborative relationships were developed with PSTs and UTs, thus enabling him to become a more effective supervisor.

Steven was motivated in his role for a number of reasons. He received help and support when he was a PST and as a result he wanted to provide similar positive experiences for PSTs. He also stated that it was an important role and should be incumbent to the teaching profession. Steven stated that whilst he was motivated to influence a PST's learning, he also enjoyed the feeling of being valued;

"*It's gratifying in lots of ways, it is, and there are all sorts of things. It is a nice feeling helping someone, it is great to see them improve, when they come and ask you for advice, that's gratifying. If you see what you are giving, the information you are imparting used then it is even better. I enjoy it*" (final interview).

4.2.2. Cooperating Teacher-Pre-service Teacher Relationship

Steven's approach to the school placement enabled the development of a number of communities. Steven's strength was in his professional, yet caring, manner with the PSTs. He made it clear that he was there to support them and that he was open to developing a strong working relationship to enhance the school placement experience. He articulated his opinion of relationships as;

"*there is a relationship, if that ends up being friends, so be it but it has to be a professional relationship where if I were to come to you and say that was absolutely superb and sit down over a cup of coffee and say that was brilliant that should be done. But there is also the case where you have to say 'you aren't dressed appropriately', or 'your language wasn't acceptable', or 'the way you dealt with that situation wasn't acceptable'. There has to be both ways, it's a hard one, my role is as a mentor, facilitator they are good words*" (interview 1).

Aspects of mutual engagement between Steven and his PST served to enhance his learning trajectory in that he looked for new ways to improve PST's supervisory experiences. Both Steven and the other physical education teacher in the school became central to the PST's development, with the PST readily interacting and granting them increased access to an evolving community. This learning was reinforced when Steven witnessed the PST progressing as a result of his input and this, consequently, having a positive impact on his professional identity in the process;

"*When you see something working that you're actually trying to get someone to do, it's a little surreal when it works so well from one teacher to another and you see that being passed on 3rd hand. Problems no, benefits, it was very pleasing to see how the student progressed with our help and with his own hard work*" (final interview).

To enhance his supervisory capabilities Steven ensured that he was immersed in the school placement process. He ensured he was very much part of the process and central to the PST's development. This was mainly due to his confidence in his ability as a supervisor, although he had never received any form of training prior to this study. As part of the study, he was asked to formally structure his approach to supervision to aid both his and the PST's learning. However, as he was already carrying out a substantial supervisory role, his professional identity, in particular, did not alter significantly. When Steven's professional identity did experience peaks, it was when he developed a strong connection with the PST and multi-directional learning occurred. Steven emphasised the benefit to his learning as;

"*We see new things, every now and then you see something, that's what I love about it, you might get somebody in from a different sporting background, and you might get somebody in who is trying something new and sit back and say I haven't seen that before, fantastic*" (interview 1).

The extent of the legitimacy granted by the PST, to enable learning to take place, was strong; "I find that [name of PST] now instead of me instigating meetings, that [name of PST] will come and talk about a particular issue, which is great" (interview 3) and "that is why it is so gratifying for [name of other PE teacher] and I, we see things that we are suggesting being used and working" (interview 4). The PST in Steven's school was an accomplished basketball player and coach and the PST's acknowledgement of what Steven was doing in his classes was the greatest source of legitimacy; "It's funny, some of the exercises that I was doing for basketball, he actually put into his lesson, basketball wouldn't be one of my strong things, so that was interesting" (interview 2). This form of legitimacy enabled Steven to develop a greater sense of professional identity by reinforcing the effectiveness of his teaching.

4.2.3. The Evaluation Process

Steven felt that his view of an effective supervisor was linked to the evaluation process. His previous experience of the evaluation process with a final year PST had been negative as he felt he was very much left on the periphery, making him feel redundant in the process;

"*I was very annoyed recently, we had a student and just not at the standard we would hope after four years yet he qualified and off he went. At that point I was ignored, I was mad, both [name of other PE teacher] and I were angry. It wasn't right, our student went backwards when he was here.*

We found ourselves nearly commandeering lessons. Whatever about being poor, he was border-line unsafe" (interview 1).

Steven stated that being on the periphery, in terms of the evaluation process, was a barrier to learning and undermined his professional identity as a supervisor. In the past he often got frustrated when his opinion was not sought or, when offered, ignored. Steven highlighted the fact that he saw the PST progress, improve and learn over a six or ten week placement while a UT only observes the PST twice. As a result, Steven attempted to involve himself more in the evaluation process and lessen the divide between the periphery and the core. He did this to enhance his own knowledge and identity and present a clearer picture of the PST's development. In the past, Steven had been asked by the UT to stay in the observed lesson and had the opportunity to compare feedback following the lesson Steven stated that their feedback was quite similar, reinforcing his ability as a supervisor and giving him an impetus to continue.

4.2.4. Cooperating Teacher-University Tutor Relationship

The fact that the UT took the time to invite him to stay in the lesson and go through feedback at the end made Steven feel valued and resulted in the UT enabling legitimacy, further enhancing his potential to develop a supervisory identity. This was reinforced by the UT in this study who interacted with Steven and encouraged him to get involved in the evaluation; *"I thought she was real, realistic, I thought she was very supportive of the student, very interested in what I had to say, I thought she was great. It was a very open relationship"* (final interview). In this case, through shared observations and post lesson debriefs, the UT made Steven's learning experience an empowering one by opening up access to the evaluation process. Steven felt that he had developed his identity as a supervisor with the UT as they were working towards the same goal of supporting the PST. He emphasised his role in the UT visit again by stating;

"*I seem to be included in everything. I will sit down and discuss, first of all how things have gone so far and give some insights. I stay for the class and make a few observations, share some comments. Generally I have been asked for my opinion and I have been asked to sit in on the post lesson appraisal which is great. I have a voice in that conversation, encouraged by the tutor*" (interview 1).

Although Steven felt involved in the UT's visits, and learning opportunities were provided through interaction, he was aware that the ultimate grading decision rests with the UT. This form of peripherality frustrated Steven and he acknowledged that this form of peripherality will continue as long there is no formal structure in place for CTs in the supervision process. Another point of frustration emerged when he emphasised the issue of time and logistics for the development of identity within a school placement community;

"*To get the cooperating teacher working with the pre-service teacher and the university tutor is going to take time that isn't there, the system is flawed. Where are we going to create a situation where three people are going to be able to sit down and discuss, I don't know how that is going to happen because it won't happen in school time, and not outside school because the chance of all three being free are slim*" (final interview).

4.2.5. Cooperating Teacher Learning

Steven was very proactive in his role as a CT and took time to support and nurture PSTs on placement at his school. Steven was a full participant, as referred to above, in that he had the motivation, the professional teaching skills and social skills to establish and maintain his professional identity in the communities created. Whilst his learning trajectory remained mainly consistent, he experienced a number of peaks due to the sharing of practices by PSTs and UTs. This access to resources made Steven's practices legitimate and allowed him to learn new skills to add to his existing understanding of his professional identity as a supervisor. Although Steven participated at the core of the school placement process in many respects, he realised that peripherality in the evaluation process could restrict learning opportunities for CTs and have a negative effect on the development of professional identity.

Steven's experience was an empowering one where he relished the opportunity to become an effective 'teacher of teachers'. This was enabled, in particular, by how his identity was constructed by the PST. This reinforced the role he was carrying out and, as a result, Steven's concept of his own professional identity was regularly reconstructed throughout the school placement process. Being included and accepted within a community supported Steven in the formation of a strong supervisory identity.

CONCLUSION

CTs' experiences as legitimate peripheral participants and their interactions with PSTs, UTs and the teacher education institution can help inform what support and training is necessary for them to become confident in the supervisory role and how to form a professional identity in communities. Within this study, particularly in the case of Steven, the data revealed two important influences on his decision to become an active supervisor to PSTs on school placement. Firstly, the experience enabled the CT to become an "agent of change" as his ability to deliver effective feedback positively impacted on his PSTs' development. Secondly, they both acknowledged the potential impact participation could have on their own professional development, as both physical education teachers and supervisors. Significantly, there are CTs who are willing to support PSTs on placement and develop effective and sustainable relationships to benefit the development of a professional identity.

Learning and the construction of a professional identity was enabled by a number of factors including positive motivations and dispositions, past supervisory experiences and the level of support received from PSTs and UTs. Many relationships facilitated learning through the CT being open to learning from PSTs and acknowledging the benefit of multi-directional learning. The main factors which inhibited the CTs' progress were the absence of communication with

the teacher education institution, the lack of collaboration with UTs, disengaged PSTs and CTs' perceived lack of confidence in their supervisory capabilities. When these were experienced, CTs' learning trajectories and development of a professional development were negatively affected.

The learning experienced by Steven was mainly as a direct result of his high levels of intrinsic motivation to become an effective supervisor and full member of a community. However, the possibility of CTs becoming legitimate peripheral participants in professional learning communities will continue to be restricted by the lack of communication between the university and the school, the absence of clarity in each of the stakeholder's roles and the fact that CTs are not acknowledged for the role they play in the supervision of PSTs.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors confirm that this article content has no conflict of interest.

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