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The Effect of Non-Specialist Physical Education Primary School Teachers’ Experiences of Physical Education During Their School Centred Initial Teacher Training Course on Their Confidence, Knowledge and Ability to Teach Physical Education

(Dissertation submitted under the Pedagogy area)

Lily Porter

ST20021760
THE EFFECT OF NON-SPECIALIST PHYSICAL EDUCATION PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS’ EXPERIENCES OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION DURING THEIR SCHOOL CENTRED INITIAL TEACHER TRAINING COURSE ON THEIR CONFIDENCE, KNOWLEDGE AND ABILITY TO TEACH PHYSICAL EDUCATION
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ABSTRACT

The importance of primary physical education (PE) is increasing due to the rising level of childhood obesity. PE at primary school has been identified as the optimal window for development for children to adopt healthy lifestyle behaviours, and therefore partake in lifelong physical activity. It has been reported in the literature that PE is currently in a state of neglect and one of the many reasons for this being, the lack of input from teacher training courses to have an effect on teachers’ confidence, knowledge and understanding needed to teach PE. School centred initial teacher training (SCITT) is increasingly becoming a desired choice for teacher training, however there is limited research into the PE experiences gained on SCITT. Therefore, the aim of the study was, ‘to understand the effect of non-specialist PE primary school teachers’ experiences of PE during their SCITT course on their confidence, knowledge and ability to teach PE’.

A qualitative methodology was selected with the use of semi-structured interviews to question five female primary school teachers, newly qualified via the SCITT programme. The interviews were then transcribed and a thorough thematic analysis process was undertaken. The researcher found that all the participants reported a negative experience of PE on SCITT, as the received PE training was inadequate, specifically drawing upon the relevancy the training had in relation to primary education. One of the suggested improvements of the course was the opportunity to observe a primary teacher teach a quality lesson of PE. Therefore, future research should study a more comprehensive cohort of SCITT courses to investigate other suggested improvements and implement these suggestions in order to improve the PE training received on SCITT. This may then increase the likelihood of primary teachers entering the profession with confidence, knowledge and the understanding of how to teach PE. Thus, contributing to a child’s positive primary PE experience.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION
Physical Education (PE) is defined as the “planned, progressive learning that takes place in school curriculum timetabled time” (Association for Physical Education, 2013, p. 3). It involves “both ‘learning to move’ and ‘moving to learn’” (Association for Physical Education, 2013, p. 3). The concept of PE presents opportunities whereby children can make substantial development (Murdoch & Whitehead, 2013) which are focused upon four broad domains: physical, social, affective and cognitive, all of which aim to promote lifelong physical activity (PA) (Pickup & Price, 2007; Bailey et al., 2009).

Promotion of lifelong PA is becoming increasingly significant due to the rapid increase in obesity worldwide (World Health Organisation (WHO), 2015) and alarmingly, the prevalence of obesity within children (WHO, 2015). In 2013, it was reported that 42 million children under the age of five were overweight or obese (WHO, 2015). One recognised cause of this is an increase in sedentary living and individuals not meeting the recommended PA guidelines of 150 minutes of moderate intensity exercise (Ridgers et al., 2006; Department of Health, 2011). With the awareness of childhood obesity developing into adulthood, as well as the risk of developing many associated diseases (WHO, 2015), Bartle et al. (2013) stressed the importance of intervening early, as problems with obesity are less likely to be resolved in later life. Ridgers et al. (2006) emphasised how essential it is that children’s PA and the prevention of childhood obesity becomes a public health priority.

Kirk (2005) argued that in order for PA to continue throughout life, positive and motivational early learning experiences are crucial. Suggesting that, primary schools are a potential setting for combatting childhood obesity, whereby physical educators have the opportunity to engage children in healthy lifestyle behaviours (Pickup et al., 2007; Naylor & McKay, 2009; Jenkinson & Benson, 2010). Moreover, Jess et al. (2007) also emphasised that school may possibly be the only time a child has access to experiencing and developing the foundations of PE and physical competence.

Given the importance of primary PE, debates arose as to whether non-specialist classroom teachers, who currently take a greater percentage of primary PE (Graber et al., 2008) are best suited to teach primary PE in comparison to a specialist PE teacher (Fletcher & Mandigo, 2012). These debates began due to the prolonged and continuing concern for PE in primary education, a particular concern being the status of the subject (Pickup et al., 2007; Carney & Winkler, 2008). Due to the primary years holding the key to
lifelong PA (Green, 2002) and being the optimal window for development (Jess & Collins, 2003; Pickup, 2012), uncertainty and concern emerges as to the reasons why primary school PE has received considerably little attention (Jess & Collins, 2003). Griggs (2007) even claimed that primary PE was in a state of neglect (Griggs, 2007). This being said, the government has started to make some positive movements (Begg, 2011; GOV.UK, 2014a).

One concern with the delivery of primary PE is teacher proficiency (Pickup et al., 2007), namely, the lack of knowledge and confidence to teach primary PE (Morgan & Bourke, 2005; 2008; Morgan & Hansen, 2008a). Research has shown that these inadequacies in PE have been affected by the teachers’ previous experiences up to their current teaching practice (Carney & Chedzoy, 1998; Faucette et al., 2002; Morgan & Bourke, 2008). A significant amount of research has been conducted in the different areas of experience, for example, personal, school, and teaching (Carney & Chedzoy, 1998). However, an experience that has been mostly regarded as a negative one is that of the initial teacher training (ITT) (Decorby et al., 2005; Morgan & Bourke, 2005). There is a significant amount of research on primary PE within ITT, particularly the traditional route of Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) (Decorby et al., 2005; Morgan & Bourke, 2005).

Increasingly, other pathways into primary teaching, such as, school centred initial teacher training (SCITT) course has become a desired choice by many graduates in England (Department for Education, 2015). The SCITT is a yearlong course whereby most of students learning occurs in their allocated schools (Department for Education, 2015). The concept of SCITT is based on the fact that students can experience teaching first-hand and apply what has been observed into their own teaching practice from the outset (Department for Education, 2015). Despite the positive perception accredited to SCITT, there are challenges with the course when associated with primary PE, in particular, when related to the quality of PE teaching (Caldecott et al., 2006). To the researcher’s knowledge, the study by Caldecott et al. (2006) is the only study to research into the SCITT course and primary PE. However, this study only researched into the time dedicated to PE within SCITT, not teachers’ knowledge and confidence to teach the subject. Moreover, no research has been conducted in relation to confidence and knowledge on non-specialist PE classroom teachers who have undertaken the SCITT course. Therefore, the aim of the present study
is, ‘to understand the effect of non-specialist PE primary school teachers’ experiences of PE during their SCITT course on their confidence, knowledge and ability to teach PE’. In order to achieve this aim a qualitative approach will be undertaken to explore and understand individuals’ perceptions of their experiences. Five interviews will be conducted in a semi-structured manner on female participants who, in the previous year, took part in the same SCITT course within the South of England. The data will then be analysed using an inductive thematic analysis process.

The following chapters will explore the literature surrounding primary PE, specifically; the specialist PE teacher/classroom teacher debate, the barriers that classroom teachers have of teaching primary PE, and the experiences gained both prior to and including ITT. There will include an emphasis on Caldecott et al.’s (2006) research upon SCITT. The literature review will then be followed by a detailed explanation of the methodology, a discussion of the findings of the present study compared to previous research and finally a conclusion chapter will summarise the study and future research directions.
2.1 Introduction

The literature review will present many of the contributing factors that have an effect on the teaching of Physical Education (PE) within primary education. Initially, evidence is provided both for and against the employment of specialist PE teachers, whilst also identifying many barriers that primary teachers face in relation to delivering effective primary PE. Thereafter, the review has been divided into experiences gained both before and during initial teacher training (ITT). In relation to primary teachers’ confidence and knowledge, they will appear throughout the review of literature as they are highly dependent upon the areas identified and cannot be discussed in isolation.

2.2 Non-Specialist Primary Teachers Versus Specialist Primary Physical Education Teachers

Discussions in relation to who should teach PE in primary education are contradictory (Fletcher & Mandigo, 2012). Fletcher and Mandigo (2012) sought to review the research on primary PE from 1990 to 2010. Various research displays evidence to support the claim that qualified PE specialists are more likely to teach a higher quality programme of PE in comparison to the classroom teacher (Fletcher & Mandigo, 2012). One of the many reasons being: specialist teachers feel confidently prepared for PE, whilst also finding enjoyment in teaching the subject (Mandigo et al., 2004). Other evidence suggests that specialists behave differently and more effectively within their PE lessons, as they provide a greater amount of instruction and feedback throughout; compared to non-specialists who spend a great deal of time observing quietly and not moving around the space provided (Behets, 1995). Kirk (2005) also stated that introducing specialist PE teachers in secondary school might be too late to have an impact upon levels of competence, perceptions and motivation of children.

Research supporting the employment of primary PE specialists was conducted using reflective journals written by six PE specialist undergraduates on a three-year primary education degree (Pickup & Price, 2006). The reflections revealed that personal philosophies of PE were predominantly formed from previous experiences, along with experiences gained through ITT; both on the course and in the school placements (Pickup & Price, 2006). All of the specialist primary PE students approaching the end of their third year of training expressed their enthusiasm, confidence and readiness for their newly
qualified teaching year (Pickup & Price, 2006). With one student reporting that her confidence in her own ability grew significantly throughout the duration of the specialist course. This evidence suggests that if specialists were to be hired, children would be taught PE from confident and prepared individuals. However, this assumption cannot be made due to the sample being drawn from one individual university, which is therefore not representative of other universities, resulting in the inability to generalise.

A strength of the research by Fletcher and Mandigo (2012) was that they provided a comprehensive reasoning behind why specialist PE teachers within primary schools have not being hired to date. The article specifically brought attention to both the political and financial pressures of schools and the influence of stakeholders’ curricular priorities (literacy and numeracy). Fletcher and Mandigo’s (2012) review of research identified a limitation as a lack of longitudinal studies within the wide scope of research. Other reasons for a lack of change is due to contradictory research still having an influence, for example, studies have shown that it is more desirable if primary classroom teachers teach all subjects, as a child-teacher bond is already in place (Caldecott et al., 2006; Sloan, 2010). This bond increases the likelihood of cross-curricular learning occurring (Sloan, 2010) and positive attitudes towards PE being generated (Caldecott et al., 2006). This point further supports the well-known strength of primary education and its model of ‘one teacher teaches all’. Primary teachers develop a relationship with each pupil, resulting in the awareness and ability to develop a child in all areas of education (Caldecott et al., 2006). Although primary teachers demonstrate this understanding in many areas, it is rarely transferred into the teaching of PE (Jess et al., 2007).

Research by Campbell and Jess (2012) reinforced this finding in their longitudinal intervention from 2006 at the University of Glasgow and Edinburgh. The projects main aim was to increase teachers’ confidence and competence in PE, which appeared to be met for two reasons. Firstly, at the end of the research the teachers reported they had learnt that PE should not differ from their practice in other areas (Campbell & Jess, 2012). Secondly, teachers reported they felt more confident and knowledgeable, as well as feeling comfortable to experiment more with pedagogical approaches (Jess & Campbell, 2012). However, since this research was conducted in Scotland it is only partially relevant to the present study.
Despite the many barriers presented above, primary PE has changed drastically in recent years and is finally on many ‘political’ agendas (Begg, 2011). At the start of 2013, the Westminster Government announced funding of £150 million per year for the next two years to improve the quality and breadth of primary PE in England (GOV.UK, 2014a; Ofsted Guidance, 2013). This funding is now distributed directly to the head teacher to determine the best use of the money in order to make improvements (GOV.UK, 2014b). Possible uses of the money include; up-skilling current teachers, employing specialist PE teachers to work alongside classroom teachers, and then the likes of improving facilities and equipment (GOV.UK, 2014c; Ofsted Guidance, 2013). Although this funding is a breakthrough for primary PE, problems still remain, as for many schools these barriers will still be in place, with a continued use of non-specialist primary teachers to teach PE within the primary sector (Blair & Capel, 2011). This funding however, does provide substantial reasoning for further research to be conducted on the impact to date.

2.3 Non-Specialist Primary Teachers’ Barriers to Teaching Effective Primary Physical Education

There are not only barriers towards employing specialists; there are also significant barriers that classroom teachers face in relation to primary education itself and effective primary PE. Reasons behind the suffering of primary PE have been identified as an overcrowding of the curriculum, as well as the national drive to reach higher standards in the core subjects; English, Mathematics and Science (Wright, 2004; MacPhail & Halbert, 2005; Haydn-Davies et al., 2007). There is now an extensive list of requirements for core subjects within the National Curriculum for primary education (Department for Education, 2013), which has incorrectly led to a reduction in the time allocated to PE (Griggs, 2007). Speednet survey (2000 cited in Wright, 2004) stated that national drives of literacy and numeracy has replaced over half a million hours of primary PE. Furthermore, Pickup and Price (2006) found that undergraduates conveyed great frustration due to the time, which should be dedicated to PE, being replaced to allow extra time for the core subjects. Re-emphasising the negative effect that the increasing Government pressures can have on foundation subjects, such as PE (Griggs, 2007). Instead, schools, along with the Government need to understand how imperative it is to keep PE as a focus subject and not of secondary importance to core subjects (Griggs, 2007).
Haydn-Davies et al. (2007) summarised the key barriers that primary teachers face into predominantly two issues: content and time. In the past the content of primary PE has been notified as a barrier because children’s learning was not at the forefront of the lesson; instead, the activity was. For many schools this was a watered down version of secondary school PE (Haydn-Davies et al., 2007). The tasks set were most likely too difficult which resulted in children pulling away from an activity with the belief they could not succeed (Jess et al., 2007). In relation to time, it is highly unlikely that the scheduled time allocated to PE is achieved when taking into consideration changing time, rehearsals and other events (PEA, 1987; Jess, 1992; HMIE, 2001 cited in Haydn-Davies et al., 2007).

On the other hand, Morgan and Hansen (2008a) conducted semi-structured interviews on classroom teachers in order to investigate the types of barriers that affected the teaching of PE. They then separated these barriers into two categories: institutional and teacher-related. Institutional barriers refer to the likes of facilities, funding and time (Morgan & Hansen, 2008a). Whereas, teacher-related barriers refer to teachers’ confidence, attitudes, personal school experiences and more (Morgan & Hansen, 2008a). The results showed that the greatest barriers that are inhibitory to PE teaching were institutional but out of the teachers’ control (Morgan & Hansen, 2008a).

2.4 Non-Specialist Primary Teachers’ Previous Experiences of Sport, Physical Activity and Physical Education

Bandura’s (1986) social-cognitive theory was a development upon his social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) and both can be used to explain how one’s own existing beliefs and actions can be ascertained from personal and social experiences from the past. Despite these studies being dated, research since then has followed this theory and current teaching is still being associated with previous experiences. Therefore, this is an appropriate theoretical framework to consult as a starting point for the present study.

The aim of Carney and Chedzoy’s (1998) study was to investigate the relationship between previous experience and its effect on teaching competence in the six areas of the former National Curriculum for PE. These were: Athletics, Games, Swimming, Gymnastics, Dance and Outdoor Adventurous Activities (Carney & Chedzoy, 1998). Carney and Chedzoy (1998) then separated prior experiences into eight categories, including: Personal, School, coaching experience, teaching experience, undergraduate degree and
previous job. Through the process of questionnaires, it was illustrated that students had a lack of belief in their own ability and blamed their low levels of competence on their lack of personal skill in an activity (Carney & Chedzoy, 1998). Research since 1998 has continued to support these findings and in relation to personal ability, teachers’ levels of confidence and competence over their ability to teach an activity can be associated with a lack of knowledge (Faucette et al., 2002; Morgan & Bourke, 2008). Hence, when there is an absence of content knowledge, the quality of PE is unlikely to be high (Decorby et al., 2005). Therefore, improving knowledge (Decorby et al., 2005) combined with the improvement of confidence (Morgan & Bourke, 2008) could eliminate major barriers that prevent effective teaching (Petrie, 2010).

Attitudes that primary teachers hold towards PE can have a considerable effect on what and how they teach (Petrie, 2010). Morgan and Hansen (2008b) stressed that when teachers have negative school PE experiences themselves, alongside a lack of confidence and knowledge, they risk providing a poor experience for their students, who would thereby continue the cycle of negativity towards PE. Research by Morgan and Bourke (2008) also aimed to investigate personal school PE experiences and its effect on confidence levels to teach PE. They found that individuals who reported negative PE experiences in school also indicated less confidence to teach the subject compared to those that reported more positive experiences (Morgan & Bourke, 2008). However, this study also pinpoints a weakness that all studies have into previous experience, which is, experience can only be measured via memory and may therefore result in different reports to what actually happened, affecting the validity of the results.

Two other factors that have been found to influence teaching primary PE are confidence in certain activities and interest in physical activity (PA) (Morgan & Hansen, 2008a). Firstly, Morgan and Hansen (2008a) found that teachers can feel less confident teaching specific activities over others. For example, teaching gymnastics and aquatics tend to be activities of worry, due to the safety issues involved (Morgan & Hansen, 2008a). So, gaining as much experience in PE is key to improving knowledge, attitudes and confidence. Secondly, if a teacher has a personal interest in PA it has been reported they are more likely to engage pupils and provide more opportunities compared to teachers who have no interest (Carney & Chedzoy, 1998; McKenzie et al., 1999; Morgan and Hansen, 2008a).
2.5 Experiences within Initial Teacher Training

Along with personal interests, Morgan and Hansen (2008a) also reported on confidence and how it is strongly influenced by ITT. With negative beliefs being generated from past experiences, ITT is key to challenging these beliefs. Berlo (2007) stated that a deep-rooted aim of ITT should be to inspire teachers to engage those pupils that have a dislike of PE. However, a significant body of research has shown that this is not occurring (see Campbell & Jess, 2012 for example).

Despite Smith (1993) stating that previous experiences generate attitudes so strong that it is unlikely that ITT will have a significant impact, other research has found the contrary (Curtner-Smith, 1999). An important factor is the influence that the course provider/mentor can have. The ITT courses are structured by the providers themselves, leaving the choices of what, when and how long PE should be delivered entirely down to them (Warburton, 2000 cited in Caldecott et al. 2006). Moreover, although dated in its nature, Curtner-Smith (1999) highlighted that module leaders’ attitudes significantly affect trainee teachers’ perceptions of PE. In practice, mentors should only be appointed to that position if adequate training has been received (Giannakaki et al., 2011). A requirement that should be in place since ITT’s purpose is to ensure all teachers enter the profession with the knowledge, skills and attributes to be an effective teacher (Haydn-Davies et al., 2011). The lack of input towards PE in ITT leaves newly qualified teachers doubtful about their ability, especially when these teachers have had previous poor experiences (Campbell & Jess, 2012).

As reported above, teachers’ negative beliefs and competencies can be the result of content knowledge being absent (Morgan & Hansen, 2008a; 2008b). This absence of knowledge has then been associated with the minimal time spent on PE within ITT (Morgan & Hansen, 2008b). Over 15 years ago, Ofsted (1998) raised concern on the irregularity of time that different institutions devoted to teaching PE, a concern that was still evident in the survey by Caldecott et al. (2006), which specifically focused on the time dedicated to PE within primary and junior trainees. As little as nine hours were allocated for the one year Post Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) and even worse, School Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) courses evidenced only five (Caldecott et al., 2006).
It is reasonable to suggest that the lack of confidence in specific areas (Morgan & Hansen, 2008a) could be due to the insufficient hours dedicated to them in the one-year courses (Caldecott et al., 2006). SCITT courses were again found to provide less time for specific activities than the PGCE, corresponding with the lesser time overall (Caldecott et al., 2006). SCITT courses provided a miniscule mean time of 3.58 hours for games, and gymnastics just 2.85 hours over the year (Caldecott et al., 2006), with some courses providing much less. Alarmingly, some activities such as, athletics and swimming were not taught at all in over 60% of the one-year PGCE and SCITT courses (Caldecott et al., 2006). In some institutions it was not even a requirement for students to experience teaching PE. An implication from this is that primary teachers were entering the profession with no experience of teaching the subject.

Caldecott et al., (2006) and Pickup et al. (2007) stated more research into ITT routes would be invaluable since PE is far too important and there is a risk that it is being left to chance. For example, the number of movements within a dance sequence would not be specifically designed for young children, it would be guessed (Jess et al. 2007), not guaranteeing effective learning. It is clear that ITT is inadequate (Caldecott et al., 2006) and teachers recognised this by being critical of their training (Decorby et al., 2005), stating it was insufficient (Philpotts, 2000 cited in Caldecott et al., 2006). Teachers also acknowledged they needed more training to allow them to actually teach PE (Morgan and Bourke, 2005). Finally, it is important to note that the research by Caldecott et al. (2006) is highly significant in relation to this research because to the author's knowledge, it is the first study that investigated and reported the drastically low hours that SCITT trainees in particular received in PE training.

Caldecott et al. (2006) highlighted that a simple solution to the problem of time would need to be the standardisation, as well as putting in place minimum requirements across all programmes (Caldecott et al., 2006). Carney and Winkler (2008) went further by making the suggestion that the only way forward is to make PE a core subject, as also suggested by the Schools and Physical Activity Task and Finish Group (2013). If it were to become a core subject, ITT institutions would be required to focus more attention towards PE. When PE is not a core subject, marginalisation is still likely to occur (Carney & Winkler, 2008).
As identified, there is much negativity around primary teachers teaching PE, as well as the recognised unwillingness of primary teachers to teach it (Xiang et al., 2002), with preferences to teach other subjects (Morgan, 2008). However, despite these negatives, primary teachers have also acknowledged that the subject has value and identified their understanding of the possible benefits of PE (Decorby et al. 2005; Morgan, 2008). Sloan (2010) also found that many teachers do not wish to be placed on the periphery and would rather be involved, a contrasting positive to the research into primary PE.

In reference to students’ beliefs and attitudes, if an undergraduate enters training with negativity towards PE and receives little or no training in PE, those negative beliefs and damaging attitudes are then entering the profession with them. This is detrimental as it then affects the children being taught and was evidenced by Fairclough (2003) who found a child’s belief of their ability could be significantly impacted upon via the environment and the teacher. Training needs to be targeted to increase the likelihood of teachers’ motivation and enthusiasm towards PE, in order to start making a positive change (Whitehead, 2010). Thereby, reducing the chance of those children reporting negative school experiences when they grow up, discontinuing the cycle.

Research is highly significant in relation to the study conducted by Morgan and Bourke (2005) because it was one of the first to explore the issue of confidence in non-specialist teachers specifically. They investigated primary teachers’ confidence in teaching PE and their PE ITT. Their method of data collection used questionnaires and their results corresponded with previous research, whereby inadequate ITT was a major problem, as was teachers lack of confidence to teach PE. The results also showed there was greater confidence in the areas that were taught more in ITT, evidencing it having an impact. Morgan and Bourke (2005) also investigated teachers suggested improvements and found more time learning to teach PE in training would be beneficial. However, a limitation of the study is that it only looked at one Australian pre-service cohort. This research is only partially pertinent to the present study as it was conducted using questionnaires in Australia as opposed to in depth interviews with SCITT qualified teachers in England.
2.6 Purpose and Rationale for this Study

The SCITT pathway is becoming an increasingly popular and desired choice by many aspiring graduates due to its emphasis on being predominantly school based for the entire training year (Department for Education, 2015). Along with this, is the vast amount of research on primary teachers expressing low levels of confidence and inadequacies in teaching PE (Morgan & Bourke, 2005; Morgan & Hansen, 2008a). With time in training seen as an underpinning factor in primary PE (Decorby et al., 2005; Caldecott et al., 2006; Harris et al., 2012) and the fortunate research by Caldecott et al. (2006), the SCITT course has been brought to the forefront of concern and cause for future research. Morgan and Bourke's (2005) research and Caldecott et al.’s (2006) research were the two predominant studies in which initiated the present study.

From the scope of previous research on the different teaching pathways, Giannakaki et al. (2011) made the assumption that students that went through the undergraduate or school-based training pathway, for example, SCITT, were more prepared to face the demands of teaching compared to the one-year PGCE. Although this may be correct when referring to teaching in general, the evidence showing that SCITT courses provide even lesser amounts of time to PE in comparison to PGCE (Caldecott et al. 2006), raises the question as to whether SCITT courses are adequate for making improvements to PE in primary.

Due to the substantial evidence of the diminishing status of PE and the possibility of secondary school being too late (Kirk, 2005), making improvements to primary PE should be the aim of all primary ITT providers (Haydn-Davies et al., 2007). In explanation, if SCITT courses provide little training or placement mentoring via teachers already in the profession, who are also under confident and ill equipped in the area of PE, it is unlikely the SCITT courses are going to prepare knowledgeable, prepared and confident teachers of PE. Furthermore, although the new Government funding (GOV.UK, 2014a; Ofsted Guidance, 2013) is a positive move for primary PE in schools, ITT institutes have had no change and are still placing newly qualified teachers into the school system who are under confident (Morgan & Bourke, 2005), under prepared (Decorby et al., 2005), and have a great lack of training in PE (Caldecott et al. 2006). From reviewing previous research, an identified gap in the literature has been found. Teachers’ experiences of PE whilst on their SCITT course and the effect of these has not been studied and therefore provides justification for the present study. Against this backdrop, the study aims ‘to understand the
effect of non-specialist PE primary school teachers’ experiences of PE during their SCITT course on their confidence, knowledge and ability to teach PE’. To answer this aim the following research questions have been set:

What are the non-specialist physical education primary school teachers’ experiences of physical education during their school centred initial teacher training (SCITT) course?

What are the non-specialist physical education (SCITT qualified) primary school teachers’ experiences of physical activity, sport and physical education?

What are the non-specialist physical education (SCITT qualified) primary school teachers’ current teaching experiences of physical education?

What is the effect of non-specialist physical education primary school teachers’ experiences of physical education during their SCITT course on their confidence, knowledge and ability to teach physical education?
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY
3.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to provide a description of the methodology used for the data collection in this study. Firstly, a rationale of the chosen research design will be illustrated as well as identifying the method chosen within this design. Following this, a detailed report of the procedures before, during and after will be evidenced, including the ethical practices put in place. Finally, the methodology section will be concluded with how the research remained trustworthy.

3.2 Research Design

Qualitative research has been defined by Patton (2002) and Gillham (2005) as a method that pursues to understand social phenomena and investigate individuals’ interpretations of their own experiences in a 'real world' context. The purpose of qualitative research is to provide enriched, comprehensive information supporting the topic under investigation (Hastie & Hay, 2012). The qualitative approach was deemed the most appropriate methodology for the current research due to its ability to draw upon human feelings and emotions, as well as seeking to understand the beliefs and viewpoints of individual persons (Walliman, 2011; Hastie & Hay, 2012), an identified limitation of quantitative research (Walliman, 2011). When researching within the qualitative domain the data collection is primarily gathered via the researcher themselves, making them significantly involved in the process (Hastie & Hay, 2012). Qualitative research must be understood as a subjective process, with a humanistic approach (Patton, 2002). However, this does not mean to say that subjectivity is a weakness; it just has to be understood as a method (Patton, 2002).

3.3 Method

There are many different methods of qualitative data collection, however for this study, the data will be collected using semi-structured interviews. These interviews are beneficial when exploring an area of research because they let specific questions to be answered using a progressive structure to maintain focus (Patton, 2002; Walliman, 2011). However, allow for further development using secondary questions, also known as probes, to be asked in order to generate a natural conversation where the participant can elaborate upon their points made (Gratton & Jones, 2004; Walliman, 2011). The aim of
understanding experiences and perceptions suggests that any other method, for example, questionnaires would not have generated answers of depth or allowed the researcher the ability to further question around the topic (Walliman, 2011). In total, five interviews were conducted and ranged from 35-50 minutes duration.

3.4 Sample

This method of selection chosen by the researcher is known as purposive sampling (Patton, 2002; Hastie & Hay, 2012). This method was selected as it allows specific phenomena of interest to be studied (Patton, 2002). Five primary school teachers within Hampshire were selected for the purpose of this study, all of which were female, aged 20-25. Access to participants was facilitated through the researcher having already established contact with one of the participants, known as convenience sampling (Patton, 2002). Participants were qualified via the same primary school centred initial teacher training (SCITT) course, were non-specialised in PE, had varied undergraduate degrees and at the time of the study, were completing their newly qualified teaching year. The teachers represented a range of the primary year groups, early years, year two, three, four and five. This particular sample was selected in order to meet the criteria needed for the research question to be investigated, as well as making the research as representative as possible, given the time constraints. Newly qualified teachers were chosen in order to represent teachers currently entering the profession and the requirement of being non-specialist in PE was due to the researchers aim to investigate their knowledge, confidence and ability to teach PE. This aim was in accordance to the literature, which indicates primary school teachers’ inadequacies to teach PE (Morgan & Bourke, 2005; 2008; Morgan & Hansen, 2008a).

3.5 Ethics

Prior to any research being conducted, the Cardiff Metropolitan University ethics committee approved the study (see evidence file, section 1). This approval was established due to submission of a descriptive summary of the study, the aim of causing no harm or deception, as well as identifying the possible benefits of the research (Walliman, 2011). Participants were provided with an information sheet of the synopsis of the study, which made them aware of the study’s purpose, methods and intentions (Silverman, 2013) (see Appendix A). They were also given a consent form (see Appendix
B) that needed to be read, understood and signed to ensure participation was voluntary. They were then verbally informed that steps would be taken to ensure confidentiality and anonymity (Walliman, 2011; Babble, 2013). Anonymity meaning that participant identification and their responses remains unknown to everyone except the primary researcher and confidentiality is the complete prevention of connection publicly (Babble, 2013). For these reasons, pseudonyms were used to protect identification (Flick, 2009). Confidentiality is particularly important within this research as the participants knew each other and came from the same course (Flick, 2009). Individuals who read this research should not be able to identify a specific response to a certain participant. Furthermore, the specific SCITT course, as well as the schools in which the participants work, will not be identified. Finally, participants were also made aware of their rights to withdraw themselves and their information from the study at any time without explanation (Weppner, 1977).

3.6 Pilot Study

Following the development of a trialled and amended interview guide, a pilot study was conducted to simulate the actual interview process. The pre-test was where final modifications were made before the true study commenced (Gillham, 2005). The pilot was conducted on a primary school teacher, therefore, closely linked to the target group (Brandl-Bredenbeck & Kampfe, 2012) and it allowed the researcher to trial the generated responses, construct additional probes to stimulate answers, and gain familiarisation with the arrangement and order of the interview (Gillham 2005). The pilot study provided an opportunity to get used to operating the equipment, as well as finding the most suitable placement of the Dictaphone to produce the greatest sound and clarity. Finally, it gave an estimation of the length of time that would be needed to conduct each interview (Brandl-Bredenbeck & Kampfe, 2012). The greatest alteration was made in relation to the length of time it took the participant to generate responses to the more in-depth questions, especially those that involved thinking back to their past experiences. This discovery resulted in the interview guide being sent to the participants beforehand to allow them to consider their responses.
### 3.7 Procedure

During the preparation stages of the research an interview guide was constructed (see Appendix C) as a result of a thorough review of the literature, and was separated into key themes; previous experiences, teacher training, confidence and current teaching of PE (see Appendix C). An interview guide was constructed to make sure the research aims were considered, as well as ensuring each individual interview followed the same basic, systematic structure of open-ended questions (Patton, 2002). The guide included possible probes, which were used to help the interviewee expand upon their answers (Gillham, 2005). The interviews were organised for the most convenient day for all participants, Saturday 10th January 2015. Participants were given an individual time slot to arrive at the researcher’s house, chosen to guarantee a quiet room and allow for a more comforting atmosphere that gave time both before and after the interview. This was to increase the likelihood of building rapport and prevent the participants feeling rushed. However, a limitation of this was that it was not on neutral ground (Gillham, 2005).

To begin, the study was introduced, each participant’s rights were reiterated and after both the consent form and information sheet were read through again, the Dictaphone was started and the interview began. Opening questions were asked to make the participant feel at ease and to show attentiveness and a caring attitude towards their interests (Ennis & Chen, 2012). It was only after the interview had developed into a relaxed atmosphere that the interviewer explored deeper into the more specific questions. At the end, the interviewee was asked if there was anything they would like to add, giving them the opportunity to discuss something that perhaps was not thought of by the researcher (Patton, 2002). The use of a Dictaphone was to allow fluidity of the interactional aspect of semi-structured interviews, where many insightful quotations have been made (Patton, 2002). It is also important to note that face-to-face interviews are advantageous due to interpersonal chemistry and use of non-verbal communication such as, gestures, which are unavailable in the likes of telephone interviews (Gillham, 2005). The Dictaphone was then sent to a qualified, experienced transcriber, in order for the interviews to be transcribed verbatim (see Appendix D). Although this method saves time, it can be seen as a limitation as the researcher has less opportunity to immerse themselves in the data (Patton, 2002). To counteract this limitation the researcher spent a considerable amount of time reading and checking the transcripts in relation to the recordings (Patton, 2002). The process of transcription was completed between the 15th and 19th January 2015.
3.8 Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis is described as a chaotic, time consuming, discovery process (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). As previously mentioned, it has a subjective nature, specifically when analysing, as it is the researchers’ interpretations of the data (Patton, 2002). Unlike quantitative, there is no standard procedure for analysing or coding qualitative data (Patton, 2002; Marshall & Rossman, 2011). However, Marshall and Rossman (2011) suggest there are some common steps to follow for analytical procedures; organising the data, for example, dating and filing the transcriptions electronically, immersion in the data, generating categories and themes by reading and re-reading transcripts, coding the data, which was accomplished by highlighting key words and phrases with different colours in relation to different sub-themes, offering interpretations through analytical memos, searching for alternative understandings, and writing the report. The researcher aimed to follow these steps throughout an inductive thematic analysis. This refers to the researcher discovering themes within data, compared to deductive, whereby the pre-set themes are used for analysis (Patton, 2002). Thematic analysis is described by Boyatzis (1998) as a coding procedure for qualitative information. Within this research these codes were devised by the recognition of patterns found in the interview transcriptions, organised into categories, which were then developed into themes (Boyatzis, 1998; Marshall & Rossman, 2011). A process of intensive analysis on a small section of data was carried out before extensive analysis as suggested and advised by Silverman (2011). This method was to ensure that the most effective categories would be used in the analysis. Thereafter, this process continued until the researcher found no new information or emergent themes.

3.9 Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (1985) presented more appropriate, alternative terms for the issues of reliability and validity within qualitative research. These terms include credibility, dependability, conformability and transferability. Trustworthiness was therefore evaluated using these four factors. Credibility refers to how believable the interpretation of the findings are (Gratton & Jones, 2010) and with credibility taken into consideration, the transcriptions were returned back to the participant to check the representation of meanings and interpretations (Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Hastie & Hay, 2012). Dependability refers to the changing conditions of research and transferability refers to the
ability to apply the research to different settings (Hastie & Hay, 2012). To increase both, a
detailed report of the method and exact procedures is provided, as well as an attempt to
keep each interview the same structure through the production of the interview guide
(Hastie & Hay, 2012). A thorough analysis and report was carried out to ensure accurate
interpretations were made, for example, continuously reading over the transcripts, which is
known as a method of increasing conformability (Hastie & Hay, 2012).
CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
4.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to present and discuss the main findings that were generated. The interview transcripts were thoroughly studied, coded and categorised in order to extrapolate into key themes (see evidence file, section 6). The analysis itself resulted in the production of one overall theme; contributing factors that impact upon the teaching of physical education (PE) (see Figure 1.). Within this, consisted eight sub-themes; educational priorities, importance of PE, assigned time for PE, delivery of PE, loss of PE, current confidence to teach PE, current knowledge of PE and the understanding of how to teach PE, all illustrated in Figure 1. below.
Figure 1. Hierarchal tree illustrating the codes, categories, sub-themes and overall theme of the research.
Code 1 – Educational Priorities in current teaching
- Core subjects prioritised
- Foundation subjects given less priority
- Government priorities
- Assessment for core subjects

Code 2 – Educational Priorities in SCITT
- Core subjects prioritised
- Foundation subjects given less priority
- Government priorities
- Assessment for core subjects

Code 3 – Importance of PE in current teaching
- Development
- Sedentary hobbies
- PE only opportunity for PA
- Low importance in school
- Enrichment priority
- Health and exercise
- Behaviour

Code 4 – Importance of PE in SCITT
- PE focus for the year
- Had to be observed teaching PE
- Observation of a PE lesson
- Low priority on SCITT
- High priority on placement
- Low priority on placement

Code 5 – Assigned time for PE in current teaching
- Time
- Days per week

Code 6 – Assigned time for PE in SCITT
- Days of PE
- Estimated hours
- Lessons

Code 7 – Delivery of PE in current teaching
- Class teacher takes PE
- Coaches take PE
- Positive of coaches
- Positive of class teachers
- Positive of PE teachers
- Negative of class teachers
- Negative of coaches
- Negative of PE teachers
- Balance
- PPA

Code 8 – Delivery of PE in SCITT
- Gym coach
- Secondary school PE teacher
- Outsiders take PE
- Mentor
- Coaches take PE

Code 9 – Loss of PE in current teaching
- Changing
- Explanation
- Lunchtime
- Equipment
- Other events
- Christmas
- Core subjects
- Only half hour slot
- Coaches have priority
- Lack of importance
- Rotation
- Lack of confidence
- Cover

Code 10 – Loss of PE in SCITT
- Cancelled
- No teacher
- Lack of importance

Code 11 – Current confidence to teach PE from current teaching
- Developed confidence
- Teaching experience
- Biggest influence – current experience

Code 12 – Current confidence to teach PE from SCITT
- Developed confidence
- Developed confidence and knowledge
- Confidence in certain activities
- Placement
- Teaching experience
- Wary at the start
- No confidence from no teaching experience
- 50/50 interlink of knowledge & confidence

Code 13 – Current confidence to teach PE from personal school experience
- Secondary experience
- No confidence from no experience
- Not knowing how
- Biggest influence – school experience
- Confidence in certain activities

Code 14 – Current confidence to teach PE from other experiences
- Confidence from experience
- Confidence in certain activities
- Confidence
- Biggest influence – other experience

Code 15 – Current knowledge of PE from current teaching
- Developing knowledge
- Biggest influence – current teaching
- Teaching experience
- Trial and error

Code 16 – Current knowledge of PE from SCITT
- Positive of SCITT
- Negative of SCITT
- Lack of knowledge
- Lack of knowledge on the skills
- Lack of knowledge of NCPE

Code 17 – Current knowledge of PE from personal school experience
- Did PE as a subject
- Past teachers
- Knowledge
- Biggest influence – personal school experience

Code 18 – Current knowledge of PE from other experiences
- Knowledge
- Did PE as a subject
- Biggest influence – other experience

Code 19 – Current understanding of how to teach PE from current teaching
- Positive of current teaching
- Teaching experience
- Gained how to knowledge
- Observation

Code 20 – Current understanding of how to teach PE from SCITT
- Positive of SCITT
- Negative of SCITT
- Positive of placement
- Negative of placement
- Teaching experience
- Observation
- Not relevant
- Lack the how to knowledge to teach PE
- How to knowledge to teach PE
- Suggested improvements for SCITT on learning how to teach PE

Code 21 – Current understanding of how to teach PE from personal school experience
- Positive of school
- Observation

Code 22 – Current understanding of how to teach PE from other experiences
- Positive of staying after school
- Positive of playing sport
- Positive of being a teaching assistant
- Positive of gym
- How to knowledge of teaching PE
- Observation

Code 23 – Current confidence to teach PE
- Not confident
- Confidence on certain activities
- Interlink of knowledge and confidence
- No interlink
- Lack of knowledge
- Not knowing how

Code 24 – Current knowledge of PE
- Lack of knowledge of the skills
- Not knowing how
- Interlink of knowledge and confidence
- Knowledge
- Lack of knowledge

Code 25 – Current understanding of how to teach PE
- Lack the how to knowledge to teach PE
- No understanding of how to progress skills
- Indication of continuing professional development for how to knowledge

Key: Codes for Figure 1
Each sub-theme on the hierarchal tree (see Figure 1.) represents a contributing factor that impacts upon the teaching of PE. For clarity, each sub-theme has been divided into categories of where the contributing factor was experienced. In explanation, reference to current confidence was categorised into school, other, SCITT and current teaching experiences.

4.2 Rationale of Theme Selection

Three focal sub-themes, namely, current confidence, knowledge and understanding of how to teach PE were selected to be discussed as they were the most prominent themes to best answer the aim, ‘to understand the effect of non-specialist PE primary school teachers’ experiences of PE during their SCITT course on their confidence, knowledge and ability to teach PE’. To the researcher’s knowledge the final sub-theme (current understanding of how to teach PE) was an emergent theme (Patton, 2002), referred to by all five participants, and has yet to be discussed as a concern of primary PE within the literature. Discussing three selected sub-themes in detail allows the researcher to understand the teachers’ experiences in much greater depth.

The sub-themes that were not selected to discuss included: educational priorities, importance, assigned time, delivery, and loss of PE, all of which have been found as potential barriers for primary teachers teaching PE in previous research (Pickup and Price, 2006; Griggs, 2007) and the current study (see evidence file, section 7). Not discussing these in detail does not mean they are not important, they are, and will continue to be considerable factors that impact upon the worrying prospect of PE. However, all these aspects appear to be somewhat driven by the government, identified by Morgan and Hansen (2008a), as institutional barriers which are out of teachers control and seem difficult to improve without large governmental changes to the National Curriculum for PE (Department for Education, 2013). In turn, these changes would make significant improvements upon all the contributing factors of teaching PE (Carney & Winkler, 2008; Schools and Physical Activity Task and Finish Group, 2013). It is possible that combatting the knowledge, confidence and understanding of how to teach PE may be easier issues to amend without waiting for political changes first.
Knowledge and confidence are interlinked (Faucette et al., 2002; Morgan & Bourke, 2008) and the understanding of how to teach comes about through knowledge itself. Due to the complex interlink between the desired sub-themes, discussing each in isolation would appear difficult. To allow the chosen sub-themes to be permeated throughout the discussion, the categories in which each sub-theme was divided (see Figure 1.) must be used in order to section the discussion. These are, current teaching, SCITT, personal school and other experiences (see Figure 1.).

All these experiences are influential in affecting confidence, knowledge and understanding of how to teach PE. However, how past experiences have affected these, has been well documented in the literature (Bandura, 1977; Carney & Chedzoy, 1998; Morgan & Bourke, 2008), and will therefore not be discussed in detail. As noted in the literature review, previous experiences have been shown to have an effect on current actions since 1977 (Bandura, 1977) and the current research supports this, presenting on-going evidence of the effect of previous experience (see evidence file, section 7). There is no doubt that experiences before teacher training have considerable impact on PE teaching and when participants were asked what their most influential experience was in relation to confidence and knowledge, no participant reported SCITT to be the most beneficial (see evidence file, section 7). Three participants referred to their past experience and sporting background as being the biggest influence, Maisie said, “I think if I hadn’t had any involvement in any kind of sport, I wouldn’t have a clue what I was doing” (Transcript 4, page 16, line 15). Two participants reported their current experience to be the most influential, demonstrated by Jenny who stated “the knowledge of teaching PE has come from me teaching PE and working out what works and what doesn’t work” (Transcript 3, page 17, line 17). Finally, Sarah reported other experiences to be most important:

It would probably be nursery and gym. I've learned a lot from being in the gym and seeing the classes and pushing myself and being a learner. I feel that’s really helped me and in nursery that helped build up my confidence in knowing I could help children learn and teach PE. (Transcript 5, page 16, line 25).

These comments suggest that participants’ perceptions of confidence and knowledge were predominantly reliant upon their past and/or teaching experiences. The first suggests that primary teachers who have had a sporting background have a greater repertoire of PE to draw upon. The latter proposes that teachers, who have had experience teaching, current
or previous, could have an increased confidence, knowledge and understanding of PE. The remarks suggest that the teachers have been forced to rely on other experiences of PE, more so, if little input has been received on SCITT. This does not mean to say that teacher training cannot, or is not likely to have an effect, as suggested by Smith (1993). In fact, it supports other literature by Morgan and Bourke (2005) and Caldecott et al. (2006) by suggesting the possible reason for no effect being due to inadequate experiences. Proposing that, if improvements were to be made on teacher training, the effect the training has would increase.

To the author’s knowledge the only research to look into SCITT was conducted by Caldecott et al. (2006) in relation to the time dedicated to PE within the course. However, the research did not explore the areas of confidence, knowledge and understanding of how to teach PE. The SCITT has yet to be discussed in relation to the three chosen sub-themes and has been devised into the positives and negatives of the SCITT course, also drawing upon the possible improvements that could be made.

4.3 School Centred Initial Teacher Training Experiences and its Effect on Current Confidence, Knowledge and Understanding of How to Teach Physical Education

4.3.1 Positives Attributed to the School Centred Initial Teacher Training

The SCITT course itself was identified as a strength in its own right with its ability to provide more opportunities of teaching experience, compared to other one year training routes. Emily and Jenny indicate this, for example Emily said, “I think you learn so much more when you’re in with the children, actually doing it” (Transcript 1, page 6, line 31). These comments directly relate to the positives that are accredited to SCITT (Department for Education, 2015). Every participant also made a positive statement in relation to PE and the development of at least one of the selected sub-themes. However, all comments were only in relation to the placement part of SCITT, not the taught element. Two participants gave the same reasoning as to why the placement part of SCITT was so beneficial, Emily stated it was “getting the chance to put what I've observed (in PE) into practice and see what works and what doesn't and just trying things out.” (Transcript 1, page 9, line 28).
Similarly, Jenny said, “towards the end of SCITT I was a lot more confident teaching PE and it was one of my strengths” (Transcript 3, page 10, line 34). One possible reason for this is that SCITT made teaching and being observed in PE a requirement whilst on placement (see evidence file, section 7). This positively opposes the research by Caldecott et al. (2006) who found 43.74% of SCITT institutions had no requirement of experiencing teaching PE throughout the whole year. Emily explained:

I don’t think I’d have so much of a clue going in before teacher training, especially through things I saw on placement, I think that’s given me ideas and confidence and knowledge of what I need to be doing (in PE). So yes, it definitely helped me; I wouldn’t have known at all if I hadn’t (had SCITT) (Transcript 1, page 13, line 2).

Emily identified a possible reason for the positive influence of SCITT by saying, “my mentor on one of my placements was the PE leader at the school, and he had a lot of strategies, so observing him was really useful” (Transcript 1, page 9, line 17). Although Emily was the only participant to express such a strong influence, it is likely due to her mentor being experienced and knowledgeable in the area of PE, as opposed to the training provided to others on the course, which was by non-specialist PE primary school mentors. This recognised positive might give evidence to support the notion that initial teacher training (ITT) courses could have an impact, especially the SCITT placement. However, caution must be taken when identifying positive aspects of SCITT, when associated with the placement part because the experiences always vary between individuals and their allocated schools. For example, Maisie reported a much more detailed PE experience in the first and last placement compared to the middle one:

My first and last placements, which were in the same school, they were very keen to make sure you had PE every single week for the two hours and from the get-go at that school I taught PE every week. So for that placement I did observe my mentor teaching and I carried on the teaching for the 6 or 7 weeks I was there, for autumn and summer. But my middle placement, I know that my teacher there only taught PE once; I went and watched her teach PE once and it wasn’t a proper lesson, it was only for 20 minutes. (Transcript 4, page 7, line 28).
These differences may be dependent on the importance that the school places on PE and their assigned mentor. Those with mentors who emphasise the significance of PE, like Emily’s mentor and Maisie’s first placement, are likely to have more beneficial training experiences than those with mentors who don’t. This has been the case for Jenny who said “she (her mentor) didn’t enjoy teaching PE, so it didn’t benefit me really” (Transcript 3, page 9, line 1). This corresponds with the research by Curtner-Smith (1999) who found the significantly negative impact that mentors can have on what trainees’ perceive to be acceptable attitudes for PE. This highlights the requirement of only appointing mentors who have had adequate training in primary PE (Giannakaki et al., 2011), once more suggesting the need for specialist primary PE teachers. Despite the caution that must be taken in regards to the positives of SCITT, the positives do support the research conducted by Morgan and Bourke (2005), who evidenced the importance of ITT and the influence it can have, specifically on confidence. They found that inadequate ITT was a key reason for a lack of confidence.

Morgan and Bourke (2008) found that teachers with negative PE experiences reported lower confidence levels compared to those who had positive. It is reasonable to suggest that those with positive experiences may be more knowledgeable in the areas of PE as they have had more PE engagement. The current research however, contradicted this finding, with all the teachers reporting positive experiences of PE, but low levels of confidence in terms of teaching the subject. This is illustrated by Emily in the following quotation, “I'm not as confident as I could be, because I haven't got the knowledge (of PE) I could have, of the skills that children need and how to teach those skills” (Transcript 1, page 12, line 29). In explanation, the teachers associated their lack of confidence with their lack of knowledge of how to teach PE. It could be interpreted that the teachers’ perceptions of confidence in the current study differed to those in the study by Morgan and Bourke (2008) because their previous experiences of PE were positive, and it may not have occurred to them that negative previous experiences can also be a reason for a lack of confidence. Instead, the reasons given were more specific and in relation to their lack of knowledge of the ‘how to’ skills of teaching PE.

Additionally, Campbell and Jess (2012) stated that teachers, especially those with poor experiences are doubtful about their ability to teach PE because of the lack of input they received in their ITT. This, in combination with the current research emphasises that any form of ITT, including SCITT is still important for teachers that have had positive
experiences. Although the current research contradicts Morgan and Bourke (2008), the findings are key to support the importance of ITT, as without it, there would be an absence of knowledge and confidence.

4.3.2 Negatives Attributed to the School Centred Initial Teacher Training

Despite the identified positives of SCITT, the above quotations referring to a lack of confidence only touch upon the many negatives of PE within SCITT. The present research had a greater amount of negatives in reference to SCITT PE compared to positives. Although the current research supports the claim of the importance and possible influence of ITT (Haydn-Davies et al., 2011), it also suggests that the potential of PE within SCITT is not being utilised and will be discussed below, through the identified negatives of PE experiences on the SCITT course.

All five participants reported at least one negative comment in regards to PE on SCITT (see evidence file, section 7), as illustrated by Jenny, “No, I wouldn’t say it (SCITT PE) was adequate really. It definitely gave us some advice and it gave us some tips, but when I taught my first PE lesson I just felt I was being thrown in the deep end.” (Transcript 3, page 9, line 20). Three participants then suggested that a reason for this was due to not receiving the knowledge and skills they needed to teach PE, demonstrated by Sarah who stated; “I didn’t receive the knowledge I thought I’d get” (Transcript 5, page 10, line 27). These comments suggest that teachers went into their SCITT believing they would receive knowledge of primary PE, but instead entered the teaching profession questioning what knowledge they had actually acquired. This is important as an absence of PE knowledge has been evidenced as a contributing factor to the levels of PE teaching confidence (Decorby et al., 2005; Morgan & Hansen, 2008a). Teachers entering schools with a lack of knowledge and therefore lack of confidence stresses the point emphasised by Caldecott et al. (2006) that there is a risk that PE is being left to chance. An implication of teachers not receiving much input on their SCITT course results in comments like Maisie’s who informed, “sometimes I feel like I’m teaching myself at the same time” (Transcript 4, page 11, line 1). This suggests that primary teachers who qualified by way of the SCITT programme are not sure of what to teach in PE.
Within the literature review it was found that SCITT courses provided just five hours to PE over the year, with the majority of time dedicated to games and gymnastics and no time to athletics and swimming (Caldecott et al., 2006). The current research also found similar results, with participants remembering no more than five taught lessons on PE throughout the year. The current research differed to Caldecott et al. (2006) because gymnastics and dance were the only lessons they received university training in, neglecting all other activities, including games (see evidence file, section 7). This may be problematic because if teachers have had little experience previously, as well as receiving no experience in training, they are unlikely to have the content knowledge needed to be able to deliver a quality PE lesson. However, due to Decorby et al. (2005) already well evidencing this finding, the following will focus in depth upon the specifics of gymnastics and dance received on SCITT.

The focus of gymnastics and dance similarly likens the PE and School Sport initiative in Wales (Estyn, 2005), which prioritised these subjects in primary training due to teachers’ greater lack of confidence. It is reasonable to suggest the focus of these subjects on the SCITT course may have been for the same reason. The results (see evidence file, section 7) suggest that the SCITT course did well in upscaling their knowledge, as suggested by Sarah, “the dance was by a secondary school teacher and she gave us lots of information on the different styles of dance” (Transcript 5, page 10, line 5). When teachers were asked if they were consequently more confident in teaching these areas, Hannah, Jenny and Maisie’s responses indicated they were still greatly lacking in confidence (see evidence file, section 7). A possible reason for the lack of confidence and understanding of how to teach gymnastics and dance is in relation to the relevancy of the lessons they received. Hannah showed awareness of this by stating gymnastics:

“wasn’t necessarily teaching us how to teach, it was almost again about our subject knowledge, this is, for example, a forward roll – that kind of thing, they’d say ‘this is this, this is that…’. It wasn’t really ‘in order to teach this you need to do this’ (Transcript 2, page 8, line 19).

The reason that the teachers may not have learnt how to teach gymnastics and dance relates to a significant finding found in relation to who taught the these lessons. Not only was PE delivered by outsiders (see evidence file, section 7), the outsiders were not related to primary education, nor was one related to PE; dance was delivered by a secondary
school PE teacher and gymnastics delivered by a coach (see evidence file, section 7). The use of non-primary specialists to deliver PE could be problematic for a number of reasons. Firstly, coaches are unlikely to be familiar with the curriculum and may lack understanding of the purpose of PE (Association for Physical Education, 2013), ultimately reducing their ability to be able to teach PE. Secondly, the use of secondary school PE teachers can be unrealistic to the context and setting that primary teachers have to deliver. So, although their knowledge of the activities increased from SCITT, it is suggested their understanding of how to teach the subjects did not. Likely due to the lack of relevance to PE in a primary context. This finding supports that of Giannakaki et al. (2011) who stated only educators who have received adequate training in the area should be appointed to teach PE.

The above negatives led to the most powerful finding, which was the report of not knowing how to teach PE; the final sub-theme. The occurrence of this theme was within the most logical, expected place of learning the ‘how to’ knowledge of teaching PE, which was within the SCITT experience. This theme emphasises the need, not only to know ‘what’ to teach but also knowledge of ‘how’ to teach within a practical subject like PE. Lack of understanding of how to teach PE, as touched upon already, repeatedly occurred throughout four of the five conducted interviews in relation to the taught element of SCITT. As identified by Haydn-Davies et al. (2011) the main aim of ITT is to produce knowledgeable, skilful and effective teachers. Therefore suggesting that ITT should provide trainees with the understanding of how to teach PE, as without it, they cannot teach effectively. In this study, there was evidence to suggest that the SCITT course did not provide them with the knowledge and understanding of the ‘how’ as explained by Hannah, who stated, “I think what I could have benefited more from the SCITT would have been if they’d taught me how to teach it” (Transcript 2, page 9, line 20). This, and the many statements similar (see evidence file, section 7), support the findings by Campbell and Jess (2012) who stated that newly qualified teachers enter the profession doubtful of their ability to teach PE.
Three of the participants suggested one of their major concerns was a lack of understanding of how to progress skills within a lesson. This finding was well illustrated by Emily in the following quotation:

So if I have a class of children and there are some of them who are really good at a certain skill and some children who just can’t do it. How to move the children who can do it on, and how to bring it down a level for the children who can’t, so everyone’s making progress with their skills. (Transcript 1, page 14, line 31).

One implication of this finding is that the teachers in the study are challenged on the theme of inclusion and the knowledge of how to differentiate activities for all pupils to be included (Black & Stevenson, 2011). The above findings emphasise the importance, depth and influence that SCITT could potentially have, if provided with appropriate time and primary PE specialist teachers. However, how the SCITT is currently, is just one of the reasons to suggest that without a change to SCITT PE, specialist primary PE teachers would be more beneficial; supporting the on-going evidence that specialists provide higher quality lessons of PE (Fletcher & Mandigo, 2012). In reference to possible changes, the participants were asked to provide their suggested improvements for PE on SCITT for it to have a greater effect on their confidence, knowledge and understanding of how to teach PE. As expected the suggested improvements varied between participants (see evidence file, section 7), they included, training on all activities within PE, lessons on how to progress skills and experience teaching PE themselves. There was however, one prominent suggestion which four participants made explicit reference to (see evidence file, section 7) which was the opportunity to observe a primary teacher teach a good PE lesson.

This suggestion was well illustrated by Jenny in the following quotation, “the whole point of the SCITT is that it’s school-based and I don’t think we observed PE in a school environment, which is what we need” (Transcript 3, page 10, line 25). Hannah also stressed, “I think they should definitely find time, when you’re in the lecture part, not on placements, for you to go and observe an outstanding PE teacher” (Transcript 2, page 12, line 3). For many teacher trainees the opportunity to observe a good primary PE lesson in their training is likely to be the first time they have observed a primary PE lesson. Without observing a good delivery of PE in the primary years suggests that the teachers in this study went into teaching without knowing what a good primary PE lesson should be like.
This may reduce the likelihood of producing a good primary PE lesson themselves, having had no quality PE reference in which to refer to. The final participant, Sarah, did also mention that observing a lesson would be beneficial, however, specified that she would also want an explanation to increase her understanding of PE (see evidence file, section 6), suggesting that individuals have different ways of learning and that making one improvement may not be beneficial to all.

The participants acknowledged that they need more training, similar to Morgan and Bourke (2005), and have gone one step further by suggesting one way of how this could be improved. The opportunity to observe a primary teacher teach a PE lesson seems to be a small change that would have made these primary teachers’ PE training experience more beneficial on its effect on the tree sub-themes. It is believed that although there are a number of problems with ITT, as suggested in previous and current research (see Morgan & Hansen, 2008b for example), it is possible small alterations could increase the effect that SCITT could have. These suggestions contradict the research by Smith (1993), who suggested ITT is too late to have an effect on the perceptions a teacher holds, due to strong opinions and attitudes surrounding PE being generated from previous experiences before ITT. Although the current research can only suggest the contrary exists, not prove it, it does support the reasoning for future research to be conducted in order to provide sustenance to the influence that ITT can have on improving all three sub-themes. The evidence of how ITT can have an influential effect came about through reviewing the positives and negatives of SCITT ascertained through the analysis process and comparing it with the participants suggested improvements upon the SCITT course, which in fact, are not unrealistic modifications that could be made to all training courses. If ITT was not an influential factor in current teaching practice of PE, the positives, negatives and consequently the suggested improvements of how the SCITT course contributed to their confidence, knowledge and understanding of how to teach PE would not have been reported or suggested.
5.1 Summary

The aim of this study was ‘to understand the effect of non-specialist physical education (PE) primary school teachers’ experiences of PE during their school centred initial teacher training (SCITT) course on their confidence, knowledge and ability to teach PE. This aim was then divided into the four research questions:

What are the non-specialist physical education primary school teachers’ experiences of physical education during their school centred initial teacher training (SCITT) course?

What are the non-specialist physical education (SCITT qualified) primary school teachers’ experiences of physical activity, sport and physical education?

What are the non-specialist physical education (SCITT qualified) primary school teachers’ current teaching experiences of physical education?

What is the effect of non-specialist physical education primary school teachers’ experiences of physical education during their SCITT course on their confidence, knowledge and ability to teach physical education?

A qualitative methodological approach was adopted, which involved semi-structured interviews as they were deemed the most appropriate method to answer the research questions above. There were five interviews in total, all recorded and transcribed in order for the researcher to go through an inductive thematic analysis process. From this, emerged eight major sub-themes, in which three were selected to be the most beneficial in answering the research questions; these were, current confidence, current knowledge of, and current understanding of how, to teach PE. These were then discussed in relation to the positive and negative aspects of the SCITT experience. The positives were accredited to the placement side of SCITT; in particular, gaining knowledge from a mentor whose specialist subject was PE. In relation to the reported negatives, all participants indicated that their PE experience on SCITT was inadequate. The researcher’s interpreted suggestion of this was due to the lessons in which they did receive PE training in, were not relevant to primary PE. Finally, through the assimilation of the positives, negatives and the suggested improvements brought about the possible changes that could be made to the SCITT course in order to improve the three selected sub-themes. From this research
specifically, adding more opportunity to observe a good PE teacher whilst on SCITT was a particular suggested improvement by four of the five participants.

5.2 Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

One identified limitation of the research was in reference to the interviews themselves, secondary questions were often generated in the interactive aspect, which brought about some interesting responses. However, as the question was not recorded on paper, it was then not asked to all other participants, making data comparisons difficult. Another issue that is not often articulated is the process of transcribing recorded data into processed written data, as important aspects of the spoken word are lost in transcription (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Thus, the trustworthiness of the data is reduced due to differing interpretations; this weakness comes about through not identifying critical pauses and overlaps (Silverman, 2011), as well as the more simplistic process of punctuation, which ultimately changes the meaning of a response (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). To reduce the effect of this, the recordings were listened to and compared against the transcripts several times. This then brings us on to the issue of time, which presented the weakness of only using one singular method of data collection, and this is again identified due to the issue of trustworthiness, and multiple methods not being used. This technique is beneficial as it uncovers different findings (Patton, 2002) and future studies should consider the implementation of triangulation (Patton, 2002; Flick, 2009), as this would reduce the likelihood of the above limitations being problematic.

In qualitative research it is deemed superior to gather detailed data from a small sample, rather than limited breadth of data from a large sample (Patton, 2002). Although this is an identified strength of qualitative research and allows in-depth, valuable information surrounding a specific population to be studied (Patton, 2002), future studies need to expand upon the research into teachers’ PE experiences on SCITT by studying other SCITT cohorts. By investigating the effects of more than one SCITT programme the results will become more generalisable (Flick, 2009). Further research also needs to be conducted to find other suggested improvements to PE within SCITT, as well as then implementing the various suggestions to investigate the effectiveness that these changes can have. This future research is needed in order to discover how SCITT could produce teachers with greater confidence, knowledge and understanding in the area of teaching PE, therefore beginning to discontinue the cycle of negativity towards PE.
Through the dissertation process the researcher has gained a wide scope of knowledge surrounding primary PE and the study has confirmed to them that entering the primary profession with a specialism in PE would be a beneficial course of action.
REFERENCES


APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

INFORMATION SHEET
Teacher Information Sheet

Title – School Centred Initial Teacher Training qualified primary school teachers’ previous experiences of physical education and how this impacts upon their teaching of physical education.

Please read the following and if you do wish to take part, know you have the right to withdraw at any point. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to ask (contact details are supplied below).

What is the aim of research?
The aim is primarily for educational purposes in order to graduate from university but also to gain an understanding of the impact that previous experiences have on teaching PE currently.

Why you?
You have been chosen to take part in a study conducted by myself, Lily Porter, a student at Cardiff Metropolitan University. You have been invited to partake in the study because you are currently teaching in primary years and were qualified through the SCITT course.

What will you need to do?
On January 10th 2015, a semi-structured interview will be conducted and you are asked to answer truthfully in your responses about your previous experiences within PE.

How will your information be used?
The information you provide will be used for the dissertation project only and your answers will remain confidential and anonymous.

How does this benefit you?
There is no direct benefit however; the more evidence there is in the area of primary school, the more likely it is that improvements will be made. Having insight from primary teachers themselves strengthens this evidence.

What do you need to do if you do choose to take part?
You will need to fill out, sign and return the consent form on the day. I hope you are able to participate within the study.

Yours faithfully,

Lily Porter

Email: St20021760@cardiffmet.ac.uk

Emergency Contact Supervisor: Anna Bryant

Email: anbryant@cardiffmet.ac.uk
Teacher Consent Form

Title - School Centred Initial Teacher Training qualified primary school teachers’ previous experiences of physical education and how this impacts upon their teaching of physical education.

Researcher – Lily Porter

Please tick each box for the corresponding statement.

I confirm that I understand the study and what I have to do:

I have had the opportunity to ask questions and these questions have been answered satisfactorily:

I believe the research to be beneficial to education:

I understand that I can stop doing the interview at any time without reason:

I am happy to take part in the study:

I give consent for the interview to be audio recorded and for quotes to be used anonymously:

Your name: ..............................................................

Signature: ...............................................................

Date: .................................................................
APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW GUIDE
Interview Guide

Introduce the research and the aim

Introduction

1. Thank you for taking the time to come and chat with me. I am really interested in primary teaching, can you tell me a bit about what your job involves?
   - Day to day, age group, what they are currently learning?

2. Is teaching what you thought it would be? What is the same and what is different?
   - Examples, explain?

3. So, what made you become a primary teacher then?
   - Influences, experiences, significant others?

Previous Experiences

4. Moving on to your own personal school experience, was there a specific subject you enjoyed throughout school?
   - When did this enjoyment begin, still enjoy it now?

5. As you know, the focus is on PE, can you tell me a bit about your PE at school?
   - How it was delivered, who delivered it, the differences between primary and secondary, your views of PE through the different stages of education?

6. So, overall, throughout your education, would you regard PE as a positive or negative experience?
   - Can you elaborate?

7. What about now, do you participate in any sport or activity now?
   - What, why, when?
8. Along the way, have you gained any other experiences, for example, coaching badges or sport clubs? 
   -Have you used these experiences in any way to generate lessons or improve confidence?

9. Do you feel you entered teacher training with a positive or negative view point of PE?

Teacher Training

10. Thank you for giving me an insight into your past experiences in school, could you now tell me a bit about you undergraduate degree, just generally? 
   -What course was it; did it influence your decision to become a primary teacher?

11. After your undergraduate degree I am aware you did the SCITT course, could you tell me a bit about that? 
   -The structure, what it promotes, why it is different to others, when you go into the schools?

12. So, why did you choose the SCITT over other pathways? 
   -Are you happy you chose this pathway?

13. Were there any subjects given prominence and why do you think this was the case?

14. Can you explain your experience of PE within the SCITT course? 
   -Was there a lot of PE, how many hours overall do you think you received, do you feel you benefited from it, was there an activity covered more than others, did you observe any PE in school, can you tell me about what you observed – did it help, was it useful, were you observed as an assessment in your training?
15. Do you feel your training in PE was adequate; can you give reasons for your answers?

16. What did you learn on your SCITT course that you perhaps did not already know about PE?

17. So, has the SCITT course altered the way you view PE at all or influenced the way you teach PE?

18. What do you believe other students’ feelings towards PE were?
   - Similar to yours?

19. If you can remember, can you talk to me about who taught you PE on the SCITT course?
   - Area of expertise (secondary, coach), was it lecturer from the course or a guest lecturer?

20. If you were to make improvements on your SCITT course, what would they be and could you think of any improvements specifically for PE on the SCITT course?

21. Reflecting on your SCITT course, do you feel the positives accredited to the SCITT overall can also be applied to the PE within the SCITT and why?

Confidence

22. Do you feel knowledgeable, prepared and confident to teach high quality PE?
   - Why, where has this stemmed from?

23. Are there activities in PE you feel more knowledgeable and confident about?
   - Games, gymnastics, dance?

24. Would you say that knowledge and confidence are interlinked or separate?
25. How knowledgeable and confident did you feel about PE before entering teacher training?

26. Did your SCITT course increase your knowledge and confidence in any way?  
   -Do you think more training would have increased this, why?

27. How do you feel knowledge and confidence could be increased in teacher training?  
   -Do you think more training would have increased your knowledge and confidence?

Current Teaching
Now there is just one more section on your teaching practice currently

28. Are you currently teaching in a school that was provided as a placement from the SCITT course? Why?

29. Do you have a favourite subject to teach and if so, why?

30. Do you think PE is important, what benefits do you believe PE can have for a child?

31. Do you find teaching PE enjoyable?  
   -Why, what have you taught so far?

32. Have you faced any challenges from teaching PE so far?

33. Have you received any support for PE since you have started teaching?  
   -Any further training?

34. Do you take all the PE lessons for your class?  
   -Are you happy with this or would you change it?

35. What are your views upon PE being taught by a specialist PE teacher in secondary but not in primary?
- Level of knowledge, confidence, cost, other subjects?

36. How do you feel about PE teachers or coaches taking PE instead of the class teacher?

37. If someone else could take your PE lessons would you prefer it?
   - Why, can you explain?

38. In your school, how many hours of PE is there a week?
   - Is this enough?

39. Has PE ever been missed or replaced at any point in replacement of another subject or event?
   - Christmas for example?

40. After reviewing your experience of PE up to now, what do you feel has been the biggest influence in how you teach and view PE?
   - Personal school experience, teacher training (lectures or placement), current teaching practice or other (coaching, job etc)?

41. Is there anything we have not mentioned that you would like to say?

Thank participants for taking part in the interview
Interviewer: Thank you for taking the time to chat with me. I'm really interested in primary teaching; can you tell me what your job entails?

A: I work in an Infants School in early years, so I have a class of thirty 4 and 5 year olds. We do a lot of adult-directed activity in the morning, taught lessons; then afternoons involve a lot more child-initiated play and learning through play. So we set up the provision and then let the children use it in their own way to apply their learning from the adult-directed in the morning.

Q: Can you give an example of how you do that?

A: If we were doing, say, learning about the story ‘We're going on a Bear Hunt’ in Literacy in the morning, we teach the story; then in the afternoon we’d put, say, character masks out in the outdoor area, different materials – grass from the story for example, so the children can explore the story in their own way and choose what they’d like to do to explore the story, but it’s still linked to the learning and applying the learning independently. (1.15)

Q: So you have tasks for the day, do you have separate subjects or do you follow the same format?

A: During the mornings we’ll teach, something like Phonics, letters and sounds; Literacy, Maths and PE is taught as well, as a separate subject. Then during the afternoon we have different areas that the children can choose to go to. So we’ll have a Maths area, we’ll have a writing area; we’ll have a role play area. We’ll have the bikes and scooters out for gross motor and physical development in the afternoons as well, so they can choose what they do.
Q: You started your year in September didn’t you, is teaching what you thought it would be?

A: Yes, it is. I think there are a lot more challenges behaviour-wise and lots of paperwork, probably more than I expected, but yes, generally it is what I thought. (2.15)

Q: On the paperwork side, back to your day to day, what time do you start and what time do you finish?

A: I’d normally get to school about twenty to eight and I’d leave about a quarter to six in the evening, so I spend the time before school, generally getting resources ready and after school marking any work we’ve done during the morning and then sticking observations and evidence of the children’s learning in and just sorting through to make sure we have evidence for each area.

Q: What made you become a primary teacher? When did you decide that’s what you wanted to do?

A: I did a degree in Early Childhood Studies first of all, then I became more interested in the education side, that took a whole view of social care and safeguarding children and things like that, but I was more interested in the education. So during that I did some experience in schools, volunteering. Then from that I decided that’s what I wanted to do. (3.25)

Q: So you decided when you were an undergraduate? Were there any people who influenced that or was that you in yourself and your experience?

A: My Mum’s a teacher, so I saw a lot of what she was doing and I went in with her to work on days I wasn’t at university; so I was able to see that's what I wanted to do, and I took groups and things in there.

Q: Moving on, it will now be at about your own personal school experience, not as a teacher, but when you were younger. Was there a specific subject you enjoyed throughout school?
A: Probably during primary I enjoyed writing and reading, so Literacy subjects. But then in secondary I enjoyed more practical subjects, like Design Technology and Drama and things like that. We did Textiles using sewing machines and stuff like that, just creating. (4.40)

Q: You mentioned primary school and then secondary school. Do you have a specific subject that you enjoy now, that you remember – did you always enjoy Maths, did you always enjoy English, or the practical subjects?

A: Probably the more practical subjects, I still enjoy now, so the creative side. You have a product at the end. (5.10)

Q: Do you use that now, do you still use it?

A: I think in teaching I use it for making resources and things for the children to use. Yes, but not so much outside school.

Q: As you know, the focus is on PE. Can you tell me a bit about what your PE was like at school? You mentioned Design Technology and that practical area, but can you talk about PE?

A: At primary school, I went to a really tiny village primary school, so we had loads of space. There was, I think a hundred pupils in the whole school from Reception to Year 6, and we had a big playground; we had a climbing frame area and then a huge field as well, in addition to the hall, so I think we had three PE sessions a week, one in the hall, one on the playground and one on the field, weather dependent. So yes, I really enjoyed PE at primary school; I did lots of games and things. I think I can remember. I went on to a huge secondary school, there were about 2,000 pupils but we still had the big field and Astroturf and things like that, but it was more kind of, ability-driven, maybe, so I kind of lost interest a little bit, so I didn’t enjoy it as much at secondary school, I don’t think. (6.35)

Q: More ability than participation. Going back to your primary, do you remember who taught PE?
A: I think it was our class teacher who always taught it. I don’t think we had any outside coaches or anything.

Q: You said the difference mainly was participation in primary.

A: Yes, it was definitely more fun in primary and secondary was more skills-driven. If you could do it, you could do it and if you couldn’t you were just kind of ‘there’. (7.07)

Q: Overall throughout your education, would you regard PE as a positive or a negative experience, collecting all of it?

A: Probably more positive than negative, because at secondary I did enjoy the chance to play games, rather than the skills, so rounders and things like that during the summer. Then obviously at primary school that was the same, so overall positive.

Q: What about now? Do you participate in any sport now?

A: I try to go running when I have the time, but no, apart from that nothing.

Q: No outside club or anything like that?

A: No.

Q: Along the way have you gained any other experience? As you were doing your undergraduate degree did you do any coaching badges or any sports coaching?

A: I think in the first year I did a sports leaders’ course for children, so we just went into school, I think it was once a week, and just ran little PE sessions, we did an after-school club, I think. Yes, we did a Level 1. (8.25)

Q: Do you feel you’ve used these experiences - you go for a run, so you obviously enjoy going for a run – but do you feel you’ve used the experiences on the course you did in your first year, have you used them in your lesson planning, what things to avoid or what things to make sure you include?
A: I think in PE lessons I place a lot of focus on warming up and I discuss with the children ‘What happens when we warm up? Can you feel you get hotter? What happens to our bodies when we exercise? Then a lot of the games we used in the sports leader course I’ve translated; even though that was with older children, I think the principles of the games I have put in, so warm up games and things like traffic lights. I’ve used ideas from that. (9.20)

Q: So you can transfer them down the age groups. And finally on that section, do you feel you entered teacher training with a positive or a negative view of PE? So you ended school with PE, but after school you obviously went through college…?

A: Probably positive and for the age group, when I went into teacher training as well, I knew I was going to be teaching infant school children, so for the age group, where my experience in primary was positive, I think, yes it was a positive view of the way I could make it fun for the children and help them to enjoy PE. (10.00)

Q: Because you enjoyed primary you now know how to put that across to them.

A: Yes, I think it’s given me a more open view to PE especially for primary.

Q: Now we’re going to talk about teacher training. Thank you for giving me insight into your past experience in school. Could you now tell me a bit about your undergraduate degree? I know it wasn’t to do with PE – what was it?

A: I did Early Childhood Studies, so it just looked at children in general basically, so we did lots of different units on the effects of family structure on children’s learning and children’s wellbeing and things. We did a lot about social care and safeguarding issues with children, so if a child is at risk what steps are taken next. We looked at children in care and the effects that has on their education; a lot about behaviour and behaviour management, so all things I can link in to teaching now, and lots of the psychology behind the ways in which children behave and their personalities and things like that. (11.22)

Q: So that would help a lot when you’re teaching, especially behaviour. So how long was your course? Was it a 3 year course?
A: Yes, a 3 year course.

Q: *After your undergraduate degree you did the SCITT course, can you tell me about that?*

A: It was a year long course. We went in and we’d do one half term, six weeks in training, so we’d do lectures and then the next six weeks on placement in schools, teaching. In the six weeks we were in lectures each time, so there were three lots of six weeks when we were in lectures and we’d have different lectures. So something like behaviour management and assessment and things like to do with teaching generally and then some on the subject side of it. So we’d have set days when we’d do English or set days with Maths, and all the different subjects to give us an insight. The course was to be able to teach from early years up to Year 6, so a lot of it was varied, some days we’d do English for year 1 and 2; some days we’d do year 5 and 6, which might not be as relevant to my age group. (12.50)

Q: You said you did six weeks and then six weeks of practical – the six weeks beforehand did that link to what you were supposed to be doing in the practical?

A: Bits of it did. It was days on kind of general teaching, behaviour management and things, we could obviously use ideas from that in the placement. But the subject days, when we did days on English or Maths or PE, might not have linked as much, but obviously it gives you ideas to use, but if we’d been in a practice, say, before Christmas, then in the six weeks after Christmas we’d have another lecture on English which we might have been able to use before we went into school to practice, to give more ideas. (13.40)

Q: *What do you think the SCITT promotes? Because you’ve got PGCE and that’s in university, why was the SCITT different?*

A: I think a lot more emphasis is placed on the practical, so school practice and being observed with the children and getting feedback. Whereas the PGCE and courses like that place less emphasis on that side, even though there are still placements and things; but it’s very school-centred and there’s a lot more time spent in school with mentors. (14.15)

Q: *Is that why you chose the SCITT over the PGCE?*
A: Yes, I wanted more time to be spent with the children and I think you learn so much more when you're in with the children, actually doing it, than sitting in a lecture. I'd just come from my undergraduate degree which was really heavily lecture-based, there wasn't much practical, so I wanted something more practical.

Q: You were ready to go into the schools. And are you happy with your choice?

A: Yes, I think it prepared me quite well for going into school generally.

Q: Were there any subjects, which were given prominence on your SCITT course?

A: I think Maths was given a huge, a lot of time was put into the Maths and with the new curriculum coming out as well, Maths, English and Science were given the most time, the core subjects. (15.15)

Q: You mentioned the National Curriculum. Are you using the new national curriculum?

A: Because I'm in early years on the early years foundation stage, which changed in 2012, so they don't go into the national curriculum until Year 1. But Year 1 are now using the new national curriculum, so where the early years curriculum changed earlier, it's better preparing the children to go into the expectations of the new national curriculum rather than the old one; kind of in line with each other.

Q: On the SCITT course did you learn the new one or the old one, an overall, just before you went into early years?

A: We started, I think the new one, more details were released as we were on the course, so we started with the old one and then they updated us with the new one, which was a bit confusing! (16.16)

Q: It must be difficult when they introduce new systems.

A: Yes, a lot more expectations for the children – it's just getting to know it, I think.
Q: Do you feel you know it now for the early years?

A: Yes. I feel quite confident with the early years one, but I wouldn’t be confident with the national curriculum in older children.

Q: There is now quite a big section; can you explain your experience of PE in SCITT?

A: I think it was planned that we’d have a few classroom-based lectures on teaching PE and then we did some practical ones as well. So, for one of the practical ones we went to a gymnastics centre and the gymnastics coach from the centre taught us different ways of teaching PE; it was a lot based on trampolining and things, so we got to have a good play with. But it was maybe not so relevant for in school, because we don’t have trampolines in school and things like that. Yes, we also went to a secondary school and we were taught by the secondary school PE teachers as well. I think they did bits on safety with getting equipment out and things. But again, I think that was tailored towards older children rather than the really young ones. (17.47)

Q: How many hours do you think you receive on the SCITT course within the year, only if you can remember?

A: I think it was planned that we’d have about six days, maybe on PE, but a lot were cancelled and changed around and never rescheduled, so I think we maybe only had about three or four days in the whole year. (18.10)

Q: So was that whole day given to PE?

A: Probably, with lunch breaks and things maybe, four or five hours of each day. So maybe 16 hours over the year, something like that.

Q: Do you feel you benefited from these sessions, the hours you had?

A: I think the gymnastics centre with the gymnastics coach was good, it was good fun and it gave us some ideas of gymnastics games, but I don’t think there was that much we could apply to teaching in a school environment, rather than in a gymnastics centre.
Because we used a lot of the equipment and things; whereas if you're in a school hall or a playground, you don't have that equipment and I think we could have done with more behaviour management in PE and different ways of introducing the safety in the hall. So making sure children know how to lift mats and things and get them out and using the wall apparatus – things like that. So things that we’d actually use in school, rather than introducing the gymnastics centre, where we wouldn’t really go. (19:35)

Q: On the behaviour side, do you think behaviour in PE is different to other subjects?

A: Yes, especially younger children, so we’re the youngest in the school and I think they have the boundaries, they have their routines in the classroom, but then when we get into the playground or the hall, it’s a different environment for them and they kind of lose that sense of routine and I think the routine is really important when they’re so young, so they know the boundaries and they know what they should be doing; that they should still be listening and following the class rules and things, so I think you need to place a lot of emphasis on what they need to do when they get into the hall or into the playground; where they should sit, that they should still be listening, it’s not just a chance to run around and do what they want. (20:40)

Q: Did you learn that on the job or was any of that on the SCITT course?

A: I think through my placements on the SCITT I think I got an insight, yes. My mentor on one of my placements was the PE leader at the school, and he had a lot of strategies so observing him was really useful, in just getting the logistics of the PE lessons sorted. So getting the children changed and their routines; once they're changed they sit on the carpet and they know what’s coming next and then really explaining things clearly, so that when they get into the hall or the playground they know exactly what they’re doing. But obviously that takes a lot of time out of the PE lesson, but yes, I’d say the practical element of the course helped me with that more than the talks and going into the secondary school and the gymnastics centre. (21:40)

Q: So, you just mentioned your observations as the most useful part, observing the PE?
A: Yes, I think so, and then getting the chance to put what I've observed into practice and see what works and what doesn't and just trying things out, I think. (22.00)

Q: On the SCITT course, were you observed? You say you observed someone, but were you observed as an assessment, or…?

A: Yes. On each of our six week placements, we did three six week placements and on each of them we had to have, I think, 7 lesson observations and I think, actually when I did SCITT they had a focus for the year on PE, that was the focus, so each student teacher had to be observed in PE. So we would get observed and given written feedback and things. But quite often I'd just teach PE, not being kind of formally observed and my mentor would just give me informal feedback, and I think that was the most useful, something like 'Maybe you could try this next time…'

Q: Yes, and then put it into practice?

A: Yes.

Q: Do you feel your training in PE was adequate, with the time you were given? (23.00)

A: I think during placements it was really useful, again observing and then putting things into practice. But in the taught element, I'd say not so much. I don't think it was very relevant to infants school teaching and what we do. I wouldn't say it gave me any insight into what the children need to be able to do and the skills that we actually need to teach them.

Q: So if you were going to make some improvements on the SCITT course, if you were going to run it, what would you do differently? What would you try?

A: Maybe more opportunities to go and observe PE lessons, so in the gymnastics element and then ball skills and things, more teaching and ideas of – for example, with a class of 30 four year olds, how to get, say, balls or tennis racquets out in a way that doesn't disrupt the whole lesson and making sure they're using them correctly, things like that. Just more the logistics of getting equipment out and things, I think. (24.15)
Q: You mentioned gymnastics and going into the secondary school. What did you actually learn in the secondary school sports wise?

A: I think we had two sessions in the secondary school, I think the first one we did, I remember playing rounders and I think there were some on safety, just generally, making sure children aren’t wearing jewellery and things and making sure that the hall is safe, so there’s no equipment in the way. But I think again, that was kind of tailored to older children, they gave us ideas of games to play with balls, so we played rounders, dodgeball, but obviously that’s not a game you would play with young children. So I think definitely we’d need more ideas of things to do to develop the skills that younger children need, through PE. (25.25)

Q: What do you believe other students’ feelings were towards PE?

A: I think there was a general kind of agreement that we’d … There were a few occasions that we’d turn up to PE lectures and where it was outsourced, so there was the secondary school doing it and the gymnastics centre. There were lots of mix-ups in communications, I think, so two or three times we turned up for sessions and were told it was cancelled or it wasn’t arranged, so we went to the secondary school and there was no one there to teach us. So I think that’s how we missed out on a few hours of PE training. (26.15)

Q: So all your PE training was done by outsiders, it wasn’t done by your course supervisors?

A: No. It was all done by outside people.

Q: Ok, do you agree with that?

A: I think it would have been useful to have been taught by people who had actually taught primary school PE, because we were taught by secondary school PE teachers – teaching the skills, but that’s not for the younger children and it doesn’t take it into account; because obviously in secondary school children get changed quickly by themselves, they can go into the hall and there’s less of a focus on the practicalities of the lesson. (27.00)
Q: Reflecting on the SCITT course, do you feel that the positives that are accredited to the SCITT overall, like it’s school-centred, you get lots of practical experience, do you think that can be applied to PE, or do you think it’s different for the PE within SCITT, from the Maths or English?

A: I think definitely the school-centred side of SCITT was really good for PE, because I was in a class on placement that was a similar, if not the same age, of the children that I wanted to teach when I went into a job. So I was able to see those strategies, practice them and see what worked and it gave me lots of ideas, but maybe not so much the taught side of it.

Q: Do you feel knowledgeable and confident to teach PE now? (28.00)

A: I don’t think I did when I started teaching in September, but I think as I’ve gone through and I’ve taught more and got to know the children in my class more, I think it’s developed and I’d say I’m more confident on getting the children into the hall and doing warm-ups and things. But I don’t think I’m that confident on the skills; my knowledge of the skills that children need to develop and how to get children to practice those skills. I think I need a wider bank of games and ideas of how to do that.

Q: Do you think you would have got that from the SCITT course?

A: I think the ideas and things that I have got were from the SCITT course, but I think I could still have had more. I don’t think it gave me enough. (29.00)

Q: Are there some activities in PE that you feel more knowledgeable and confident about than other activities?

A: I think I’m less confident on using equipment, just from a behaviour management point of view. I think that’s a big thing, with early years, just getting the children into the routines. So getting the equipment out is a whole new routine and getting the children into habits, so I’d be more confident doing something like dance-based or gymnastics-based, where there’s not equipment to get out, but it’s just developing and you can clearly model
to the children what they're doing. I think I'm more confident on the skills that they need to develop through that side of PE, rather than using equipment and things like that.

Q: *Would you say that knowledge and confidence go hand in hand? Are they interlinked? Or would you say that they're separate and don't affect each other?* (30.00)

A: I think there's definitely a link between them. I think the more knowledge I've developed on ideas and strategies to use, the more confident I've got with teaching PE. But I think, again I'm not as confident as I could be, because I haven't got the knowledge I could have of the skills that children need and how to teach those skills.

Q: *How knowledgeable and confident did you feel before you teacher training, compared with how knowledgeable and confident you felt afterwards?*

A: I think it definitely developed, I don't think I'd have so much of a clue going in before teacher training, especially through things I saw on placement, I think that's given me ideas and confidence and knowledge of what I need to be doing. So yes, it definitely helped me; I wouldn't have known at all if I hadn't. (31.05)

Q: *How do you feel it could be increased – just the behavioural management and you'd like to learn more skills in the equipment?*

A: Even maybe just a kind of classroom-based session rather than practical, on the skills that children actually need at different ages and the development of those skills; so where to go next, if a child can do one thing, say throw and catch a ball – what do they need to do next and how to move them on within the class. I don't think I'm very confident on that, I'd need to look into it before doing it, rather than just having it to hand in a lesson.

Q: *There’s just one more section on your teaching currently, so are you currently teaching in a school, which was provided by your SCITT?*

A: Yes. I was on placement in the school and then got the job after that placement. (32.05)

Q: *So, would you say that’s a benefit of the SCITT course?*
A: Yes, definitely, I think it opens a lot of doors and there’s quite a close communication between SCITT and all the schools that their students go to, so I think it definitely helped.

Q: Do you have a favourite subject that you teach now?

A: Probably Literacy, but again I think that’s down to my being more confident and I feel I know where children are going with the next steps and the things they need to do in it.

Q: Do you think PE is important? Do you feel there are benefits to the child?

A: Definitely, I think even just looking at their routines and the social development side of it, I think it’s important because it’s different to every other lesson we teach directly, in that children can, even just the independence of getting changed, that’s the only time at school that they do that, and coming into school I was really surprised, being my first year, with the number of children who couldn’t even take their jumper off, couldn’t take their shoes off, they just didn’t know because they don’t have that independence. And then in developing physically, so their gross motor movements, so throwing a ball would help and moving their arms in certain ways, and I think that affects the different areas of their learning as well, so if they don’t have the strength in their gross motor skills, like using their shoulders and their arms, that can affect their holding a pencil, so it can affect their writing. So I think it’s all interlinked and I think it’s really important that they develop those gross motor skills and then they can use them in other areas as well. (34.10)

Q: Do you find teaching PE enjoyable or because you have a lack of confidence in some areas of it, do you not enjoy it?

A: I think I’m starting to enjoy it more, I think I’m developing that confidence, so as I develop it, I am enjoying. Right at the start of the year I was really nervous about teaching PE and I didn’t feel I knew what I was doing. With getting the children changed as well and the behaviour side, that was a huge obstacle in teaching it. We’d end up with probably about 15 minutes of an hour lesson in the hall, just because we’d been getting changed and going through behaviour expectations and what we’d do, and things like that.
Q: So a lot of time gets taken up?

A: Yes, definitely. (35.00)

Q: Have you faced any challenges teaching PE, other than those – have you any examples of challenges on the practical side that you’ve faced?

Q: I’d say my skills, my knowledge of the skills the children need, I think that’s a challenge for me. So if I have a class of children and there are some of them who are really good at a certain skill and some children who just can’t do it. How to move the children who can do it on, and how to bring it down a level for the children who can’t, so everyone’s making progress with their skills. I think that’s probably a challenge, a difficulty.

Q: Especially within one lesson! Have you received any support for PE since you started in your school? (36.00)

A: Yes, as a newly qualified teacher, I get an extra half a day out of class, so I get the opportunity to go and observe other teachers. So I’ve been to observe the PE leader doing PE and it gave me lots of ideas for games to play, and where to get children to sit when we go into the hall and how to model the skills they need; and I think if there is anything I’m struggling with, I can go to other teachers and ask them for help.

Q: Do you take all your PE lessons for your class?

A: Yes, we only have one PE slot a week, so it’s normally on a Friday morning. Yes, I do, I know in Years 1 and 2 they have enrichment, which is taken by outside coaches, but in early years we do one PE a week and then to further that gross motor and physical development we have half an hour of playground time each day as well, where the children have bikes and scooters and hoola-hoops and things, so that kind of contributes to their physical development as well. (37.20)

Q: In that one lesson you have on Friday morning, is it an hour?
A: It’s meant to be an hour, yes, but obviously after we’ve got changed we normally end up with not very long in the hall. I think 10.40 to 11.40 it’s meant to be, so we start changing at 10.40 and we’ll normally get in there about five to eleven or eleven o’clock, so that’s already 20 minutes gone. Then the lunchtimes have changed this year, so each year group is staggered, so the hall is taken up now, for I think it’s two hours a day with lunch time, so we’ve actually got to be out of the hall by twenty-five past eleven, which normally only gives us about 25 minutes in the hall. Then with getting equipment out and things, that time’s reduced even more. (38.18)

Q: So you say you’ve lost out some time to lunches and stuff. On a Friday, you have it, what about before Christmas, do you lose PE lessons for other events at all?

A: Yes. I think Fridays always seem to be the day we have special events, like charity days, which if the hall is being used, then we don’t do PE. And celebration days, so we did an Eid celebration day, which meant we didn’t do PE. Then nativity preparations, there are 3 year groups in the hall who each do a different nativity, so before Christmas the hall was taken up each day. I don’t think anyone did any PE across the whole school for probably the whole of December. So I think maybe since September we’re meant to do it once a week but we’ve probably only done about 5 or maybe 7 PE sessions. (39.20)

Q: Do you agree with that?

A: I think it would be nice to have more opportunities to do it, but I think it has made it harder and across the school it’s a problem, with the lunch times taking up so much time in the hall, that everyone’s struggling to find time for PE.

Q: Is it the same with other subjects, do they get pushed as well?

A: Probably not as much. I think PE gets … I think PE is maybe the first to be cancelled, because of other events. Maybe the children’s discovery time as well, is next, so their afternoon time to apply the skills, which is really important in early years as well. (40.05)

Q: Do you teach all your PE lessons?
A: Yes. There are no outside coaches or anything like that.

Q: So what are your views on outside coaches and PE teachers coming in? Would you like that?

A: I think it is good to get different ideas and for the children to acquire different skills through that, so I know that Year 1 and Year 2 have enrichment afternoons where PE coaches come in and teach different skills and that might be more kind of specialised and they'll know the skills the children need and different ideas and strategies for getting the children to practice those. So I think yes, it can only be a good thing, to have that kind of wealth of knowledge. (41.00)

Q: You say that for Year 1 and 2, the coach comes in. Do you feel the coaches should take primary PE? Do you think primary PE is the same as sport?

A: I think it’s a good thing to introduce the sport to the children through coaches who come in, but I think they need a balance, so maybe in addition to their class teacher teaching PE as well, so the class teacher still has a knowledge of all the children; but then they’re getting different skills taught to them as well. But obviously that depends on time in the week.

Q: What are your views on primary school and secondary, they’re obviously specialist PE teachers in secondary. Do you think there should be specialists in primary or do you think it should be you, as the class teacher? (42.00)

A: I think there’s a balance. I think in primary it’s more important than in secondary, that the class teacher has a view over the children’s whole development, so as a teacher I wouldn’t feel I knew the children as well if I didn’t see them doing any PE. I wouldn’t know what stage they were at and I think it’s so interlinked, so their physical development links so much to the way they hold their pencil, that I’d feel I didn’t know the children as much. But then again, I think I don’t feel at the moment that I have as much of a knowledge of the skills and practical side of PE as a specialised PE teacher would. So it’s about balance.

Q: After reviewing your experience of PE up to now, what would you feel was the biggest influence? Would you say it was your school? You can do it for confidence,
knowledge … you choose, but do you feel your biggest influence was from school, from teacher training or from your actual current experience, now?

A: Probably my current experience now, with maybe a little bit of my experience on placement when I was in teacher training. But definitely the practical experience and being in a PE lesson and trying different things and seeing what works, what doesn’t and each class is different as well, so some things that work on one class might not work on another. So just trial and error really, getting the children into the routines and habits, I think it’s probably the biggest. (43.50)

Q: So is there anything we haven’t mentioned that you’d just like to say about PE?

A: No, I don’t think so. (44.00)

Q: Thank you.

Interview ends at 44 minutes 01 second.