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## An approach to re-skilling of in-service teachers in Physical Education in South African schools

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During the past two decades, curriculum restructuring in South Africa has had some unintended consequences; one of these being the unrealistic demands expected from Life Skills (LS) and Life Orientation (LO) teachers. Physical Education (PE) finds itself within the multi-faceted subject of LS/LO, therefore the teacher, often without requisite training, has to be accountable for the dissimilar demands of this multidisciplinary subject. The continuing professional development needs are undoubtedly just as diverse as the subject itself is. The aim of the study was to explore an approach for capacitating in-service LS/LO teachers responsible for teaching PE. The research reported in this article employed a qualitative design, which comprised semi-structured interviews with 10 Subject Advisors of LS/LO in the Free State. Themes that emerged from the data analysis were assessment problems, inappropriate allocation of teachers; rotation of teachers; and lack of knowledge and understanding; which culminates in the need for in-service training. The results of this study indicate the necessity for re-skilling of in-service LS/LO teachers and propose an approach for a re-skilling programme to equip these teachers with the essential knowledge and skills to teach PE proficiently.

**Keywords:** continuing professional development; Life Orientation; LO teachers' needs; Physical Education; re-skilling

### Introduction

South Africa is listed, among 23 other countries, as an emerging economy or developing country (Amadeo, 2017). Emerging economies are defined as rapidly growing and volatile (Amadeo, 2017). However, the potential for growth is accompanied by substantial risks in terms of political, economic and social perils (WebFinance Inc., 2018). Said countries are recognised for diverting from their traditional economies in pursuit of a better quality of life for their people (Amadeo, 2017). Unfortunately, the multiple challenges emerging economies face with regard to education are more typical of regress, ranging from dropout rates, insufficient funds, issues of accessibility and inclusion, and critical teacher shortages (Turbot, 2016). Tsoetsi and Mahlomaholo (2013) state that several countries endeavour to improve the quality of their teachers, although they find it challenging to connect it with pedagogical practices. Furthermore, Nkambule and Amsterdam (2018) maintain that countries worldwide concede that in order to successfully implement reforms in schools, teacher support is vital.

Amidst the turbulence of curriculum transformation in South Africa, the need for support were exacerbated by uncertainty and confusion among educators to deliver a new curriculum in the aftermath of apartheid (Nkambule & Amsterdam, 2018). Seemingly, a critical aspect that was neglected was the training of in-service teachers to implement the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) (Dada, Dipholo, Hoadley, Khembo, Muller & Volmink, 2009). Ensuing revisions of the curriculum since 1994 had a profound impact on Physical Education (PE), which was marginalised to a learning outcome (Van Deventer & Van Niekerk, 2009) of the subject Life Skills (LS) in the Foundation and Intermediate phases and Life Orientation (LO) in the remaining phases of the NCS (Dada et al., 2009; Van Deventer, 2009). In the absence of dedicated PE teachers in practice, the alternative resolution was to fill the void with the existing LS/LO teachers. A repercussion of the restructuring was that the LS/LO teacher had to become a master in a multi-faceted subject almost instantaneously, demonstrating competency in diverse areas, for instance, as indicated in the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) (Department of Basic Education (DBE), Republic of South Africa, 2011) - Personal and Social Well-being, Physical Education and Creative Arts, depending on the phase. Hypothetically, these teachers virtually had to transform into superheroes, as it was expected of them to teach a subject without requisite training, and be accountable for the diverse demands of this multidisciplinary subject, almost like being a "jack of all trades and a master of none" (Stroebel, Hay & Bloemhoff, 2017:166).

The Provincial Departments of Education were responsible for the training of teachers, mainly due to the cessation of teacher training colleges, the phasing out of PE at schools, and restructuring at Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), which left PE in an ill-fated position (Van der Merwe, 2011). A study by Prinsloo (2007) suggests that being considered 'qualified' in LO can range from being a teacher in one of the former subjects of Guidance, Religion Studies or PE; attending a three-day human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and acquired

immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) course, or attending a two-hour LO workshop. Accordingly, the quality of education was jeopardised by insufficient preparation and forcing changes in a limited amount of time, without a proper trial period (Dada et al., 2009). This quick-fix approach contributed to the implementation challenges equally experienced by teachers and departmental officials, since the majority are unqualified in PE (Dada et al., 2009; DBE & Department of Higher Education & Training [DHET], 2011; Diale, 2016; Du Toit & Van der Merwe, 2013; Van der Merwe, 2011; Van Deventer & Van Niekerk, 2009). This finding corroborates a recent study by Stroebel et al. (2017), which concluded that less than a third of in-service Foundation Phase LS teachers at primary schools in the Free State were qualified in PE.

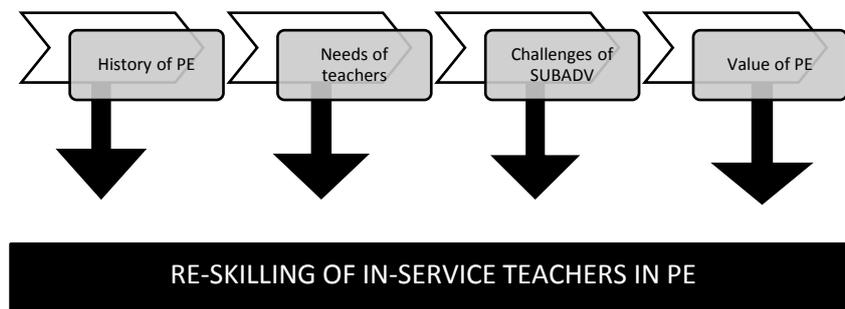
Worldwide, the significance of quality PE is emphasised by numerous associations, e.g. The United Nations Office on Sport for Development and Peace (UNOSDP, 2013), as well as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) (International Committee for Physical Education and Sport, 2011). In essence, these conventions all agree on the necessity of continuing capacity building of PE teachers. Hence, two of the key activities identified in the National Sport and Recreation Plan of South Africa are the assessment of the capacity of educators to deliver PE and sports specific training and the re-skilling of educators to deliver PE (Sport and Recreation South Africa [SRSA], 2012).

It has conclusively been shown (Du Toit, Van der Merwe & Rossouw, 2007; Perry, Mohangi, Ferreira & Moletsane, 2012; Van Deventer, 2012; Van Deventer & Van Niekerk, 2009) that the capacity of educators to deliver PE is insufficient, and that re-skilling should be prioritised, as it is vital

to offer quality PE. In response to the call that emanated from the aforementioned research, this paper forms part of a more comprehensive study, which was conducted in phases, culminating in the main research question: What would the best approach be to capacitate in-service teachers to implement PE effectively? The approach is nested in the answers to several sub-questions regarding a re-skilling programme (RSP),

- *Why* is it necessary to implement a RSP for in-service teachers? This question emerged as the result of the first phase of the study, which provided an overview of the historical development of PE in South Africa (SA) with regard to content, state and status and teacher training. In addition, Phase 4 explored literature and core government documents related to PE, school sport and sport development in order to elucidate the significance of the delivery of quality PE and school sport.
- *What* should the content entail to prepare teachers effectively? During Phase 2 of the study, the needs and challenges of LS teachers were clarified with regard to effective implementation of PE in the Foundation Phase in selected primary schools in the Free State Province. Hence, the knowledge that is imperative for the teacher to be empowered and equipped to deliver the curriculum in PE is the focus.
- *By whom* should this programme be taught? In Phase 3 the aim was to provide an understanding of the challenges faced by LS/LO Subject Advisors (SUBADVs) in monitoring the implementation of the CAPS for LS/LO, specifically for PE in schools in the Free State Province of South Africa. This links to the importance of the quality of support needed for effective operation in schools.
- *How* should the programme best be presented to the teachers?

The collective results obtained from achieving the aims of each phase of the study consistently pointed towards the need for training (Figure 1) of LS/LO teachers in PE.



**Figure 1** Summary of the phases of the comprehensive research study

The teacher is central to implementing the curriculum; however, the reciprocal relationship between the LS/LO teacher and the SUBADV surfaced unobtrusively during the extensive study. Therefore, it became clear that SUBADVs are in the best position to give an insightful synopsis

concerning the aspects of teacher education and training, since they interact with teachers on all levels and cover the entire range of teaching phases.

It was thought that a qualitative approach would provide an in-depth view of the realities and challenges SUBADVs deal with and allow the

exploration of broader issues that may support or impede the delivery of PE. The purpose of the study, therefore, was to explore an approach for capacitating in-service LS/LO teachers responsible for teaching PE. In an attempt to determine the extent of the need for in-service training, it was thought to link the expectations and experiences of SUBADVs to the actual need of the teachers for direction and support.

Timperley (2008:6) advances that “student learning is strongly influenced by what and how teachers teach,” although other factors also play a role. Therefore, the aforementioned sub-questions of *why, what, by whom* and *how* re-skilling of in-service LS/LO teachers should take place, in relation to the successive phases of the comprehensive study, directs the rationale for the current paper (see Figure 1).

#### *Why is it Necessary to Implement a RSP for In-Service Teachers?*

PE has the potential to afford children opportunities of learning through meaningful and appropriate instruction, not merely being active (Le Masurier & Corbin, 2006). Children essentially need PE, besides having the ‘right’ to physical activity, PE and sport, as stated in The Revised International Charter of Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport (UNESCO, 2015). However, earlier studies report that, resulting from the haphazard allocation and the regular rotation of teachers in LS and LO, non-specialist teachers find themselves in the position to teach PE, which has a detrimental effect on the status and practice of LO (Prinsloo, 2007; Van Deventer & Van Niekerk, 2009). In addition, their lack of, or restrained level of confidence (Morgan & Bourke, 2008) and insufficient preparation to teach PE (DeCorby, Halas, Dixon, Wintrup & Janzen, 2005) also have a negative impact. These findings are consistent with those of Diale (2016), who reports that schools move teachers from one learning area to another, depending on the schools’ needs, in addition to filling up their individual timetables with LO to have a fair distribution of teacher workload. Correspondingly, research by Van Deventer (2012), Van Deventer and Van Niekerk (2009), and more recently, Stroebel et al. (2017) reaffirm that, in view of the lack of prior training and the directive to deliver on the mandatory outcomes of the curriculum, in-service training is inevitable. Yet, a lack of in-service programmes for LO teachers exists, especially support anticipated to be initiated by HEIs (Diale, 2016).

#### *What Should the Content Entail to Prepare Teachers Effectively?*

The wide range of knowledge and skills that are generally expected from a PE teacher lies beyond the scope of this paper. Therefore, the focus will be on the most appropriate knowledge areas that the teacher needs to master in order to apply the content

and curriculum for PE. Jess and McEvilly (2013:7) emphasise the significance of thinking “beyond ‘tips for teachers’ and pre-prepared lesson plans” when designing development opportunities. Van Deventer (2009) posits that training ought to enable the teacher to present curriculum outcomes sufficiently. In addition, Petrie (2011) postulates that diverse pedagogical approaches and context should be considered. Moreover, teachers are held legally responsible for ensuring safety in the PE class, which implies that they should be aware of potentially hazardous environments and how to minimise risks for injury in their classes (DeCorby et al., 2005).

Teachers should also be guided to overcome the lack of resources. DeCorby et al. (2005) report that teachers had the inclination to revert to activities that suited the resources at their disposal, rather than follow the curriculum as prescribed, with developmentally appropriate activities. Thus, the absence of appropriate equipment could also affect skills learning. This is particularly relevant in the SA context, since the Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development (DBE & DHET, 2011), highlights the importance of teachers possessing the knowledge and competence to interpret and utilise teaching resources and learner support materials to improve the quality of teacher education, teachers and teaching. Du Toit et al. (2007) advance that LO teachers be trained in practical and didactical improvisation skills in order to execute prescribed activities in the absence of the required equipment, as this is the reality in many schools. Similar to the results of this study, Van Deventer (2012) identified three crucial topics that needed to be addressed within PE, namely programme planning, content ideas and presentation skills.

For clarity purposes, the phrases *re-skilling* and *continuing professional development* (CPD) will be used interchangeably throughout this article, as it refers to equivalent concepts. The Cambridge Dictionary (2017:para. 1) defines re-skilling as “the process of learning new skills so you can do a different job, or do your old job in a different way,” whereas the Macmillan Dictionary (2017:para. 1) refers to CPD as “training and education that continues throughout a person’s career in order to improve the skills and knowledge they use in their job.” Both terminologies encompass a process of learning and improving skills, which implies developing and increasing in knowledge, in order to be empowered to reach the expectations/requirements of the work.

#### *By Whom Should the RSP be Taught?*

In order for productive professional learning to take place, “the role of knowledgeable expertise” should not be underestimated, according to Timperley (2008:29). Sloan (2010) therefore advocates in-service training within own institutions, delivered by

external specialists or proficient staff. Armour and Makopoulou (2012) agree that training should be directed by CPD providers and other experts in order to deepen understanding. Accordingly, Armour and Yelling (2007:184) concur that for a CPD opportunity to be successful, one of the requirements is that it needs to be “delivered by a good presenter who understands the real world of teaching.” In a recent study by Stroebel et al. (2017:172), not only was the need for training categorically stressed by teachers, but likewise “motivation and encouragement from experts.” Similarly, this sentiment was echoed in the successive study by a participant, petitioning that the facilitator of teacher training ought to understand policy requirements, be informed about assessment, be well-versed in strategies that are applicable in PE instruction, and be able to offer guidance in terms of appropriate approaches for PE (Stroebel, Hay & Bloemhoff, 2018).

In a similar vein, DeCorby et al. (2005), as well as Kirk (2005), conclude that inadequate specialist training and the resulting lack of knowledge lead to ambiguity amongst teachers. In reality, the overburdening of staff and the shortage of expertise resulted in schools utilising external providers to deliver PE (Rainer, Cropley, Jarvis & Griffiths, 2012), with the assumption that such specialists are in a supportive role, not substituting the teacher (Sloan, 2010). However, intentions do not necessarily transpire in reality as envisaged. An example of this is provided in a study by Hollander (2017), where insufficient transfer of learning took place between teachers and presenters of a service provider, mainly due to the non-attendance of teachers, who used these periods to catch up on administrative work (Hollander, 2017). Furthermore, teachers came to realise that “merely imitating model lessons does not provide them with an adequate knowledge base to implement flexible and quality teaching” (Hollander, 2017:213). Notwithstanding the aforementioned, teachers’ practices highlighted that lack of knowledge in terms of planning, lesson preparation and assessment has a negative effect on their ability to teach PE, regardless of accessibility to guidelines and activities within the curriculum (Hollander, 2017). Certainly, while sport coaches have in-depth, specialist knowledge in terms of guiding and managing performance, they may lack experience with regard to working with young children, adapting activities to make it more age-appropriate, and designing meaningful learning outcomes (Blair & Capel, 2011; Flintoff, Foster & Wystawnoha, 2011; Rainer et al., 2012), and coping with disciplinary problems, specifically with regard to the managing of large classes and strategies to counteract lack of equipment and to maximise participation during the PE period (Hollander,

2017). This may be a case of the blind leading the blind.

Subsequently, apart from the significance of who presents the RSP, the success of the RSP will greatly depend on how it is presented.

#### *How Should the Programme Best be Presented to the Teachers?*

Various researchers have questioned the effectiveness of traditional short course training (CPD) for teachers, especially through workshops (Guskey & Yoon, 2009; Jess & McEvilly, 2013; Kirk, 2005). In addition, Jess and McEvilly (2013:7) caution against the “training trap,” where courses are often a once-off occasion, accompanied by a manual. Guskey and Yoon (2009) argue that workshops that offer no follow-up or sustained support, which is unsystematic and fail to focus on established strategies, simply do not ‘work.’ The impact of the absence of ongoing support became noticeable when teachers reported challenges and feelings of isolation after returning to their schools to implement the new ideas (Jess & McEvilly, 2013). In a study by Hodges, Kulinna, Lee and Kwon (2017), follow up support continued throughout the study by means of constant dialogue, which proved to be highly successful. It was found that teachers benefitted most from scaffolding of information and experiences. One practical example are YouTube video links, which afforded teachers the opportunity to visualise activities for each lesson over the course of the study (Hodges et al., 2017).

Apart from sustainable support, other crucial features that constitute effective CPD training will be discussed.

Although South Africa cannot simply replicate best practices that have proved to be successful for teacher training in other countries, it is important to take note of the impact such strategies have. According to Sahlberg (2011), there is substantial support for PE in Finnish schools and society. PE is valued as much as any other subject, which is evident in the teacher academic requirements. For example, all basic-school teachers are required to hold a master’s degree qualification (including PE teachers). As a result of the standard criterion, there is confidence in teachers’ abilities, which is demonstrated by the flexibility to make their own content decisions concerning activity selections and accountability for student learning and assessment.

Armour and Makopoulou (2012) evaluated an innovative national CPD programme for teachers in England, and found that an ‘audit of need’ undertaken prior to the programme informed the selection of appropriate modules. Seemingly, the tailored modules resonated well with teachers and schools as they addressed specific needs and acknowledged the context of teaching in a certain school under certain circumstances. The fact that teachers were actively involved in the learning

process and could share ideas, knowledge and experiences with colleagues proved fruitful, as opposed to such cases where they are spoon-fed. In addition, they proposed a different structure of CPD that includes sustained and supplementary learning support, and establishing a national programme that could be adapted to meet local needs (Armour & Makopoulou, 2012).

Scotland seems to have found the ideal win-win 'formula,' an approach that is incorporated in involving teachers in a long-term and ongoing capacity building process that is participative, collaborative and situated (M Jess, pers. comm.; Jess & McEvilly, 2013), thereby also including the components mentioned by Armour and Makopoulou (2012).

Furthermore, research has shown that teachers ought to learn meaningful knowledge and skills, teaching approaches and assessment knowledge that have been the result of thorough research (Timperley, 2008). Timperley (2008) further advocates partnerships, which is supported by Sloan (2010), who suggests that schools form clusters to organise courses. Thorburn, Carse, Jess and Atencio (2011) also propose support networks for teachers. Sahlberg (2011) refers to professional communities coupled with professional development. Hence, Lee and Cho (2014:529) are of the opinion that "when the teachers' perceptions change within a supportive educational setting, the culture of the PE teaching takes on a different form." Similarly, collaborative learning, learning with and from professional colleagues, such as cohort groups or teacher tutoring, is valued and endorsed by teachers and scholars alike (Armour & Yelling, 2007; Edginton, Kirkpatrick, Schupbach, Phillips, Chin & Chen, 2010; Thorburn et al., 2011).

Considering the practical nature of PE, the integration of curriculum and teaching seems vital (Dudley, Okely, Pearson & Cotton, 2011). This implies incorporating theory and practice, supplemented by providing multiple opportunities for teachers to acquire and develop essential subject knowledge and related pedagogical skills (Edginton et al., 2010; Timperley, 2008). Moreover, Thorburn et al. (2011) maintain that linking theory and practice encourages the sense of improved competence. Accordingly, Sloan (2010) concurs that progressive development of PE-specific knowledge has the potential to build confidence and increase personal enjoyment of teaching the subject. According to Graham (2008), success and enjoyment in teaching originates from having the skill set and ability to intertwine content (what to teach) and process (how to teach).

However, the significance of context ought not to be underestimated. In fact, context is key, and for the classroom environment, it is influenced by the broader school ethos, which spirals out to the

community and society in which the school is located (Timperley, 2008). Edginton et al. (2010) agree that a dynamic pedagogy ought to be contextually based, whilst Diale (2016) avows that contextual needs ought to be addressed when programmes are structured. The above findings are consistent with the study by Hollander (2017), which indicates that the dissimilar SA context should be considered when CPD courses are designed, since teachers seemingly required descriptive resources, explanations or visual material to enlighten them on how to perform certain activities. Additionally, assistance with methodology and the modification of activities to be more age-appropriate are needed (Hollander, 2017). It is apparent that the copious facets mentioned here point towards the lack of knowledge and confidence, almost as if teachers want to revert to a "paint by numbers" scheme.

### Methodology

A qualitative research approach was adopted, as the data collected were descriptive, and focused on participants' responses during individual interviews. Analysis, interpretation and description of individual perceptions, attitudes and convictions were concluded according to qualitative methodology (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit, 2004). In-depth, semi-structured, face-to-face interviews were conducted with 10 purposefully selected SUBADVs. The interpretation of the subjective experiences and meaning attribution of SUBADVs, as well as the impact of the context on constructing their understanding, were the focus (Grbich, 2007; Merriam, 2009).

### Participants

The participants in the study were purposefully selected in order to "discover, understand and gain insight ... a sample from which the most can be learned" (Merriam, 2009:77). Ten SUBADVs (five male and five female) involved in the subject area LS and/or LO, employed by the Free State Department of Education, took part in the study. Eight of the ten participants do not hold any qualification in PE, where on the contrary, they specialise in a variety of subject areas such as Guidance, Arts and numerous other subjects. SUBADVs that were interviewed represented the Foundation Phase ( $n = 2$ ); Foundation Phase and Intermediate Phase ( $n = 5$ ); Intermediate and Senior Phase ( $n = 2$ ), and Senior Phase ( $n = 1$ ). Participants held positions as LS/LO SUBADVs in one of the five districts of the Free State, namely the Mtheo District ( $n = 2$ ); Lejweleputswa ( $n = 2$ ); Xhariep ( $n = 2$ ); Fezile Dabi ( $n = 1$ ) and Thabo Mofutsanyana Districts ( $n = 3$ ). There were no excluding criteria regarding gender, ethnicity, socio-economic level, or educational level.

### Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations in this study entailed acquiring permission from the Free State Department of Education (FSDoE) as well as the Ethics Board of the Faculty of Education, University of the Free State (UFS) (UFS-EDU-2014-037). The study followed strict ethical conduct, and ethical guidelines outlined by the Ethics Board of the UFS and the conditions specified by the FSDoE, including informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality of research participants, were upheld in the research process.

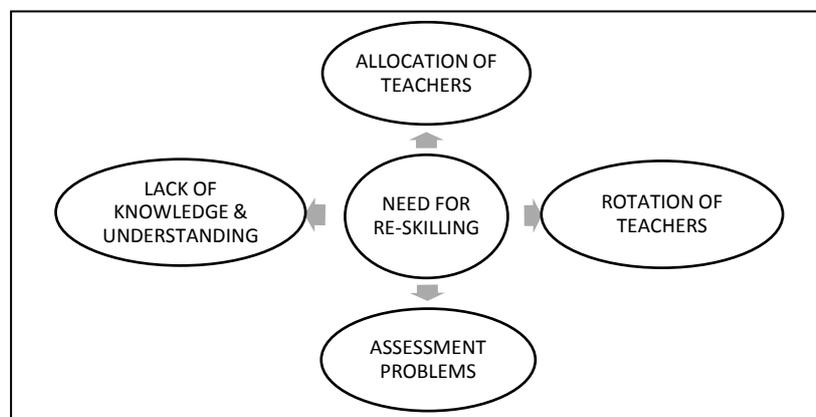
### Data Collection

Data for this project were collected by means of in-depth, semi-structured interviews over a period of six months in the course of 2015 and early 2016. Face-to-face interviews with SUBADVs were conveniently conducted at the respective district office, depending on the availability of each participant. On average, interviews lasted 22 minutes and sought to identify challenges that SUBADVs experience in their task to assist and support teachers with regard to the subject area of LS and LO, particularly concerning the need for re-skilling and the impact on the implementation of PE. The interview schedule contained a series of open-ended questions. The interview was used to determine: a) which challenges SUBADVs experience to support LS/LO teachers; b) which difficulties do teachers experience with the implementation of CAPS; and c) which challenges do SUBADVs experience in supporting teachers with the teaching of PE. The nature of the questions provided opportunity for elaboration by participants on issues raised during the interviews. SUBADVs frequently deviated from the questions, obviously preoccupied with the teacher being central to the challenges, mostly with reference to their capacity, or lack thereof, to deliver the outcomes of the subject, specifically with regard to PE. However, authentic information provided by SUBADVs regarding what teachers know and what they need to

know, is relevant to the current situation in PE delivery. SUBADVs are in the position to provide an accurate account of what occurs at schools, since they resolve enquiries, perform observations and engage in discourse with teachers on a daily basis.

### Data Analysis

Data were recorded by means of field notes and audiotaping. Data were collected through interviews, and transcribed verbatim. Subsequently, data was analysed by the primary researcher, in accordance with Merriam (2009:29), who maintains that “the investigator is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis.” The transcribed data were analysed by reading the text several times to gain meaning, assigning codes and categories to extracts of text. The interview results were read and extracts of text then allocated to coded items (categories). According to Miles and Huberman (1994), open coding identifies the themes within the information, followed by axial coding, to categorise the themes in order to find patterns and linkages between themes. Additionally, a statistician analysed the interview transcripts independently, then performed data analysis using SAS 9.4 Software (SAS Institute Inc., 2014). The transcripts were programmatically searched for the extracts of text that were identified, and relevant codes were assigned to each interview/question, resulting in interview outcomes. Maree has noted that “Content analysis is [...] an inductive and iterative process where we look for similarities and differences in text” (2007:101). The two methods of analysing the data (researcher’s inductive coding and the coding/programming of the results by independent statistical analysis), serve to validate the results, as “involving several investigators or peer researchers to assist with the interpretation of the data could enhance trustworthiness” (Maree, 2007:80). Five themes identified from the interviews and supported by field notes and statistical analyses as indicated in Figure 2, will be discussed.



**Figure 2** Themes that impact on in-service teacher training

## Results

The themes that have an impact on teacher training comprise assessment problems, inappropriate allocation of teachers, rotation of teachers, and lack of knowledge and understanding, which culminates in the need for training/re-skilling/CPD. These themes are deliberated in relation to the aforementioned questions: *why, what, by whom* and *how* re-skilling of in-service LS/LO teachers should take place. It should be noted that the need for re-skilling is so dominant that the themes appear to link recurrently to the question *why*.

### Assessment Problems

Assessment issues relate to the question why teachers need re-skilling. In the former curriculum, PE was not assessed or evaluated. However, assessing movement and physical skills cannot be circumvented, since SUBADVs seek evidence that assessment took place. In reality, teachers feel ambivalent about assessment:

*Learners just go outside, they play and play, they come back and they are given marks”; “for frequency of participation, learners [...] get their 20 marks for free [...] even if they are absent.*

In some cases, the marks for every term is 100% [...] Those people they just give marks [...] 20 out of 20 [...]

Stroebel et al. (2017) found that assessment in PE is in disarray, since teachers struggle with the choice and correct application of rubrics, the application of the inclusivity principle when assessing learners with physical disabilities, and the interpretation of rubrics.

### Rotation of Teachers

The matter of teacher rotation relates to the questions of *why, what* and *when* teachers need re-skilling. One of the main issues identified by SUBADVs was the rotation of teachers, the fact that there is no continuity:

*the biggest challenge again at schools, is this thing of shifting around. You support a teacher today, you go back to the school after two weeks, and you'll find a new face.*

Some SUBADVs refer to the changing of teachers, the non-retention of teachers or the moving around of teachers,

*next time you will find that it is another teacher [...] you keep on training and training and training and at the end [...] won't get skilled people, knowledgeable people who can master the content and who can teach a particular game or safety measures [...] it is allocation, movement of teachers from subject to subject and at the end, you get people who are not trained,*

resulting in a “vicious circle.” SUBADVs are often unaware of the rotation of teachers, therefore appropriate induction for new teachers can also not be followed through.

### Allocation of Teachers

The allocation of teachers relates to the question *why* teachers require re-skilling. Several participants specifically identified the allocation of teachers as a major concern. It would seem that, in order to distribute the workload evenly between all teachers, when the assignment of timetables and workload is prepared, teachers who do not have the required number of periods on the timetable will be allocated LO as a “filler” subject,

*you take one, you take one, you take one [...] That's how they split it [...] it tells you something about the allocation, Life Orientation is not important [...]*

it is allocated to anyone. At some schools, principals are allotted to LO, and since their managerial duties impede on the class time, they usually end up not having evidence of any work, because they have not been to class. Additionally,

*principals, they think everybody can teach LS [...] they are not aware [...] you must have background, you must have knowledge about it, you don't just give it to anybody,*

thus participants argue that principals don't value it as a subject.

Disturbing to note is that if *the Senior Management Team (SMT) [...] or the principal has got something against you, because you know in schools they have internal politics, if they have [...] some scores they want to settle with you, then they want to frustrate you, they will give you the subject, and most of the time you will find that it is people who are not committed, who are not knowledgeable, who don't have the background, and then they are just there because they need to keep learners busy.*

Several participants mentioned that it is allocated to *... lazy, troublesome teachers;*

also *... people who are [...] not really life orientated ...* as well as

*... people who are obese and they are physically inactive.*

Disconcerting are the following remarks:

*teachers [...] who are drunk at school, no, who always drinks a lot, they are given LS, these teachers who are always sick, they're given LS, these teachers who are not ... knowledgeable; our teachers are not committed, they don't teach and, [...] year in year out, the very same useless, lousy teacher, you'll find them at school – they are there.*

The resistance experienced from teachers who blatantly refuse to present PE – especially teachers who are older – is a reality; thus, not only does the lack of interest play a role, but also age and attitude. Participants have stated that educators are not trained in PE, but that they are overloaded and overworked, classes are overcrowded, they are often unprepared, and absent in supervising learners. The austere depiction continues:

*The educator will sit under the tree with the newspaper while learners are doing [...]*  
and they will

*... take a seat outside and sit there and say to them: play!*

and

*... don't know what to do, I sit on the chair, and I say "play," "run," that's Physical Education, and that's that.*

It is explicable then that a participant reacts,

*I mean, you earn a salary, you have to do something [...] we cannot pay you for mahala.*

The abovementioned themes, allocation and rotation of teachers have an adverse effect on the implementation of PE; likewise, on the value and status of the subject. Consequently, the need for re-skilling is amplified in view of the two issues that continually keep surfacing, namely: the lack of knowledge and understanding; and the desperate need for in-service training.

#### Lack of Knowledge and Understanding

The lack of knowledge and understanding of the subject relates to the question of *what* ought to be included in re-skilling and how re-skilling should take place. Eight of the ten SUBADVs are not qualified in PE, which unsurprisingly leads to challenges in supporting teachers efficiently. It is problematic to such an extent that one participant disclosed avoiding the PE component entirely. SUBADVs, however, observed that teachers frequently skip to the practical part, which in some cases entails throwing a soccer ball to the learners and instructing them to play, often without supervision. The lack of knowledge manifests regularly in disciplinary problems and insufficient instruction by teachers, which carry the risk of injury to learners. Furthermore, adequate physical resources at schools do not compensate for the lack of knowledge and presentation skills, since teachers still have to maximise facilities and interpret content for efficient application correctly. The result is that activities that aim to develop skills are often substituted for activities just to keep learners busy.

#### Training and Workshops

The longstanding topic of training and workshops relates to the question of how re-skilling should take place. Several participants reported that previous training was deficient and vague, omitting the practical application of the curriculum, often just focused on getting them to move and be active, but discounting the issues concerning policy. External providers are sometimes perceived as amateurish and non-specialist by teachers. Unfortunately, PE is also typically seen as an afterthought at workshops. Subsequently, the irony of having a workshop for a few hours and expecting informed teachers who are capable of applying the newfound knowledge successfully as outcomes is clearly unrealistic. A participant alluded to teachers having the manuals,

having done the training, but still lacking the knowhow to implement and apply the textbook knowledge.

#### Discussion

Emerging economies in particular, encounter teacher shortages (Turbot, 2016). In a similar vein, the improvement of the quality of teachers, and provision of adequate educator support, are considered challenges in most countries (Nkambule & Amsterdam, 2018; Tsotetsi & Mahlomaholo, 2013). Congruently, the second world-wide survey of school PE conducted by Hardman and Marshall (2009) reports that most countries experience challenges with the teaching of PE. In South Africa, where dedicated PE qualifications at HEIs is on the wane, along with the gradual downgrading and, in some cases, elimination of PE in schools since curriculum reform commenced has had a detrimental impact on the delivery of PE. Alluding to the aforementioned findings, the allocation and rotation of teachers plays a significant role in affecting the knowledge, understanding and challenges associated with PE.

Van Deventer (2009) contends that to implement a new subject without the required human resources is illogical. He further postulates that permitting teachers to work under taxing conditions, where their lack of proficiency is exposed, is both discriminating and unfair to the teacher. Diale (2016) agrees with the conviction that any educator can teach LO and contribute to the continual migration of teachers in the subject, which, in turn, increases the volatility. Indisputably, the overwhelming evidence in the literature that includes the current study culminates in and substantiates the urgent call for appropriate in-service training. The central question of this study remains how the RSP should be presented best to teachers to capacitate them to effectively implement PE.

Armour (2016) contends that in order for CPD to be effective, it should be relevant to contemporary challenges, which should be addressed by attempting to bridge the gap between theory, research and practice. Armour, Quennerstedt, Chambers and Makopoulou (2017) agree that the complexity of the learning process, context and contemporary challenges are crucial in order to reach success with CPD for PE teachers. Armour (2016) argues that effective CPD ought to consider the dynamic nature of contemporary PE, and hence, the digital technologies used by trained teachers ought to be prominent. Furthermore, Laureano, Konukman, Gümüşdağ, Erdoğan, Yu and Çekin (2014) concur that using technology such as websites could also keep parents informed of PE and additionally advance parental support for PE. Although Konukman (2015) advocates for academic service learning of pre-service teachers in PE,

in the South African context, it is impractical to expect teachers that needs re-skilling themselves, to provide authentic learning environments. However, a number of suggestions for PE teachers made by Konukman (2015) might be applicable to the LS/LO teacher in order to continue to develop professionally; such as being versatile in teaching and coaching, demonstrating large class teaching skills, and being innovative and flexible. In addressing abovementioned skills, the challenges regarding lack of knowledge and understanding could be reduced.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

In this study, an exploration of a potential approach for equipping in-service teachers in LS/LO were undertaken. In analysing research done on this issue, the importance of context was illuminated. The SUBADVs in this study played an informative role in acting to confirm the importance of capacitating in-service teachers in PE. However, as mentioned before, the majority of SUBADVs find it challenging to support teachers sufficiently, since they are not qualified in PE themselves. Therefore, other than accentuating the need for in-service training, and emphasising that training ought to be done by experts in the field, it is understandable that they could not provide practical guidelines with regard to how re-skilling should take place.

Guskey and Yoon (2009:499) remind us that “effective professional development requires considerable time, and that time must be well organized, [*sic*] carefully structured, purposefully directed, and focused on content or pedagogy or both.” Whether this is related to curriculum implementation or CPD approaches, tactics used to remedy omissions, since pilot studies are more often than not, met with resistance – the axiom “there’s never (enough) time to do it right, but there’s always (enough) time to do it over” rings true for the South African context.

Therefore, when contemplating the most suitable format for South Africa’s unique, disparate circumstances and context, particularly considering the LS/LO teachers’ drawback in terms of PE, it is recommended that the following aspects be included in an approach for re-skilling of teachers in PE:

- Sufficient time to conduct pilot studies to inform the development of research-based, tailored, functional programmes;
- Financial resources to fund the programme, for example, a partnership between the DBE, SRSa and the Department of Health to drive a concerted effort

for PE; and

- Since in-service training is not yet standardised, and no directives exist to ensure uniformity and higher educational standards, it is recommended that the development of nationally accepted guidelines for a RSP (in collaboration with DBE and HEIs) should be developed that could contribute to the effective implementation of PE in schools. It is therefore proposed that a cohort of expertise in PE, such as the South African Universities Physical Education Association (SAUPEA) be involved in said development to ensure informed, research-based guidelines.

A study by Armour and Yelling (2007:184) summarises what PE teachers have defined as effective CPD, “what is practical, relevant, and applicable; able to provide useable ideas; challenging and thought-provoking; and offering time for reflection and collaboration.”

In order to develop the best approach to capacitate in-service teachers to implement PE effectively, suggestions for three key components that need to be addressed in a RSP are summarised in Table 1.

Based on the results of this study, it is evident that in order to rescue PE, a RSP could serve as an interim measure, but what is now needed is further research to develop a strategy to establish a South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) recognised qualification, such as a short learning programme in PE.

The triumph in the quest would be the reinstatement of PE as stand-alone subject, which implies that quality pre-service, undergraduate training programmes to educate dedicated PE teachers at HEIs would be key to successful implementation of the subject. However, in the event of this not realising in the near future, the alternative resolution would be to empower, enrich and educate in-service LS/LO teachers who lack confidence and competence to teach PE efficiently. Hence the acronym, RESQ-PE (RE- Skilling – (for) Quality-Physical Education), which can also be understood as rescuing or reclaiming PE as a valued subject in its own right is proposed to endorse the endeavour of a teacher training programme.

To conclude, re-skilling is more likely to succeed if a renewed approach is adopted for continuous teacher training/CPD, instead of a ‘hit-or-miss tactic,’ where activities are constructed on instinct and custom (Guskey & Yoon, 2009). As the adage goes, ‘If you’ve always done what you’ve always have, you’ll always get what you’ve always got.’

**Table 1** Key components for an approach to a RSP

Key component	Suggested approach to address the component
By whom should this programme be taught?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualified facilitators with the necessary expertise and experience who are familiar with the curriculum should present training opportunities (Armour &amp; Makopoulou, 2012; Stroebel et al., 2017);</li> <li>• facilitators that are knowledgeable with regard to content and capable to structure and incorporate learning strategies and methods during instruction; and</li> <li>• who can incorporate a combination of strategies appropriately, such as formal lectures, integrated small group seminars, interactive small groups, utilisation of technology, E-learning, practical demonstrations, active participation practical sessions.</li> </ul>
What should the content entail to effectively prepare teachers?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The duration of the programme must accommodate the practical nature of PE (Van der Merwe, 2011; Van Deventer &amp; Van Niekerk, 2009);</li> <li>• a richer and more extensive repertoire of pedagogical strategies in teaching PE should be included (Thorburn et al., 2011);</li> <li>• topics and content related to curriculum requirements; linking practical and theoretical aspects; acquiring skills for improvising equipment and modifying and adapting activities (Stroebel et al., 2017; Van der Merwe, 2011), obtaining presentation skills and learning safety measures (DeCorby et al., 2005).</li> </ul>
How should the programme best be presented to the teachers?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conferences should be held on a regular basis, supplemented by follow-up enrichment meetings (Van Deventer, 2012);</li> <li>• main conference for teachers and SUBADVs (March/April) after workload and allocation of teachers have been finalised;</li> <li>• bi-annual enrichment seminars (June and September);</li> <li>• ongoing, sustainable support via expert facilitators.</li> </ul>

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### Authors' Contributions

L Stroebel was the main researcher of this study, responsible for all parts of the research including reporting and writing of the manuscript. J Hay and H Bloemhoff supported the planning of and refining of the manuscript, and provided feedback on earlier versions. All authors reviewed the final manuscript.

### Notes

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