

TEACHING HEALTH EDUCATION: PHYSICAL EDUCATORS' PERCEPTION OF THEIR ROLE AND CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED DURING THEIR INDUCTION

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1. INTRODUCTION



Health Education (HE) in Québec Schools

Since 2001, Québec Physical Education and Health Program has introduced HE through its third competency: *To adopt a healthy, active lifestyle*. The purpose of this competency is to help students develop resources that will enable them to take responsibility for their own health and be active throughout their lives⁴.

Teaching Health Education

Scientific literature shows that seasoned physical educators who tried to implement initiatives aimed at promoting health have encountered several difficulties⁶.

Induction in Physical Education and Health (PEH)

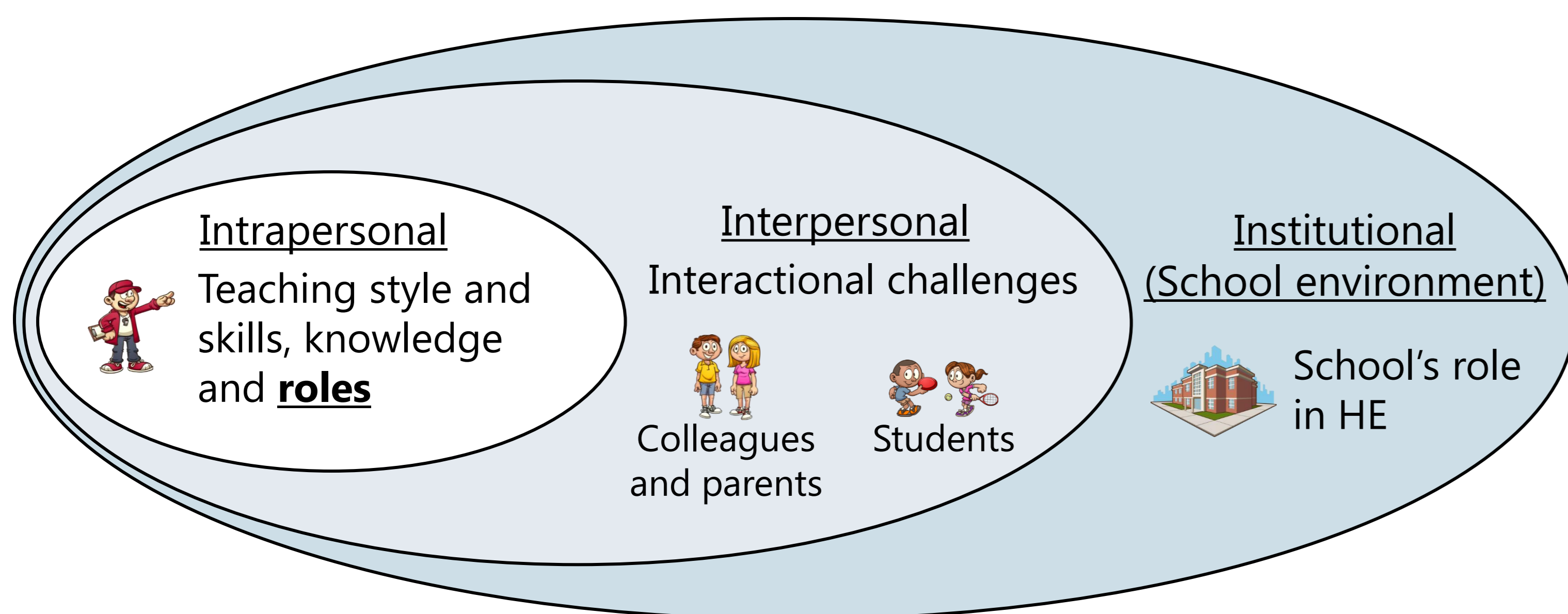
Induction in PEH is a stressful process and leads to a high attrition rate⁵. Organisation, professional relationships and the "reality shock" are main reasons for leaving the profession^{2,3} and workload, specialty and professional identity represent the primary challenges³.

Professional identity of PEH teachers

Implementation of HE as well as the inclusion of public health interests in PE modulate the roles and responsibilities expected from PEH⁸ teachers. These changes in roles and responsibilities explain why we are facing a transformation in professional identity of PEH teachers^{1,6}.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

For the purposes of this study, the social-ecological model of Vamos and Zhou⁷ is used to identify beginning PEH teachers' needs in the specific context of teaching HE. The model includes 3 levels such as intrapersonal, interpersonal, and institutional.



5. RESULTS

a) Role

13 participants perceive their role in HE as **very important** and **primordial**.

Throughout the first four years in the profession, **participants' vision of their role in HE** is stable and revolves around **4 main concepts**:

- Transmitting information to students (n=13)
- Raising student's awareness about health (n=10)
- Being a guide, a reference about health (n=10)
- Getting students to like doing PE and HE (n=8)

9 participants described that the **vision of their role in HE had changed** since the end of their initial training.

Although the vision of their role slightly changed over time, participants still relate to the 4 main roles presented above. The change in their vision is more of an "adjustment" and is often attributed to a feeling of "**coming back to reality**" after beginning in the profession.



"Starting out, I thought I was going to change the world... And then, I became more realistic" (P05)

"Sometimes, I feel like it's every man for himself" (P07)

"It was idealistic of me, I thought that HE was already in every school" (P10)

[Free Translation]

6. CONCLUSION

- Beginning teachers highlight the **importance of their role in HE**, even though the perceptions of their role slightly change following the challenges they face during their induction process.
- Challenges encountered when teaching HE are **numerous and varied**. These challenges show the importance of guiding beginning teachers during the first few years of their career.
- It seems essential to question the schools' role in supporting PEH teachers in the implementation of HE initiatives.
- **Initial training must consider the array of conditions** that beginning teachers face in the first few years in the profession to support their induction.

3. OBJECTIVES

This study examines perceptions of novice PEH teachers of their role in HE and challenges encountered during the implementation of initiatives promoting this component, as described by the following specific objectives:

- Assessing participants' vision of their role in HE at the end of their induction and its evolution throughout the first four years in the profession.
- Identifying challenges experienced by participants on the implementation of HE initiatives, as well as solutions they found to cope with these challenges.

4. METHODS

- Data collection was conducted during six distinct periods of time.
- The first period of time (T1) involved teachers at **the end of their initial training** (n=16).
- The five other periods of time (T2, T3, T4, T5/T6) involved teachers who actually implemented HE activities in the **first four years in the profession** (n=9).
- **Individual interviews** were conducted to assess the perceptions of their role along with the challenges they dread regarding HE during these six periods of time.
- Data collected was processed according to an **inductive analysis** strategy.
- Numbers (n) in results section refer to the amount of participants who gave this answer.

b) Challenges

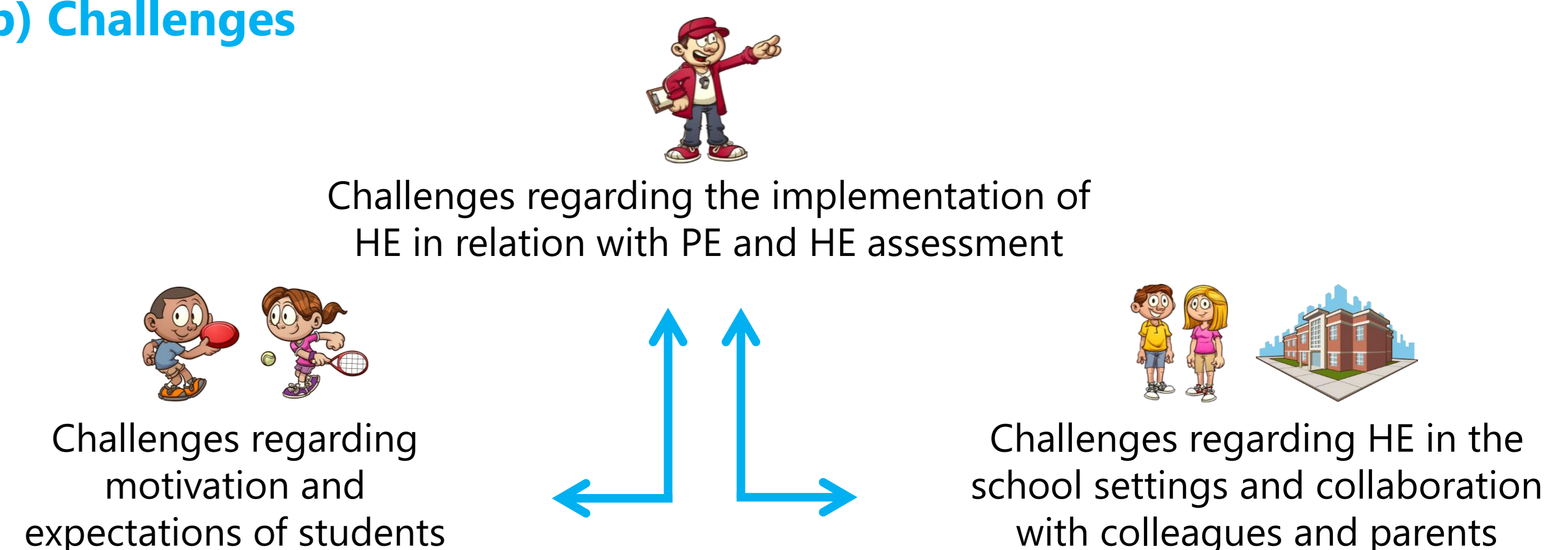


Table 1	Teacher	Students	School and family
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Lack of knowledge on how to implement HE (n=4) ➢ HE is theoretical and abstract (n=3) ➢ Lack of knowledge on how to assess HE (n=3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Motivating students (n=6) ➢ Get HE to be dynamic for students (n=4) ➢ Meeting students' expectations of PEH (n=3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Schools' lack of openness to HE (n=3) ➢ Struggle to work with colleagues (n=2) ➢ HE doesn't seem as important to others (n=1)
Solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Documenting and personal growth (n=4) ➢ Progressively incorporating HE (n=2) ➢ Adapting HE to various students' needs (n=2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Coming up with a variety of new activities* (n=12) ➢ Organising various projects in school (n=3) ➢ Teaching HE with games (n=3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Teamwork (n=6) ➢ Creating activities to do in classroom (n=3) ➢ Better communication with parents (n=1) ➢ Projects including families (n=1)

* Examples: Health journal, health info, thematic activities, activities outside of school.

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