

## REGARDING THE DUAL ROLE OF TEACHING AND COACHING – WHAT CONFLICT?

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### ABSTRACT

*The purpose of this study was to examine the dual role of teaching and coaching, from the perspective of participants who were awarded for their teaching, but also happened to coach. The purposeful sample included two elementary physical education teacher/coaches (TCs), four middle, and three high school TCs. Data were collected via semi-structured interviews and field notes. Each participant was observed teaching at least three PE classes and coaching at least one practice. Data analysis of the interview transcripts and field notes was done via induction and constant comparison. Data trustworthiness was obtained via triangulation, as interview responses were compared to teaching and coaching observations and participants were given an opportunity to comment on a first draft of the manuscript through member checking. Results revealed that TCs reported more similarities between teaching and coaching than differences. Five of the nine participants stated that they spent more time planning for teaching than they did for coaching. Four TCs stated that they identified equally as a teacher and coach, with four others identifying more as a teacher, and one, more as a coach. Most of the TCs felt that their teaching and coaching styles were similar, in that the focus was on skill development for both, and therefore they used a direct instruction style. Seven of the nine participants stated that teaching and coaching were equally rewarding, with the other two commenting that teaching was more rewarding. Five of the nine TCs stated that they never felt burned out fulfilling multiple roles, with the other four stating that they felt so at times. Participants discussed ways in which they maintained positive role balance by being organized, learning to say no sometimes and understanding their limits. Three participants made unsolicited comments that their teaching helped them be a better coach, and vice-versa.*

**Keywords:** Teacher socialization.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

There has been a great deal of research that has looked at physical education teachers who also coach sports teams in after school programs. It is very common that physical education teachers also coach. This has been explained in part because of the belief that many teacher/coaches (TCs) enter teaching so that they can be involved in sports through coaching as well (Sage, 1987). There is also an expectation by many school administrators that physical educators should also coach, specifically in the same school district (Himberg, Hutchinson, & Rousell, 2002; Konukman, Agbuga, Erdogan, Zorba, & Demirhan, 2010; Sage, 1987).

The majority of studies in this area have focused on TCs working at the high school level. As stated by Richards, Templin, Levesque-Bristol and Tjeerdsma-Blankenship (2014), this research was particularly popular from the late 1970s through the 1990s, though it continues till today. Many of the results have shown that the “simultaneous performance of

teaching and coaching roles has been viewed as being particularly problematic” (p. 383). In particular, research has found that combining the complex roles of teaching with coaching has often resulted in role conflict. For TCs, this conflict has been defined as “the experience of role stress and role strain due to the conflicting multiple demands of teaching and coaching” (Sage, 1987, pp. 217-218). This strain can result in feelings of frustration and anxiety that may manifest itself in low job satisfaction that can lead to burnout and leaving the profession. In the case of TCs continuing to work, this may lead to their performances in both roles falling short of expectations, or committing more time, and energy, to one over the other - with the coaching role usually winning out (Himberg et al., 2002).

To have a better understanding of the dual role of TCs, it is worthwhile to examine this topic via occupational socialization. Research in this area comprises three phases: acculturation (also known as recruitment), professional and organizational (Stroot & Williamson, 1993). The first phase entails determining what types of individuals decide to enter the teaching and coaching profession. The second phase studies the impact of teacher preparation courses and experiences on undergraduate students. The third phase examines workplace conditions of teachers, typically in public schools.

Research into acculturation of physical education teacher education (PETE) students has found it to be crucial in the overall teacher socialization process. For an excellent review, see Richards, Templin, and Graber (2014). Students come into teacher preparation programs already having perceptions of what and how to teach (and coach) - based on their personal experiences. Lortie’s (1975) seminal work on teacher socialization introduced the concept of the “apprenticeship-of-observation” model. He suggested that students take on the unofficial role of a teacher in their mind, as a way to predict how a teacher might react to a certain behavior. Over the course of 13 pre-university years of education, students solidify in their minds what being a teacher would be like. Schempp (1989) found this concept to be very powerful in the PETE students that he studied. An area of recruitment pertinent to this study and related to the apprenticeship model is whether PETE students identify more as a teacher or as a coach. Some PETE students have a preexisting orientation toward coaching, and see teaching as an avenue to be involved in coaching. Others are orientated toward teaching, with coaching being a secondary focus. Finally, some PETE students are oriented toward the middle of both perspectives (Curtner-Smith, Hastie, & Kinchin, 2008). The belief is that if students are orientated toward teaching then they will be more receptive to their PETE teachings and experiences than those orientated toward coaching (Richards & Templin, 2012).

The professional socialization phase will not be covered much here, given that it is not a focus of this study. There is, however, evidence that a PETE program may have some influence on teacher satisfaction of graduates teaching and coaching in schools (Wright & Grenier, 2019), which could potentially influence how TCs deal with their dual role.

Organizational socialization will be the main focus of this study. Many research studies have found that workplace conditions for physical education teachers have resulted in issues such as marginalization, reality shock, isolation, and role conflict (Richards & Templin, 2012). This last condition is most pertinent to this study. Former research results are mixed on the issue of whether the dual role of teaching and coaching can be ‘handled’ well. Most studies that have examined this issue have found that TCs struggle with role conflict (Drake & Hebert, 2002; Locke & Massengale, 1978; O’Connor & Macdonald, 2002; Ryan, 2008; Templin & Anthrop, 1981). When role conflict results in a burden too heavy to carry, TCs may experience role retreatism – whereby individuals will prioritize one of the roles. Contributing factors “include time restraints, role preferences, role overload, role expectations, rewards systems, unavoidable conflict situations, role strain and conflict between T/Cs and non-coaching teachers” (Richards & Templin, 2012, p. 171). Researchers have found that when role retreatism occurred, TCs prioritized coaching over teaching, given

that they found greater social support, recognition and rewards in the former role (Hardin, 1999; Locke & Massengale, 1978; Millslagle & Morley, 2004; Sage, 1987). Similar findings have suggested that TCs are not as committed to teaching as they are coaching (Drake & Hebert, 2002; Hardin, 1999; Sage, 1987). Finally, when coaching was found to be the priority of TCs, teacher effectiveness was determined to have decreased (Aicinena, 1999; Hardin, 1999).

There is some evidence however, that at least with some people studied, the TCs were able to handle both the teaching and coaching roles and therefore avoided major conflicts (Napper-Owen & Phillips, 1995; O'Connor & Macdonald, 2002; Pagnano & Griffin, 2005). Richards and Templin (2012) have suggested that whether role retreatism occurs or not may be in part due to individual characteristics of TCs and how they were socialized in their dual role. If TCs are able to teach and coach effectively, they achieve what has been described as positive role balance (Voydanoff, 2002).

The majority of TC studies reviewed for this article revealed that the recruiting of research subjects was not biased towards exemplary physical education teachers or coaches. One exception was a study by Hardin (1999), in that he recruited participants who were considered expert and very successful coaches, who also happened to teach physical education. The findings of that study revealed that the TCs identified more strongly as a coach and spent much more time planning for coaching and instructed far more when they coached than when they taught. This study made the researcher wonder if the results would be similar if the participants recruited had been recognized and awarded for their teaching, and also coached. Ultimately, the researcher was not able to find evidence of such a study, and therefore, undertook this study.

## **2. METHODS AND MATERIALS**

### **2.1 Procedures**

Most of the data were collected during the researcher's sabbatical, which afforded the researcher the opportunity to spend full school days observing and interviewing each TC. On average the researcher observed each participant teach three classes and coach one practice session after school.

### **2.2 Participants**

As others have suggested (Donoso, Bloom, & Caron, 2017), given that the sample size was small for this study, there will not be a great deal of specific information on any one participant, to ensure their anonymity. Therefore, demographic information will be reported collectively, rather than individually. There were six females and three males among the TCs. At the time of this study two were teaching at the elementary level, four at middle school and three at the high school level. Also at the time of this study, all participants were coaching at the school level and district they were teaching in. That was not always the case, as both elementary TCs had coached up to high school-aged students in the past, as had two of the four MTCs.

The TCs had been teaching on average for 19 years, with a range from 8 to 34 years. The number of years coaching was similar to the years of teaching. The schools would be considered small in size, given that the average was as follows: Elementary (n= 525 students); Middle School (n= 375); High School (n= 1,033). The average class size for the TCs was 18, 17 and 24 for the respective levels. The elementary participants taught on average 6.5 classes of 35 minutes each per day. The MTCs taught on average five, 50-minute classes and the HTC's taught three, 75-minute classes in a block schedule. Participants coached, on average,

two seasons per year. Almost all the TCs fulfilled the role of head coach of their respective teams. Sports included cross-country running, competitive jump rope, golf, field hockey, swimming, track and field, volleyball, softball, basketball, lacrosse, boxing, soccer, wrestling, football, as well as strength and conditioning. One TC also coached unified teams, whereby athletes with special needs competed alongside able-bodied athletes.

Other duties of the participants included bus, lunch and study hall obligations, as well as committees such as curriculum development, assessment and wellness. Of the four Middle School Teacher Coaches (MTCs), two were also athletic directors, one was a district-wide K-12 Department Chair, and one was a district-wide K-12 Wellness Coordinator. One of the HTC's was also Department Chair.

Collectively all nine participants had been honored as a State Teacher of the Year for their grade level. Three of the TCs had been honored as the regional AAHPERD/ SHAPE Teacher of the Year and one had been awarded National Teacher of the Year. Other awards included Outstanding Service Awards within their district, and a Governor's Council Outstanding Achievement Award. Several of the TCs had received coaching awards related to their region and/or state. Several participants had coached state champions (both team and individual), and one participant served as an Olympic Development coach.

### **2.3 Data Collection**

Semi-structured interviews took place in schools, typically after school and before practice. Interview questions were constructed after a review of relevant research literature. A pilot study was conducted via two TCs not part of this study. It was determined that all questions were clear and unambiguous. Interviews took place in a quiet room and were recorded. Participants were given the questions ahead of time and the average length of an interview was 40 minutes. The researcher transcribed the interviews, often within a week of completing them. Researcher also took field notes while observing teaching lessons and athletic practices. The foci of the notes were on teacher/student interactions, instruction versus game play and teaching as well as coaching styles observed.

### **2.4 Data Analysis**

The nine interview transcripts were analyzed by having each open-ended question serve as a category. The responses for each question/category were coded to determine emergent themes through induction and constant comparison (Bogdan & Biklen, 2016). If more than three participants mentioned a key word or phrase, then it was considered a theme. Field notes were also analyzed via induction and constant comparison.

Trustworthiness of the data was done in part through triangulation. The TCs' responses to interview questions were compared to the field notes taken during their teaching and coaching episodes to determine if what they said they did, they actually did. For example, if a TC stated that they focused on skill development while teaching and coaching, then is that what actually transpired during the observed lessons and coaching episodes? Sharing a first draft of this manuscript with the participants also enhanced trustworthiness. They were asked to comment on whether they had any thoughts or concerns about how the data was being reported, particularly quotations that were used. This strategy is known as member checking (Flick, 2006).

## **3. RESULTS**

The major focus of reporting results will be on the interview question responses. A brief summary of the field notes taken will follow. This will not be reported in detail, due to the overall length of this article.

## Teaching Expectations

Five TCs expressed that there were high expectations from their administration regarding their teaching, as the following quotes suggest.

*Expectations are that you teach to the whole child and differentiate instruction for all children so that you meet the needs of all of your students. That is a tall order, but the expectations are very high here. I am observed officially by my principal and assistant principal at least four, unannounced times, but usually more. There is a rubric regarding teaching effectiveness with 20 outcomes, including quality instruction, depth of knowledge, positively manages behavior, quality of activities, etc. (ETC)*

*We need to make sure that our lessons address the PE national standards. We also have to plan for and make sure that appropriate grade level outcomes are met and that we teach using best practices. Believe it or not, we have weekly observations from our principal and associate principal via walkthroughs, although they are considered unofficial. We meet with them weekly, and we also have official observations at least twice a year. They take teaching very seriously around here. (MTC)*

Two participants who have been teaching for more than 30 years said that the teaching expectations varied quite a bit over the years, depending on who the administrators in their building were. Some years they were high, yet at other times quite low, and everything in between.

*One TC commented on expectations that were considered 'mixed.'*

*In our school there is a teacher expectation's rubric, and my assistant principal observes me 2-3 times a year. To be honest they give me enough space to do my thing. You can see that as a negative because maybe they do not prioritize PE, but other times it is for good reasons because they know that I know my stuff, they trust me, and it is a bit different because it is not the typical classroom environment. (HTC)*

Finally, one HTC is in an environment that would be considered to have low expectations for teaching. "My administration just wants to make sure that my kids are active – not much else. It is kind of a sad. I have not been observed formally in several years."

## Coaching Expectations

Of all the respondents, the least amount of pressure regarding coaching was felt by the elementary TCs, as exemplified by this response.

*There are expectations to teach fundamentals and a healthy mindset toward running and competition, as well as the social aspect of running with a team. Safety is also a priority. Winning is part of it, but we look at how our athletes compete and we want runners to do their best. . . Our teams are really good but the focus is on having fun running and the parents are on board with that. I want the kids to have the experience for themselves, not for me. (ETC)*

Middle school TCs did not feel a great deal of pressure regarding coaching expectations, but more than their ETC peers.

*Parents want to see top-notch coaches who know the sport inside and out, and can work with their kids to make them better. They also want it to be enjoyable for their kids. Winning is important for boys' teams, but not as much for the girls. For my girls' teams I focus on the growth of my players, more than wins and losses. I email parents at least once a week. I try to nip the negative talk of the parents and get them to focus on the positives. That came about because I observe and talk to other coaches to emulate what I believe to be best practices. (MTC)*

High school TCs had differing views about the culture surrounding interscholastic sports at their schools, as these two quotes illustrate.

*The focus is on teaching kids to play the right way. It might be because we have had a tremendous amount of success, which is because we have excellent athletes who work really hard. We haven't had to deal with, 'is winning important' I think because we win a lot. Parents are very supportive – mostly of the character building that they see going on. (HTC)*

*There was a heavy emphasis on winning at my school – including quality practices, instruction, serious weight room activity, the culture, etc. Now there is a real concern around here surrounding concussions and that has impacted our football and ice hockey programs pretty heavily. Also our numbers have dropped considerably over the past 10 years. Now there is less winning and for sure less pride in our athletic program. (HTC)*

### **Similarities between Teaching and Coaching**

All TCs talked about the importance of students learning, whether in the role of a teacher or a coach. They expressed more similarities than differences in the two roles.

*Coaching is teaching and teaching is coaching. I don't see a great deal of difference. When you teach you ask yourself, 'are the kids learning and how should I assess their learning?' When you are coaching you are still asking if they are learning. Now granted the assessment in coaching looks different. I think one of the greatest experiences with coaching is working on something in practice that needs to be improved on, and then you see it translate in a game the next day. Then you feel validated as a coach – but you are teaching when you are coaching. (MTC)*

*I try to make it as similar as possible because when I wake up I get fired up to coach. So, I try to take that excitement and put into my teaching as much as I can. I love to teach skills in both. In teaching I love it when kids can finally do something they've been trying to do and they get so excited – they stand a bit taller and you can just see the emotion and how good they feel. I am a high-energy guy and that is inherent I think when coaching sports but it is important for me to do with my classes too. I like to put on music, get people going. I think there are good ways and bad ways to teach and to coach. I want to make sure I am good at both. My job is to move kids to make them better, whether they are really athletic or bottom of the barrel physically. I need to help them get better. That is true for teaching and coaching. (HTC)*

*When I am coaching football or strength and conditioning - or when I am teaching PE, I treat them all as learning opportunities. It is all about the learning for me, and I can do that in coaching because it isn't all about winning here. I can focus in coaching on making sure my players are learning the game and focusing on skills. Whereas that is less important at a place where it is all about winning. In that type of place if I have 60 players and a kid is not getting it, well then, 'next guy up' and see you later to the other kid. ... So to me, whether I'm teaching a lesson on badminton, or coaching a varsity football practice working on our inside zone running game – to me it is all the same. I love being involved with kids pursuing mastery in something we can share an interest or passion for. (HTC)*

### **Differences between Teaching and Coaching**

Three TCs mentioned that student athletes have a choice in playing, whereas students in PE do not.

*For PE, all students are required to take it, but field hockey is different, as students are there by choice. PE has a variety of activities and there is a range of student abilities in each of them. I teach multiple lessons in a given activity so I have a lot of time to reflect and improve on lessons. For field hockey, you get one shot at things. Another difference is that teaching is mostly private and coaching games is very public. (MTC)*

Three participants mentioned that it is easier to develop more personal relationships with student athletes and their parents, than it is with their students.

*In coaching there is more of a connection between the runner, their family and I. I see parents at the end of every practice and race. I try to make personal connections with parents so they clearly understand my philosophy toward running. I can't make as close a connection with all the students I teach because time is limited and there are just too many kids. (ETC)*

Three TCs spoke to the more inclusive nature of teaching than coaching, as exemplified by these two quotes:

*I think most teachers can be a good coach. I do not think most coaches can be a good teacher. Coaches have a different way of thinking. When I am a PE teacher, I'm thinking of the entire student, teaching all skills, everyone getting along, where teamwork is important. I think the coach thinks more about winning the game. The goal is different coaching than teaching. In coaching, if a kid fails, that can only happen so much before a change needs to happen. In teaching, I am okay if a kid fails again and again and again until they finally learn the skills. I don't see that a coach is able to do that. You put a hardcore coach into a classroom and they are going to overlook a lot of students. Teaching is so much more inclusive. (MTC)*

*Nothing will trump for me when teaching PE, making sure my kids are in an environment where they feel comfortable, safe, and are successful. Top to bottom – from the best performing kids, cognitively and kinesthetically, to the worst. In coaching, often times the top to bottom mentally is not the case. More time is spent with the starters, and the middle guys, and not the players at the bottom who are essentially disposable. So there is a big difference there to me. So are teachers and coaches the same? I think it really depends on the expectations regarding your coaching. For me I like it best when I teach and coach in a similar manner. (HTC)*

## **Planning**

All of the ETCs and three of the four MTCs said that they planned more for teaching than they did for coaching. Teaching planning could include lesson plans, meeting with special needs personnel, unit plans and curriculum development, while coaching planning could involve practice plans, electronic supplemental information for players, playbooks, and/or analyzing video for game preparation. Two of these five participants did mention that when they coached at the high school level they spent more time planning than what they do now at the elementary and middle school levels.

As an ETC stated,

*I spend more time preparing for teaching than I do for coaching. I revisit my curriculum all the time and I have a lesson plan book for all my lessons and they contain my teaching goals for the year. I send out lesson plans in advance to all the paraprofessionals [teaching aides] and therapists that work with my students who have special needs. I also film sessions so the kids can preview what they will be doing. Particularly for autistic kids, this has a calming effect on them when they come to the gym. I also attend IEP [Individual Education Plans] for my students. I spend a lot of time on my teaching planning because it is really important to me. My coaching*

*planning at the elementary level for cross-country is not that involved. I know what I need to do for each practice and meet, but it does not take up nearly as much time as planning for teaching.*

A similar sentiment was expressed by a MTC,

*I find myself spending more time planning for lessons than practice. In practice these days we are working on a lot of the same things over and over again. I use Google classroom for both my teaching and coaching. I have my catchers watch a 3-minute YouTube video on the importance of framing pitches, for example. When my kids can watch these videos before practice I find that it helps. It is like a flipped classroom. Planning for teaching is more involved though, as I have so many different skill ability levels in my classes. I have to teach to competencies and national standards also, and I spend a lot of time on assessments.*

The three HTC's and one MTC commented that they spent more time planning for coaching than teaching. As a HTC said,

*Initially I spent a ton of time on planning [for teaching] but now that I have been doing it for a while I make smaller changes to my unit and lesson plans. I spend more time at home on coaching. For example, I break down football film. I would not do that for teaching. In school the time is a little more equal planning for teaching and coaching but still a bit more for coaching.*

Another HTC stated that,

*I plan every minute of every practice, and coaching is really different every day. I have been teaching PE so long [30+ years] so I have lesson plans already done – my school requires them, but I just have to tweak them a bit. We also revisit our curriculum every year and I'm working on competencies for grading, but I do spend more time planning for coaching.*

### **Identify More as a Teacher or a Coach**

Four participants stated that they identify equally as a teacher and a coach. As a HTC commented,

*I identify both as a teacher and a coach and I do a lot of similar things in both roles. I run my classes on a timer, where things are measured out time-wise, and I do the same when I coach football. I have a digital playbook for football and in PE my students have electronic portfolios. Even some kids in my class, who do not have me as a coach, call me coach. I have come to realize that I am happiest when these roles are very similar.*

Four also stated that they identify more as a teacher than a coach. One MTC said that:

*I definitely identify more as a teacher than a coach. My students see me clearly as their teacher who happens to coach as well. I purposefully focused on just teaching at the beginning of my career. I like to do things very meticulously and I wanted the teaching part to be very solid before adding coaching and other responsibilities to my life.*

Finally, one HTC replied that his identification was mainly as a coach. "I did not do PE as an undergrad, so I took the alternative certification route." So as a result he stated that, "When people ask me what I do, I say I'm a teacher and a coach. But I think I identify more as a coach. If I wasn't coaching, I don't think I would have gotten into teaching."

The participants were also asked if they identified more as a teacher, a coach, or both equally when they were undergraduates. As above, the same four that identified as teachers presently, saw themselves as mainly that as college students. Two of the participants who identified themselves as equally teachers and coaches did so as undergraduates as well. Two

others were not in a PE program as undergraduates (athletic training and psychology) and one participant was not sure how he identified more than 30 years ago.

### **Contact Time Spent in Teaching versus Coaching**

Contact teaching time ranged for the participants depending on what level they were in. The least amount of contact time with students was an ETC who met students once a week for 35 minutes. The most amount of contact time was for a HTC who met students 90 minutes, every other school day. The ratio of contact time for coaching was similar across grade levels. The least amount was the same ETC meeting student athletes for practice once a week for an hour. There was also one meet per week for roughly one-two hours, depending on the number of teams competing. The most amount of contact coaching time was a HTC who met student athletes five times a week for a total of 10 hours, plus a game that would take roughly two hours. In every case the TCs had more contact time with their student athletes, than with their students.

### **Teaching versus Coaching Styles**

TCs were asked to comment on their perceived teaching and coaching styles, as well as instruction time versus game play time for both. All of the participants spoke about the importance of emphasizing skill development, both in their teaching and their coaching. Two quotes are representative of this concept. “When I think about my teaching and coaching styles, I think they are similar. I give very direct instruction in both, and I give students as much time as needed to perfect skills” (MTC). Also,

*I'm a firm believer that you gotta teach skills in order to play the game with reasonable success... Then, if the kids are getting it, you can introduce tactical awareness and decision-making. We get into game play, but only when kids are ready (MTC).*

The implication of this is that the participants felt that their teaching and coaching styles were fairly similar. Some did suggest, however, that there was some variation.

*In coaching there is a lot of direct instruction but in teaching it depends on the unit. If I'm teaching rock climbing I am very direct with them. But it is different when teaching initiative tasks because the students spend a lot of time problem solving on their own (HTC).*

Another MTC commented that,

*I do a fair amount of direct instruction when I teach, but not as in-depth as when I coach. In teaching you cover a lot of different activities so there is more breadth, but not as much depth. Coaching is all about mastering many of the same skills and so you work over and over on them till they get it.*

### **Teaching and Coaching Professional Development**

All of the participants commented that they engaged regularly in professional development (PD) for teaching, by attending state PE conferences. Seven of the nine mentioned that they have attended national PE conferences (AAHPERD, now called SHAPE). Five stated that they have attended regional SHAPE conferences as well. Another common form of PD, mentioned by four participants was taking graduate-level courses, and another four mentioned workshops taken within their local school districts. As one MCT stated regarding PD pertaining to teaching:

*I can't get enough of it. I attend conferences all over the place, including state and regional every year. I also attend SHAPE as much as possible. I did Asheville, NC in*

*the summer. I write curriculum for OPEN [online PE network], I'm online all the time with PD stuff. I also take workshops within my district and grad level courses nearby.* Pertaining to coaching PD, participants were also actively involved, but not at the level of PD for teaching. Seven participants commented specifically that they had attended conferences related to coaching (although three mentioned that they were in conjunction with teaching). Five TCs spoke of their attendance at clinics, workshops and/or seminars and five mentioned specifically that they belonged to professional associations related to coaching. As a HTC stated, "PD for my coaching is really important to me. I am always attending conferences and workshops. I love to talk to other coaches, you know, to pick their brains about how and why they do things."

### **Is Teaching or Coaching More Rewarding?**

When TCs were asked whether they felt that their teaching was more rewarding, or their coaching or if they felt both were equally rewarding – the vast majority (seven) said both were rewarding but for different reasons. For example, an ETC said that,

*Teaching is rewarding every day, almost every moment as there is instant feedback from students telling you how much they are learning, demonstrating their learning and asking what are we going to do next. You know you are making a difference. I think in coaching you make a lasting impact in a different way. Years later my runners come back to see me and tell me how important running is in their life. A former runner came to see me recently and she is currently running at an elite level and it makes me feel good that I somehow had a little bit of an impact on her wanting to pursue her running career. That makes me want to coach even more, even though it is a lot of work.*

Furthermore, a MTC commented that,

*This is a tough question for me because both are really rewarding. You work hard with your team and you walk off with a great win – WOW. In PE, you see a kid light up when they finally accomplish something that they have been working really hard to master. I have a hard time separating them because kids' successes keep me going.*

A HTC stated that,

*Both are really rewarding. On the one hand I really like seeing my PE kids who start out hating PE and by the end of the semester engaged and enjoying activity. Coaching for me is more about life lessons, developing things like perseverance and competitive spirit. I don't think one is more important than the other.*

The other two participants felt that teaching was more rewarding than coaching. As a HTC responded:

*I feel most rewarded when I teach rather than coach. Many of my students feel like they are forced to take a PE class. They feel like they would not sign up for this, they don't really want to be active. To get me to light up about this is going to be a task. I really like that challenge and it is really, really rewarding to see how many of these students are responding to my teaching style, and the experiences they are having. Whereas in coaching – the kids are choosing to participate. So you are going to get kids who right away love it. It is just not as empowering for me when I see these kids progress, as it is a kid who I know I helped make a complete U-turn regarding their willingness to be active.*

### **Most Committed to Teaching or Coaching or Both?**

The participants' responses to this question varied a little from the previous question about what was most rewarding. While seven said both teaching and coaching were equally

rewarding and two said teaching was the most – five said they were more committed to teaching than coaching, with the other four saying they felt equally committed to both. Four of the five who felt most committed to teaching answered in part from a practical standpoint that is exemplified with the following quote by a HTC. “Every time I look at my paycheck for teaching and for coaching, it reminds me what I should be most committed to and focused on.” All of the TCs in this study were paid predominately for their teaching, with stipends for coaching that were a small percentage of their teaching salaries.

A typical response for participants who felt equally committed to teaching and coaching was from this HTC.

*I feel committed to the kids and the bigger picture – both in teaching and coaching. Anyone can lecture but the teachers that stand out are the ones that have connections with kids. I'm committed to reaching as many kids as I can. This might be a dynamic wrestler on my team, or all the way to the super non-athlete in PE who never liked sports. How do I get these kids to feel better about where they are going? I convince them to try things, to not be scared - go for it!*

### **Dual Role of Teacher/Coach**

When participants were asked if the dual role of teacher and coach has stayed relatively the same or if it has somehow changed over time, all said that it has changed. Some stated that it has gotten easier for them to do both roles as they have learned how to delegate some responsibilities within the coaching role. Others have stated that after many years of doing both, the dual role has naturally evolved, but again with regard to coaching. As this MTC commented,

*I've been at this a long time [30+ years] and as I have gotten older I'm not as hardcore - I have softened up. It happens to everyone I think. Yes, I still want to win, but more than anything I want the kids to have a good experience. Winning isn't everything to these kids, particularly now that I am not coaching high school these days. As I have lightened up in my coaching, the dual role of teaching and coaching seem more similar to me than in the past.*

### **Burnout**

All the participants were asked if they ever felt burned out fulfilling multiple roles. If so, how did they deal with it and if not, how did they avoid it? Five commented that they never felt really burned out. Some used humor when discussing the issue, such as this MTC who has been working for more than 30 years in schools.

*I wouldn't say I ever felt really burned out. I would say on Sundays I'm relaxing big time! I feel like my battery is dying and I need to recharge it. Also during the week I try to get a run in almost every day and I make sure I get plenty of sleep every night. Don't get me wrong; I go to bed early – that's my life. You have to take the time; you have to make the time and you need to take care of yourself.*

Four of the nine participants confessed that they feel burned out at times, as these quotes will attest to.

*Yes, I feel burned out sometimes. I teach my wrestlers how to deal with it so I am good at recognizing it myself. If I feel bad, I always try to help someone else out first. It brings the flow back for me. Then you have to remember to look after yourself. Having little kids helps me a lot because I go to bed way earlier than I used to. Getting eight hours of sleep is important, so is nutrition, all that healthy stuff. (HTC)*

*I did take on more than I thought this year and so I have struggled a bit. So when I tip the balance and felt off kilter, I started to approach the feelings of being burned out.*

*When I was in balance I never hit burnout. I was always excited, always motivated to get out and do more things. I am still fairly new to the AD position and I have no one to help me through a lot of things I need to do. I know it will get better each year I do it. You need to get plenty of sleep! All the time I put into my AD job, I used to spend on teaching. Take the extra time and effort to spend with kids and help make the program better. I feel like my PE program is suffering because of it. (MTC)*

### **Positive Role Balance**

Participants were told that positive role balance pertained to doing multiple roles well, and they were asked what they thought were important factors to achieving this, given that the TCs seem to have achieved this. All but two kept their comments to teaching and coaching and spoke in mostly positive terms. They discussed the importance of being organized, learning to say 'no' sometimes, and trying to understand their limits. As a HTC stated,

*You have to like multi-tasking and you need to be organized. You have to have goals for teaching, coaching and being a department head. You have to keep all your ducks in a row or you end up being overwhelmed and not at all in balance.*

*One MTC confessed to struggling with keeping a positive role balance.*

*This year I am struggling teaching, coaching and being an [athletic director] AD a bit. The biggest thing is maintaining your enthusiasm. The more enthusiastic you are, you don't see what you are doing as work but rather something you really enjoy. Talking with others who are in similar situations helps. I have a bunch of people who I can reach out to, and that makes things easier for me.*

The other two participants commented on not only being a teacher and a coach (and even an AD or Department Head), but also a spouse and a parent. As one stated,

*Between being a teacher, a coach and having a family, you know, you take it one day at a time. It is really important for me to find some time to do for myself, before I can do for others. Doing everything is hard – it's not for the elderly!*

Although not asked specifically, some of the participants expressed that doing both positively impacted their teaching and coaching roles. "I used to see teaching and coaching as two separate entities when I first started. Now I see coaching as more of an extension of my 'classroom.' I have found that good classroom management strategies carry over well to coaching, for example" (MTC).

*I do think the fact I coach has made me a better teacher. The beginning of practice there is always a lot of clapping and shouting to get my players pumped up and now I do that at the beginning of my classes too. I think it helps to build excitement – its good. (HTC)*

*I think there are a lot of similarities between teaching and coaching, to be honest. Teaching helps you to break down skills. As a coach - I think I'm a better teacher because I coach. I learned how to develop the skills even more. I therefore bring more competition into my classes, without ruining it, if that makes sense. Teaching and coaching compliment each other nicely. (MTC)*

### **Field Notes**

As alluded to earlier, the description of the field notes will be limited, due to the length of this article. The reporting will also be collective in nature. As participants stated in their interviews, their teaching styles were more similar than different to their coaching styles. All TCs were observed focusing on at least some skill development in the lessons that they taught. This ranged from a total emphasis on skill development for an upper elementary soccer lesson, a middle school fly-fishing casting lesson and a Pilates lesson at the high school level,

down to 20% of a lesson before students played a pickle ball tournament at the middle school level. What stood out in all the teaching lessons was the emphasis on teachers giving students encouragement and individual feedback on a continual basis.

The coaching episodes followed a similar pattern to the teaching ones. Again, there was a strong emphasis on skill development. Some practice sessions were devoted entirely to skill development, such as skill drills for middle school lacrosse and softball practices. Others had a majority of skill development but also included up to 25% of time allotted to a full scrimmage/game of volleyball, for example. When coaches did engage their players in game play, however, they tended to stop play to instruct more than they did when they taught a PE lesson. The exception to this was cross-country running at the elementary level, where the majority of the practice was not devoted to skill development at all, but rather just running. All the coaches gave a great deal of encouragement and individual feedback to their players, just as they did when teaching. In general, the coaches spent more time with each player giving feedback, however, compared to the amount of time spent with each student when teaching.

#### **4. DISCUSSION**

Five of the nine TCs commented that they believed that the administration in their school district had high expectations for their teaching. This manifest itself through multiple supervisory visits with assessment rubrics, required lesson and unit plans, updated curriculum planning and assessments that met grade level outcomes. A majority of the research that has examined this issue has revealed that TCs in other studies did not feel as though there was much of any expectation for teaching (Chelladurai & Kuga, 1996; Hardin, 1999; Herbert, 2007; Richards & Templin, 2012). This study did find that two TCs claimed that over 30 years of working in schools has resulted in expectations being mixed, depending on the administrators at the time. Another TC felt that expectations were mixed, in the sense that administrators cared about his quality teaching, but on the other hand were not present as much in his environment as they were in academic classroom settings. Finally, one TC claimed that similar to other study results, his administration did not have much of any expectations for his teaching - as long as his students were active and not getting into trouble then everything was fine.

Coaching expectations (from administration, parents and community) of the TCs varied somewhat depending on the grade level they taught and coached in. The elementary TCs felt like the expectations for coaching were all about their students having quality experiences, whereby no one was cut and there was not a strong emphasis on winning. The middle school TCs felt the same way about providing quality experiences for their students/players, and winning became more important, but not at the level where a TC felt it could impact their employment as a coach. The TCs at the high school level also talked about the importance of providing quality experiences for their athletes, but they alluded to the fact that often they paid attention to first team players more than they did their marginal players. These TCs talked more about winning than the other TCs, but similar to the MTCs, none of them mentioned that they felt that their win-loss record would have any bearing on their employment as a TC. This is in contrast to the TC research literature that found that TCs often mentioned that they could lose their job as a coach if they did not win enough (Hardin, 1999; Locke & Massengale, 1978; Millslagle & Morley, 2004; Richards & Templin, 2012; Sage, 1978).

All nine of the TCs in this study felt that there were more similarities than differences between teaching and coaching. All of the participants discussed how in both environments their major focus was on quality learning experiences in physical activity settings for their students and athletes. This finding is similar to what O'Connor and Macdonald (2002), found,

but the reality is that many more studies found that TCs expressed that they felt there were more differences than similarities in the two roles (Aicinena, 1999; Biddle, 2001; Chelladurai & Kuga, 1996; Hardin, 1999; Konukman, et al., 2010; Kwon, Pyun, & Kim, 2010; Millslagle & Morley, 2004). TCs in this study did comment that there are differences as well – just not as much as there are similarities. Three TCs mentioned that coaching athletes, who have chosen to play a sport, is very different than teaching students in PE who are required to be there. Three other TCs stated that they were able to develop much stronger relationships with athletes (and their parents) than they possibly could with their students in classes – given the more infrequent times they meet and the larger class sizes than their coach/athlete ratios. Three other participants commented that for them a big difference was that they felt they were much more inclusive of all students when teaching, than they were when they coached.

Five of the TCs stated that they spent more time planning for teaching than they did for coaching, albeit all of them were teaching and coaching at the elementary or middle school level. This result was not found to be true in any of the TC studies reviewed for this article. The other four participants (one MTC and all three HTC) commented that they spent more time planning for coaching than they did for teaching. This is similar to what Hardin (1999) found in his study.

When asked whether they identified more as a teacher or a coach, four TCs stated that they identified as both, and four more declared that they identified more as a teacher. Only one commented that he identified more as a coach than a teacher. This finding is at odds with multiple studies that found TCs identified more as a coach than a teacher (Chelladurai & Kuga, 1996; Hardin, 1999; Herbert, 2007; Sage, 1987). Looking further at identification – participants were asked if they identified more as a teacher or a coach when they were in their undergraduate, teacher preparation program. An earlier discussion on acculturation alluded to the fact that where PETE students fall on the teacher – coach continuum may impact how they perceive their dual role of a teacher and a coach later in their career. In fact in this study, the four TCs who claimed to identify most as a teacher, said that was the case back when they were an undergrad as well. Also, two of the four participants who stated that they identified as both equally now, also identified equally as undergrads. Two other TCs were not enrolled in a PETE undergraduate program, so they could not answer the question regarding identification, and the final TC stated that he could not remember what he identified as, more than 30 years ago.

The TCs felt that their teaching and coaching styles were more similar than different, with an emphasis on direct instruction pertaining to skill development. This result is in contrast to Kwon et al., (2010) who found that TCs in their study were much more direct in their coaching, than they were in their teaching. An analysis of the field notes pertaining to observations of teaching and coaching episodes confirmed that the TCs did indeed teach and coach in a way that they said they did.

Seven of the nine TCs spoke about feeling equally rewarded for their teaching and coaching. The other two participants commented that they felt most rewarded when they taught. The fact that none of the TCs felt most rewarded when they coached is at odds with the research on this topic, that has shown TCs feeling most rewarded when coaching (Chelladurai & Kuga, 1996; Hardin, 1999). Interestingly, although the current finding revealed that most participants felt equally rewarded - five of the nine TCs commented that they felt most committed to teaching, with the other four stating that they felt equally committed to teaching and coaching. What tipped the balance to more feeling committed to teaching was the very practical perspective that they were being paid mainly to teach, not coach.

Five of the nine TCs claimed that they have never felt burned out, even though they have been teaching and coaching and for some engaged in heavy administrative work such as being an AD or Department Chair. The other four admitted to feeling burned out at least

occasionally. There is ample evidence in the research literature that states it is fairly common for TCs to get burned out (For a review see Richards et al, 2014b). Participants in this study, whether they avoided burnout altogether or felt it at times, discussed ways to avoid or limit its effects. Most of the strategies revolved around taking care of themselves. Getting enough sleep, exercising, and finding ‘me’ time were prevalent in their responses.

Given that the TCs seemed to avoid serious issues with burnout, they were asked what they felt were the keys to success in maintaining a positive role balance. Interestingly, even though the question was open-ended, seven of the nine only discussed the roles of teaching and coaching, but not the role of a parent or a spouse. Much of the research on positive role balance includes professional roles, as well as family (Marks & MacDermid, 1996; Ryan, 2008; Voydanoff, 2002). The participants in this study seemed to separate their personal lives from their professional lives, at least in their response to this question.

Even though a question was not asked directly, three TCs commented that they felt they were better as a teacher and coach because they did both. They gave examples of how one role helped to inform the other. This was not a typical result of TC research that was studied. The only evidence of this was Napper-Owen & Phillips (1995) reporting that a TC felt feedback and instruction improved in their teaching, because they were a coach.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Several of the findings in this study were different than multiple studies that examined TCs. Therefore, the fact that the participants recruited were teacher award winners, perhaps helps to explain these differences. The majority of TCs in the study felt like the administrators in their schools had high expectations of their teaching. With regard to coaching expectations, however, the TCs did not feel that winning was a high priority (certainly not at the elementary and middle school levels), and would not impact whether they were able to keep their coaching jobs. The participants felt that there were more similarities than there were differences between their teaching and coaching roles. Slightly more TCs stated that they planned more for teaching than they did for coaching. The identification as a teacher or a coach held true for these participants, meaning that more than likely they identified presently in a way that was similar to when they were undergraduate students. Seven of the nine TCs stated that they felt equally rewarded while teaching and coaching – with the other two felt teaching was most rewarding. The majority of respondents commented that they never really felt burned out teaching and coaching, although the other four admitted to feeling so at least occasionally. All the participants seemed to have achieved positive role balance between teaching and coaching (although one was struggling with the new role of being an AD), and three made unsolicited comments that they felt the dual roles of teacher and coach helped them to be better at both.

Richards and Templin (2012) have argued that, “role conflict is not automatic and that individuals experience their teaching and coaching responsibilities differently based on their personal dispositions and environmental factors” (p. 171). The findings in this study would support this argument as the evidence here has shown that these nine TCs did not experience role conflict in any significant way.

There were limitations to the study, particularly given that the sample size was very small. The participants were also ones that had won at least one award for their teaching. Therefore, it is not possible to generalize these findings to TCs overall. However, these findings do add to the literature in this area and future research is warranted. It would be valuable to expand this research to more TCs and compare and contrast findings from different types of TCs – those awarded for their teaching, those awarded for coaching and those that are not recruited as award winners. When TCs are found that seem to thrive in the

dual role of teacher and coach, they should be examined more closely to help determine dispositions and strategies that combine to allow for this very positive result.

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