

ARTICLE REVIEWED

Understanding Physical Education Teachers' Help-Seeking Behaviors in a Facebook Professional Learning Community

Xie, X., & Chen, Y.-J. (2023). Understanding physical education teachers' help-seeking behaviors in a Facebook professional learning community. *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education*, 42(2), 197–205. <https://doi.org/10.1123/jtpe.2021-0238>

THE PROBLEM

Continuous professional learning is critical in improving one's teaching practice. In recent years, it has been challenging for physical education teachers to build specific learning communities. Professional learning communities have been widely adapted to support teachers' ongoing professional learning on social media. Recent research has started to emerge on physical educators' use of social media. Social media may serve as an option for physical educators to continue their professional development and stay connected with other educators. However, it is unclear how physical educators utilize, interact, and seek help in social media as a professional learning community.



Research Summary

A case study was conducted to explore physical educators' help-seeking behaviors in a social media-based professional learning community on Facebook. A total of 4,323 Facebook posts were collected, and descriptive and qualitative analyses were performed. For the quantitative analysis, a coding template was established by the researchers to collect different categories of information from each post, including format (e.g., text, multimedia, or both), connection to other online resources, grade levels applied (e.g., preschool, K–2, 3–5, 6–8, 9–12, college, other), number of “likes” and comments received, and gender of the publisher. The gender of the publishers was identified based on their Facebook profiles, and the grade levels applied were identified based on the content of the posts or the publishers' clarifications in the comments. Qualitative content analysis was first: The researchers independently read and summarized 30 randomly selected posts using headings and keywords to describe the purpose of the posts with the analytic memos taken. Discussions were held after practicing open coding to increase coding agreement. The researchers then each coded over 2,000 posts respectively. All posts were coded as either “help seeking” or “non-help seeking.” Six themes were derived from their findings.

Conclusion

Six themes emerged from the analysis to report the types of help sought by users of the Facebook professional learning community: (1) teaching ideas and materials; (2) equipment and technology; (3) classroom management and discipline; (4) extracurricular event and program development; (5) career and professional development; and (6) social and emotional support. The majority of the help-seeking posts were from females; thus, it is important to get more males involved in professional learning communities.

Key Takeaway

These findings emphasize the significance of leveraging social media platforms, particularly professional learning communities, as integral resources for physical educators. As individuals seek to maintain connections following conferences and national conventions, platforms such as Facebook offer promising avenues for sustained engagement and support.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Beddoes, Z., Prusak, K., & Barney, D. (2023). Professional Learning Communities in physical education: Preparing teachers to thrive. *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance*, 94(1), 38–44. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07303084.2022.2136317>