

ARTICLE REVIEWED

Physical Education Teachers' Experiences With Remote Instruction During the Initial Phase of the COVID-19 Pandemic

Mercier, K., Centeio, E., Garn, A., Erwin, H., Marttinen, R., & Foley, J. (2021). Physical education teachers' experiences with remote instruction during the initial phase of the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education*, 40(2), 337-342.

THE PROBLEM:

The COVID-19 pandemic forced physical education teachers to change the way they teach. In spring 2020, most PE teachers in the United States were moved to remote teaching in just a couple of weeks. With the removal of in-person instruction came several challenges for teachers — specifically, how to keep students active during a time when many were under shelter-at-home guidelines.

Physical education has been a marginalized subject, and this became blatantly obvious during the onset of the pandemic as PE teachers were expected to find effective ways to teach students remotely with little to no assistance from those outside the physical education community.



Research Summary:

The purpose of this study was to identify and understand the methods physical education teachers used to remote teach during the beginning of the pandemic. The participants of this study were 4,362 current K-12 physical education teachers from across the United States. They completed a one-time survey that asked them questions about the methods they were implementing to keep children active at home. The questions varied using Likert scales, multiple selection, yes/no, and open-ended questions. Specifically, the researchers asked the participants about their learning standard priority, submission of students' assignments, students' access to technology, use of video, and a self-rating on teaching effectiveness.

Conclusion:

In this study, the researchers found that 51% of PE teachers required students to submit assignments and 37% used video to provide instruction during the onset of COVID-19. It is important to note that PE teachers' responses varied based on region, grade level being taught, and school district. For example, rural PE teachers reported the highest percentage (24%) of feeling less effective in their teaching; however, they also reported having the least access to technology for their students.

Key Takeaway:

Although the focus of this study was to understand the methods used by PE teachers during the stay-at-home orders, it also highlights the disparities between groups. While secondary teachers reported having more access to technology for their students, this was not true for secondary teachers in rural districts. The authors suggest that efforts need to be made to meet the needs of these groups who have less access, such as through grants specifically designed for them. This study also highlights that PE teachers are willing to use technology to teach but need more guidance. Professional development should focus on providing technology implementation in PE settings.