

ARTICLE REVIEWED

Chapter 4: Twitter as a Professional Development Platform Among U.S. Physical Education Teachers

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THE PROBLEM:

Social media is a growing platform for more than just connecting with friends. Some social media sites, such as Twitter, can be used as ways to connect with others in the same field. In recent years, Twitter has become a platform for continuing professional development (CPD) for physical educators.

Specifically, physical educators have been using Twitter as a way to connect, learn, discuss, and share ideas with others. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to understand why and how U.S. physical educators use Twitter as CPD.



Research Summary:

The participants of this qualitative study were 32 physical educators with most being White (91%) and teaching at the elementary level (81.25%). Each PE teacher participated in a semi-structured interview. From the interviews, four themes emerged: a) socialization into Twitter takes times and is often encouraged by existing members; b) socialization through Twitter focuses on improving practices via the sharing of resources; c) everyone has a voice on Twitter, but content requires critical appraisal; and d) teachers create a community on Twitter that addresses marginalization and isolation.

Conclusion:

The study found that Twitter can allow for physical educators to take control of their own CPD by controlling the content and the pace. They also found that physical educators must be able to sort and recognize quality content, as Twitter is a public domain and therefore, it is difficult to regulate all content. It should be noted that the participants felt it took time to integrate into the Twitter CPD; however, they felt they were welcomed and now are able to learn and share their own content with others. By being able to connect with other physical educators, Twitter can serve as a mechanism to combat feelings of marginalization and isolation felt by PE teachers.

Key Takeaway:

This study provides evidence that Twitter can serve as a way for physical educators to learn, collaborate, educate, and connect with others in the field. If you're looking to join Twitter, it is free to create an account and you can use hashtags like #physed and #physicaleducation to begin connecting.