

## Pre-Service Physical Education and Sport Teachers' Professional Selves and Mentor Perceptions before the Practicum

**Yağmur Güler**

Department of Physical Education and Sport Teaching, Faculty of Sport Sciences, Ankara University, Türkiye

**Damla Güler**

Department of Physical Education and Sport Teaching, Faculty of Sport Sciences, Ankara University, Türkiye

### Abstract

The purpose of this study is to explore how pre-service physical education teachers construct their professional selves prior to the teaching practicum, their expectations for professional development, and their perceptions of the mentor-mentee relationship. A qualitative research design was adopted, and data were collected through semi-structured interviews with fourteen pre-service teachers enrolled in a faculty of sport sciences. The data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis approach. The analysis revealed three main themes: (1) Constructions of Teacher Self, (2) Expectations of Change and Development, and (3) Conceptions of the Mentor Teacher. Participants described teaching through images such as "light," "shepherd," "farmer," "manager," and "beehive," highlighting guidance, care, nurturing potential, and creating a safe learning environment. They also expected the practicum to foster confidence, patience, flexibility, classroom management, and communication skills, while helping them adopt more positive personal attitudes. The mentor teacher was depicted through both hierarchical metaphors such as "master," "coach," and "shepherd," and collaborative ones such as "beehive" and "athlete-coach." The findings suggest that teacher education programs should take into account pre-service teachers' self-conceptions, developmental expectations, and perceptions of mentor-student relationships before the practicum, as these dimensions play a crucial role in shaping professional identity and supporting personal transformation.

### Keywords

Physical education and sport, self-perception, mentor teacher perception, pre-service teachers, teaching practicum.