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'Trying to get our message across': Successes and challenges in an evidence-based professional development programme for sport coaches

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Abstract

This paper reports data from the evaluation of a coach education programme provided by a major national governing body of sport (NGB) in the UK. The programme was designed for youth sport coaches based on research evidence that suggests that CPD is most effective in supporting practitioner learning when it is interactive, collaborative and located in practice. At the same time, the NGB was keen to ensure that in order to meet the objectives of the organisation, there was some consistency in delivery across the various practice sites. The research aimed to investigate how the original CPD programme was enacted across 8 professional sports clubs, and to understand how professional knowledge was interpreted and negotiated between participants at the NGB and sports club levels. Over a 2-year period, data were collected from a series of focus groups and extended individual semi-structured interviews. Participants were 7 senior managers, 8 coach educators, 8 Academy club directors, and 12 sports club coaches. Data were initially analysed inductively and, drawing on the theoretical work of Bernstein (1999, 2000), illustrate the numerous ways in which programme knowledge was interpreted, facilitated and blocked at different levels of the organisation. The paper adds new insights into the complexities of coach education settings and the inherent challenges faced when attempting to 'roll out' a coach education intervention – even when it is 'evidence-based'.

Keywords: Youth coaches, Bernstein, CPD, Recontextualisation, Learning *in situ*

Introduction

An extensive body of research on continuing professional development (CPD) suggests a number of ways in which participant learning might be optimised. It has been suggested, for example, that for participant learning to occur, CPD should be content-rich, engaging, relevant and sustained (Little, 2012; Desimone, 2011). Yet, despite these suggestions, research across a number of professional fields – including sport coaching - has failed to find conclusive evidence about the relative effectiveness of different types of CPD on participant learning and changes to practice (Neimeyer *et al*., 2012). As a result, there is little secure evidence about 'what works' in CPD to change learners' behaviours and improve practice.

A review of the CPD literature across education, physical education and sport coaching suggests that much research has focused on participants' learning in terms of receiving, building and applying professional knowledge within a particular setting (Armour, 2014; Nelson *et al*., 2013). Moreover, research has tended to focus on the agency between the

individual and specific CPD activities (Opfer & Pedder, 2011), with less attention given to the wider impact of organisational culture on professional development, and it is here that this paper contributes to existing knowledge on coach CPD. We argue that whereas researchers and educators have attended to the microstructures involved in CPD (e.g. situated activities, location, individuals), there needs to be a stronger emphasis on the ways in which key meso (e.g. at an institutional/club level) and macro structures (e.g.at a systems/organisational level) mediate learning impact.

The purpose of this paper is to report findings from an extended study that examined how a national governing body of sport (NGB) in the UK attempted to use existing research evidence on 'effective' CPD to underpin new approaches to their youth coach education programmes. Drawing from the professional learning literature, the NGB was cognisant of how knowing is situated in the practices of a specific context (Fenwick & Nerland, 2014), and therefore developed a new professional development programme delivering coach professional knowledge *in situ*. The study therefore offered researchers a unique opportunity to examine the opportunities, challenges and barriers to coach learning when delivered *in situ,* and to consider the coherency of the CPD message across very different learning settings. The paper reports how the CPD programme was delivered and received, the challenges faced by coach educators, and draws on the work of Bernstein (1999, 2000) and the concept of the 'pedagogic device' as an explanatory framework. Bernstein's work offers new insights into the ways in which the professional development 'message' was mobilised and reshaped by actors at different levels of the transmission pathway, and how coach professional learning was therefore enacted, facilitated and blocked. In addition, the language of Bernstein (2000) offers researchers the opportunity to describe and position the discursive practices of an organisation by relating macro-structures to micro-interactions in terms of power and control (Singh, 2002). Mindful of Daniels (2012) observation that, "*the boundaries which shape researchers' horizons often serve to severely constrain the research imagination*" (p. 2), Bernstein's work broadens the evaluative lens through which to examine learning impact, and contributes to understandings about the nature of effective CPD from a new perspective.

The paper is organised as follows. First are overviews of the current research on the nature of learning in 'effective' CPD and on organisational culture and its impact on coach learning. Next, we outline Bernstein's theory of recontextualisation as a conceptual window into the nexus between the organisational culture of the CPD provider, the coach educator, and the sports club context in which it was to be delivered. We then outline the methodology that

includes a description of the coach education programme delivered, together with detail on research evaluation design, rationale and processes. This is followed by reporting of the key findings. Lastly, we consider the challenges faced by the CPD providers.

Overview of learning in 'effective' CPD

Research suggests that coaches are supportive of CPD that enables them to develop their coaching knowledge *in situ*, and through active learning interactions such as mentoring and collaborative activities with fellow learners (Nelson *et al*., 2013). Based on what is often termed informal learning, it is argued that these types of social interactions represent relevant and meaningful professional development because they can be applied readily into practice (Coffield, 2000). Indeed, Eraut (1994) has argued that professional learning is the ability to change practice, and a substantial proportion of learning in relation to change occurs in the context of use, and it is this reasoning that underpinned the design of the CPD programme investigated in this study.

Sport coaching is not alone in struggling to identify the most effective models, frameworks and processes for CPD. Perhaps the closest profession to coaching is teaching where there is an extensive body of research on effective/ineffective CPD (Desimone, 2011; Hill *et al*., 2013). At a cursory level, a dictionary definition tells us that to be 'effective', something must be successful in producing a desired or intended result. For Wei *et al*., (2009), CPD should focus on teachers' learning, and should link knowledge and practice in ways that support professional and pedagogical growth. Similarly, de Vries and colleagues (2014) argue that effective CPD should update practitioner's knowledge and skills, engage in reflection and facilitate collaboration with colleagues. The literature is certainly replete with arguments about which kinds of CPD are most likely to 'work' in this respect (e.g. Desimone, 2011; Day & Sachs, 2005), and this is mirrored in the literature on CPD for physical education teachers (Armour &Yelling, 2004). Yet, in the USA where large-scale studies of the impact of different CPD initiatives have been funded (e.g. Santagata *et al*., 2010, video based modules; Bos et al., 2012, coaching teachers), results have been inconclusive. Reasons given include inappropriate content, poor fidelity in application, and inadequate measures (Hill *et al*., 2013). What is clear from the literature is that despite great enthusiasm for the value of CPD to facilitate practitioner growth, identifying the processes and mechanisms of 'effective' models remains elusive. As Armour *et al*., (2015) have recently reported, the CPD research in education has failed to identify the key to effective CPD, and as a result, "*despite decades of research, there remains little robust evidence to support definitive claims about what constitutes 'effective' CPD*" (p.

1). What we might conclude, therefore, is that challenges faced in defining, developing and measuring 'effective' CPD in sport coaching are part of much wider debates on this topic.

Organisational culture and professional learning

In contemporary professional learning literature, socio-cultural theories are used to conceptualise learning as an outcome of the social interactions of a particular cultural setting (Hager & Hodkinson, 2009; Billett, 2004). What practitioners do, and how they learn what to do, is an outcome of what Kemmis (2010) described as the cultural and social-political reconstructions of practice and actions. Organisations are rich in context, culture and emotion that, in turn, act as powerful determinants of learning (Wenger, 1998; Billet, 2004). From this perspective, learning can be seen as the product of 'situatedeness' (Lave &Wenger, 1991) and this also suggests that organisational culture can be a source of resistance to learning and change.

Sport NGBs are complex organisational structures characterised by networks of interconnected practice, where communication between networks are influenced by the operational and philosophical culture of the organisation (Forster, 2006). Contextualising CPD activities in organisational culture allows for a nuanced understanding of how knowledge in one structure (i.e. the CPD provider) is classified, framed and legitimised, before being 'transferred' into another (i.e. the practitioner's context) (Penney, 2013). Indeed, Biesta (2013) has argued that in its essence, education operates through the transmission of knowledge from one context to another. This suggests that for researchers, mapping how knowledge is produced and re-contextualised across contexts can offer valuable insights into the professional learning process, particularly the boundaries and barriers that act to constrain learning.

Bernstein: re-contextualising professional development activities

The challenges of providing CPD in ways that are 'effective' for both providers and practitioners are clearly documented across a range of professions (Nursing - Lee, 2011; Education - Hill *et al*., 2013; Physiotherapy - French & Dowds, 2008) and reinforce claims that definitive evidence of 'effective' CPD remain elusive. It is apparent there remains a need to better understand the processes of learning and the ways in which CPD is communicated between organisational culture and professional development practices. In this regard, the work of Bernstein (1999, 2000) offers a language to engage in a multi-level understanding of the impact of organisational culture on pedagogical practices. In particular, Bernstein offers a conceptual framework from which to understand how the NGB in this study attempted to

repackage and reconceptualise the nature of high quality coaching, and how this 'new message' was communicated through the many organisational levels before reaching practitioners at a club level. Examining this process offers insights into *how* and *why* coach educators and participants engage in professional development in the ways they do. In the following section, key tenets of Bernstein's theory that are applicable to this paper are summarised, recognising that though his work may be familiar to some readers (hence perhaps we have included too much detail) it will be less familiar to others (hence we may need more).We have, therefore, attempted to strike an appropriate balance.

Bernstein's (1990, 2000) theoretical principle of recontextualisation and, in particular, the concept of a 'pedagogic device' provide an explanatory framework to capture the mechanisms through which knowledge is produced, reproduced and transformed. Three hierarchically related rules make up the pedagogical device: (i) *distributive rules* - how 'new' knowledge is constructed and positioned; (ii) r*econtextualising rules* - where discourses are interpreted and translated to become 'legitimate' knowledge; and (iii) *evaluative rules* - pedagogic transmission and knowledge exchange that take place through the diffusion of instructional (e.g. skills, knowledge) and regulative (e.g. identity, relations) discourse. This ensemble, as Singh e*t al.*, (2013, p) suggests, provides for, *"rules or procedures by which policy knowledge is selectively translated into what is taught to who, when, where, why, and how it is evaluated or deemed as acquired*". In other words, the knowledge and policies constructed at the organisational level are subject to creative processes of interpretation and translation across the communication pathway. Therefore, it is clear that professional development discourse is an outcome of socio-political directives that select and filter knowledge to inform pedagogical practices (Day & Sachs, 2005). In this context, it is possible to conceive professional development activities as the outcome of struggles for cultural governance in which professional knowledge is legitimised and enacted.

In describing the communication relay, Bernstein (1999) described three fields or settings that produce and reproduce knowledge, each associated with specific rules of the pedagogic device:(1) primary field of knowledge production (e.g. Higher Education research); (2) field of re-contextualisation (e.g. NGB), and (3) secondary field of knowledge reproduction (e.g. sports clubs). This study was particularly interested in the practices of the recontextualisation and secondary fields in order to deepen our understanding of the ways in which coach educators and coaches reconfigured knowledge in the context of practice. The NGB, as the recontextualising field, was the site of CPD policy production and the source of key CPD

documents that communicated organisational aspirations for coach development. In the secondary field, coaches were members/affiliates of multiple agencies charged with coach development (e.g. sports club, NGB, and other professional development units), and each agency involved in enacting CPD policy and interventions through interpretation and translation. As a result coaches in this study were exposed to multiple interpretations of CPD, and therefore operated in a very crowded and sometimes competing professional learning space.

A review of the extant literature suggests that coach education research has tended to focus on the microstructures involved in CPD (e.g. Lemyre *et al*., 2006; Chesterfield *et al*., 2010) and there has been less emphasis on key meso (e.g. programmes) and macro (e.g. organisation) systems that impact the whole professional learning process. This has resulted in an understanding of CPD processes that is, arguably, too narrow, and it may explain why despite extensive research, CPD programmes often fail to deliver what organisations intend, and practitioners expect (Opfer & Pedder, 2011). It was in this context that this study sought to address the following research question.

> What are the opportunities, challenges and barriers to coach learning encountered when an NGB attempted to design and deliver a new *'in situ'* CPD programme for youth coaches?

Methods

The programme

The study involved evaluation of a new youth sport coach education programme over a 2-year period. The programme was designed because of research evidence that suggests that CPD is optimised when it is interactive, collaborative and located in practice (Desimone, 2011). Reflective of a wider cultural shift in player and professional coach development research (Jones, 2006), the programme focussed on the development of youth coaches through phase-specific sports awards and personalised CPD activities delivered in coaches' practice communities. At the heart of the CPD programme were coach educators who delivered coach development opportunities to clusters of professional sports clubs within specific regions of the UK.

In evaluating the impact of the programme, data collection strategies drew from a programme theory evaluation model (e.g. Kellogg Foundation, 2001) that addressed the relationships between programme context, mechanism and outcomes. The utility of Logic models is that

they serve to map complex social initiatives by constructing an overview of the ways in which a programme is intended to achieve its aims (Armour & Makapoulou, 2012). In this regard, and drawing from Bernstein, we were presented with a unique opportunity to capture the recontextualisation process between components identified in the Logic Model, and across two dimensions of the programme: vertically between the recontextualising field of the NGB and sports clubs, and horizontally between sport clubs and a variety of community practice settings. As we have argued, moving beyond a focus on CPD at the micro level can facilitate a nuanced understanding of how CPD knowledge/curriculum is recontextualised at different levels of the communication relay. Thus, knowledge that was originally constructed at one level is interpreted through a range of filtering systems from the organisation to the individual coach. This approach allowed us to capture processes constraining or enabling CPD programme impact at a number of different levels: the overall programme; club-level impact linked to the strategies employed by individual coach educators; and contextual factors pertaining to the NGB and each individual club.

Participants and settings

The NGB was organised in terms of multi-unit structures, intra-organisational relationships, distributed work arrangements and a significant global presence. Throughout the study, researchers were given access to senior managers and learning consultants charged with coach development. Participating sports clubs (n=8) were sampled using a stratified purposeful strategy (Patton, 2002). Described as "*samples within samples*" (Patton, 2002, p. 240), stratified purposive sampling is useful in capturing variation within a phenomenon, and in this study, allowed us to capture variation in club settings (e.g. club size and location). Ideally suited where the aim is to evaluate the implementation of educational strategies across different settings (Suri, 2011), such a strategy allowed us opportunities to examine how CPD activities were selected, how coaches and educators experienced CPD, lessons learnt from these interactions, and the impact of club culture in shaping coach/educators interpretations. Participants at the club level included Academy Managers, coach educators and full-time and part-time youth coaches. An interesting and unique dimension of study was how youth coaches were members of the NGB, but were also affiliated to other sports organisations that delivered professional development with each one having its own culturally embedded pedagogical discourse and forms of legitimised professional knowledge.

Research design and procedures

Using a 2-stage evaluation design, the first stage of the study was conducted over twelve months from December to December. Delivered across 8 professional sports clubs, study participants included 4 x coach educators (identified as CE 1-4); 4 x Academy Directors (identified as AD1-4); 4 x Head of Coaching (identified as HC 1-4); and 12 x Club Coaches (identified as CC 1-12). The aim of this phase was to use semi-structured interviews with participants in seeking to identify implicit/explicit learning theories that underpinned programme construction, and consider how the programme led to positive outcomes for clubs, coaches, and to identify barriers. Data were collected pre-programme (to establish a baseline) and then at intervals throughout the 12 months culminating in exit interviews with key participants. During this phase a Logic Model (Kellogg Foundation, 2001) was co-constructed with coach educators to provide a graphic representation of progress from baseline.

Stage 2 of the study took place in the following calendar year from January to December, with the aim of interviewing key programme decision makers and designers. The sample consisted of 1 x Chief Executive Officer identified as NGB-CEO; 4 x National Youth Coach Developers (identified as NYCD 1-4); 2 x Coaching Workforce Managers (identified as CWM 1, 2); 4 x coach educators (identified as CE 5-8). The aim was to examine assumptions made about learning in coach CPD, and to identify implicit and explicit learning theories that underpinned the CPD programme from the perspective of providers and receivers. Participants were invited to participate directly (i.e. the NGB provided names of individuals who held key coach development responsibilities), or using snowball purposeful sampling (Patton, 2002), through our emerging network of relationships in the NGB because of conducting research in phase 1.

Data Collection

Across both stages, data collection methods included semi structured individual interviews (n=48), focus groups with coach educators (n=2) and programme designers (n=1) document analysis (e.g. coach education strategy documents), and educator attendance records. At the NGB level, researchers were interested in the ways in which programme knowledge was conceptualised, legitimised and communicated. At club level, researchers focused on the filtering role of Academy Directors in giving CPD providers access to club coaches. At a practice level, the role of coach educators in contextualising the programme to fit the community practices/culture of club coaches was investigated. The aim of the question format was to encourage participants to explain how CPD was interpreted in the context of the sport, and how they translated CPD discourse in terms of theory and practice. Questions were used such as, “what do you understand by the term ‘needs-led CPD?’; “is there a consensus within

the organisation about what learning approaches underpin CPD delivery?", and "what is the role of coach educators in getting the message across" and these attempted to draw out interpretations within the 'particularities' of the sport. Across both research phases, individual interviews duration ranged between 60 – 90 minutes.

Analysis

In making sense of what participants told us, we initially engaged inductive analysis where data were trawled for findings about achieving – or not – the CPD programme aims. Drawing on tools of Grounded Theory to organise qualitative data (e.g. coding, constant comparison), interviews were transcribed and analysed independently by members of the research team using open and focused coding. Open coding involved analysing meaningful chunks of data and labelling them in ways that captured key conceptual properties. Focused coding took the form of a more refined phase in which the most frequent codes were synthesised and gathered under category headings that began to identify significant concepts/themes within the data set (see Table 1). Both activities were characterised by a process of 'constant comparison' (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) which included comparing data with data, data with categories, and categories with categories to decide on a best-fit scenario. A constructivist version of Grounded Theory (Charmaz, 2006) was deemed appropriate because it allowed research questions to be addressed while offering flexibility in capturing participants' broader experiences of CPD. Although constructed themes illuminated learning experiences, there was a need to capture structures and processes that shaped learning enactment by locating data within a theoretical framework (Bernstein, 1990, 2000). Hence, and in moving analysis from description to abstraction, the work of Bernstein was used to support analysis and interpretation of findings, rather than offering a way to 'correctly read' data (Cushion & Jones, 2014).

Insert Table 1

In the following section, data are reported within themes to demonstrate the ways in which professional learning was enacted and blocked. Direct participant quotes from each thematic database are provided and these have been selected to offer clear illustrations of the key points. The source of the data extract is provided in brackets after each quote.

Findings

Theme 1: Legitimising the message

It is interesting to note that all respondents in the official field (NGB) had a clear vision of the kinds of players that they felt should be developed. They used terms such as; '*innovative*', '*creative*', '*technically skilful'*, '*thinkers*', to describe players They also had clearly expressed visions of the types of coaches needed to deliver such player outcomes: '*motivated*', '*curious*', '*problem solvers'* and '*risk- takers'*. . In a highly charged and competitive environment with a culture focussed on 'winning', the role of the NGB, as the official field of knowledge production, was to "*help that message get out there so that [*youth*] coaches can defend three defeats in a row"* (NGB CEO). Yet despite senior managers offering a clear vision and language around their perceptions of quality coaches and coaching, there remained a significant challenge in communicating this to clubs.

> "*One of the biggest fall downs in the NGB is communication. One of the biggest weaknesses, fragmentation and lack of communication. Two of the biggest weaknesses. What ends up happening is where there's a void…. someone fills the gap*" (AD1)

Moreover, there was acknowledgment that any form of national alignment or "*consistent view*" of the professional development message had to account for "*the political sensitivities of the different bodies in the country*" (NGB CEO). There were multiple bodies charged with coach development nationally (e.g. different leagues), whose policies and practices did not always align with those of the NGB;

> *"It's a fragmented programme* [continuing professional development - CPD] *within the NGB… it's a fragmented programme within the country. You've got the* **** [organisation] *who will only CPD certain clubs and everybody else is excluded and you've got the* **** [organisation]*who want to join in with the* **** [organisation]*but the* **** [organisation]*won't let them, and yet the* **** [organisation]*will allow the* **** [organisation]*to come and join them on their CPD, the NGB seems to, I'm not quite sure what it is at the moment with it all and it's chaos, it literally is chaos. Chaotic"* (AD2)

It was clear when talking to senior managers however, that a learning discourse appeared to be firmly embedded in their strategic thinking. Illustrating Bernstein's (1990) evaluative rule (how knowledge was constructed and positioned), the source of 'new' knowledge was located in the work of an external learning consultant employed by the organisation over 14 years. As one senior manager commented:

> "*I don't think there's one sort of theory that says that's the way we're going at, I think it's an amalgamation of things and, I mean,* ****** [name] *came on board years ago as learning consultant so you know,* ***** *played a key role into us shaping people's understanding a little bit more of theories, of learning, of what the needs of people are…*" (SM4)

It was interesting to note that although an understanding of the organisation's coaching philosophy had been clearly articulated, inconsistency in translating this philosophy into practice persisted. It became clear, for example, that the new coaching programme and, in particular, coach educators, would have a brokering role in reconceptualising 'official' knowledge through the selection of instructional (e.g. skills) and regulative (e.g. principles of identity) discourse;

> *I think they have a clear understanding about how we would prefer the game to be played in this country to make it more relevant to young players. If you say, 'How should it be taught?', then I think we have mixed messages, there's some confusion, and as to the balance and the appropriateness of the, let's say styles of working with people, that needs to be ironed out before there's total agreement (AD4)*

Data illustrated that coaching knowledge, when delivered at the educator/coach level, was open to radical interpretation. In the context of CPD, the reality of the 'knowledge' relay is better understood as a complex process of meaning and interpretation. Indeed this study highlights why the relationship between organisational knowledge (i.e. official) and local knowledge (i.e. secondary) in terms of CPD curriculum and pedagogy continues to challenge both developers and users.

Theme 2: Constructing a personal experience

In this study, Bernstein was used to theorise the relationship between macro (organisational level) and micro (club level) interactions, and drawing on the pedagogic device, the communication between them. Theme 1 presented data that were illustrative of regulation and production of CPD knowledge at a structural level. In the following section (Theme 2), data illustrate the recontextualisation of this knowledge at club level, with particular reference on how CPD discourse was appropriated and relocated.

At the heart of the coach education programme were personalised learning activities delivered *in situ* to club coaches. Learning activities were the outcome of negotiations between coach educator, club coach and club director. As one coach commented;

> *"There's a face, there's regular contact, and it's just more personal and understanding. I think they were thinking you understand their club, you understand their cultures, you understand their culture, you understand all the barriers that exist in their world and I don't think you can underestimate the value of that" (CC5)*

In this personal space, it was interesting to consider the wider context of sports clubs and how they framed official knowledge to fit the context of their practice. There was considerable debate amongst Academy Directors, for instance, about the structure of the NGB's CPD provision. For instance:

> *"I think the long term is more shaping, supporting, developing individual people and groups of cultures to the long term end of improving players. The longer the process goes on, the more individual the interaction between the culture, developer, educator and the individual coach, and that obviously takes time and trust" (AD3)*

Findings indicated a degree of consensus regarding curriculum content and the kinds of learners that the NGB was trying to produce. That said, there was acknowledgement that the message, borne out of considerable "*internal discussion*" and "*research*" at senior management level, might encounter resistance through the translation process;

> *"…and if you* [club coaches] *want to take it on board or not it's entirely up to you, but we think this is a positive way forward and to be honest the vast majority will take that on board but you'll always get the clubs saying, we're 'x' club and we'll do it this way" (SM4)*

With sports clubs, Academy Directors were a significant filtering factor that influenced how the programme was received, and activities completed. For example, Academy Directors generally vocalised support for the programme but there seemed some reluctance to fully integrate access to the coach educators into the coaches' network as generally access was

controlled by the Academy Director. When asked how the perceived educators working 'within' the club, two reported,

> "*Well, first of all, the word 'within' is dangerous, because he wouldn't be within. He would be 'outside', supporting us in terms of our qualifications. Now, our circumstances could be unique...The coach educator could not come into this Club's Academy and start telling anybody what to do. It doesn't work that way. He's invited in as our guest, as our support person*". (AD3)

> "*I told him* [educator] *that he could come in but he wasn't going to change anything as we have our own way of doing things and our way is the right way*"(AD4)

In this study, sports clubs were rich in cultural practices that exerted degrees of control and power (in the ways Academy Directors framed the programme) upon the learning process. As McQuaig & Hay (2014) have argued, understanding the different spaces where knowledge is transmitted and filtered is important because organisational structures (such as NGB and sports clubs) are cultural products that serve to mediate the construction and delivery of knowledge. Although data illustrated a language and desire to facilitate new approaches to youth coach education programmes, such communication was filtered through the structural relations of the club setting. In this regard, Bernstein offers a way to, "*unpack the ways in which socially constituted agendas in education produce certain pedagogic identities for learners*" (Sriprakash, 2011, p. 538)

Theme 3 Edutainment

This theme captures the experiences of educators as they sought to interpret and translate professional knowledge, and their descriptions of how this recontextualising process played out in the pedagogical practices of the sports clubs. As we followed the work of coach educators, their ability to translate organisational aspirations for coach education came to the fore. Educators were clear that their pedagogical role involved delivering sport-specific knowledge in the most "*entertaining*" way;

> *It's about the educational entertainment sometimes. They turn up, they watch a showcase session, they watch it work or they watch **** work, played it fantastic, brilliant, they go away and in a good hour and a half there'd been loads of stuff in there but they probably*

weren't taking out the stuff they needed to take out of the session and they just had a good time (Coach Educator)

It was clear from coach interviews that the organisation's CPD provision had not always been valued in terms of coach learning. As has been reported in a range of sports (Football - Stephenson & Jowett, 2009; Ice hockey - Wright *et al*., 2007) these coaches had tended to treat CPD as a 'tick-box' exercise based on previous experience. For example;

"*What I thought was I'm going to this thing* [CPD], *I'm going to see something different. I'm going to get blown away. Going to see something different and I didn't. And I came away thinking I spent 3 hours in the car, up since 6.30am, and basically I've watched a session that my son could have put on….and he's 14. Now I see why guys warn you about CPD*" (Coach).

Any new scheme, such as the programme described in this study, would therefore have to operate in this cultural context and needed to demonstrate quality and relevance to ensure coach buy-in; "*So that's, for me, almost a shifting role. So you've gone from coach educator, coach developer, coach mentor to coaches' coach*" (CE4)

A significant feature of the landscape for coaches in this study was their affiliation to multiple 'learning' organisations, each one re-contextualising pedagogic discourse to reflect organisational culture. Coaches inhabited a professional development terrain characterised by multiple networks of pedagogical practice that filtered the cultural transmission of knowledge. In the context of professional development delivered *in situ*, coach educators were charged with facilitating an educational learning space from which differing perspectives and subjectivities were contested. It is in this space where the impact of pedagogical discourse can be seen in its influence over learners' dispositions, identities and practice. To this end, findings reflected a need to examine how educational ideas were reworked, re-interpreted and re-enacted in local contexts, and the need to acknowledge what Sriprakash (2011) called "*contextual sensitivities*" (p 254) when seeking to design so-called transferable or scalable CPD models or programmes.

Discussion

In this study, we sought to map and analyse the empirical features of a novel professional development programme. Bernstein's framework (1990, 2000) offered a window into

problematising creative processes (e.g. interpretation, translation) that generated the structural principles of professional development that previous research appears to have navigated around. Despite research suggesting effective CPD should promote active learning interactions delivered *in situ* (Desimone, 2011), findings from this study illustrated the complexity and unpredictability in the way professional knowledge was contextualised in the practice setting. Organisations and clubs, for instance, are powerful structures in promoting a social view of sport (and professional knowledge), which manifests the actions, rituals, language and practices experienced by practitioners. Subsequently, from a Bernstein perspective, the concept of framing is helpful in explicating the hierarchical relations of the CPD programme in terms of influencing pedagogic interaction (e.g. conduct, manners). Hence, where educators were encouraged to acknowledge cultural sensitivities of clubs, framing can be used to consider sites for resistance and negotiation (Sriprakash, 2011). As Edwards and Daniels (2012) have observed, professional practices, across a range of occupations, are *"historically formed, imbued with knowledge, freighted with emotion and shaped by the values and purposes of the institutions in which they are located*" (p. 40). Resonating with Bernstein's (2000) proposition of learning as a culturally situated activity, sports clubs and organisations in the study constructed boundaries that were strong and stable in terms of identity, agency and discourse, resulting in a form of *in situ* coach education control that selected, sequenced and delivered professional knowledge.

Drawing further from Bernstein (2000), three related issues come to the fore in this study: professional development choices were indicative of recontextualised knowledge (Theme: *legitimising the message*); the recontextualisation process was influenced and controlled by dominant groups (Theme*: Constructing a personal experience*); professional development experiences were an outcome of context-specific educational practices (Theme: *Edutainment*). Understanding the different pathways through which knowledge is transmitted is important because organisational structures are cultural products that serve to mediate the construction and delivery of CPD curricula (Daniels, 2012). That said, what was missing from the programme was a clear understanding of a transmission model for coach CPD that 'connected' the multiple communities involved in supporting coach learning. From this perspective, Bernstein's (2000) three interrelated rules; distributive (e.g. educators as the legitimate voice in communicating content, policy), recontextualising (e.g. how NGB's vision strategy was translated at club level) and evaluative (e.g. educator's adoption of instructional and regulative discourse) were useful in describing the generative process of knowledge communication.

Indeed, these rules go some way to explaining how the fidelity of any intervention programme is inevitably challenged by the complexity of the educational setting, and the weakness in imposing a traditional CPD transmission model e.g. top down

The value of Bernstein's framework is that it offers an interesting way to reconsider design and delivery of future learning programmes. It is clear, for example, that organisations structured in terms of intra-organisational relationships and distributed work arrangements have adopted 'top-down' CPD transmission models in an attempt to influence their workforce. Such transmission models, however, underplays the reality of the communication relay as a process of meaning and interpretation; a process that Biesta (2013) suggests should be understood as "*radically open and undetermined – and hence weak and risky*" (p. 26). Findings from this study highlight the need to acknowledge and account for the creative processes of interpretation and translation that underpin the ways in that knowledge is likely to be communicated between different contexts. In this endeavour, to understand how and why professional development discourse is enacted is to understand the structuring and interconnectivity of knowledge within and between structures, and the boundaries between that facilitate both stability and change in learning (Edwards & Daniels, 2012).

The prevailing approach to professional development, across a number of fields, continues to be one of an optimistic 'top down' model with the intention that it will lead to the seamless transmission of knowledge between different levels of the organising structure (Kent, 2004; Byrne & Keefe, 2002). This is intuitively attractive from an organisational viewpoint where the intention is for everyone to learn the same thing (Biesta, 2012). The design of the CPD programme investigated in this study was progressive, but it also represented a centralising ambition. Data, however, illustrated numerous re-contextualising structures and processes whereby knowledge was enacted. The importance of the data reported here is the clear message it offers to those seeking to design 'effective' CPD programmes for coaches. Essentially, even in a progressive programme designed by a self-aware NGB in an 'ideal' evidence-based format, there were numerous spaces in which intended learning was challenged, lost or changed

Although we have attempted to articulate how professional knowledge was interpreted and contextualised between different levels in the organisation, and across different coaching sites, we were not able to consider how coaches themselves shape the culture of their working context (such as sports clubs); a context that in turn serves to re-contextualise coaches' learning

experience. There is a need for future research to examine how the discursive interactions between organisational culture and individual agency engage learners in ways that could offer further insights into the variability of *in situ* learning experiences reported in this study, and in the wider literature (De Bruijn, & Leeman, 2011). That said, focusing on the socially constructed communication of professional knowledge allows for increased explanatory power when considering 'what works', and 'in what contexts' (Day & Sachs, 2005). Evaluating the dynamic relationships between the macro and microstructures of professional development interventions offers an opportunity to go beyond the usual boundaries of evaluations, and to re-imagine CPD aspirations and processes (Daniels, 2012). It is in this space that this paper has attempted to contribute fresh understandings.

Conclusion

In this research, we have tried to broaden the evaluative lens through which to examine learning impact in a CPD programme for youth sport coaches. In so doing, we have attempted to address Thomas & James's (2006) observation that qualitative research should attend to the, "*interweaving of structural features of social situations and activities*" (p. 769). To this end, the aim of this study was to contribute to understandings about the nature of effective CPD from a new perspective. Reporting data from the experience of an NGB delivering a new youth coach education programme i*n situ*, Bernstein's concept of the pedagogic device was valuable in articulating how the programme was interpreted, facilitated and blocked at different levels of the organisation. Kemmis (2010) has argued that in order to understand the cultural and social-political reconstructions of practice and actions, it is important to consider those social sites where knowledge is contested, negotiated and advocated. In this regard, Bernstein's pedagogic device underlined how programme content was constructed from re-contextualised knowledge, and the re-contextualising process was an expression of the power and control of specific social groups. The work of Bernstein goes someway in explaining how the fidelity of any intervention programme is inevitably challenged by the complexity of the educational setting, and the weakness in imposing a traditional CPD transmission model that assumes consistent and uniform impacts on practitioner learning.

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