AN INSIGHT TO THE COACH EDUCATOR: COACH EDUCATORS' UNDERSTANDING OF LEARNING

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Introduction & Methodology

- Under-researched (Nelson et al., 2016; Abraham et al., 2013; Cushion & Nelson, 2013).
- Purposively selected - criterion-based sampling (Sparkes & Smith, 2014); Semi-structured interviews (Purdy, 2014); Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Watts & Cushion, 2016).
- "undiscussed into discussion" (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 168); "a set of thinking tools" (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 15). Socio-political field (Cushion & Kitchen, 2011; Townsend & Cushion, 2015)
- "...a more fully worked-out view of the social world" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 54).

Participants

- 16 CEs (m age = 35 yrs.); 13 male; 3 female; 'white British'; 10 tertiary educated; modest sporting careers
- CE (m = 9 yrs.) L1 - 5 & CPD delivery
- 15 active coaches (m = 14 yrs.); (L2 to 5) (recipients of coach education)
- 10 sports: hockey, rugby league, netball, rounders, cricket, swimming, boxing, tennis, futsal & football

Key semantic findings

- Coach educators' backgrounds and journeys
- Understanding of learning
- Perceptions of NGB provision
- CE education
- Perceptions of roles and practice

Learning

- Struggled to articulate pedagogical approaches of curricula and their practice – lack of consideration? understanding? learning?
- Social world taken for granted - "they do not think about it because they do not have to" (Jenkins, 1992, p. 70; Bourdieu - 'doxic' experience).
- Interviews challenged CEs 'ontological security' (Giddens, 1987); 'disjuncture' (Jarvis, 2006) - learning opportunity..

L3 CE: "yes, we cover learning styles, you know, visual, auditory, um, that sort of stuff. We cover all of that."

L2 CE: "I don’t know if I've had a huge learning journey. Maybe I've not worked with players of a high enough level to get to the 'nitty-gritty' of coaching and learning."

Perceptions of Formal Coach Education

- 'Essential', but 'low impact' (as coaches & CEs)
- Pragmatic: critical (L1-2, 'fast track', 'artificial assessments'; 'limited input', 'constrained by the structure')
- 'Pressure to pass': career/employment concerns; limited agency; CEs docile bodies
- "I know it - I teach you – you learn it" reductionist approach (still) used in many programmes (Armour, 2011, p. 236)
- ..not simply a process of transfer or assimilation (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Watts & Cushion, 2016).
Educator Education

- Critical of CE 'training' & CPD.
- Lack of preparation: 'short periods' - 'deliver the content' (limited pedagogical focus); programme aims?

L2 CE: '..we’ve had three orientation days, which were awful…it was rushed. There were very few answers - some contradicted the qualification, and qualification framework - they (NGB) couldn’t give us an answer…what is it that they (coach learners) will leave with?'

Discussant

- 'Transmitter’s privileged perspective' (Lave, 1996), where "pedagogic authority is bestowed, not earned" (Jenkins, 1992, p. 106). Cultural transmission (Cushion & Kitchen, 2011)
- Pedagogic actions - interest of dominant groups? Reproducing social structure? (Jenkins, 1992)

Aim "help learners become aware and critical of their own and others’ assumptions" (Meezow, 1997, p. 10).

- Challenge traditional conceptualisations of learning (Armour et al., 2016); deconstruct assumed know-how (Anderson, 1997; Chesterfield et al., 2010)

Discussion and Conclusion

- "Transmitter’s privileged perspective" (Lave, 1996), where "pedagogic authority is bestowed, not earned" (Jenkins, 1992, p. 106). Cultural transmission (Cushion & Kitchen, 2011)
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Concluding thoughts

- "it seems illogical to expect professional development providers to be able to support teachers and coaches effectively if they themselves are not engaged in appropriate, compatible learning" (Armour, 2011, p. 234; Taylor & Groom, 2016; Griffiths et al., 2016)
- Greater CE education, support, and focus on learning approaches (e.g. adult learning theories) underpinning provision (Griffiths et al., 2016). "Educate the educator" (Lave 2012)
- Develop a CE ‘community of practice’..? (Lave & Wenger, 1991)
- Further research (NGB/CEs) - benefits

Key References

- Critical "Outlier"

- L3 CE:
  - "I think the understanding of it (pedagogy) within national governing bodies isn’t where it should be."
  - "I think our educators would struggle conveying some more of the research informed approaches."
  - "reflective practice is really important…it’s really superficially covered in courses."
  - "we know very little about their (learners’) backgrounds"
  - "I sacrifice my beliefs when I am delivering"