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Introduction

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For individuals interested in contemporary physical education and sports coaching practices, the well-known saying, 'may you live in interesting times' (sometimes referred to as the Chinese curse) will hold some resonance. As debate occurs about the very nature of what constitutes physical education and sports coaching, and 'which' knowledge should be privileged through pedagogical encounters, we do live in interesting times characterised by profound social and cultural changes (Wright, Macdonald and Burrows 2004). For some, these changes have produced professional working lives that are extremely fast-paced and time-poor. With many commercial enterprises claiming to offer 'innovative' and 'cutting-edge' practical solutions and 'quick fixes' for highly complex problems, as professionals we are now required to become critical consumers of what others have termed the global information explosion (Wright et al. 2004). In relation to physical education and coaching we believe that in order to be effective critical consumers, 'context' matters and as such, we need local, nuanced examples of how various teaching and coaching approaches are applied to consider their relevance for the issues we face in our own practice.

*Contemporary Developments in Games Teaching* draws on research into, and thinking about, learner-centred, inquiry-based approaches to teaching and coaching games and team sports from Europe, the UK, the US, Australia and Asia. It presents recent developments in games teaching from pedagogical, policy and research perspectives. It is built around a critical mass of established researchers/authors, supported by emerging authors and a few 'new faces'. Common to each contribution is a belief in the efficacy of student/player-centred, inquiry-based approaches to teaching games in physical education and coaching team sports and the ways in which recent developments and research can offer various perspectives to inform its implementation and ongoing improvement.

Despite the emergence of arguments for a wide array of 'movement' experiences to address issues of youth physical inactivity, games and team sports still appear to hold significance for many young people and continue to dominate global school-based physical activity experiences (Williams and Kentel in press). Although we have witnessed a growing movement committed to the
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continual improvement of games teaching and coaching through what others have termed ‘game-centred approaches’ (Oslin and Mitchell 2006), critics argue that more sophisticated ways of thinking about games teaching and coaching are required if their potential for student-centred and ‘contextually’ relevant learning experiences are to be achieved (Wright and Forrest 2007). In particular these authors argue much of the game-centred approaches research to date fails to:

- go beyond an unquestioning acceptance of the intrinsic value of games, and of the community of practice that games and sports constitute. Nor does it question how what actually happens in TGfU [teaching games for understanding] lessons realises TGfU outcomes, or outcomes that are associated with empowering young people to take a more active part in their own learning about games and the place of games in society.

(Wright and Forrest 2007: 280)

Put simply, Wright and Forrest (2007) argue that there is relatively little evidence in either the theoretical or the empirical literature of what a game-centred approach ‘looks like in real lessons’ (p. 274). Recent work has sought to address this gap (see Light 2013) and the contributions in this collection in particular provide a range of examples of what we collectively term game-based approaches (GBA) in various teaching and coaching contexts that can be used to inform individual practitioner reflections and practice. We prefer to use GBA rather than ‘game-centred approach’ to avoid confusion with the Singaporean games concept approach (GCA). Common to each of these pedagogical approaches is a focus on the game instead of decontextualised techniques or skills to locate learning within modified games or game-like activities (Light 2013) and that emphasise questioning to stimulate thinking and interaction (see, for example, Wright and Forrest 2007).

While TGfU remains a dominant approach in the literature the proliferation of variations on it and the emergence of similar approaches such as Play Practice (Launher 2001) and the tactical-decision learning model (see Gréhaigne, Richard and Griffin 2005), which have much in common but have originated independently from TGfU, creates a need for an umbrella term.

The origins of the ideas underpinning GBA can be located in the 1960s and earlier in the work of people such as Wade (1967) in the UK and Mahlo (1974) in France, and others, but in terms of direct influence the publication of Bunker and Thorpe’s (1982) ideas on teaching games have had the biggest influence. For this reason we provide a brief historical summary of the development of GBA, beginning with TGfU, to situate the contemporary developments presented in this volume. This collection focuses on some of the most recent developments in games teaching over the last few years. It does not attempt to cover all recent developments but does present innovative ideas on teaching and learning and on conducting current, cutting-edge empirical research. It also presents contemporary developments in pedagogy.
and policy in Asia as largely underrepresented in the games teaching literature. In addition to contributions from well-established scholars in the field this book showcases the work of some emerging scholars and early career researchers in physical education and sport pedagogy. Further, the book features chapters in English from authors who are well published in their first language but have published little in English. It comprises contributions from Australia, the UK, France, Japan, Singapore and the US.

Detail on the content of the collection is preceded by a brief historical outline for the development of GBA.

**The development of GBA**

TGfU was first proposed by David Bunker and Rod Thorpe in 1982 but since then has been further developed through research and practitioner interest in it. Their ideas on teaching games inspired a brief period of interest at the time but it was not sustained (Holt, Strean and Bengoechea 2002). The TGfU approach to teaching games by teaching in and through games did not really begin to take off until a decade later, evident in interest from North American scholars. These scholars recognised the importance of tactics and decision making in games and the limitations of an exclusive focus on the decontextualised drilling of technique in promoting better games players and making learning enjoyable (see, for example, Mitchell, Oslin and Griffin 1995). The growth of interest in games-based teaching over the early 1990s is reflected in a special issue of the *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education* in 1996 edited by Judith Rink and entitled, 'Tactical and skill approaches to teaching sport and games'.

This development led to the conceptualisation of a North American approach called the tactical games approach (Griffin, Mitchell and Oslin 1997). Tactical games followed a pattern of using modified games for learners to understand the meaning and place of skills in games, followed by focusing on developing the skill(s), then returning to the game or a more complex and demanding form of it, building up the games as skill and understanding developed. This period of development also led to the design and implementation of authentic assessment approaches that suited the very different teaching approach taken. The two main assessment instruments were the Game Performance Assessment Instrument (GPAI) developed in North America (see Oslin, Mitchell and Griffin 1998) and the Team Sport Assessment Procedure (TSAP) developed by French and French-Canadian researchers (see, for example, Richard and Godbout 2000). The general debate over this period tended to be around the comparative importance of technique and tactics (see, for example, Mitchell *et al.* 1995; Turner and Martinek 1992).

Over this period Rod Thorpe made regular visits to Australia to work with local coaches and the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) to develop a version of TGfU focused on sport coaching called ‘Game Sense’ (Light 2004, 2013). He built upon coaches’ existing use of practice games but introduced a
more systematic approach and an emphasis on questioning to promote thinking and dialogue. The ASC produced a Game Sense package comprising a handbook (den Duyn 1997), a video and a useful set of modified practice games divided into the four game categories of invasion, striking, net/wall and target games. Geared more toward sport coaching than physical education classes (and receiving far less attention from researchers) the Game Sense approach has remained close to the original ideas of Bunker and Thorpe while TGfU has become more defined and specific in its implementation and developed in parallel with tactical games (Light 2013).

Toward the end of the 1990s interest developed in constructivist theories of learning and other theories that sit upon the same epistemological assumptions about what knowledge is and how it is acquired (see, for example, Light 2008). This provided new ways of understanding how learning occurred in TGfU and similar approaches (Gréhaigne and Godbout 1998; Kirk and Macdonald 1998) that were further developed by prominent figures in physical education research such as Rovegno (see, for example, Rovegno and Dolly 2006), Gréhaigne (see, for example, Gréhaigne et al. 2005) and Wallian (see, for example, Wallian and Chang 2007; Light and Wallian 2008). The concept of situated learning (Lave and Wenger 1991), first proposed in a physical education context by Kirk and Macdonald (1998), has also influenced thinking about learning and pedagogy. Such work now underpins other theoretical perspectives that promote enhanced understanding and learning in and through games such as self-determination theory (see Deci and Ryan 2000) and the constraints-led approach to skill acquisition (see, for example, Davids, Button and Bennett 2008).

The establishment of a regular series of international conferences from 2001 (Plymouth, New Hampshire, US) convened by Joy Butler contributed to growing interest in TGfU. Subsequent conferences were convened in Australia (2003 at the University of Melbourne), Hong Kong (2005 at the Hong Kong Institute of Education), Canada (2008 at the University of British Columbia) and most recently in the UK (2012 at Loughborough University). The global promotion of TGfU was first managed by a TGfU Task Force set up at the 2002 AIESEP (Association Internationale des Ecoles Superieurs d’Education Physique) World Congress in La Coruña, Spain and its membership evolved into a special interest group operating within AIESEP. Attendance at the TGfU symposia held at AIESEP World Congresses has also been strong in Finland (2006), Japan (2008) and Spain (2010) and there have also been conferences convened with a more regional focus such as the ‘Asia-Pacific Conference on Teaching Sport and Physical Education for Understanding’ at the University of Sydney in 2006.

The international TGfU conferences have generated a significant literature that includes peer-reviewed conference proceedings (see, for example, Light, Swabey and Brooker 2004; Light 2007; Liu, Li and Cruz 2006) and edited books (see, for example, Griffin and Butler 2005). Authored books have been published on the American tactical games approach (see, for example, Griffin et al. 1997) and the French tactical-decision learning model (see Gréhaigne et al. 2005).
There has also been a spike in the publication of books drawing on approaches that resonate with the key intentions of Game Sense pedagogy aimed at practitioners in the past few years (see, for example, Breed and Spittle 2011; Pill 2007; Slade 2010) and a recent research-based book focused specifically on Game Sense by Light in 2013. Interest in GBA is also suggested by the publication of special issues of Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy on TGfU in 2005 and The Journal of Physical Education New Zealand on the games approach to coaching in 2006.

There is significant writing on games teaching in Western settings and in Anglo cultures in particular but developments in Asia, apart from publications on the Singapore GCA (games concept approach), have received less attention to date. GCA was developed to meet the expectations of the Singapore Ministry of Education that physical education teaching contribute toward high-quality learning as part of its Thinking Schools, Learning Nation policy. Over the past decade researchers in Singapore have conducted a sustained programme of research on GCA and its implementation that Fry and McNeill draw on in Chapter 3 to reflect upon a decade of research on GCA in Singapore.

More recently, the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) implemented a new primary (2011) and secondary (2012) physical education curriculum that mandates a games and inquiry-based teaching approach influenced by international developments and by Game Sense in particular. Prior to Suzuki's chapter in this book there had been nothing written on this in English. At the same time new physical education curricula have been introduced in China and Taiwan that seem to encourage student-centred, inquiry-based approaches to teaching games but which face similar challenges to Japan (Jin 2011). Developments in games teaching in France have been made available in English through the publication of Teaching and Learning Team Sports and Games (Gréhaigne et al. 2005). There has also been some innovative research conducted on the subjective dimensions of play in team sports in France that have only just begun to emerge in the English literature (see, for example, Light, Harvey and Mouchet 2012). Some of this work is presented in Chapter 10 by Alain Mouchet.

The book

The book is divided into three sections that are briefly outlined below. They focus on (1) recent pedagogical and policy developments in games teaching, (2) research on the implementation of game-based approaches, and (3) issues in teaching game-based approaches.

Part I: Recent pedagogical and policy developments in games teaching

This section comprises chapters that present new ideas, innovations in pedagogy and recent policy developments in game-based approaches. It begins by examining some of the philosophic and epistemological underpinnings of
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game as ‘context’, especially given our focus on the localised, social and cultural contexts in which teaching and coaching occur. Too often lacking in the literature are philosophical groundings or foundations for the developments of, and research into, GBAs and, as such, this valuable chapter presents epistemological issues of what counts as valued knowledge and how we acquire it as central themes to any thinking about learning and pedagogy. In particular, John Quay and Steve Stolz focus on the notion of context as a pivotal concept in the development of GBA and in research on it in Chapter 1. As they point out, it was 30 years ago when Bunker and Thorpe (1982) argued that traditional methods of teaching and coaching tended to emphasise motor techniques while overlooking the contextual nature of games. Taking this as their starting point, Quay and Stolz provide a philosophical perspective on the nature of context and the forms of inquiry designed to explore and adapt contextually through Game Sense pedagogy that draws primarily on the work of John Dewey and Martin Heidegger.

In Chapter 2 Richard Light uses Game Sense as an example of what he calls positive pedagogy and which he argues offers a way of using Game Sense pedagogy beyond games and team sports. Light suggests that, while TGfU has drifted away from Thorpe’s original ideas, Game Sense has remained largely committed to these ideals and that its looser approach offers a framework for delivering high-quality teaching across the broader physical education curriculum. Light suggests that all student-centred, inquiry-based approaches to games teaching can provide positive pedagogy that can not only enrich games teaching but also inform other aspects of the curriculum.

Chapter 3 examines GBA development in Asia through the work of Joan Fry and Mike McNeill, who examine a decade of research into the development, and implementation, of the Games Concept Approach (GCA) in Singapore. The Singaporean GCA is a hybrid of TGfU and the North American Tactical Games Approach (see, for example, Griffin, Mitchell and Oslin 1997). Not only does this chapter provide us with an understanding of the development of GBA in Asian settings but it also gives an account of the most extensive, sustained programme of research on the implementation of GBA that has been conducted anywhere in the world to date. Fry and McNeill review research on teaching a conceptual approach to games pedagogy to specialist physical education student teachers.

Over the past 12 years a series of investigations into learning to teach and learning to play in Singapore have revealed the difficulties encountered by university faculty, student teachers and school-based mentors in teaching using the GCA. On the other hand, it also suggests that those learning to play this way (student teachers and school students) see these games lessons as being ‘value-added’. Set against published studies, this chapter considers the perspectives of university faculty on their current approaches to games teaching and their reflections on the take-up of the GCA in school physical education.

In Chapter 4 Naoki Suzuki considers significant changes in the Japanese physical education curriculum and their implications for the development of
GBA in Japan. This discussion provides valuable understanding of the specific cultural and institutional factors shaping the development of GBA in Japan and the opportunities offered for its development by curricula development. Specifically, Suzuki’s chapter focuses on an examination of radical curricula change in the teaching of ballgames in Japan. The ‘2008 national course of study for physical education’ mandated by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) specifies a focus on ballgames taught using a student-centred, tactical approach. However, because Japanese teachers are not particularly well versed in adopting student-centred and/or tactical approaches a major focus of the reform effort centres on curricular issues as they relate to learning theory. Suzuki outlines that behaviourist, constructivist and situated learning theories are being considered by Japanese educationalists who draw heavily from Western literature to guide curriculum development for teaching ballgames.

This section concludes with Wendy Piltz’s overview of Play Practice and offers some background on its development by Alan Launder, its key principles and some suggestions for how it can be used to guide professional practice. While Play Practice has been around for a decade it is still an innovative approach to coaching sport and one that is applied to physical education. In this chapter, Piltz outlines the principles, processes and advantages of Play Practice as an innovative model for teaching and coaching sport. Tracing its origins back to 1957 she highlights the significance of deep and extended participation in reflective practice as the foundation for the Play Practice model and its value for teachers and coaches. She then explains the key principles of the approach with attention directed to using the ‘power of play’ to engage the learner. Focusing on the complexity of skilled performance in sport, she suggests the elements of skilled play including the critically important notion of ‘Game Sense’.

Part II: Research on the implementation of game-based approaches

Part II begins with a review of the literature on empirical research conducted on GBA. In Chapter 6, Kendall Jarrett and Stephen Harvey identify new trends in GBA research that suggest increased interest in the affective dimensions of learning in and through GBA. They also identify key challenges that arise in the implementation of GBA and the utilisation of a diverse range of research designs and methodologies in response to the performative culture so often embedded within physical education and youth sport programmes. The following three chapters in this section provide localised and contextually relevant examples of the empirical research being conducted on GBA, specifically in rural schools and sports clubs in Victoria, Australia, an elite independent school in Sydney and the use of Game Sense by elite-level rugby unions coaches.

Chapters 7 and 8 report on research that involved interventions in quite different settings. In Chapter 7 Amanda Mooney and Meghan Casey examine the ways in which physical education teachers and community sports coaches
responded to a curriculum intervention designed to enhance school-community sporting links in rural Victoria, Australia. Their research examines a collaborative partnership with Tennis Victoria and Football Federation Victoria that drew on the principles of games sense to reinvigorate adolescent girls' participation in the sports of tennis and soccer.

In Chapter 8 Christina Curry and Richard Light draw on a recent study conducted in an elite independent secondary school that inquired into the implementation of a TGfU approach to games teaching. They report on the ways in which the context of the school influenced the implementation of the TGfU approach with a focus on teacher experience. They identify how contextual factors such as the school's traditional emphasis on competitive team sports (rugby and rowing in particular) and the implementation of a teaching for understanding approach across the whole school shaped PE teachers' experiences of the implementation of TGfU.

The use of small-sided, modified games and questioning are two distinctive features of Game Sense that present challenges for teachers and coaches. Communication is also very different. Where 'traditional' approaches emphasise a monologue of instruction from coach/teacher to players/students, Game Sense emphasises productive dialogue between players/students and between players/students and the coach/teacher, which requires, and builds, very different relationships between them.

There has been some attention paid to specific aspects of Game Sense, TGfU and other game-based approaches (GBA) that present challenges for coaches and teachers, such as meeting the challenges of effective questioning (see, for example, Roberts 2011; Wright and Forrest, 2007) and the issue of game design (addressed by Adrian Turner in this book in Chapter 13). There has, however, been little attention paid to the significant change in relationships involved in implementing Game Sense and other GBA. In Chapter 9 John Evans attempts to redress this oversight by drawing on a study that investigated the interpretation and use of Game Sense by elite-level rugby coaches in Australia and New Zealand. It explores the nature of relationships developed by the coaches with their players and how they related to both the coaching approaches used and the coaches' perspectives on good coaching.

Part III: Issues in adopting game-based approaches

Part III comprises four chapters written by authors from France, Australia, the UK and the US that consider issues in the implementation of GBA. In Chapter 10 Alain Mouchet exposes us to some of the innovative research being conducted in sport coaching in France but which has primarily been published in French to suggest how understanding the subjective elements of thinking and decision making in team sports can be used to improve performance. Greg Forrest then draws on his research on pre-service teachers' experiences of using GBA (referred to by him as game-centred approaches) with a focus on the challenges of questioning, with Stephen Harvey, Edward
Cope and Ruan Jones drawing on some of the Francophone literature to make suggestions for implementing authentic assessment that considers embodied knowledge and knowledge in action. In Chapter 13 Adrian Turner provides suggestions for meeting the challenge of designing effective modified or practice games.

Chapter 10 builds upon French research on the relationship between embodied (non-reflective) and conscious (reflective) thinking in decision making in team sports. Within this work psycho-phenomenology has helped in understanding the links between embodied and conscious thinking and subjectivity. In this chapter Alain Mouchet proposes the pragmatic utility of psycho-phenomenology for facilitating the coaching of decision making in team sports. He suggests that consideration of players' subjective experience is an important way of improving the co-construction of the team identity and game style and the flexibility between strategy and tactical adaptations in action. He also outlines an innovative use of this work in elite rugby clubs by linking these interviews to player's subjective experience in competitive matches. In Chapter 11 Greg Forrest draws on a study of pre-service teachers' experiences of learning to use game-centred approaches, with a focus on the development and use of questions as a key component to effective teaching in games and sports.

Authentic assessment is an important issue in the implementation of GBA and this forms the focus of Stephen Harvey, Edward Cope and Ruan Jones in Chapter 12. The importance of authentic assessment for GBA cannot be understated as it provides a way of assessing *knowledge-in-action* (Schön 1983) and the body thinking (Light and Fawns, 2003). This chapter examines why this is the case and outlines various strategies to overcome the challenges for authentic assessment in game-centred pedagogies. One strategy suggested is the infusion of Francophone research and perspectives on games teaching and assessment (see, for example, Gréhaigne et al. 2005). 'Getting the game right' (Thorpe and Bunker 2008) is probably the most important task facing a teacher or coach when taking a game-based approach (Light 2013) and this is the focus of Chapter 13. In 'Learning games concepts by design' Adrian Turner focuses on the design and development of modified games for learning in the invasion games category. His chapter covers both intra-game and inter-game development of sport concepts and uses a learner-centred approach within which modified games are used to highlight specific tactics that facilitate players' Game Sense and enable them to play more effectively by learning to read the game. It provides teachers and coaches with pedagogical structures to enhance player understanding during game development.

**Using this book**

Whilst this book is intended to engage any undergraduate or postgraduate student in physical education and coaching studies, the contributions in this collection, taken together or drawn upon separately, provide insights and
learnings for practitioners and researchers interested in fostering student centred, inquiry-based approaches to games and team sports, and to their broader pedagogical practices. Each contribution brings up issues that can resonate with any professional's practice in the teaching and coaching of games and team sports. As such, they provide examples that can be drawn on to make sense of, or seek a deeper understanding of, their reflections on their own practice.

Questioning is central to all GBAs as a valuable tool for promoting student inquiry, generating dialogue and stimulating thinking and learning. Yet, as Wright and Forrest (2007) point out, many of the current resources on games teaching and coaching present and model questioning techniques more closely akin to a 'closed Initiation – Response – Evaluation (IRE) pattern' (p. 276). This, they argue, can lead to teachers and coaches expecting one right answer to the questions posed and can close off opportunities to construct and negotiate meaning with students, an approach that may more accurately reflect a 'student-centred' approach. In teaching, questions should generate thinking, dialogue and action in the development of knowledge and a positive disposition toward learning and moving.

For the same reasons, at the conclusion of each chapter the authors pose three discussion questions. These are not offered in an attempt to control the direction conversation about the ideas presented in the chapter will take, but rather to stimulate and encourage readers to think deeply and broadly and control the direction of their own conversations, reflections and learning – without boundaries and limits.

References


Introduction


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