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Primary physical education, coaches and continuing professional development

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Abstract

Physical education (PE) in primary schools has traditionally been taught by qualified primary teachers. More recently, some teaching of PE in primary schools has been undertaken by coaches (mostly football coaches) (Sports coach UK, 2004, 2007a). These coaches hold national governing body awards, but do not hold teaching qualifications. Thus, coaches may not be adequately prepared to teach PE in curriculum time. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the perceptions of a group of community based football coaches working in primary schools of the impact of a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programme on their ability to undertake 'specified work' to cover PE in primary schools. The programme focused on four areas identified as important to enable coaches to cover specified work: short and medium term planning; pedagogy; knowledge of the curriculum; and reflection. Results showed that for the majority of coaches the CPD programme had made them more aware of the importance of these four areas and had helped to develop their knowledge and ability to put this into practice in covering planning, preparation and assessment time. However, further input is still required to develop coaches' knowledge and understanding in all four areas, but especially their curriculum knowledge, as well as their ability to put these into practice consistently. These findings are discussed in relation to the implications of employing coaches to cover the teaching of PE in primary schools and, if employed, what CPD coaches need to develop the necessary knowledge, skill and understanding for covering specified work in schools.

Keywords: *Primary Physical Education, Sports Coaches, Continuing Professional Development, Planning, Pedagogy, Curriculum and Reflection.*

Introduction

Primary school physical education (PE) in England has traditionally been taught mostly by generalist class teachers (Garrett and Wrench, 2007), with a small percent taught by

specialist primary PE teachers. Qualified primary teachers have spent at least four years in higher education, with at least one of those years learning to teach across the full range of curriculum subjects taught in primary schools, including PE. However, more recently, some PE in primary schools has been taught by people other than the class teacher; in particular coaches (particularly football coaches) (Sports coach UK, 2004, 2007a). There are a number of reasons for this, including the initial teacher education (ITE) of primary teachers in relation to PE and the introduction of a new workload agreement (DfES, 2003).

PE in primary ITE

The limited time spent on learning to teach PE in primary ITE in England has been of concern over a number of years. Recently, a number of authors (e.g. Kelso, 2008; Talbot, 2007, 2008a, b) have reported that many primary teachers have received minimum input on PE in their ITE. Caldecott, Warburton and Waring (2006) reported that as few as a total of five hours during a one year Post Graduate Certificate Education (PGCE) course are being spent on PE in primary ITE. Talbot (2008a) estimated that 40% of all newly qualified primary school teachers have received only a total of six hours preparation in teaching PE. For Talbot (2007, p.8) '6 hours is simply not acceptable..... this is a national disgrace'.

As a result, many primary generalist teachers enter the profession with a limited background in, and preparation for, teaching PE. Therefore, many primary teachers lack confidence to teach PE (e.g. Garrett and Wrench, 2007; Morgan and Bourke, 2008). Combined with the different challenges regarding the specific content and pedagogical knowledge, including the increased physical risk and class management, PE is perceived as one of the most challenging subjects in the curriculum for primary teachers to deliver (Chappell, 2006; Katene and Edmondson, 2004).

In light of the limited input on PE in primary ITE and the resulting lack of knowledge, skill and confidence of primary teachers in teaching PE, it is perhaps not surprising that in 2005 Ward reported that a third of all primary schools were using external sports providers to cover PE lessons. However, this situation has been exacerbated by the introduction of the 2003 workload agreement for teachers (DfES, 2003).

Teacher Workload Agreement

The UK Government's 2003 Workforce Remodelling Act (DfES, 2003) identified seven key points aimed at supporting teachers and schools to raise educational standards without adding additional workload responsibilities. In September 2005 planning, preparation and

assessment (PPA) time was introduced. This allows for all teachers to have 10% of their timetable away from pupils to plan lessons, prepare resources and assess pupils work.

Initial observations suggest that many primary school teachers are choosing to have someone else cover the teaching of their PE lessons whilst they are engaged in their PPA time (e.g. Griggs, 2008; Lavin, Swindlehurst and Foster, 2008; Stewart, 2006).

The use of coaches to cover PPA time

In order to agree to cover PE whilst teachers take PPA time, headteachers must either have the evidence and confidence, or make an assumption, that coaches have the content and pedagogical knowledge, skill and understanding to plan, prepare and deliver units of work and individual lessons and can assess and report on the development, progress and attainment of pupil learning. An alternative explanation is that they are happy to employ a sports coach to keep the children 'busy, happy and good' (Placek, 1983) during PE lessons.

In reality, the situation is likely to be more complicated. Head-teachers are in the challenging position of having to provide teachers with 10% of their time for PPA and taking account of teachers' requests regarding the lessons which they want to be covered. A number of other factors are also likely to influence their decision. These may include: the focus on academic achievement in making judgements on the success of a school (or teacher), resulting in the prioritisation of English, mathematics and science; limited understanding of the role of PE in schools; confusion between PE and sport; and a willing pool of sports coaches who are perceived to hold relevant qualifications (National Governing Body (NGB) awards) and who are readily available to cover PE lessons for an hourly rate of pay, a situation which is perhaps not the same for, say, English or mathematics.

There are arguments against using coaches to cover PPA time. Carney and Howells (2008, p.3) stated clearly 'coaches with sport specific knowledge, but without an education background, are not the answer'. This is further supported by Talbot (2008b) who argued that the best quality PE she has seen in primary schools has been 'delivered by primary teachers who were not physical education specialists, but specialists in children's development'... who know the children they teach well' (p.7). For Talbot, the answer is to develop the confidence and competence of primary school teachers to deliver high quality PE.

Whatever the arguments for and against using coaches to cover PE lessons whilst teachers take PPA time, this is a reality and pragmatically it may be unrealistic for at least some

schools not to employ coaches to cover PE lessons to allow for PPA time, at least in the short term. Thus, if coaches are to be used to cover at least some PE lessons to allow for PPA time, they must be able to deliver what is required in this time. Baalpe (2005, p.29) stated: 'Anyone teaching PE needs to be competent (i.e. to have the skills, knowledge, understanding and expertise necessary to plan, deliver and evaluate the pupils' work in a context of appropriate challenge and a safe working environment)'. At least some of the components of being competent are identified in the requirements for undertaking 'specified work', which all those covering PPA time, including coaches, are expected to meet. Specified work is defined as 'part, or all, of: Planning and preparing lessons and courses for pupils; delivering lessons to pupils...; assessing the development, progress and attainment of pupils; reporting on the development, progress and attainment of pupils' (Baaple, 2005, p.4).

Coaches' qualifications

Coaches who might be employed to cover specified work in curriculum time are qualified through NGB awards in specific sports, mainly at levels 1, 2 and 3 (Blair and Capel, 2008). No formal qualifications are required to undertake levels 1 and 2 courses. Each level consists of theoretical and practical components. In football, these awards cover mainly the technical, tactical, physical and, in some cases, psychological content knowledge for coaching. The content may not be appropriate for coaches working with children, including working in primary schools to cover PPA time. In addition, these courses are delivered away from the coaches' working environment over one or two day blocks. Thus, coaches' attend a day/weekend coaching course and then return to their coaching situation.

There is an increasing amount of research and academic hypothesising on large scale coach education programmes which is critical of these awards (e.g., Abraham and Collins, 1998; Cassidy, Jones and Potrac, 2004; Douge and Hastie, 1993; Gilbert and Trudel, 1999). Literature on continuing professional development (CPD) for teachers is also critical of the one-day or weekend courses which have no follow-up. For Armour and Yelling (2007) it is becoming very clear that the traditional one day off-site course is largely ineffective in supporting teachers in advancing their pedagogy and, in turn, their practice. Thus, if CPD is to have true value and meaning to make genuine advances to our practice, it must surely embrace non-routine, problematic and contextualised environments.

Some of this criticism questions the ecological validity of these awards; how knowledge and understanding gained from de-contextualised role-play environments can be transferred into the highly bespoke context in which each individual coach works. When coaches are asked

about their preference for developing their practice they clearly prefer learning through contextualised experience, i.e. coaching or learning through trial and error 'on the job' (Fleurance and Cotteaux, 1999 cited in Gilbert and Trudel 2006; Jones, Armour and Potrac 2004; Trudel and Gilbert, 2006; Wright, Trudel and Culver, 2007). However, Bell (1997) suggested that it is problematic simply to suggest just spending time 'doing the job', as this may lead to a situation that Gilbert and Trudel (2006, p.114) described as 'ten years of coaching without reflection is simply one year of coaching repeated ten times'. Therefore, Cassidy et al (2004) suggested that integrating reflection into coaching and coach education is vital.

This leads to a dilemma. If primary schools are going to employ sports coaches to cover PE lessons and allow teachers to take PPA time, it is essential that they have the knowledge, skill, understanding and expertise to carry out specified work. However, coaches who have learnt to coach through NGB awards, and through their own experiences, may not have the background, experience, knowledge, understanding or skill to carry out specified work within the National Curriculum for Physical Education (NCPE). This leads us to question what CPD do they need to undertake this work?

CPD to enable coaches to cover specified work in PPA time

Emerging literature on coaching and coach education suggests that coaching can and should be viewed as an 'educational enterprise' (Bergmann Drewe, 2000, p.79). Jones (2006, 2007) discussed the coach as educator and the re-conceptualisation of the coaching role, encouraging coaches to act as professionals, with their primary role being one of an educator. This is based on a vision that at the very core of coaching there is a learning and teaching interchange, with a clear and transparent acknowledgement that coaching, like teaching, is set in a non-routine, problematic and highly complex social exchange between the learners, the coach, a reciprocated knowledge exchange and the physical and social environment (Jones et al, 2004; Leach and Moon, 1999). Through this acknowledgment comes a responsibility to consider carefully what this knowledge should include and how coaches develop their understanding.

Literature in both ITE and CPD has identified knowledge, skill and understanding to cover specified work as including planning and curriculum (e.g. Bailey, 2001; Gower, 2004), pedagogy (e.g. Capel, 2005; Leach and Moon, 1999; Mortimore, 1999) and reflection (e.g. Dymoke and Harrison, 2008; Moon, 1999; Pollard, 2002a, 2002b).

Literature also highlights the socially constructed nature of the coaching environment (see, for example, work by (Cassidy et al 2004; Culver and Trudel, 2008; Cushion, 2007; Gilbert and Trudel, 2001, 2006; Jones, 2006, 2007; Jones et al 2004; Jones, Hughes and Kingston 2008; Kidman, 2005; Lyle, 2002; Trudel and Gilbert, 2006). This focuses on coaches being critically aware of the consequence of their choices when planning, delivery and evaluating their work in schools. This literature also supports work undertaken in ITE (e.g., Leach and Moon, 1999, Mortimore, 1999) on the use pedagogy and reflection by the 'professional' (Schon, 1983) educator.

Thus, together, the content of NGB awards held by coaches, the definition of specified work, literature on ITE and CPD and emerging literature on coach education highlight key knowledge, skill and understanding required for working in PPA time in schools to be: short and medium term planning, pedagogy, knowledge of the curriculum and reflection. Knowledge of the curriculum not only includes PE specific content, but also the contribution PE makes to the broader education of pupils (Blair, 2006; Theoloudies, 2006)

Purpose of this study

Coaches are being employed in some primary schools to cover PE in PPA time. However, their previous background, experience and qualifications do not necessarily give them the knowledge, skill and understandings to be able to cover this work (Blair and Capel, 2008). Thus, it is not only necessary to provide CPD to support coaches in undertaking this work, it is also important to evaluate its effectiveness. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the impact of a CPD programme on the knowledge, skill and understanding of a group of football coaches to undertake 'specified work' to cover PE in PPA time in primary schools. This paper is a formative evaluation of the first 12 months of a 24 month CPD programme. This evaluation was valuable because format of delivery of the first 12 months was different to that of the second year. Thus, the evaluation supported attempts to explain why the programme was working or indeed failing (Pawson and Tilly, 1997). It also informed development and changes to the second year of the programme.

Method

Participants

The sample for this study was 21 Football in the Community Coaches (coaches work predominately with five to eleven year old children, in both school and community settings) employed at the Community Sport Trust (a community department of a professional football club that has charitable status) of one English Premier League (the highest professional

league in England) club during the 2007 calendar year. Part of the work of these coaches involved undertaking specified work in PE lessons to cover primary teachers' PPA time. All coaches were paid by the club; eight coaches were employed by the club in a full-time salaried position and 13 were sessional coaches employed in part-time hourly paid positions. The coaches were selected as a purposive sample for participation in the CPD programme by the Community Sports Trust (CST) managers at the club; based on their employment status, i.e. full time coaches and those part time coaches who worked the most hours for the club and therefore who were most likely to work in schools covering PPA time. During the first twelve months of the CPD programme, one full-time and seven part-time coaches left the employment of the CST. Table 1 gives demographic details of the coaches included in this study including; age range, gender, ethnic background, number of years worked as a community coach, coaching and academic qualifications.

Table 1: background of coaches in this study

The CPD programme

The theoretical perspective of the CPD programme was reached through reviewing literature on learning theories and coach education (Abraham and Collins, 1998; Bergman Drewe, 2000; Cushion, Armour, Jones, 2003; Cushion, 2007; Cross, Lyle, 1999; Gilbert and Trudel, 1999, 2001, 2006; Jones, 2006, 2007; Lave and Wenger, 1991; Potrac, Brewer, Jones, Armour, and Hoof, 2000; Trudel and Gilbert, 2006; Wenger, 1998) and through personal reflection.

It was acknowledged that the coaches had a good level of content knowledge at the start of the programme, therefore the aim of the CPD programme, its' content and teaching and learning approaches, were designed to enable coaches to develop a deeper, more sustained, knowledge, skill and understanding to work as an educator within the framework of the NCPE. Base-line data collected in January 2007, at the start of the programme, showed that these coaches did not have the knowledge, skill and understanding of the four educational principles (short and medium term planning, pedagogy, knowledge of the curriculum and reflection), to enable them to move some way to meeting the requirements set out by the definition of specified work (Baalpe, 2005, p.4), which would enable them to cover specified work in PPA time (Blair and Capel, 2008). Therefore, more specifically, the aim of the CPD programme was to support coaches to build, develop and construct their knowledge, skill and understanding in these four areas.

In addition, the programme was designed to support coaches to work in a more independent manner and to reflect and question their own and others practice. The CPD programme was therefore designed as a set of connected experiences utilising a range of critical pedagogical approaches (Fernandez–Balboa, 1997; Kirk, 2000) that were delivered over a sustained period of time (O'Sullivan and Deglau, 2006), allowing the coaches to explore alternative knowledge and approaches to coaching children. It emphasised the process of providing meaningful professional development opportunities (Armour and Yelling 2007, Attard and Armour, 2006) that were socially constructed. The programme embraced the social theory of learning (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998), underpinned by a constructivist epistemology. Thus, learning was seen as being a socially constructed process which encouraged coaches to reflect on their identity as a coach and what that actually meant to them in practice.

The first nine months of the CPD programme were shaped around a teaching curriculum (Wenger, 1998). It comprised nine whole day (6 hour) taught sessions (once per month) and nine support days (once per month). The CPD days consisted of practical coaching, role play, group work, information sharing, DVD analysis. The support days provided coaches with one-on-one and small group input through reflective tasks such as reviewing and discussing personal coaching sessions on DVD. Thus, the focus was on engaging and involving the coaches in a variety of 'hands on' learning experiences to construct and re-construct knowledge and experience through interaction among individuals and groups. In addition to new knowledge, the programme also allowed coaches to question knowledge, both new and old. This was achieved through a series of learning activities, including critical

tasks aimed at fostering a culture of open and honest communication in which coaches would feel supported and empowered to experiment and learn.

The last three months of the first twelve months of the programme progressed to a learning curriculum (Wenger, 1998); a curriculum approach that decentralises how individuals and groups formulate their knowledge and understanding. Coaches were split into four smaller groups, each with a lead coach selected by the CST managers. The criteria for the selection of the lead coaches was negotiated between the CPD leader and the CST managers, this included; coaching qualification, employed full time, amount of PPA time coaching and leadership qualities. This allowed coaches to work in a reflective way, responding to organic real-world situations and problems that were drawn as much as possible from their own working environment. The rationale for the use of a learning curriculum at this time was to move learning towards being self regulated, working in their own context to reflect and solve organic real-world problems; and to include innovative and meaningful activities to develop intrinsic motivation (Simons, 1993).

Instruments, procedures and data analysis

A multi-method approach, collecting both quantitative and qualitative data, was used in order that this research might move some way to addressing the issue of research in sports coaching being primarily quantitative with the data gathered mainly through questionnaires, identified by Gilbert (2002). This also allowed for triangulation of data collected and, hence, greater reliability and trust in the results (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000).

The multi-method approach to data collection included: semi structured individual and group interviews, questionnaires with both open and closed questions, video analysis of practical sessions, document analysis, participant observation and coaches' folders and field notes. The timing and methods of data collection were chosen in order to understand the key issues from the perspective of this group of coaches.

The transient nature of the community coaches and their 'multiple roles' in the real-world environment in which the research was conducted, meant that it was not possible to collect data from all coaches at all the collection points.

All coaches were provided with a CPD folder, in which they were asked to collect evidence of their personal professional development, including, for example, information from CPD sessions and, increasingly, from other coaches, short and medium term plans, reflective field notes, feedback on their coaching and supporting documentation, research on lesson

planning, e.g. from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), certificates from courses they had attended.

In June 2007 coaches completed a questionnaire comprising of both 5-point likert scale and open-ended questions, relating to how the taught programme sessions were supporting their work within PPA time. Ten of the 21 coaches completed this.

At the end of the first 9 months of the programme (October 2007), coaches were asked to complete an anonymous feedback sheet (AFS) on their personal perception of any change within their coaching behaviour(s). This comprised two likert-scale questions and open-ended comments about how they felt their coaching was progressing and if their attitude towards their role as a coach had changed. Fifteen of the 21 coaches responded.

After 9-10 months (October-November 2007) a series four semi-structured group interviews were conducted (with 9 coaches 1, 4, 6, 9, 11, 15, 18 19, 21), asking about the impact of a specific parts of the programme.

In November 2007 the four lead coaches (4, 10, 14 and 21) delivered a coaching session recorded on DVD. Each group member watched the DVD, first individually, then as a group and finally with the CPD leader; whose role was that of critical friend, commenting on and questioning practice in order to support coaches individual and group reflections. Data regarding the effectiveness of using video and small group work was collected from 16 coaches through semi-structured group interviews (SSGI) in November 2007 and questionnaires in January 2008 (11 coaches). Seven coaches (1, 4, 9, 11, 15, 19, 21) took part in both interview and questionnaire.

At the end of the first twelve months of the programme (January 2008), eleven coaches (1, 2, 4, 7, 9, 10, 11, 13, 15, 19 and 21) completed a questionnaire comprising open-ended questions designed to understand the development of their knowledge, skill and understanding relating to short and medium term planning, pedagogy, knowledge of the curriculum and reflection, as well as how they felt the structure and organisation of the programme had supported them.

In most instruments the identity of the coach was known. For these instruments results are reported by the number of the coach responding. However, one questionnaire was completed anonymously. In this case, the response is recorded as A, B etc. This letter does not link to the numbers used elsewhere. All interview data was transcribed word for word.

The data were treated inductively in line with the studies overall interpretivist epistemology. Themes were inductively generated through the triangulation of data.

Results

Part 1: The impact of the CPD programme on to cover specified work in PE in primary schools

Planning

Results collected in January 2007 (see Blair and Capel, 2008) showed that this group of coaches did not plan for the short and medium term as a matter of course and did not value or understand the importance of planning. As a result of participating in this CPD programme results showed these coaches' increased their awareness of the importance of the planning process in both short and medium terms.

It could be argued that the importance of coaches planning is nothing new, but the recognition and understanding by community based coaches' that planning significantly supports their practice is itself interesting, especially when contextualised against results collected in January 2007 (see Blair and Capel, 2008)

Coaches' reported (AFS, October 2007) their attitude to planning had changed. For example, *'I'm planning more which makes the session easier to coach'* (cE).

All 11 coaches (questionnaire, January 2008) said that the CPD programme had influenced them in relation to their attitude towards planning their coaching sessions. For example, *'It showed me that planning the session is vital for the learning of the player/student. If I don't plan my session I don't know what I want them to learn and if I don't know how can they!?'* (c1);

Three coaches said that they now produce a medium term plan. For example, *'I complete a medium term plan to cover a unit of work (6 lessons) which spans over half a term. Each session is designed to progress on from the previous, hence the sequence of lessons'*. He continued to discuss how his coaching is: *'more structured now, with clearer aims and progressions within the session. My planning, reflecting and evaluating are now fully documented and kept for future reference'* (c10).

Coaches (SSGI, November 2007) showed an increased understanding of the importance of planning. This was clearly summarised by one of the full-time coaches: *'The only time I planned before was if I had an advanced group...and even then I wouldn't write it down, I would just think about it...and set the session out in my head of what I was going to do. Doing this course has shown how important it is to plan...'* (c21).

Coaches also noted (questionnaire, January 2008) the impact of planning, for example, *'through planning you can manage behaviour and guide learners through the aims of your session better'.....I have seen the benefit of the new way we have been taught to coach. It makes sense to plan and evaluate your sessions. It helps to achieve your goals for the sessions'* (c4). Evidence of the medium and short term plans completed by coaches was included as part of the evidence folder all coaches were asked to keep at the start of the programme.

Coaches' identified (questionnaire, January 2008) aspects of planning they felt required further help. Three coaches stated that they would like further support in structuring the aims and objectives of their planning, e.g., *'Understanding how to set aims and objectives relevant to the age group I am working with'* (C4). Three coaches wanted help to plan for the four assessment strands of the NCPE, e.g. *'I need more support on the strands as I don't quite understand the targets'* (C15). Two coaches identified support with medium term planning, e.g. *'What medium and long term goals I might have for different age groups..... what I need to do/coach to get to these'* (c19). Further information on the content of lessons/sessions was also requested by three coaches, e.g. *'which topics to cover e.g. strong on sending and receiving, travelling, what other areas are there?'* (c9), *'repetitive session plans – need new ideas'* (c13).

Pedagogy

At the start of the CPD programme, this group of coaches did not understand the importance of using a range of different pedagogical approaches (see Blair and Capel, 2008). As a result of participating in this CPD programme, the data show that coaches changed their pedagogical approach when working with children.

Coaches reported the CPD programme had impacted or modified the way in which they coached. For example, five coaches (questionnaire, January 2008) explicitly stated that they used much more question and answer techniques and a further two coaches highlighted their increased awareness of letting the children make more decisions. Coach 14 reported (SSGI, November 2007) *'When I first started with the trust, it was a case of just going and*

delivering a session and that was it, but now I am thinking more in terms of how I affect the particular kids I am working with, my mannerism, lowering your voice, making your voice higher and posing certain questions and leaving a gap for the answer, rather than me asking a question and then jumping in with an answer, it's just a different way of teaching it and coaching and delivery is what I have taken from it'. Asked what he meant by 'it's just different', he replied, 'Its' how you put across the questions, like why and how and the different mentality to what I had previously'.

Coaches also talked about how experimenting with new approaches has led to some interesting results. For example , *'Behaviour is a lot better and the way the kids engage is a lot more interesting for me. They are brighter, they want to listen and they want to try new things'* (c9, SSGI, November 2007).

Coaches also mentioned management strategies. For example, *'it's just getting everyone into me; they are now running in rather than kicking a ball into the side. Asked if he had seen these strategies before, the coach replied: 'You just don't. No-one ever says this is how you communicate with a group. They say this is how you learn about Football, this is how you should play it, this is how we want you to coach it and they don't say how to deliver a session. They say this is how you set it out, this is how you play the game or how you do the drill and then that is how you do it'* (c21, SSGI, November 2007)). Coach 1 added further support to this... *'You don't take into account how you explain it or how best to get your point across or how it's best to set standards. I have been brought up mainly by the FA and CST and how they want me to coach and I have just done that all the way through and that is all I have ever known. No-one ever tells you how best to get a point across to a 4 year old, or how best to get a point across to a 16 year old, as it must be different but they don't say. There is no differentiation'.*

They recognised the impact of the changes to their pedagogy, for example, *'The learning methods I use and how I interact with the children have changed. The children enjoy the session more which has decreased massively the number of disruptive children'* (cM, AFS, October 2007)).

National Curriculum

Data collected at the start of the project clearly highlighted that the coaches had virtually no knowledge of the NCPE (see Blair and Capel, 2008). The results after 12 months of the CPD programme showed that the input on the NCPE highlighted for a number of coaches

just how little knowledge they had about working within the school curriculum. Although some progress had been made further work was still required.

Three coaches (questionnaire, June 2007) felt they were 'off the mark' or behind the standards of input required to deliver in the NCPE. For example, '*Started to give me an insight and a better understanding of what PPA should be and subsequently suggested we were nowhere near this level of competence*' (c1); '*with the standards we have in place and the standards that are required within the curriculum, I realised we are way off the mark*' (c13), and '*It showed how much we are currently behind the National Curriculum standards when coaching PPA sessions*' (c17). Further, '*It was useful but because it was all so new to me I didn't really understand it that much*' (c4) and '*highlighted areas of weak understanding and need for research/learning in order to be able to coach in PPA framework*' (c9).

Overall coaches felt they had basic knowledge and understanding of the NCPE (questionnaire, January 2008). Comments included: '*I know quite a few of the basics but if someone who knew more than me started asking me questions I would not feel comfortable*' (C1); 'Two coaches indicated that they thought their knowledge/understanding was poor (e.g. '*Don't know much*' (c11)). On the other hand, coach 9 indicated that his knowledge was good, providing the following reason '*Developing a unit of work for multi-skills has made me aware of how to write units in line with the NCPE and terminology needed to be used*'.

Evidence from coaches' folders, including lesson plans and field notes, indicated that coaches are able to identify the four strands of assessment, but were less successful in using them to construct intended learning outcomes and learning tasks. Coaches' field notes showed they would like further input on short and medium term planning and more insight into the NCPE

In relation to how they would like to be further supported in developing their knowledge and understanding of the NCPE (questionnaire, January 2008), two coaches wrote about developing further understanding of how the four assessment strands are used in relation to assessment and planning, e.g. '*Understanding of the strands and then help implementing them in my sessions and my planning*' (c4); and '*how to relate the strands of assessment to the delivery of a session*' (c9). Coach 13 talked about the method of delivery; '*A copy of the National Curriculum, working with the PE teachers more rather than always dealing with the receptionist*'.

Reflection

Data collected at the start of the CPD programme (January 2007) suggested that coaches' were more routine than reflective in their attitude. This is supported by coach 21 (SSGI, November 2007) *'I have to be honest you get stuck in a rut, you go out doing a lot of coaching hours and you get stuck in a rut'*. Results show that coaches' attitude towards considering the consequence of their coaching evolved during the CPD course. Through seeing the impact of a more reflective practice the coaches placed increased value on its' importance.

Most coaches' (AFS, October 2007) reported their attitude had changed. For example, *'I am thinking more about the sessions I teach. I reflect on sessions during and when done'* (cI); *'I now go into and come out of sessions thinking about what I have taught and the kids have learnt'* (cK); *'Now very much more reflective and using planning'* (cL); *'Before I was a little naïve, but my attitude has changed for the better with regards to what I'm doing. I find it a good challenge; long may the challenge remain!!'* (cN). However, one coach said that his attitude had *'Not [changed] at all yet'* (cH).

Coach 1 (SSGI, October 2007) commented regarding the value of reflection in action

'Really, really good, I have never done anything like that [a tutorial with the CPD leader looking at the DVD of another coach] at that kind of level and the chance was there to reflect. You do a session and you go away, but watching C4 [coach] was really good for his benefit, plus ours as we can all relate to it and the point brought up about reflection in action, changing the session just to watch the behaviour of kids also. I mean, when you are in the moment, you maybe can't pick up on everything; but just watching that, you get the little signs that you would know to watch out for when you are doing it, so if you have got them sitting down, get them playing, increase the size of the pitch, just the reflection in action is the thing I would take away the most from there.'

Asked if the CPD programme had helped develop his reflection and self awareness (SSGI, November 2007), coach 9 replied; *'Yes if a coach says to me now, how can I develop myself as a coach, I would tell them that the most important thing is that they reflect'*.

Coaches were asked (questionnaire, January 2008) why they thought reflection was an important aspect of coaching. Four coaches identified how reflection can support progression of the session and themselves as a coach, e.g. *'Gives you time to analyse the lesson in progress and see what works and what doesn't work for differing age groups and*

abilities. Also lets you evaluate the sessions between sessions' (c10); and 'It is important to assess what's working well and not so well so that you can adapt if you need to, to suit the needs of the group' (c13). Five coaches highlighted how reflection was important in allowing them to make improvements to their coaching practice, e.g. 'It allows you to think about how to improve your next session and how to tailor your session to the learners needs' (c4). Two coaches highlighted a personal development dimension to reflection stating 'It highlights areas where children can be coached. Also I can reflect on my performance and think about how I can improve and develop' (C15); to improve as a coach and develop myself' (c19). Coach 1 highlighted the role of reflection in relation to knowing what has worked or not worked, e.g. 'if you don't reflect how would you know if your session was of any use?

Discussion

This paper has presented the results of an evaluation at the end of the first 12 months of a CPD programme designed to develop coaches' knowledge, skill and understanding in four key areas; planning, pedagogy, curriculum and reflection in the coaching and learning process, in order to enable them to undertake specified work in PPA time in primary schools. At the start of the CPD programme coaches did not have the knowledge, understanding or skill to undertake specified work to cover PPA time (see Blair and Capel, 2008). Results of this study indicate that after 12 months coaches' had an enhanced knowledge and understanding of the importance of planning their sessions. They planned sessions and they could see the impact that planning had on their practice. As coaches started to have greater success in the coaching sessions they were able, in part, to attribute this success to the time and effort they had directed to their planning and preparation. Coaches also had enhanced knowledge and understanding about pedagogy, had changed their pedagogy somewhat and could see the impact of the change of pedagogy on pupil learning. Coaches had some knowledge about the NCPE, but they still had some way to go in order to use this knowledge to plan meaningful learning outcomes and learning tasks. Perhaps the most interesting finding within this area is that a number of coaches showed an increased awareness of how 'far off the mark' they were and that they needed more curriculum knowledge. This is not surprising, but also very concerning, as these coaches' had no previous input on the PE curriculum in primary schools prior to working in primary schools or prior to this CPD programme. This acknowledgement of lack of curriculum knowledge could also be linked to the coaches' comments regarding their evolving appreciation of the importance of reflection in relation to knowing if they had done a good job, being able to improve their practice and being able to self regulate their own performance; reported as being very important to these coaches. Reflection was mainly at a technical level (Van

Manen, 1977), with coaches being concerned with using reflection to 'see what works'. Data shows that coaches came from a background culture of routine practice (see Blair and Capel, 2008); thus, for these coaches to change their thinking on how they consider the consequences of their action is significant.

The findings of this study highlight how the CPD programme provided the coaches with a developing appreciation of how the additional knowledge it presented supports their role as a community coach working in primary schools to cover PPA time. The coaches are more reflective and aware of the consequences of their pedagogical decisions. Their perception of being a coach is evolving and being re-conceptualised and professionalized (Jones, 2006, 2007), providing further empirical support to Bergman Drewe, (2000) and Jones (2006, 2007) view that the coaches' role is primarily one of an educator. However, although coaches' knowledge has developed, further development is needed for coaches to understand how their developing knowledge and understanding can be translated into developing skill in undertaking specified work.

The results take another step towards addressing criticisms of large scale coach education programmes and CPD for teachers, particularly one-day or weekend courses in which knowledge and understanding is gained from de-contextualised role-play environments and from which there is no follow-up to allow transfer of this knowledge and understanding into the non-routine, problematic and contextualised environments in which each individual coach works (e.g., Abraham and Collins, 1998; Armour and Yelling, 2007; Cassidy et al, 2004; Douge and Hastie, 1993; Gilbert and Trudel, 1999). Coaches have clearly stated their preference for developing their practice they prefer learning through contextualised experience (Jones, et al, 2004, Wright et al, 2007).

The CPD programme was designed as a set of connected experiences utilising a range of critical pedagogical approaches (Fernandez-Balboa, 1997; Kirk, 2000) that were delivered over a sustained period of time (O'Sullivan and Deglau, 2006). It emphasised the process of providing meaningful professional development opportunities (Armour and Yelling 2007, Attard and Armour, 2006), by enabling coaches' to contextualise their learning by using their own coaching practice as the focus for reflection; this was very specific in the last three months of the programme.

This supported coaches to reflect on the knowledge being generated through their experiences and helped them to create their own personal meaning from this additional knowledge. By working in this way, the coaches' were able to see the relevance of; for

example, why and how planning directly supports their practice and how more inclusive pedagogical approaches support the learning of all children.

The development of 'ones' own meaning through experience is an underpinning ingredient of Wenger (1998) social theory of learning. The programme embraced the social theory of learning (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998), underpinned by a constructivist epistemology. Thus, learning was seen as being a socially constructed process which encouraged coaches to reflect on their identity as a coach, what that actually meant to them in practice and being critically aware of the consequence of their choices when planning, delivery and evaluating their work in schools.

Results testify to the effectiveness of such an approach, although further work is needed on what aspects of the programme were most effective. Thus, the CPD supported most coaches to appreciate how an alternative epistemology can both challenge and supplement their existing knowledge and understanding of the coaching process. Consequently they started to value the importance of emphasising the additional knowledge presented in this CPD and how practice can be advanced and indeed become more rewarding when aligned with a deeper theoretical understanding. The results of the study provide further support to existing literature (Cassidy et al 2004; Culver and Trudel, 2008; Cushion, 2007; Gilbert and Trudel, 2001, 2006; Jones, 2006, 2007; Jones et al 2004; Jones et al, 2008; Kidman, 2005; Lyle, 2002; Trudel and Gilbert, 2006) highlighting the socially constructed nature of 'learning to coach' and indeed the importance of developing an organic context with bespoke meaning when educating coaches. Thus, the outcomes reported in this paper have led us towards wanting to understand more about 'what processes produce what effects, for which participants, in what circumstances' (Coalter, 2007, p 3).

We are certainly not suggesting that the CPD programme developed a new way to coach, but rather it reinforced, explained, demonstrated, modelled and critiqued four key areas that might provide a starting place for an additional set of coaching knowledge(s) required to cover specified work in PPA time in primary school and to supplement knowledge already delivered through NGB coaching awards. This is especially relevant as research by Sports coach UK (2007a) highlights that the most frequent environment in which full-time coaches work is in a school setting. This is further supported by Ward (2005) who reports that a third of primary schools are using external providers to cover PE lessons. This context is especially interesting when aligned with results from this project as coaches' discussed how, on NGB awards, they are not taught approaches and techniques to communicate to a group, specifically children. This suggests reasons why these coaches (who have all passed

NGB awards) placed little value and demonstrated little knowledge and understanding regarding the importance of planning and pedagogy. However, it also raises questions as to why planning and pedagogy are omitted from any coach education that is aimed at children (or adults) learning being progressive? We would encourage a view that learning to coach, like learning to teach, is a continual process that is constantly in a state of progress and therefore should embrace core principles of effective pedagogical practice.

The knowledge, skill and understanding needed to educate a class of twenty six or more, mixed ability, mixed gender children with a wide range of different learning needs and requirements may supplement those traditionally taught to coaches whose role might have conventionally been seen to be with a team of enthusiastic children with (perhaps) a narrower range of physical abilities. With some making a conscious decision to attend and in some cases make a payment for football coaching. Indeed, development in the four areas included on this CPD course and strengthening the relationship between sports coaching and education principles could have a much wider impact on the quality of the physical and sporting activities experienced by children. It could enhance the experience of children learning to play football outside the classroom, as some coaches identified the increased pedagogical knowledge developed through participation in this CPD programme is used in other contexts in which coaches work, including community contexts working with children (e.g. *'my style has become more accommodating for different players I deal with. I now ask a lot more questions and challenge the children from different angles'* (c19)).

While we are clear that coaches have to take personal responsibility for the development of their practice, we would also state that there is a much broader responsibility in relation to providing coaches with the knowledge, skill and understanding they require to work in school. How coaches who are working with children are educated must be an area of concern for Government, Sports coach UK, NGB's and employees. We are aware that this is being addressed through Sports coach UK coaching framework (2007b), NGB discussion document (Football Association, 2008) and that the FA are currently writing age appropriate youth awards at level 1,2, 3 and 4. We are in support of the recommendation put forward by the Coaching Children's working group (2007) to create a 'license' for all coaches working with children within the framework of the NCPE. We would, however, suggest that careful consideration be given to the knowledge deemed appropriate for coaches working at a community level, where the majority of their work is with 5–11 year old children. If coaches are going to be expected to cover specified work in schools to cover PE lessons to allow teachers to take PPA time, then the findings of this study should help inform the content of such awards.

However, the results of this study also raise key issues related to the teaching of PE in primary schools. There are many aspects to this debate; one of which is covered below.

Implications for teaching PE in primary schools

Morgan and Bourke (2008) found that non-specialist primary teachers have only a 'moderate level' of confidence to teach PE. However, Morgan (2008) found that although primary teachers lack confidence to, and would rather not, teach PE lessons; they do value the importance of the subject within the curriculum. The results of this study may help inform further debate and investigation regarding how PE is delivered in primary schools.

Should/could teachers and coaches coexist in a professional capacity, working in unison with a common goal of providing a high quality educational experience that motivates, inspires and provides access and opportunity for children to take part in physical activity? Teachers and coaches could work together; with part of the teacher's role to support coaches in the construction of knowledge relating to pedagogy and child development and coaches brought into the school community and provided with a legitimate identity as a member of the school's staff. This could have implication for how primary school teachers are supported, both in ITE and CPD. Consideration needs to be given to whether there are alternative approaches and models to the education of teachers that would support them in seeing the meaning and value of PE but without the pressure of feeling that they are the sole providers. Instead, they could be supported to view themselves as part of a more connected, team approach to delivering high quality PE. Such an approach would, in part, support Talbot's (2008b) view regarding the longer term future of PE in primary schools. Theoretically, working with coaches in such a way could support the confidence of primary school teachers to deliver PE. The model would provide a complementary synergy of content and pedagogical knowledge working together to ultimately provide a high quality PE experience for all children. It would further support the underpinning theoretical position of this CPD programme and encourage teachers and coaches to engage in the social construction of knowledge and understanding (Lave and Wenger, 1991, Wenger, 1998).

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