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Published online: 15 Feb 2021.

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Dispositions and coaching theories: understanding the impact of coach education on novice coaches' learning

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ABSTRACT

Whilst coach education has been the subject of much critique, it is often the first opportunity for novice coaches to be formally taught how to coach. Nevertheless, novice coaches arrive at coach education courses with an array of pre-existing dispositions and coaching theories, referring to naturalised and self-referenced approaches towards coaching practice, which can be resistant to change. Consequently, the aim of this research was to explore the construction and development of four novice coaches' dispositions and coaching theories, and whether they were either confirmed, developed, challenged, or changed by a Level 1 sport-specific coaching course. Following an instrumental case study design, four novice coaches were each interviewed before, during, and after their engagement with a Level 1 sport-specific course. Data were analysed thematically, informed by Phil Hodkinson and colleagues' theory of 'learning cultures' and the metaphor of learning as becoming, which draws upon Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, field, and capital. Three themes were developed which are representative of the three interview phases: (1) Pre-course: The development of coaches' dispositions towards practice; (2) During course: Challenging coaches' dispositions and coaching theories; and (3) Post-course: Future learning and critical reflections. The findings demonstrated that the four novice coaches' dispositions and coaching theories were largely underpinned by behaviourist assumptions, which were developed experientially. These dispositions and coaching theories were challenged and subsequently showed signs of transformation both during and after the Level 1 course, which promoted a constructionist games-based approach to coaching. Recognising the significance of novice coaches' dispositions and coaching theories may help governing bodies to support learners with understanding and engaging with constructionist informed coaching approaches, whilst appreciating coach learning as a social, embodied, and on-going process of dispositional re-construction.

Introduction

Whilst learning to coach has been depicted as an idiosyncratic process (e.g. Holmes et al., 2021; Stodter & Cushion, 2017), formal coach education programmes are frequently portrayed as the traditional method to prepare novice coaches for the realities of practice (Lyle & Cushion, 2017).

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However, coach education programmes have been subject to several critiques, presenting a some-what sobering picture within the literature (Nelson et al., 2013). Principally, coach education pro-vision is often delivered in a decontextualised manner, failing to recognise learners' unique coaching environment, whilst adopting a one-size-fits-all approach (Cope et al., 2021; Nash et al., 2017; Stodter & Cushion, 2019; Watts & Cushion, 2017). Furthermore, it is argued that coach edu-cation merely reproduces the agendas of Governing Bodies (GBs), with the assumption that deliv-ered content will be seamlessly implemented in practice (Chapman et al., 2020; Cushion et al., 2019).

Although designing and delivering coach education is complex due to its socially constructed nature, recent research has demonstrated a paradigmatic shift from some GBs towards social con-structionist assumptions (e.g. Chapman et al., 2020; Dempsey et al., 2020). This position assumes knowledge is constructed through a combination of individual and social factors which interact, develop, and change within historical and cultural environments (Cushion, 2013). Social construc-tionism rejects a dualist ontological and epistemological position, instead assuming multiple realities exist with knowledge considered a 'product of our social practices and institutions, or of the inter-actions and negotiations between relevant social groups' (Gasper, 1999, p. 85). Therefore, coach edu-cation is never neutral (Lyle & Cushion, 2017), rather, all provision is underpinned by assumptions related to who coaches are (ontology) and how they learn (epistemology), which structures the approaches both adopted and promoted. Tutors delivering social constructionist informed coach education are likely to be re-positioned as facilitators who question learners and encourage social interaction, whilst devising problem-solving activities which enables learners to engage with critical reflection (Chapman et al., 2020; Dempsey et al., 2020; Lyle & Cushion, 2017). Furthermore, tutors might endorse games-based approaches (GBAs) to coaching to ensure athletes engage with relevant environments and tasks which enables them to construct their learning (Lyle & Cushion, 2017). Thus, coach education informed by social constructionist assumptions has the potential to offer authentic and information-rich learning experiences for coaches (Lyle & Cushion, 2017), resulting in learners co-constructing knowledge and modifying practice (Cope et al., 2021; Stodter & Cushion, 2019).

Currently, several conceptual issues exist within the coach education literature. For example, a large proportion of research is overly focused on elite coaches (e.g. Jones & Allison, 2014; Townsend & Cushion, 2017). This is problematic, as the duration, depth, and breath of coach education pro-vision produces a differentiated set of beliefs and expectations towards the coaching role which need to be understood across domains (Lyle & Cushion, 2017). Within the United Kingdom (UK), there are currently over 3 million active coaches, yet, over half (54%) do not hold a coaching qualifica-tion, with 34% never accessing any form of continuing professional development (UK Coaching, 2019). Against this backdrop, sport coaching's predominantly volunteer workforce has resulted in an informal learning curriculum for novice coaches operating within the participation coaching domain (Lyle & Cushion, 2017; Nash et al., 2017), with these individuals learning experientially prior to any formal course (Cushion, 2011; Cushion et al., 2003). Attending a coach education course is often the first opportunity for novice coaches to be formally taught how to coach, however, the literature provides us with little appreciation of coach education 'across coaching domains and within the developmental spectrum' (Cushion & Nelson, 2013, p. 369). Therefore, exploring novice coaches' first engagements with formal coach education (e.g. a Level 1 course) and whether the delivered content reaffirms or challenges their experiential learning would seem valuable.

Problematically, relying solely on experience as the primary source of learning for novice coaches will 'reinforce certain ideological interpretations of knowledge and practice' (Cushion, 2019, p. 364). Through experience, coaches develop dispositions (attitudes, preferences) towards coaching which are shaped by a 'social press' (Cushion, 2011; Hassanin & Light, 2014; Watts & Cushion, 2017). Thus, a novice coaches' dispositions towards coaching are not benign, but instead influenced by the values of that coaching context (Lyle & Cushion, 2017), often underpinned by naturalised beliefs about both coaching and learning (Cushion, 2019). Specific dispositions towards coaching can also be referred to as coaching (practice) theories (Cassidy, 2010; Lyle & Cushion, 2017), which influences a coaches' behaviours and adopted coaching approaches (Cassidy, 2010; Lyle & Cushion, 2017). The

assumptions underpinning an individual's dispositions and coaching theories may connect to a broader paradigmatic position, such as behaviourism or social constructionism (Lyle & Cushion, 2017), which might contradict the promoted assumptions within an initial coach education course. Hence, the ability of novice coaches to understand and construct new knowledge within coach education is a complex process, which is significantly impacted by their embodied dispositions.

Whilst elite coaches' dispositions often challenge the espoused content within coach education (e.g. Jones & Allison, 2014; Townsend & Cushion, 2017; Watts & Cushion, 2017), the extent to which novice coaches' dispositions act in a similar manner following their initial engagements with coach education is significantly overlooked. Furthermore, research examining coach education is often retrospective and relies on one-off interviews or surveys (e.g. Nash et al., 2017; Nelson et al., 2013), neglecting coaches' dispositions and coaching theories both before and during course delivery. Consequently, the aim of this research was to explore the construction and development of four novice coaches' dispositions and coaching theories, and whether they were either confirmed, developed, challenged, or changed by a Level 1 coaching course. To move beyond descriptive accounts which merely outline coaches' preferences and experiences (Cushion, 2011), this research adopted a three-tier approach by tracking novice coaches' dispositions and coaching theories before, during, and after their attendance on a Level 1 course.

Research which acknowledges coaches' wider learning, prior to engagement with a formal qualification, helps to conceptualise coach learning more succinctly and account for agentic and structural factors (Leeder et al., 2019; Stodter & Cushion, 2014). Indeed, to meaningfully support novice coaches' in understanding and embracing coaching approaches embedded within initial coach education courses, both researchers and course tutors would benefit from appreciating broader educational perspectives and examining wider learning cultures (Stodter & Cushion, 2014). Therefore, to help recognise the personal constructs of the novice coaches (Griffiths & Armour, 2013), the cultural learning approach of Hodkinson et al. (2007, 2008) and their metaphor of learning as becoming are drawn upon as a 'theory of practice' to analyse novice coaches' dispositional changes (Cassidy, 2010).

Theoretical framework: coach learning as a process of 'becoming'

Traditionally, literature exploring coach education and coach learning has been broadly grouped (see Cushion et al., 2010) through Sfard's (1998) metaphors of learning as acquisition (learning as a product) or participation (learning as a situated process). Both metaphors can be critiqued for either overemphasising individual cognition and disregarding the social (acquisition) or overemphasising the social and ignoring individual agency (participation). To overcome these limitations, Hodkinson and colleagues (Hager & Hodkinson, 2009; Hodkinson et al., 2007, 2008) draw upon Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of *habitus*, *field*, and *capital* to overcome the dualisms of structure/agency and individual/social, to produce the metaphor of learning as becoming. Utilising this metaphor encompasses a holistic approach by accounting for the individual, context, and wider cultural issues of power which influences learning (Hodkinson et al., 2007).

Bourdieu's seminal concept is habitus, considered a system of structured and structuring dispositions which 'generate and organise practices and representations' (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 53). Central to Bourdieu's habitus is the use of the term dispositions, which describes an attitude or preference towards practice (Bourdieu, 1998). Through experience as both an athlete and coach within fields (social/cultural contexts), individuals embody coaching dispositions that are both structured and structuring (e.g. Cushion et al., 2003; Hassanin & Light, 2014; Holmes et al., 2021; Watts & Cushion, 2017). Within fields, individuals adopt hierarchical positions due to their accumulation and volume of differing forms of capital (Bourdieu, 1986). Within the coaching field, individuals are positioned due to their possession of cultural capital (e.g. coaching qualifications and experience) or social capital (e.g. networks), which transform to become symbolic (see Cushion et al., 2019; Townsend & Cushion, 2017). Thus, learning is largely structured by an individual's position (capital) and dispositions, situated within fields of practice (Biesta et al., 2011). Whilst there are always

opportunities for learning, these depend on the 'position, habitus and capitals of the individuals, in interaction with each other in their horizons for learning, as part of a field of relationships' (Hodkinson et al., 2008, p. 41).

Following Bourdieu's concepts, Hodkinson et al. (2008) developed the notion of 'learning cultures', explained in two parts: a theory of learning cultures (field); and a cultural theory of learning (habitus and capital). Learning cultures are the social practices through which people learn, which are both structured and structuring, meaning an individual is neither completely governed by a learning culture, nor are they entirely agentic (Hodkinson et al., 2007, 2008). Learning cultures are influenced by the field they are situated within (a theory of learning cultures), whilst being engaged with idiosyncratically dependent upon an individual's habitus and capital (a cultural theory of learning). Hodkinson et al. (2008) use the metaphor of learning as becoming to highlight the on-going process of identity construction, which conceptualises learning as a cultural, holistic, and embodied process (Hager & Hodkinson, 2009). In order words, a novice coach will arrive at a coach education course and its associated learning culture (e.g. social practices) with an array of pre-existing dispositions towards coaching, which will either resist or accept the delivered content (see Griffiths & Armour, 2013; Leeder et al., 2019). Therefore, novice coaches will experience coach education courses uniquely as part of their wider coaching journeys, with their embodied coaching dispositions developing in variable ways over time (Watts & Cushion, 2017).

Hodkinson et al. (2008, p. 39) argue that learning should be understood as a 'process through which the dispositions that make up a person's habitus are confirmed, developed, challenged or changed'. Therefore, if we perceive learning as a process of dispositional transformation, it would seem worthwhile to explore the extent to which novice coaches' dispositions and coaching theories are modified following a coach education course, to conceptualise coach learning more holistically. Bourdieu (2000, p. 136) recognised the significance of dispositions by proclaiming 'to deny the existence of acquired dispositions … is to deny the existence of learning'. Whilst habitus is commonly critiqued for appearing deterministic, Bourdieu strongly emphasised how dispositions change, despite their sub-conscious or tacit nature (e.g. Bourdieu, 1990, 2000; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Thus, novice coaches all possess a habitus, developed through positions in fields and learning cultures, which can be perceived as 'an open system of dispositions that is constantly subjected to experiences, and therefore constantly affected by them in a way that either reinforces or modifies its structure' (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 133).

Whilst Bourdieu's concepts have been used extensively within coach education and coach learning research (e.g. Hassanin & Light, 2014; Holmes et al., 2021; Townsend & Cushion, 2017), the application of Hodkinson et al. (2008) cultural learning theory and metaphor of learning as becoming has been utilised to a lesser extent, bar some exceptions (e.g. Leeder et al., 2019; Stodter & Cushion, 2014). In building upon previous research, utilising Hodkinson and colleagues' 'theory of practice', informed by Bourdieu, provides an opportunity to further conceptualise coach learning as an embodied and social process, whilst helping coach education providers to 'understand and develop practices that enable the focus to be on learners and learning' (Cassidy, 2010, p. 187). Therefore, Hodkinson et al. (2007, 2008) conceptual framework was considered a useful lens to understand how the dispositions of four novice coaches were influenced by a Level 1 coach education course.

Case study: the Level 1 course

To understand the impact of coach education on novice coach learning, a GB's Level 1 course (L1C) was chosen as an instrumental case study (Stake, 1995). Within instrumental case studies, the case itself (the L1C) is of secondary interest but helps to advance our understanding of a particular issue (Stake, 1995), such as whether novice coaches' dispositions and coaching theories are transformed by an initial coach education course. In echoing previous research (e.g. Stodter & Cushion, 2014), coach education courses are suitable for case study research due to their bounded nature and ability to draw specific insight on contextual issues (Stake, 1995).

The L1C is an entry level qualification for coaches in England wishing to work with players within the participation domain of the respective sport (Lyle & Cushion, 2017). Per annum, circa 20,000 learners complete the L1C who are predominantly volunteers working with recreational clubs in local community settings, which constitutes roughly 67% of the UK's coaching workforce (UK Coaching, 2019). Having been redesigned in 2016, The L1C is delivered by the GB's regional associations, consisting of seven workshops delivered over three and a half days, either on a weekend or mid-week evenings, in addition to three online modules.

L1C workshops are typically delivered by one tutor, with a week gap between some workshops to enable coaches to experiment with the promoted coaching approaches *in situ*. The course covers a range of topics and involves a mixture of classroom-based theory tasks and practical coaching delivery, which are both tutor and learner led. Workshop topics include session planning and practice design, social and psychological aspects of coaching, games-based approaches (GBAs), alongside discussions surrounding the GBs coaching culture.[1] The L1C promotes coaching approaches underpinned by social constructionist assumptions (e.g. GBAs), with tutors creating space for social interaction and dialogue between learners via group discussions and scenario-based tasks (Chapman et al., 2020; Dempsey et al., 2020), whilst encouraging coaches to reflect upon content in light of their existing knowledge. To complete the L1C, coaches must attend all workshops and finish the three online modules, in addition to completing all tasks within a learner journal.

Methodology

Paradigmatic position

This research is positioned within the interpretivist paradigm, emphasising a relativist ontology which suggests 'social reality is humanly constructed and shaped in ways that make it fluid and multifaceted' (Sparkes & Smith, 2014, p. 11). Epistemologically, a subjectivist position is adopted to help articulate how the 'knower and the known are inter-dependent and fused together in such a way that the findings are the creation of a process of interaction between the two' (Sparkes & Smith, 2014, p. 13). Following these paradigmatic assumptions, a qualitative instrumental case study design was chosen (Stake, 1995).

Sampling and procedure

A purposive homogeneous sampling strategy was adopted to select the L1C as the instrumental case study. The L1C was chosen due to its distinct nature (e.g. an entry level coaching course), which could provide insight and detail on a wider issue (Sparkes & Smith, 2014), such as how initial coach education influences novice coaches' dispositions and coaching theories. Moreover, the lead author's knowledge of and accessibility to the case was an influencing factor (Sparkes & Smith, 2014).

Having chosen the L1C as the case, following ethical approval, the lead author contacted gatekeepers at one of the GB's regional associations prior to the delivery of their next L1C. A participant information sheet, outlining the purpose of the study, data collection, and confidentiality was subsequently emailed to all coaches (*n* = 24) who had enrolled onto the forthcoming L1C. Interested participants were then contacted individually (*n* = 4), with informed consent being obtained. Therefore, sampling within the case was convenience based, as the first and only participants interested in the study were recruited (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). However, in drawing upon the concept of information power developed by Malterud et al. (2016), a sample size of four participants was deemed appropriate due to the research's narrow aims, the appropriateness of the case, application of theory, strong dialogue between researcher and participants, in addition to the study's exploratory nature.

Participants

Four novice coaches (mean age 34.3) enrolled onto the L1C were recruited as participants. A brief overview of each participant is provided below, with pseudonyms assigned for confidentiality:

Ryan began coaching due to his 'love of the game' and has five years coaching experience, predominantly coaching local female adult teams. Aged 34, Ryan has recently returned to coaching following work commitments.

Dennis, aged 35, didn't plan on coaching an under-6s group, but thought he 'might as well get involved' due to his son's participation. Dennis has less than a year's coaching experience and limited playing experience in the respective sport but has spent 10 years coaching tennis.

Aged 34, Max has less than a year's coaching experience. Max coaches his son's under-10s team, having spent two years observing as a parent. He began his coaching journey to 'give something back' and spend more time with his son.

Aged 34, Colin is working with his son's under-9s team after a coach recently left. Colin has no previous coaching experience in any capacity. Whilst his son's participation was the catalyst for starting to coach, Colin admitted that he had 'thought about coaching for many years'.

Data collection

Qualitative semi-structured interviews were utilised, enabling knowledge to be co-constructed between researcher and participant, whilst allowing 'attitudes, opinions, beliefs, and values with respect to a particular phenomenon' to be examined (Purdy, 2014, p. 162). In moving away from singular, retrospective interviews, each of the four participants were interviewed three times: before the L1C, during the L1C, and after the L1C. Multiple interviews enabled a range of topics to be explored, whilst allowing rapport to be built between researcher and participant (Purdy, 2014). Multiple interviews helped facilitate an exploration into the novice coaches' dispositions and coaching theories before exposure to the L1C, whilst helping to demonstrate whether they were transformed either during or after the course. All interviews followed a pre-planned interview guide utilising focused but relatively open questions, creating a flexible dialogue to address emerging issues whilst encouraging elaboration (Sparkes & Smith, 2014).

The first set of interviews (average 55 min) explored the development of the four novice coaches' current dispositions and coaching theories, in addition to their experiences of learning to coach. The first interviews were conducted face-to-face in a neutral location (e.g. a local café) to provide a less formal setting (Purdy, 2014). The second set of interviews (average 20 min) were more concise and occurred on-site during the L1C. Having obtained gatekeeper access from the GB, the lead author interviewed the four participants face-to-face in a private room during the lunch break of a weekend workshop. These shorter interviews centred on the participants' general experiences of the course and their perceptions towards the delivered content. The final interviews (average 28 min) were conducted a week after the participants had completed the final L1C workshop. These interviews were conducted at a neutral location, with discussions focusing on whether the participants had experienced any dispositional changes, whilst exploring their future learning aspirations. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Data analysis

To align with the interpretivist paradigm, Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis was considered an appropriate method to identify, describe, and interpret themes within the data (Braun et al., 2016). Braun and Clarke's (2006) 6-phase procedure was not followed prescriptively, exemplifying the iterative, on-going, and *reflexive* nature of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2020). Therefore, thematic analysis was adopted in a recursive way (Braun & Clarke, 2020), involving progression and regression through the stages of: data familiarisation; coding; developing themes; refining

themes; naming themes; and writing up (Braun et al., 2016). Thus, these stages were merged, rather than perceived as standalone features of the analytical process (Braun & Clarke, 2020).

After initial immersion within the data, codes were assigned to passages of transcription to link data to theoretical concepts (e.g. Hodkinson and colleagues, Bourdieu), moving beyond descriptive interpretation. Thematic analysis is theoretically flexible, enabling an inductive and deductive approach to coding (Braun & Clarke, 2020). For example, the codes 'different perspective', 'changing beliefs', and 'new dispositions' were collated under the heading 'habitus transformation'. Data within this initial group of codes included extracts such as 'It's changed what I was thinking, it's changed my method and my way of thinking' (Colin, 2nd interview), which demonstrated how the novice coaches experienced dispositional changes. Coding and initial theme development could be best described as a process of *abduction*, highlighting the iterative nature of qualitative analysis by integrating aspects of induction and deduction, to facilitate a reciprocal dialogue between theory and data (Blaikie, 2010). Coding and theme development were combined stages, with the process of developing, refining, and naming themes occurring at the latent rather than semantic level, resulting in three themes which illuminate the content of the data (e.g. development of dispositions, changes to dispositions, critical reflections) and represent the three interview stages (Braun et al., 2016; Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2020). The final stage of the analysis involved the integration of data extracts and analytical comments when writing up (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Results and discussion

Following the thematic analysis procedure, three themes were developed: (1) Pre-course: The development of coaches' dispositions towards practice; (2) During course: Challenging coaches' dispositions and coaching theories; and (3) Post-course: Future learning and critical reflections.

Pre-course: the development of coaches' dispositions towards practice

Dispositions are 'propensities towards particular values and behaviours' (Biesta et al., 2011, p. 87), which are embodied within an individual's habitus (Bourdieu, 1990). Coaches' dispositions refer to naturalised preferences towards coaching approaches, otherwise known as coaching theories (Lyle & Cushion, 2017). The novice coaches articulated their current dispositions and coaching theories within the first interviews.

> What I do is start them with the basics and getting the boys some confidence. How to pass a ball, how to stop a ball, how to run with the ball … I like to talk theory first, so bring the boys in, make sure they are all listening. If someone's not listening, you know, just say 'do you want to be a part of this?' or 'do you want to sit this one out?' … So that's my sort of way of doing things if you like … Talk about it, show them the current way, and show them the next way and then put it into practice. (Max, 1st interview)

> If you start with a drill that needs explaining, you sit down at the start of the session, explain to the group this is what we're doing … You have to start with just a dead simple warm up. Get the kids moving, get 'em warm, then I'd go into something technical based … so you have your warmup, your technical thing, even something really detailed like turning and shooting that sort of thing … I wouldn't end necessarily with a match. (Dennis, 1st interview)

For Max and Dennis, their current dispositions and coaching theories were representative of a behaviourist approach, emphasised by coach-led instruction and the predominant use of training-form technical practices, which involve breaking activities down into simple and complex tasks (Cushion, 2013, 2019). Dennis, Colin, and Ryan highlighted how these assumptions were naturalised, accepting the belief that coaches should be autocratic in their approach.

> I do think that there does need to be a degree of autocracy with the coach … I think that the coach needs to be reasonably strict and say 'this is what we are doing, now do it' … I'd say I've got a bit of a no-nonsense style. (Dennis, 1st interview)

> At the minute, because of what I'm doing with them it's a little bit autocratic … it is very much the basics of passing, running with the ball, things like that so it's very much 'this is what I want you to do and this is how you do it'. I am showing them and explaining to them what they are doing wrong, and sort of how to do it properly. (Colin, 1st interview)

> It's hard because you've got to be the disciplinarian as well … You've got to have that discipline within the side, it is your team, the players don't rule the roost and that's how it is. (Ryan, 1st interview)

Bourdieu (1990, p. 86) proclaimed that 'practice has a logic which is not that of the logician'. For the novice coaches, their dispositions and coaching theories were reflective of a 'traditional' and authoritarian approach, reflecting specific ontological and epistemological assumptions about both coaching and learning (Cushion & Partington, 2016; Lyle & Cushion, 2017). Ryan further highlighted his behaviourist assumptions by positioning learners as passive whilst emphasising repetitive 'drill'-type practice designs and frequent feedback (Cushion, 2019).

> Ryan: You can come to me and we can change what we need to change. But that's not always what's going to happen, and again that's why I go back to my assertiveness. You've got to accept people's opinions, but at the end of the day I'm the head coach.
> Interviewer: So, what are the key features of your coaching practice?
> Ryan: We'll play a lot of passing patterns, we'll make sure we know our movement, we know our roles and responsibilities. We will go through the phases of play, making sure we're confident on the ball … something you will hear me saying quite a lot, 'come on guys, it's only five yards, let's get that right'. (Ryan, 1st interview)

The extent to which an individual can abandon their 'practical sense' is dependent upon their position within social space (Bourdieu, 2000). For the novice coaches, their dispositions and coaching theories are influenced by a 'social press', emphasising how coaching practice is infected by the normative expectations of wider learning cultures (Cushion, 2011; Stodter & Cushion, 2014). Coaches encounter wider learning cultures (e.g. clubs, organisations, sports) which are governed by normative expectations regarding good practice. Exposure to these learning cultures is significant in the embodiment of dispositions towards coaching (Cushion et al., 2003; Hassanin & Light, 2014). Both Max and Ryan highlighted how they began to cultivate dispositions towards coaching as a parent and as a player.

> There was this particular day that came to memory. There was going to be a scout lurking about that day, so the coach decided 'I need to pick my best team and who is going to catch that scout's eye' … and my son was left out that day and told not to play … I never want to be that coach. I want to make sure that all our boys feel like they're getting the time they deserve. (Max, 1st interview)

> I imagine it's managers I've worked under … I've worked with James (pseudonym) over at United (pseudonym). He was a character, but he would always get the best out of you … Just by explaining his decisions and making sure you understood your roles and responsibilities within your team and getting that key understanding. (Ryan, 1st interview)

Prior to becoming a coach, both Max and Ryan were engaged in a 'practical induction based on previous experience' (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 80). Thus, novice coaches' induction into coaching is structured by pre-existing dispositions developed within wider learning cultures, which either facilitate or hinder their learning and progression (Hodkinson et al., 2008). Acknowledging these wider constructs and dispositions enables us to understand the impact of coach education on novice coach learning holistically.

During course: challenging coaches' dispositions and coaching theories

Coach education has been criticised for its decontextualised nature, which fails to enhance coach learning (e.g. Nelson et al., 2013). However, during the second round of interviews the novice coaches' highlighted their positive experiences of the L1C, which exceeded their initial expectations.

> Part of me thought that the whole thing was a little bit of a box ticking exercise … I didn't think I'd learn nothing, but I didn't think I'd learn a great deal, but as it transpires, I found I didn't know as much as I thought I did. (Dennis, 2nd interview)

> It's definitely met my expectations of learning stuff that I didn't know and approaches to coaching I didn't know. I would say I did think it was going to be very much here are drills, learn drills and it's not that at all. (Colin, 2nd interview)

> I think it's exceeded my expectations. I was very sceptical to start with … I didn't see how it was going to be relevant to me. (Ryan, 2nd interview)

Whilst the L1C exceeded the novice coaches' expectations, it would appear the GB's promotion of GBAs throughout the course was significant. The use of GBAs enables athlete learning and skill development to be situated within the context of games, with the coach acting as a facilitator (Cushion, 2013). As Hodkinson et al. (2008, p. 34) suggest 'institutions embody and reify cultural practices and play an important role in the continuation of cultures'. Thus, it would appear the L1C tutor, as a constitutive part of that learning culture, legitimised the use of GBAs (Cushion et al., 2019), which facilitated some forms of learning through an 'awakening of the consciousness' (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 55). Colin and Ryan emphasised this notion:

> As soon as the tutor sort of said you don't do drills, you do games, and they learn through games and explained the methodologies about why you do it that way. It makes a lot more sense why just doing repeated drills isn't the best way … I was a bit shocked at first because it seems to go against the norm … of how you'd expect it to be. (Colin, 2nd interview)

> Everything around the game-based practices … keeping the ball time rolling and the transitions from drills, it has really opened my eyes. (Ryan, 2nd interview)

Coaches' dispositions are significant and may resist disseminated messages within coach education if they challenge ingrained beliefs (Cushion & Partington, 2016; Townsend & Cushion, 2017). For all the novice coaches, when encountering the L1C's learning culture and the normative values associated with constructionist coaching approaches, their dispositions, reflective of a behaviourist approach to coaching, were challenged.

> It's definitely challenged them [dispositions] because I'm working from an old rule book of what I experienced as a kid, you know you turn up, you kick a few balls round, you pass in a straight line and at some point, you might do a game at the end. (Max, 2nd interview; insertion added)

> Originally, I was thinking of drills and stuff, and techniques and things like that, but as soon as they sort of explained how they do it and they've shown us the type of games and activities and things you can do with them … I get why you do it that way … it's more beneficial than you know just getting them lining up and taking shots and stuff. (Colin, 2nd interview)

> The big thing is making well … as much as possible game related, we are definitely guilty of doing sort of passing drills and dribbling through cones before and not really giving much thought as to why we are doing that, but now there isn't much point in doing those sorts of things … otherwise they're not learning stuff they'll be able to take into games. (Dennis, 2nd interview)

Challenging and changing dispositions within a person's habitus is one way of understanding learning (Hodkinson et al., 2008), with the metaphor of becoming epitomising its social and embodied nature (Hager & Hodkinson, 2009). Consequently, whilst dispositions are grounded in practice, they are transposable, meaning they can change when subjected to new experiences (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Colin and Ryan described how their dispositions towards coaching were modified during the L1C, suggesting their future practices will be informed by constructionist assumptions and utilise GBAs.

> It's changed my method and my way of thinking … now doing this it's very much more let's make it games, make it more fun, it's not just front of the cone, run back, run to the next cone, run back, dribble with the ball … it's not engaging them in the same way as when it's a game situation. (Colin, 2nd interview)

> It's a case of (laughs) it's more or less everything I've ever done, not ever done but a lot of the stuff is more or less in the bin now, because this has opened my eyes massively to seeing what good coaching should be. (Ryan, 2nd interview)

For Bourdieu (2000, p. 161), dispositions are modified when 'confronted with conditions of actualisation different from those in which they were produced'. During the L1C, the novice coaches demonstrated how their current dispositions and coaching theories were challenged by the L1C content, resulting in dispositional changes. As learning cultures are both structured and structuring, individuals can preserve the nature of accepted social practices (Hodkinson et al., 2008). As the GBAs promoted by the experienced L1C tutor were not explicitly contested by the novice coaches (see Cope et al., 2021), the L1C's learning culture has inadvertently been reproduced and preserved (Hodkinson et al., 2008).

Post-course: future learning and critical reflections

After completing the L1C, the final round of interviews revealed the novice coaches' learning dispositions had also developed, which mediates their future engagement with learning opportunities (Biesta et al., 2011). In building upon previous research (e.g. Griffiths & Armour, 2013; Leeder et al., 2019), the novice coaches' outlined how their motivations towards learning had shifted after completing the L1C.

> Yes, definitely thinking of carrying on the learning and doing more bits … you're always constantly learning and I'm not going to rush straight into the Level 2, but I am definitely thinking of doing Level 2 in the next couple of years. (Colin, 3rd interview)

> It has definitely whet my appetite for development … having gone from thinking the Level 1 was a box ticking exercise that I had to do to help the club out, I'm now in a position where I would genuinely consider progressing onto the Level 2. (Dennis, 3rd interview)

Hodkinson et al. (2008) utilise the term *horizons for learning* to outline learning that is possible based upon an individual's dispositions and the learning cultures they inhibit. For Ryan, the L1C has inspired him to pursue further coach education qualifications, with his personal horizons enabling him to see the potential learning opportunities.

> It's just really inspiring me like I say to think I can go and do this. We can create a great environment for people to come and play … I can build on myself then and it's just not football, it's life lessons in there as well. (Ryan, 3rd interview)

Whilst *horizons for learning* describes the learning opportunities individuals can see based upon their embodied dispositions, Hodkinson et al. (2008) also adopt the term *horizons for action* to explain how these dispositions influence future action (Leeder et al., 2019). The analysis suggests the L1C was able to positively influence the novice coaches' learning dispositions, enabling them to both see and enact upon future learning prospects (Hodkinson et al., 2008). However, learning is always structured within fields (Biesta et al., 2011), with an individual's accumulation and possession of capital influencing learning (Bourdieu, 1986). Social positions within fields, in addition to dispositions, can and do change (Hodkinson et al., 2008), with learning cultures (e.g. the social practices of the L1C) permeated by wider fields (e.g. the field of coaching). Hence, the novice coaches explained how completing the L1C and engaging with that learning culture increased their cultural capital through obtaining the qualification (institutionalised cultural capital) and developing new dispositions (embodied cultural capital).

> I think one of the main things is confidence, I now feel, it's not as though I wasn't confident before, but I now feel like, because I've done this course, got the qualification, I kind of feel my words carry a bit more weight … I feel as though I know what I'm talking about a lot more. (Dennis, 3rd interview)

> Before coming on the course, I would feel parents maybe judge me on a good delivery of training, you know 'is he focusing on the things that are wrong with the team?' … So, you would feel obliged to work on those things

in training, whereas actually having the confidence and belief in yourself to say, 'I know there's things wrong, and I know we need to address them but trust me on how to deliver this in a training scenario'. (Max, 3rd interview)

Whilst the novice coaches believed the L1C enhanced their capital, they also outlined how the course allowed them to critically reflect upon their personal coaching philosophies. The learning culture of the L1C, underpinned by social constructionist assumptions which encourage interaction and reflection on existing knowledge, enabled the possibility of this learning occurring (Hodkinson et al., 2007).

> I thought it was going to be a case of coming in, sitting in the classroom, 'do this, you have to do this'. It's not the case it was 'it's you, it's your journey, it's your philosophy' … I thought it was just going to be a case of me turning up every weekend and in the week and just going through the motions, but it did, it just made me start thinking. (Ryan, 3rd interview)

> My expectations going into it were here's A, B, C, and D … it wasn't like that, it was very much more involved in the way that it was delivered. It was getting people engaged and not being talked to but being engaged with. 'You tell us what you think' … it makes you use your own brain; you know they give you guidance … I wasn't expecting that sort of course. (Max, 3rd interview)

> Task three in the book, the whole your philosophy thing. I was sat there because I was trying to be good and get ideas and stuff, and sat looking at it, I didn't get what that meant. It wasn't until we finished Saturday and then sort of had that light bulb moment of philosophy is how you want it, what you want … It's 'I want my kids to have fun playing' … there's your philosophy. (Colin, 3rd interview)

The L1C learning culture, informed by constructionist assumptions, allowed the novice coaches to reflect upon their dispositions and evolving coaching philosophies. A cultural approach to understanding learning, therefore, helps us to understand how particular social practices provide opportunities to learn (Hodkinson et al., 2007). Whilst the term 'coaching philosophy' lacks conceptual clarity and is often treated at a superficial level within coach education (Cushion & Partington, 2016), to some extent the L1C encouraged critical reflection towards the novice coaches' philosophies to transform, rather than reinforce, their existing dispositions and coaching theories (Cushion, 2019).

Concluding thoughts

The aim of this research was to explore the construction and development of four novice coaches' dispositions and coaching theories, and whether they were either confirmed, developed, challenged, or changed by a Level 1 coaching course. Prior to attending the L1C, coaches' dispositions and coaching theories were reflective of behaviourist assumptions, emphasising coach-led practices and autocratic behaviours (Cushion, 2019). However, both during and after the L1C, evidence would suggest that these dispositions were transformed in some capacity, aligning with the L1C's constructionist coaching approaches. The use of Hodkinson et al. (2008) 'theory of practice' has helped to conceptualise novice coach learning as a process of becoming, emphasising how dispositions continually evolve over time. This research contributes to knowledge by highlighting how dispositions and coaching theories of novice coaches are constitutive parts of any coach education course's learning culture, with learning a process which can re-shape and structure that culture. Thus, the findings from this instrumental case study build upon existing research by outlining how specific social practices within a Level 1 coach education course either enable or inhibit novice coach learning through dispositional changes (e.g. Griffiths & Armour, 2013; Leeder et al., 2019), whilst highlighting the socially constructed nature of coaches' learning journeys (e.g. Hassanin & Light, 2014; Holmes et al., 2021; Watts & Cushion, 2017).

In following Bourdieu's (1998) stance, if we perceive dispositions to be preferences towards social practice which alter through exposure to social contexts, we can argue that the L1C has influenced the novice coaches' learning. Nevertheless, whilst we acknowledge that the coaches alluded to

dispositional changes, we are conscious an epistemological gap might be present (Cushion, 2019), with changes to knowledge but not practice evident (Stodter & Cushion, 2019). Without longitudinal observational data, we are unaware of the extent to which dispositional changes have meaningfully informed the novice coaches' practice. As outlined elsewhere (e.g. Cushion, 2019; Stodter & Cushion, 2014), future research should draw upon mixed methods which incorporates objective data of coaching behaviours over time following coach education.

Coach education often fails to adequately challenge coaches' beliefs, with courses tending to be additive rather than transformative in nature (Cushion, 2019). Whilst the L1C demonstrated that some dispositional changes are possible, GBs must continue to encourage coaches to critically reflect upon their experiences, whilst creating 'deliberative learning situations that expose, develop and nurture' coaches' dispositions and coaching theories (Griffiths & Armour, 2013, p. 686). To support dispositional changes, coaches need to be emancipated from their dependence on self-referenced coaching approaches (Cushion, 2013). Therefore, coach developers might skilfully facilitate an environment where ingrained beliefs can be understood, interrogated, and developed in an appropriate way (Cushion & Nelson, 2013). There is some evidence to suggest the L1C achieved this:

> I had no expectations of what a current coach should be, and actually I have come away being able to look at coaching from a different angle, and I kind of needed that, I had one blinkered view of my own past, and I needed something else … now I know I can look at and do things differently. (Max, 3rd interview).

Coaches frequently struggle to implement constructionist informed coaching approaches within their practice following coach education, with GBAs often utilised 'in an uncritical or unsophisticated way' (Cushion, 2013, p. 72). Thus, in addition to providing a 'safe space' for critical reflection on dispositions and coaching theories, coach developers may consider offering post-course support to help coaches negotiate the challenges of embedding new approaches within localised learning cultures (Stodter & Cushion, 2014). Indeed, Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992, p. 137) have argued that managing individual dispositions is 'possible only with the support of explicit clarification', meaning without support, coaches may become 'accessory to the unconsciousness of the action of dispositions, which is itself the accomplice of determinism'. Therefore, coach education could critically engage with coaches' dispositions and coaching theories, helping coaches to conceptualise both their current and future coaching practice.

Note

1. The GB's coaching culture reflects their fundamental beliefs in relation to five core elements (values, sport-specific tactics, sport-specific techniques, coaching methodology, physical and psychology support) which directly influences coach education policy and provision across all pathways and levels. Thus, there is an expectation that tutors delivering the L1C will promote the GB's coaching culture and encourage learners to engage with its core elements.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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