

THE FACTORS INFLUENCING TWO PRIMARY TEACHERS' INTERPRETATION OF GAMES

Kumar Jayantilal

Nicholas O'Leary

Abstract

Research studies investigating the occupational socialization¹ of primary teachers delivering physical education has been conspicuous by its absence (O'Leary, 2019). Using Lawson's (1986) theoretical framework, this study examined two primary teachers' interpretation of games and the socialising factors influencing their pedagogical games practices. Data were collected using semi-structured interviews and analysed inductively. Three themes appeared around both teachers' games perspectives: an emphasis on technical learning, a differing use in teaching styles and a contrasting focus on strategical and tactical understanding. A variety of factors influenced these beliefs: negative childhood experiences of physical education, an innovative higher education degree, a continuous professional development course, a physical education planning scheme and the needs of the pupils. It was recommended that practitioners could engage in continuous professional development that develops their strategical and tactical subject knowledge. Furthermore, to complement such courses, teachers could pursue informal learning and utilise communities of practices. Finally, teachers could undertake action research.

Key words: Physical education, primary education, occupational socialization, games teaching and learning, pedagogy

¹ The American spelling of socialization has been adopted, since most research in this field is based in the USA

Author biographies

Kumar Jayantilal is a primary school teacher and a postgraduate student in the Institute of Education, Faculty of Education, Health and Well-Being, University of Wolverhampton, UK.

Dr Nick O’Leary is Course Leader and Senior Lecturer in Physical Education in the Institute of Human Sciences, Faculty of Education, Health and Well-Being, University of Wolverhampton, UK.

Introduction

Current state of teachers' games pedagogy

Games are defined as ‘an activity in which a minimum of two people, themselves on the move, engage in competitive play with a moving object within the framework of certain rules’ (Mauldon and Redfern, 1981, p.vi). In order to be a competent games player, children require knowledge of the rules and regulations (declarative knowledge), the ability to execute sports techniques (basic movement patterns where the influence of the environment has minimal effect on its execution) (procedural knowledge) and an understanding of when and where to execute such techniques (strategic knowledge) (Kirk and MacPhail, 2002). Identifying the three types of knowledge, the National Curriculum for Physical Education (NCPE) states that Key Stage 2 pupils should be taught to ‘play competitive games, modified where appropriate, and apply basic principles suitable for attacking and defending’ (DfE, 2013, p.2). In other words, during invasion games – such as hockey – children should be taught to support other players, create space and score and penetrate (when attacking), whilst denying space and applying pressure (when defending) (Ward and Griggs, 2011). In contrast, in striking and fielding games – such as cricket – learners should be taught to send the ball into space, score and stay in (when scoring), whilst covering space, limiting scoring and getting the batter out (when preventing scoring) (Ward and Griggs, 2011). To facilitate the three types of knowledge (Kirk and MacPhail, 2002), and achieve the aforementioned aims (DfE, 2013), children would need to acquire the relevant technique/s, be able to apply it/them to the ever-changing, rapid decision-making nature of games (thus becoming a game skill) and finally execute such skills with a strategic and tactical purpose. Recognising such requirements, game-centred pedagogical models have been suggested for use, such as Teaching Games for Understanding (TGfU) (Bunker and Thorpe, 1982). However, such models have predominantly been employed in secondary schools (Li and Cruz, 2008; Miller *et al.*, 2016; O’Leary, 2014, 2015). That said, by

1
2
3 adopting parts of these models' structures, they can provide a pedagogical guide to create sound
4 games learning experiences in primary physical education (PE) (Ward and Griggs, 2011).
5
6
7
8
9

10 To facilitate skilful games players, the practitioner should incorporate small-sided games,
11 where the rules, players and equipment are modified according to the developmental needs of
12 the learner. The teacher should provide plenty of opportunities to play the modified game,
13 enabling learners to apply skills and employ general strategies and tactics. The former are the
14 constant basic principles of attack and defence outlined above. The latter are identified just
15 prior to and during the game, based on the strengths and limitations of both teams and the
16 requirements of the ever-changing environment (Mouchet, 2014). Open-ending questioning
17 should be utilised, related to children's decision-making skills. This should enable social
18 discussion and cooperation, where skilful children can assist their less skilled counterparts in
19 synthesising and justifying decision making, thus improving each other's understanding of
20 games (Metzler, 2011). The teaching of techniques should not be disregarded. Techniques
21 should be taught largely through reproductive teaching styles, since they best encourage the
22 repetition of movement patterns (Mosston and Ashworth, 2002). However, given the ever-
23 changing nature of games, where children are required to make rapid decisions, productive
24 teaching styles – which encourage learners to think in order to solve problems – are of
25 tantamount importance to facilitate children's understanding of games (Mosston and
26 Ashworth, 2002). Despite such recommendations, academic research (Capel, 2007; Curtner-
27 Smith *et al.*, 2001; Jayantilal and O'Leary, 2017; Kirk, 2009; Metzler, 2011) and Ofsted reports
28 (Ofsted, 2004, 2009, 2013) suggest that the technical model has dominated games teaching and
29 learning. This model – usually through a warm-up, decontextualized technical drills and a full-
30 sized game – consists of pupils repetitively practising sports techniques abstracted from the
31 game situation (Metzler, 2011). Teachers, when using this approach, heavily rely upon
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 reproductive teaching styles and behaviourist learning strategies (where the pupil replicates
4 what s/he has heard and/or observed regardless of their developmental level, prior experience,
5 and the activity or learning outcomes). Such teaching styles encourage pupils *how* to perform
6 basic techniques, as opposed to *when* and *where* to employ them. Lawson's (1986)
7 occupational socialization framework can help to explain why teachers largely interpret and
8 deliver games in such a way.
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18

19 ***Occupational socialization***

20
21
22 Occupational socialization 'includes all of the kinds of socialization that initially influence
23 persons to enter the field of PE and that later are responsible for their perceptions and actions
24 as teacher educators and teachers' (Lawson, 1986, p.107). The theory is underpinned by four
25 primary assumptions. First, Lawson (1986) believes that 'teacher socialization is a lifelong
26 process'. The second assumption is that 'practices in PE are institutionalized'. Experienced
27 colleagues filter down their traditions and customs, whilst less experienced teachers copy and
28 thereby reinforce these pedagogical practices, in a process termed the 'institutional press'
29 (Zeichner and Tabachnik, 1981). Third, Lawson purports that 'socialization is problematic
30 rather than automatic'. In short, teachers may resist their socialization, accept parts of the
31 process or fully accept the contents. The final assumption is that 'there are three stages of
32 occupational socialization' – acculturation (childhood experiences of PE and sport),
33 professional (higher education experiences) and organisational (workplace experiences).
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53

54 'Acculturation' is the influence of teachers' childhood experiences of PE and sport on their
55 pedagogical practices (Lawson, 1986). During this period, children observe and interact with
56 teachers and coaches, in a process called the 'apprenticeship of observation' (Lortie, 1975).
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 Through these relationships, children develop a subjective warrant – an interpretation of what
4 constitutes sound pedagogical practice (Lawson, 1986). This evaluative screen, through which
5 teachers filter these consistent and/or inconsistent pedagogical practices, often remains
6 relatively stable (Richards, Templin and Graber, 2014). ‘Professional socialization’ refers to
7 the influence of higher education, where student teachers acquire and/or maintain the
8 knowledge, skills and values deemed essential for teaching PE (Lawson, 1986). Given the
9 strength of acculturation – where student teachers are likely to have formed strong opinions on
10 how to teach PE – professional socialization is known to usually have the least influence on
11 teachers’ PE pedagogical practices (Curtner-Smith, 1999, 2001; Mordal-Moen and Green,
12 2014). ‘Organisational socialization’ is the influence of the workplace on teachers’ pedagogical
13 approaches. Experienced colleagues pass down their teaching beliefs and practices, potentially
14 ‘washing out’ any incompatible beliefs acquired during the acculturation and professional
15 socialization stages (Zeichner and Tabachnik, 1981).
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35

36 ***Occupational socialization and games***

37
38 Four factors regularly appear to influence teachers’ games perspectives. Examining the factors
39 affecting a PE teacher’s use of the Direct Instructional Model (DIM) (Metzler, 2011), Jayantilal
40 and O’Leary (2017) discovered that the participant’s prior experiences of PE and sport
41 influenced their delivery of cricket. Participating in PE and traditional team games during
42 childhood and interacting with practitioners and coaches, the participating teacher acquired a
43 ‘sporting perspective’. This is where opportunities to facilitate the development of the able
44 child are provided and practical development is paramount, as typically seen in a sporting
45 environment (Evans, 1991). These early childhood experiences acted as relatively stable filters,
46 where the teacher largely replicated the way he was taught (Richards, Templin and Graber,
47 2014). Such acculturative experiences can cause teachers to perpetuate largely ineffective
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 pedagogical practices (Light and Georgakis, 2005; Randall and Maeda, 2010). Here the
4 teacher's 'sporting perspective' *facilitated* his delivery of technique-orientated instruction, use
5 of reproductive teaching styles and behaviourist learning theory (Jayantilal and O'Leary,
6
7
8
9
10 2017).

11
12
13
14
15 Exploring the influence of occupational socialization upon pre-service teachers' use of the
16 TGfU model, Li and Cruz (2008) found that participants' Physical Education Teacher
17 Education (PETE) programme enabled them to perceive TGfU as a viable curriculum model.
18
19
20 Demonstrating a willingness to adopt TGfU in the future, participants felt the model
21 contributed to pupils' cognitive development, motivated learners and mapped with current
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

Demonstrating a willingness to adopt TGfU in the future, participants felt the model contributed to pupils' cognitive development, motivated learners and mapped with current education reform in Hong Kong. This contradicts a number of studies that suggest higher education can be ineffective in positively 'shaping' student teachers' practices (see for example, Deenihan and Macphail, 2017; Stran and Curtner-Smith, 2009; Zmudy, Curtner-Smith and Steffen, 2009).

Examining the factors influencing a PE teacher's pedagogical games practices with pupils experiencing social, emotional and mental health issues (SEMH), O'Leary, Longmore and Medcalf (2019) discovered that the needs of the pupils can encourage game-centred approaches. First, given the need to develop pupils' emotional resilience, the participant challenged the pupils both physically and cognitively. Second, to encourage appropriate social behaviour, the teacher taught pupils to show individual responsibility, work well with their peers and modelled appropriate social behaviour. This contrasts with the pupils in Jayantilal and O'Leary's (2017) study that encouraged the teacher's use of *direct* games approaches. As mentioned, given the ever-changing nature of games (where children are required to make rapid

1
2
3 decisions), it is prudent to employ largely productive teaching styles, since they encourage
4
5 children to think in order to solve problems (Mosston and Ashworth, 2002).
6
7
8
9

10
11 Investigating a teacher's employment of TGfU in a UK secondary school, O'Leary (2015) found
12
13 that colleagues can exert a significant influence on teachers' games practices. Working with
14
15 predominantly 'games educated' staff, where the Head of Department required the consistent
16
17 employment of game-centred approaches, the participating teacher was encouraged to place a
18
19 high emphasis on strategic and tactical understanding and provide minimal technical practice.
20
21 However, the influence of colleagues can be inhibitory. Working in a custodial PE department,
22
23 teachers' innovative games beliefs can be 'washed out' (Curtner-Smith, 1999, 2001; Sofu and
24
25 Curtner-Smith, 2010). Whilst some teachers can 'resist' this process, most teachers –
26
27 particularly those who are newly qualified teachers, given their concerns of 'fitting in' with
28
29 colleagues – accept and internalise traditional games approaches (Zeichner and Tabachnik,
30
31 1981). Indeed, even when situated in an innovative PE and games department, O'Leary (2014)
32
33 found teachers can revert to the way they were taught, placing a high emphasis on
34
35 decontextualized technique practices, a minimal focus on strategic and tactical understanding
36
37 and a reluctance to use productive teaching styles.
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45

46 **Purpose of the study**

47
48 The teaching of games has not always been effective, with an over emphasis on teaching sports
49
50 techniques (abstracted from the game situation) through reproductive teaching styles and
51
52 behaviourist learning (usually via the technical model). There appears to be a range of different
53
54 factors (and subsequent stages of socialization) influencing these questionable practices. Four
55
56 factors appear regularly in *secondary* PE literature: teachers' childhood experiences of PE and
57
58 sport, the influence of higher education, the effect of the workplace and the needs of the pupils.
59
60

1
2
3 Whilst Prior and Curtner-Smith (2020) recently analysed the factors affecting *elementary*
4 teachers' delivery of PE (in the United States of America), research utilising the occupational
5 socialization framework to assess how primary teachers interpret PE and those factors that
6 influence their pedagogical practices (in the United Kingdom) has been conspicuous by its
7 absence (O'Leary, 2019). Since primary teachers may be best suited to teach PE (given their
8 knowledge of children's holistic development) (Griggs, 2010), and the dominance of games in
9 the PE curriculum (Kirk, 2009), there is a need to investigate the socialising factors affecting
10 primary teachers' games beliefs. Such research could confirm and/or reject previously
11 identified factors, highlight new socialising agents and help determine what support could be
12 provided to maintain and/or improve their practices. This research, therefore, aimed to explore
13 the factors influencing two primary teachers' interpretation of games. To fulfil this aim, four
14 research questions (RQ) were devised:

- 15 • How do both teachers interpret games? (RQ1)
- 16 • What factors affect the teachers' interpretation of games? (RQ2)
- 17 • What influence do the three stages of occupational socialization have on their
18 interpretation of games? (RQ3)
- 19 • How can the teachers' pedagogical practices be maintained and/or improved? (RQ4)

20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 **Methodology**

48
49
50 A qualitative methodology was employed, given it provided an in-depth, detailed
51 understanding of thoughts, feelings and actions (Flick, 2018). As two teachers were being
52 examined, a double-participant case study design was utilised (Yin, 2014). Such a design
53 allowed the researchers to thoroughly examine both participants, providing reasons behind
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 certain phenomena (the factors and stages of occupational socialization behind the teachers'
4 games pedagogical practices) (RQ2 and RQ3).
5
6
7
8
9

10 11 *Data collection methods*

12
13
14 Semi-structured interviews were utilised, since they allowed for flexible open-ended questions
15 and supplementary probes, to ascertain an in-depth understanding of the participants'
16 experiences, perspectives and actions (Whiting, 2008). This allowed the researchers to
17 understand the teachers' knowledge of games (RQ1) and the influences behind their
18 pedagogical practices (RQ2 and RQ3). The semi-structured interviews also encompassed some
19 structured questions, ensuring the participants adhered to the research objectives. With each
20 participant, two semi-structured interviews were carried out. First, an initial interview (II) –
21 adapting questions from Curtner-Smith, Hastie and Kinchin (2008, pp.115-117) – was
22 conducted, exploring the participants' past and current PE and sporting experiences (RQ1).
23 Having piloted the II with a different primary school teacher, no implementation difficulties
24 were experienced. Second, a final interview (FI), where the participants indicated influences
25 behind their games practices (RQ2 and RQ3), was carried out. Interviews were held and
26 recorded on Skype, at a time convenient for each participant. Data were transcribed onto a word
27 document and stored on two encrypted memory sticks.
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47

48 *Data analysis*

49
50
51 Since this study was exploratory in nature, a general inductive approach was utilised (Thomas,
52 2006). This approach allowed the researchers to identify units of information, label these into
53 sub-themes and eventually formulate main themes (Thomas, 2006). Three sets of data analysis
54 were conducted: first, around the teachers' interpretation and delivery of games (RQ1); second,
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 regarding the factors and socialization stages influencing these practices (RQ2 and RQ3); and
4
5 finally, the researchers cross analysed both sets of the teachers' data.
6
7
8
9

10 *Data credibility*

11
12 To enhance research credibility, validity (the accuracy of the results) and reliability (the
13 effectiveness of the research conducted) were considered (Golafshani, 2003). 'The Hawthorne
14 Effect' (Jones, 1992) was ameliorated by spending as much time with both participants in their
15 school setting (before the Covid-19 pandemic), building ample rapport before conducting the
16 study. To improve research reliability, respondent-validation – cross-checking interview
17 transcripts with both participants (Bloor, 1978) – was adopted, helping the researchers to gain
18 feedback on the accuracy of the data. Both participants felt the interview transcripts were
19 wholly accurate.
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32

33 *Ethical considerations*

34
35 An institutional ethical committee deemed this research safe to conduct. In line with the British
36 Educational Research Association (BERA, 2018), four ethical issues – accuracy, deception,
37 consent, privacy – were considered. To ensure accuracy, the research project was articulated
38 to both participants. They were made aware that the project did not involve deception of any
39 kind. The researchers were completely 'transparent' throughout the research process, regularly
40 disclosing the purpose of the research, any associated risks and the nature of the teachers'
41 participation. Third, only after being made fully aware of the research process did the
42 participants provide their 'voluntary' informed consent. The participants were made aware of
43 their 'right to withdraw' without facing any negative consequences. To safeguard the
44 participants 'privacy' and maintain 'confidentiality', only the participants and the researchers
45 had access to data. Data were stored on two encrypted memory sticks and kept in a locked
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 cupboard at the first named author's house. The project was made available to the participants
4
5 at the end of the study. They were also made aware that it may be published in academic papers
6
7 and/or presented at educational conferences. To protect the participants' 'right to remain
8
9 anonymous', pseudonyms were used to change any actual details. These four ethical issues
10
11 (BERA, 2018) were outlined on a 'consent form' for the participants to sign.
12
13
14
15
16

17 **Results**

18 *Participants' biographies*

19
20
21
22 The two participants in this study, Tony and David (both pseudonyms), are both primary school
23
24 teachers. Tony is thirty-five-years old and was born in Wolverhampton, West Midlands. David
25
26 is twenty-seven-years old and was born in Leicester, East Midlands. Both teachers described
27
28 having 'positive' memories of their primary PE provision (II). For example, Tony recalled his
29
30 teachers being 'very inclusive' (II), whilst David remembered lessons being 'fun and active'
31
32 (II). However, both teachers felt their secondary PE experiences were generally 'poor' (II).
33
34 Tony, for example, was 'left to his own devices' (II), whilst David's PE and games lessons
35
36 were 'hardly structured or differentiated,' where everyone ended up being 'thrown into a
37
38 game,' which he found difficult given he was not a 'natural games player' or 'very athletic'
39
40 (II). Participating in extra-curricular sport, from eleven to sixteen, at a school which specialised
41
42 in sport, Tony felt his coaches were 'not very fair, refusing to give him the time of day' (II). In
43
44 comparison, David – alienated by his secondary PE experiences – decided to pursue
45
46 individualistic pursuits outside of school, enjoying gymnastics and taekwondo. Both
47
48 participants recall influential adults from their childhood: Tony's secondary PE teacher's
49
50 enthusiasm towards the subject (partially) influenced him to become a teacher, whereas
51
52 David's playful, energetic and motivating taekwondo coach had a 'personality influence' on
53
54 him, 'rather than a pedagogical one' (II). Put simply, David's coach encouraged the 'positive
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 relationships' he has with his students (II). Both teachers undertook different undergraduate
4
5 degrees.
6
7
8
9

10 Whilst Tony studied a Bachelor of Arts Honours degree in Sociology and Social Policy, David
11 decided to pursue a Bachelor of Arts Honours degree in Physical Education. Taught by
12 lecturers who were 'knowledgeable and consistent,' David – contrary to what he experienced
13 at secondary school – was taught to understand a 'child-centred approach to PE and games,'
14 where children are encouraged 'to think for themselves about certain situations and not just
15 spoon fed' (II). Excited by the prospect of learning about different subjects and passionate
16 about teaching children, both teachers decided to undertake a Post-Graduate Certificate in
17 Education (PGCE) qualification in Primary Education. With a heavy emphasis on the core
18 subjects, they both recall *learning* very little – practically and theoretically – on delivering PE
19 effectively, only receiving 'one or two' lessons which were 'heavily focussed on dance and
20 gymnastics' (II). Similarly, both practitioners received few PE and games *teaching*
21 opportunities on placements because there was 'hardly any time for it' (II).
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39

40 Tony – with over seven years of teaching experience – teaches at Riverdale Primary School
41 (pseudonym), where pupils come from 'affluent, socioeconomic backgrounds, with only a few
42 speaking English as an Additional Language (EAL)' (II). On the other hand, David is in his
43 third year of teaching at Radley Heath Primary School (pseudonym), where a 'high percentage
44 of children speak EAL, are from socially deprived backgrounds and experience SEMH issues'
45 (II). In comparison to Tony (who 'follows the orders' of the PE leader (II)), David (given his
46 background in PE) was given a PE specialist role after his Newly Qualified Teaching (NQT)
47 year. David's main goal is 'physical literacy – getting children to have the necessary skills,
48 understanding, motivation and competence, to go on to be physically active in later life' (II).
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 **TABLE 1 INSERT HERE**
4
5
6
7
8

9 *Teachers' interpretation of games*

10
11 According to Tony, games are activities involving 'competition, fitness, exercise and technical
12 learning' (FI). On the other hand, David, whilst not disregarding the importance of technical
13 proficiency, believes games involve 'problem-solving and quick decision-making' (FI). Both
14 teachers had contrasting perspectives on the role of a games practitioner: David wanted to
15 'facilitate children's understanding of when and where to do something' whilst also 'supporting
16 their technical execution' (FI), whereas Tony wanted to 'impart knowledge to the children in
17 the quickest, most efficient way possible' (FI). As expected, Tony agreed his games lessons
18 were centred around a 'technical model: a warm-up (with stretches), technique-based practices
19 and a full-sized game' (FI). David's games lessons, however, were 'game-centred' (FI). In
20 short, his lessons would begin with a modified game, followed by the relevant teaching of
21 techniques and skills and conclude with the modified game. Inductive analysis produced three
22 themes appeared around both teachers' interpretation of games.
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40

41 *An emphasis on technical proficiency*

42
43 Both teachers emphasised the acquisition of sports techniques. Tony believed 'children need
44 to be competent *only* at techniques, in order to be successful at games' (FI). However, David
45 felt children needed to 'acquire, develop and refine the techniques' based on strategic and
46 tactical requirements. Both teachers devised technique-based drills. Tony stated, 'you can't just
47 throw them into a full game; you must practice the technical components.' Similarly, during a
48 'technical' breakdown in play, David would 'give children multiple opportunities to execute
49 various techniques via drills' (FI). Both teachers also provided technical teaching points and
50 technical feedback. Tony wanted to 'observe and verbally correct if learners were not doing
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 the 'technical things modelled correctly,' whilst David, during a striking and fielding unit
4 (where some children were struggling to perform an effective throwing action), wanted to
5 emphasise the importance of 'pointing your non-throwing arm to the target, shifting your
6 weight to the back foot and releasing the ball with a follow through' (FI).
7
8
9
10
11
12
13

14
15 *A contrasting focus on strategic and tactical understanding*

16
17 Both teachers had contrasting beliefs about the (strategic and tactical) nature of games. Tony,
18 who failed to mention the significance of strategical and tactical understanding during both
19 interviews, believed games served to encourage 'children to keep fit and healthy through
20 technical learning' (FI). In contrast, David believed games are 'unique' because you have to
21 think 'quickly and strategically' (FI). David – recognising NCPE requirements – was adamant
22 that his pupils, every lesson, must 'play a modified game, in order to learn about the game'
23 (FI). When asked what he would modify, he mentioned the 'space, rules, equipment and
24 learners' (FI). For example, when explaining a strike and field lesson, where the strategic focus
25 was on 'sending the ball into space,' David 'exaggerated the playing area by making it bigger,
26 so children knew they had to send it into an open space' (FI). Prior to the modified game, David
27 would also provide a 'tactical problem,' a question which, he believed, would get children
28 thinking about the tactics and strategies involved in the game' (FI). He mentioned, during a
29 striking and fielding unit, 'I might ask, broadly, how we might score during a game' (FI).
30 'Providing them with such a tactical problem,' he felt children could be taught to understand
31 'the necessary on-the-ball and off-the-ball skills and decisions they need to make' (FI). Finally,
32 throughout the modified game, David would provide large volumes of strategical and tactical
33 feedback, 'reacting to children's needs, right there and then in that moment' (FI).
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 *A differing use in teaching styles*
4

5 Given his over emphasis on technical proficiency, Tony employed reproductive teaching styles.
6
7 When asked to describe his position on the spectrum of teaching styles (from reproductive to
8
9 productive), he said, ‘it’s mostly me telling them they’re going to do it like this because that’s
10
11 best way of doing it’ (FI). In comparison, David utilised productive teaching styles. The job of
12
13 a teacher, he believed, was to ‘facilitate rather than direct’ (FI). Indeed, he wanted children to
14
15 ‘have a deeper understanding’ of the general strategies or basic principles taught, so it would
16
17 ‘last them for a lifetime’ (FI). Both teachers’ varying use of teaching styles was seen in two
18
19
20
21 ways.
22
23
24
25

26 First, Tony predominantly taught games through command and practice teaching styles. It
27
28 tends to be him modelling ‘what he wants to see *and* how he wants to see it,’ whilst the children
29
30 ‘just need to be able to follow the instructions’ (FI). Given the children’s desire to ‘constantly
31
32 be on the move’ and tendency to get ‘frustrated’ at a lack of ‘doing’ opportunities, Tony also
33
34 gave children ‘as many opportunities as possible’ to practice the correct technique (FI).
35
36 Alternatively, to facilitate children’s use of general strategies, David taught games through
37
38 problem-solving and guided discovery. Recognising his students had previously been ‘spoon
39
40 fed’ during games lessons, David allowed children to ‘jointly construct their understanding of
41
42 strategies, by offering open-ended tactical problems’ to encourage them to ‘think together’ (FI).
43
44 Secondly, Tony utilised closed questions. When teaching hockey, Tony asked ‘retrieval’ based
45
46 questions (FI). Questions such as ‘what technique are we learning today?’ and ‘how do we
47
48 perform it?’ were commonplace (FI). On the other hand, David utilised open-ended questions.
49
50 During a striking and fielding unit – to develop ‘higher-order thinking’ – questions such as
51
52 ‘how do we score?’ and ‘why should we send the ball into open space?’ were usual (FI).
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

Factors influencing teachers' interpretation of games

Factors within the three stages of occupational socialization – acculturation, professional and organisational – had different influences on both teachers' beliefs. Whilst Tony's games perspectives were influenced by a continuous professional development (CPD) course and a PE planning scheme (organisational), David's interpretation of games was affected by his negative childhood experiences of PE (acculturation), an innovative undergraduate degree (professional) and the nature of pupils (organisational).

Acculturation

Experiences of PE

Both teachers attended secondary schools with, what they perceived to be, 'low quality PE provision,' receiving poor games teaching and learning experiences (II). Given he 'wasn't explicitly taught games at primary and secondary school,' Tony's childhood experiences had little perceptible influence on his games pedagogy (II). On the other hand, David, determined to 'overcome his poor childhood PE experiences,' wanted to give his pupils a 'more holistic games education' than what he received (FI). This influenced him in two ways. First, it encouraged his prioritisation of strategical understanding. 'Struggling to play full-sized games,' where he found it 'difficult to react to make decisions quickly' as a child, David felt modified games, where basic strategies and tactics are emphasised, were more appropriate for his current learners (II). Deprived of the 'opportunity to understand how to play games properly,' David also felt it was imperative to provide strategical and tactical feedback, 'praising correct and/or rectifying incorrect decision-making' (FI). Second, it influenced his use of productive teaching styles. Being taught by a PE department, where there was 'an obvious sporting culture,' David's teachers appear to have prioritised more practically able children, causing him to feel 'uninvolved and deterred' (II). Using guided discovery and

1
2
3 problem-solving – teaching styles which encourage learning ‘beyond the physical domain’ –
4
5 David wanted to ensure all children are engaged and not ‘made to feel how he did’ (FI).
6
7
8
9

10 *Professional stage*

11 *Contrasting higher education PE experiences*

12
13
14 Tony, who undertook a non-PE based undergraduate degree, learnt ‘very little’ about teaching
15
16 PE during his PGCE (II). On the other hand, David completed an *innovative* undergraduate PE
17
18 degree, which had a ‘significant’ influence on his interpretation of games (II). Through
19
20 theoretically and practically underpinned games pedagogy lectures, he was taught to
21
22 understand the ‘strategic nature of games’ (FI). In particular, he was taught to use the
23
24 ‘Principles of Play’ framework (Ward and Griggs, 2011), a framework enabling teachers to
25
26 devise modified games which emphasise application of skills to overcome tactical problems
27
28 and thus realise basic principles of play or basic strategies. David’s innovative degree could
29
30 also explain his use of productive teaching styles. During a module on TGfU, David was able
31
32 to observe the usefulness of guided discovery and problem solving in teaching games, putting
33
34 ‘theory into practice’ (FI). Creating and participating in games activities, based on social
35
36 constructivist learning, he understood the significance of placing learners in ‘open-ended,
37
38 problem-solving environments’ where they have to ‘think about strategies themselves,’ instead
39
40 of just spoon-feeding techniques to them’ (FI). Since lecturers also employed a range of indirect
41
42 pedagogical strategies, such as peer discussion, group work and independent learning –
43
44 ‘practicing what they preach’ (II) – David further appreciated the value of productive teaching
45
46 styles, ‘encouraging him to make learners think for themselves’ (FI).
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 *Organisational stage*
4

5 *A dissimilar need for continuous professional development*
6

7 Both teachers had a contrasting reliance upon CPD. Given the positive influence of his
8 *innovative* undergraduate PE degree, David did not (immediately) require PE CPD to facilitate
9 his understanding of games. On the other hand, as a recently qualified teacher (with no PE
10 background), Tony was encouraged to attend a CPD course – ‘Best Practice in PE’
11 (pseudonym) – to develop his games teaching. The CPD course, which highlighted that games
12 are best delivered through ‘a warm-up, practice and full-sized game situation’ (akin to the
13 technical model), encouraged Tony to feel ‘that teaching techniques should take precedence
14 over strategies’ (FI). During the course, he was shown ‘a full-sized game of rugby’ and taught
15 ‘how to break it down into its basic techniques using appropriate drills’ (FI). Since this part of
16 the course was practical – i.e. Tony participated in the drill – he was able to ‘experience, first-
17 hand, the benefits of developing the physical components of your game’ (FI). When asked
18 about his use of technical teaching points and technical feedback, Tony commented ‘that’s
19 probably come from that training course... I wouldn’t say it’s coming from when I was at school
20 because I was pretty much thrown into a game’ (FI). The CPD course is also likely to have
21 influenced his use of reproductive teaching styles. Through video demonstrations of ‘children
22 passing the hockey ball to each other,’ Tony ‘appreciated how quickly children can make
23 progress when you’re telling them what to do’ (FI). The use of command and practice teaching
24 styles, therefore, felt ‘automatic and instinctive’ (FI). Unsure of how to question children
25 during PE lessons, Tony revealed the CPD course ‘talked very little about questioning
26 strategies’ (FI). Instead, Tony was told (by the course tutors) to ask predominantly retrieval
27 questions, largely about performing techniques, such as ‘what are you doing?’
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

A contrasting reliance on PE planning schemes

Despite Tony's improved technical understanding of PE, derived largely from the 'Best Practice in PE' CPD course, he still felt he required 'additional support,' in the form of 'planning policies and documents' (FI). Compared to David, who relied heavily upon his innovative undergraduate PE experiences to teach games, Tony was required (by the school's PE coordinator) to use the 'Primary PE Passport' (pseudonym) – an online tool created by sports coaches, designed to enable teachers to 'deliver, monitor and assess high quality PE' (FI). The PE Passport' had a twofold influence. First, it encouraged Tony's over emphasis on technical proficiency (subsequently reinforcing his CPD messages). 'Emphasising the three main parts to a lesson – warm up, practice and a game,' the PE Passport supported Tony's use of technique-based practices (FI). When asked to identify the potential origin of technical teaching points and technical feedback, Tony commented 'I think both of those things, the CPD course and PE passport, have influenced it' (FI). Secondly, the PE Passport seems to have facilitated Tony's use of reproductive teaching styles. 'Since the online app brings up a video so you can see the techniques being modelled,' Tony feels 'inclined to provide demonstrations' (FI). 'Religiously following the lesson plan,' Tony's use of closed questions can also be attributed to the PE Passport (FI). Indeed, he revealed the 'questioning section of the app' helped him to 'ask the correct thing, at the correct time' because he 'didn't want the pupils getting bored' (FI).

The varying influence of pupils

Tony admitted he 'couldn't ask for a better class,' as 'they are very well behaved and practically able,' which allows him 'to teach in whatever way' he wants (FI). In comparison, David – whose pupils come from predominantly socially deprived backgrounds and experience a variety of SEMH issues, with many speaking EAL – feels his children influence 'what and

1
2
3 how' he teaches (FI). First, David's pupils encouraged his use of productive teaching styles.
4
5 Admitting his three classes were 'spoon fed' by previous PE teachers, David taught using
6
7 problem-solving and guided discovery teaching styles, because he wanted to 'develop
8
9 children's independence, motivation and resilience' (FI). Furthermore, acknowledging 'you
10
11 can't just bring a ball out and let them play,' David felt it was important to 'question, open-
12
13 endedly, children on their decision-making' and the 'techniques they needed to improve upon,'
14
15 believing 'there needs to be an evaluative process' (FI). By 'drawing it out' from the children
16
17 – 'getting them to understand why they're doing things' – children would become 'more
18
19 independent and responsible, an integral component to physical literacy' (FI). Second, the
20
21 pupils encouraged his emphasis on technical proficiency. Accepting the children were 'not very
22
23 practically competent,' which 'can lead to a breakdown in the game,' David felt teaching sports
24
25 techniques had value (FI). He believed there were 'things you can do to support them' (FI).
26
27 When asked to identify what these were, David explained 'you've got to organise a physical
28
29 aspect of the task' because 'that's where the physical learning happens' (FI). After this, he
30
31 proceeded to explain the influence behind his *technical* teaching points, saying 'if they can't
32
33 hit or throw the ball, they *need* some pointers' (FI).
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41

42 **Discussion**

43
44 David, given his innovative PE degree and current PE coordinator role, was the most
45
46 theoretically knowledgeable and experienced. In comparison, Tony – given his poor childhood
47
48 PE experiences and the absence of a PE-related university degree – was the least theoretically
49
50 knowledgeable and experienced games teacher. Inductive analysis produced three themes
51
52 around both teachers' interpretation of games – teaching techniques, teaching strategies and
53
54 (subsequently) the use of different teaching styles. However, the impact of the themes was not
55
56 always the same for both teachers.
57
58
59
60

1
2
3
4
5 Both teachers had an emphasis on technical learning. Tony, like many teachers (Capel, 2007;
6 Curtner-Smith *et al.*, 2001; Jayantilal and O'Leary, 2017), spent large amounts of time teaching
7 pupils how to perform techniques, through *decontextualized* drills and the use of *technical*
8 teaching points and feedback. In accordance with Metzler (2011), therefore, he appears to have
9 followed the technical model. Ofsted reports have also revealed similar findings, accusing most
10 PE teachers of spending too much time teaching techniques, rather than *when* and *why* to
11 employ them (Ofsted, 2004, 2009, Ofsted, 2013). Similarly, David felt teaching techniques was
12 important, but only after teaching strategical and tactical understanding.
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

26 In accordance with effective games pedagogy, David devised modified games, highlighted the
27 basic strategies or principles of play and provided high volumes of strategical and tactical
28 feedback. He also mentioned strategic lesson objectives, alluding to the 'Principles of Play'
29 framework (Ward and Griggs, 2011). On the contrary, Tony – who taught techniques before
30 playing a full-sized game (where strategic learning was usually coincidental) – rejected the
31 idea of game-centred pedagogy. Indeed, Tony – like many PE teachers (Jayantilal and O'Leary,
32 2017; Kirk, 2009; Metzler, 2011) – did not mention the importance strategic or tactical
33 understanding during both interviews whatsoever. Both teachers' different learning priorities
34 influenced their use of teaching styles.
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48

49 Given the emphasis on technical learning, Tony – like many PE teachers (Capel, 2007; Kirk,
50 2009; Ofsted, 2013) – employed reproductive teaching styles (command, practice and
51 reciprocal). Such teaching styles are effective for teaching basic techniques, given they
52 encourage pupils to remember and replicate what has been taught (Mosston and Ashworth,
53 2002). This reinforces the argument that whilst generalist teachers regularly use innovative
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 pedagogical strategies in *core* curriculum subjects (Blair and Capel, 2011), upon entering the
4
5 *PE* environment they appear to almost instinctively succumb to reproductive approaches
6
7 (Fletcher and Mandigo, 2012; Griggs, 2010). In contrast, David, who required children to think
8
9 in order to solve tactical problems, employed productive teaching styles (problem-solving and
10
11 guided discovery).
12
13

14 15 16 17 *Acculturation stage*

18
19 Although both teachers received, what they perceived to be, ‘low quality PE provision’ at
20
21 school (II), it had a different impact on their interpretation of games. Given he ‘wasn’t
22
23 explicitly taught games at primary and secondary school’ (II), Tony’s ‘apprenticeship of
24
25 observation’ regarding games pedagogy was largely absent (Lortie, 1975). Contrary to most
26
27 teachers (Richards, Templin and Graber, 2014), he did not appear to have acquired a ‘subjective
28
29 warrant,’ on what constitutes effective games teaching and learning (Lortie, 1975). In contrast,
30
31 David’s sound interpretation of games was *encouraged* by his negative childhood PE
32
33 experiences, commenting he wanted his pupils learning experiences of games to be better than
34
35 what he received. The absence of any strategic or tactical teaching during his school PE lessons
36
37 influenced David to prioritise strategical and tactical understanding. Similarly, a lack of self-
38
39 initiated learning experiences – crucial for late primary-aged pupils, given their need for
40
41 independence and responsibility (Gallahue and Donnelly, 2003) – encouraged David’s use
42
43 productive teaching styles. The findings, therefore, support the belief that teachers’ childhood
44
45 experiences are relatively stable filters (Richards, Templin and Graber, 2014). Put simply,
46
47 David developed an idea of what ‘poor’ PE and games pedagogical practices looked like, and
48
49 ultimately *wanted* his innovative undergraduate degree to ‘alter his childhood experiences of
50
51 PE’ (FI). Higher education institutions wishing to advocate sound games pedagogical practices
52
53 may, therefore, want to examine the acculturative experiences of recruits (given students with
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 negative PE experiences, like David, may be more inclined towards innovative games
4 pedagogy since their *own* experiences are largely poor (Stran and Curtner-Smith, 2009)).
5
6
7
8
9

10 *Professional stage*

11
12 Both teachers had contrasting higher education PE experiences, which significantly influenced
13 their interpretation of games. Whilst Tony completed a degree in Sociology and Social policy,
14 David undertook an innovative degree in PE. The PE degree – staffed by PE lecturers who all
15 articulated powerful, consistent messages – allowed David to acquire and develop sound games
16 pedagogical beliefs. Theoretically and practically games pedagogy lectures encouraged his
17 game-centred practices. Contrary to popular belief (Mordal-Moen and Green, 2014; Doolittle,
18 Placek and Dodds, 1993), this study, therefore, suggests that innovative PE degrees can
19 overturn the negative childhood PE experiences of recruits, encouraging sound games
20 pedagogy. Although many PE teaching degrees focus predominantly on traditional approaches,
21 subsequently reinforcing the technical model (Capel, 2007), it is highly recommended that
22 teachers consider pursuing such innovative courses. PE degrees underpinned by a shared
23 technical culture (Lortie, 1975) – where lecturers consistently articulate the nature of games,
24 what it means to be ‘games educated’ and game-centred pedagogy – can, as this study has
25 demonstrated, have a profound influence on teachers’ interpretation of games.
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46

47 *Organisational*

48
49 In accordance with other studies this study suggests organisational socialization can be
50 influential (Deenihan and MacPhail, 2017; Lee and Curtner-Smith, 2011; Wright, 2001). Given
51 the absence of acculturation and professional socialization, Tony’s workplace appears to have
52 had the greatest influence on his interpretation of games. The organisational effects, however,
53 have been predominantly negative. As a recently qualified teacher, with no PE background,
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 Tony was encouraged to attend a ‘Best Practice in PE’ CPD course. The course broadly
4 encouraged an over-emphasis on technical proficiency, through predominantly reproductive
5 teaching styles. Indeed, when asked what the attributes are needed to be a successful games
6 player, Tony failed to mention the importance of strategical or tactical understanding. Given
7 the nature of games, where strategic and tactical learning via productive teaching styles is of
8 critical importance, his interpretation of games was largely ‘skewed.’
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18

19 Tony, under the influence of the school’s PE coordinator, was also required to utilise the ‘PE
20 passport’, confirming that most newly appointed teachers – due to the risk of not ‘fitting in’ –
21 ‘strategically comply’ with the requirements of more experienced colleagues (Lacey, 1977).
22 The PE passport inhibited Tony’s interpretation of games (FI), actively encouraging him to
23 over emphasise technical proficiency, through the use of reproductive teaching styles, whilst
24 failing to mention strategies and tactics. Like the majority of primary PE planning – which is
25 largely discrete, difficult to follow and decontextualized (Harris, Cale and Musson, 2011, 2012;
26 Morgan and Hansen, 2008) – the ‘PE passport’ appears to be a ‘quick fix’ solution to the
27 predicament of primary PE and games. Indeed, in accordance with Lortie (1975), the ‘passport’
28 seemed to focus on ‘piecemeal tricks of the trade’ (inconsistent pedagogical practices), rather
29 than principles of sound games teaching and learning.
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46

47 In congruence with multiple research findings (Curtner-Smith, Hastie and Kinchin, 2008;
48 Jayantilal and O’Leary, 2017; O’Leary, Longmore and Medcalf, 2019), this study also
49 confirms that pupils can be a particularly powerful socialising agent. Coordinating PE across
50 three schools, where the children are ‘generally technically and strategically incompetent’ and
51 ‘lack the initiative to learn without support’ (II), David’s pupils encouraged his game-centred
52 approach. Given *more* experienced teachers are normally known to respond to the needs of
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 pupils (Fuller, 1969), David's child-centred, developmentally appropriate games approach is
4
5 somewhat surprising, since he has only been teaching for two years. This study, therefore,
6
7 highlights the need for head teachers to recruit generalist teachers with an innovative games
8
9 background. With knowledge of games (content knowledge) and knowledge of the children
10
11 (pedagogical knowledge), such teachers are likely to have the pedagogical content knowledge
12
13 (PCK) to utilise game-centred approaches (Ward, 2013). Resistant to having their innovative
14
15 views altered – David made it clear to his colleagues that he 'was going to do it the way' he
16
17 was taught during his PE degree (FI) – such teachers can also strategically redefine (Lacey,
18
19 1977) their school's traditional, outdated PE and games policies. Subsequently, they are likely
20
21 to have a greater impact on colleagues' pedagogical games practices, negating the need for
22
23 head teachers to arrange short, often expensive, decontextualized CPD courses and/or employ
24
25 relatively inexpensive, yet educationally questionably sports coaches (Griggs, 2010).
26
27
28
29
30
31
32

33 ***Possible support for teachers' future pedagogical games practices***

34
35 Tony could improve his teaching of games by developing his knowledge and understanding of
36
37 teaching strategies and tactics. The 'Coaching Strategies and Tactics in Games' workshop
38
39 (Sport Structures, 2019) aims to develop participants' understanding of the nature of games
40
41 (including the strategies and tactics prevalent in different games) and knowledge of how to
42
43 facilitate games (identifying questioning strategies to develop strategic and tactical
44
45 understanding). Since Tony was teaching hockey at the point of data collection, it would also
46
47 be prudent to attend the 'Engaging Games for Children' workshop led by England Hockey
48
49 (England Hockey, 2019). Whilst Tony's theoretical knowledge may be improved through both
50
51 workshops, CPD courses often do not have enough time to demonstrate *how* to implement such
52
53 knowledge with his unique learners (Armour and Yelling, 2007; Elliot and Campbell, 2015).
54
55 After completing the two games CPD workshops above, Tony could then learn informally from
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 a more experienced primary PE teacher (O’Leary, 2014, 2015). Although there is a potential
4 risk of passing down piecemeal ‘tricks of the trade’ (Lortie, 1975), a primary PE specialist –
5 the ‘expert’ – could teach Tony how to modify games using the ‘Principles of Play’ framework
6 (Ward and Griggs, 2011), potentially closing the theory-practice gap (the gap between
7 theoretical knowledge and practical application in the workplace) (O’Leary *et al.*, 2015).
8
9

10
11
12
13
14
15
16 Although David demonstrated game-centred pedagogy, he could still sustain, develop and
17 refine his pedagogical practice. In short, support needs to be provided to *prevent* his innovative
18 professional socialization from being ‘washed out’ (Zeichner and Tabachnik, 1981). Since
19 David was teaching striking and fielding games at the point of data collection, he may want to
20 attend the ‘Cricket for Teachers (primary)’ workshop led by England Cricket (England Cricket,
21 2019). The course helps primary teachers to apply the various strategies tactics specifically
22 involved in cricket through developmentally appropriate games and practices. In addition, the
23 ‘International Teaching Games for Understanding Conference (2021)’ – held at the University
24 of Worcester – could *further* develop his practices. Led by seminal PE and games scholars –
25 such as Professor Linda Griffin and Professor Stephen Harvey – the TGfU conference aims to
26 provide David, and other professionals, with the latest developments and research related to
27 game-centred approaches, particularly around inclusivity, integration and implementation.
28 Furthermore, David could benefit from joining a community of practice (a group of
29 professionals who share the same interests in resolving an issue, improving skills and learning
30 from each other’s experiences) (Patton and Parker, 2017). A community – potentially
31 comprised of sports pedagogy lecturers and other primary PE specialists – in providing their
32 expertise, could prevent the innovative contents of his undergraduate degree from being lost.
33 Moreover, like many expert PE practitioners (Casey, 2012; Casey, Dyson and Campbell, 2009;
34 Dyson and Rubin, 2003), David could engage in action research, adopting the role of a ‘teacher-
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 as-researcher' (Casey and Kirk, 2010). Whilst action research can be time consuming,
4 frustrating and require unlimited access to research material (Casey, Dyson and Campbell,
5 2009), it can allow teachers to systematically and critically understand and reflect on their
6 game-centred approaches and (if necessary) make changes in their practice (Gubacs-Collins,
7 2007).
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16

17 **Conclusions**

18
19 Recognising that research utilising the occupational socialization framework to assess how
20 *primary* teachers deliver PE and those factors that influence their pedagogical practices has
21 been conspicuous by its absence (O'Leary, 2019), and the dominance of games in the PE
22 curriculum (Kirk, 2009), this study aimed to investigate the socialising factors affecting two
23 generalist teachers' interpretation of games. Such research also tried to determine what support
24 strategies could be utilised to maintain and/or improve the participants' games practices. Using
25 inductive analysis, three themes appeared to influence the teachers' games beliefs: an emphasis
26 on technical learning, a differing use in teaching styles, and a contrasting focus on strategical
27 and tactical understanding. Whilst Tony's games perspectives were influenced by a CPD
28 course and a PE planning scheme, David's interpretation of games was affected by his negative
29 childhood experiences of PE, an innovative undergraduate PE degree and the nature of pupils.
30 CPD, informal learning, a community of practice and action research were suggested as apt
31 support mechanisms to support both teachers' games practices.
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50

51 This study does not support or refute that socialization could be a 'lifelong process' (Lawson,
52 1986). Whilst all three stages – acculturation (negative childhood experiences of PE),
53 professional (an innovative undergraduate degree) and organisational socialization (the nature
54 of pupils) - did influence David's *innovative* games beliefs, only a CPD course and a PE
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 planning scheme (both from the organisational stage) had a *perceptible* influence on Tony's
4 traditional interpretation of games. This research is also unable to confirm or disprove
5 Lawson's (1986) second assumption that practices in PE are institutionalized. Whilst Tony
6 automatically implemented the school 'PE passport', David warned his teaching colleagues
7 that he would 'teach games the way he was taught during his undergraduate PE degree' (FI).
8 As a result, this research is also unable to support or negate Lawson's (1986) third assumption,
9 given Tony's socialization was automatic whilst David's was more problematic. It is evident
10 that further research in primary schools is warranted to provide greater clarity regarding the
11 influence of factors and the occupational socialization stages on teachers' pedagogical games
12 practices.
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27

28 Whilst this study is one of the very few papers examining the occupational socialization of
29 *primary* teachers' delivery of games, it is not devoid of limitations. First, the occupational
30 socialization theory (Lawson, 1986) falls short in providing a comprehensive overview of how
31 the role of the teacher is defined and negotiated within schools (Richards, 2015). Put simply,
32 different individuals have different expectations regarding the role of the PE teacher, and the
33 occupational socialization theory fails to capture the dynamic process through which such role
34 definitions are developed, and how teachers respond to and navigate through them (Richards,
35 2015). Second, given the Covid-19 pandemic – which temporarily closed UK schools from
36 March till June 2020 – it was impossible to conduct lesson observations. Subsequently, it was
37 difficult to ascertain whether both teachers' games *beliefs* mirrored their games *practices*.
38
39 Third, with 85% of nursery and primary teachers being female (DfE, 2020), it would have been
40 useful to recruit a female participant. Similarly, although 88.7% of the primary workforce is
41 White British (DfE, 2020), this study does not represent teachers from Black, Asian and
42 Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds. Finally, this very small scale study was conducted over
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 a relatively short period (four months). The findings of this research, therefore, should be
4
5 approached with a degree of caution. Nevertheless, ‘moderatum empirical generalizations’
6
7 (Williams, 2002) can be applied. In short, the reader could identify factors (and socialization
8
9 stages) impacting upon both teachers’ interpretation of games and seek to apply the
10
11 recommended support strategies to their own practices. Therefore, this research could prove
12
13 useful for primary teachers currently teaching, or wishing to deliver, games. There is still,
14
15 however, a dearth of occupational socialization research regarding primary teachers’ delivery
16
17 of PE. In attempting to meet O’Leary’s (2019) request that further research in occupational
18
19 socialization is needed – especially in primary PE – a similar study could be repeated with the
20
21 inclusion of lesson observations. Furthermore, since this study examined games as an activity
22
23 medium, future research could explore teachers’ delivery of other activities such as athletics,
24
25 dance and gymnastics.
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

References

- Armour K and Yelling M (2007) Effective professional development for physical education teachers: the role of informal, collaborative learning. *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education* 26(2): 177-200.
- Blair R and Capel S (2011) Primary physical education, coaches and continuing professional development. *Sport, Education and Society* 16(4): 485-505.
- Bloor M (1978) On the analysis of observational data: a discussion of the worth and uses of inductive techniques and respondent validation. *Sociology* 12(3): 545-552.
- British Educational Research Association (BERA) (2018) *Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research*. [online] Available at: <http://www.bera.ac.uk/files/2018/08/bera-ethical-guidelines-2018.pdf>. [Accessed 3 December 2019].
- Bunker D and Thorpe R (1982) A model for the teaching of games in secondary schools. *Bulletin of Physical Education* 18(1): 5-8.
- Capel S (2007) Moving beyond physical education subject knowledge to develop knowledgeable teachers of the subject. *Curriculum Journal* 18(4): 493-507.
- Casey A (2012) A self-study using action research: changing site expectations and practice stereotypes. *Educational Action Research* 20(2): 219-232.
- Casey A, Dyson B and Campbell A (2009) Action research in physical education: focusing beyond myself through cooperative learning. *Educational Action Research* 17(3): 407-423.
- Casey A and Kirk D (2010) The teacher-as-researcher and the future survival of physical education. *Hacettepe Journal of Sport Sciences* 21(3): 110-121.
- Curtner-Smith M (1999) The more things change the more they stay the same: factors influencing teachers' interpretations and delivery of national curriculum physical education. *Sport, Education and Society* 4(1): 75-97.
- Curtner-Smith M (2001) The occupational socialization of a first-year physical education teacher with a teaching orientation. *Sport, Education and Society* 6(1): 81-105.
- Curtner-Smith M, Hastie P and Kinchin G (2008) Influence of occupational socialization on beginning teachers' interpretation and delivery of sport education. *Sport, Education and Society* 13(1): 97-117.
- Curtner-Smith M, Todorovich J, McCaughy N and Lacon S (2001) Urban teachers' use of productive and reproductive teaching styles within the confines of the national curriculum for physical education. *European Physical Education Review* 7(2): 177-190.
- Deenihan J and MacPhail A (2017) The influence of organisational socialization in preservice teachers' delivery of sport education. *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education* 36(4): 477-484.

1
2
3 Department for education and employment/qualifications and curriculum authority (DfEE,
4 2013) *The National Curriculum in England: Physical Education*. London: HMSO.

5
6
7 Department for education and employment (DfE, 2020) *School Teacher Workforce*. [online]
8 Available at: [https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/workforce-and-](https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/workforce-and-business/workforce-diversity/school-teacher-workforce/latest)
9 [business/workforce-diversity/school-teacher-workforce/latest](https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/workforce-and-business/workforce-diversity/school-teacher-workforce/latest) [Accessed 20 July 2020].

10
11 Doolittle S, Dodds P and Placek J (1993) Persistence of beliefs about teaching during formal
12 training of preservice teachers. *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education* 12(4): 355-365.

13
14 Dyson B and Rubin A (2003) Implementing cooperative learning in elementary physical
15 education. *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation and Dance* 74(1): 48-55.

16
17
18 Ecb.co.uk (2019) *England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) - The Official Website of the*
19 *ECB*. [online] Available at: [https://www.ecb.co.uk/be-involved/coaching/coaching-](https://www.ecb.co.uk/be-involved/coaching/coaching-courses/cricket-for-teachers-primary)
20 [courses/cricket-for-teachers-primary](https://www.ecb.co.uk/be-involved/coaching/coaching-courses/cricket-for-teachers-primary) [Accessed 30 May 2020].

21
22
23 Elliot D and Campbell T (2015) ‘Really on the ball’: exploring the implications of teachers’
24 pe-cpd experience. *Sport, Education and Society* 20(3): 381-397.

25
26 Englandhockey.co.uk (2020) *Great Britain Coaching Club Programme - England Hockey*.
27 [online] Available at:
28 [https://www.Englandhockey.co.uk/page.asp?section=1736§iontitle=great+britain+coachi-](https://www.Englandhockey.co.uk/page.asp?section=1736§iontitle=great+britain+coaching+club+programme)
29 [ng+club+programme](https://www.Englandhockey.co.uk/page.asp?section=1736§iontitle=great+britain+coaching+club+programme) [Accessed 30 May 2020].

30
31
32 Evans J (1991) A short paper about people, power and educational reform. authority and
33 representation in ethnographic research subjectivity, ideology and educational reform: the
34 case for physical education. ed. A. Sparkes. In *Research in Physical Education and Sport:*
35 *Exploring Alternative Visions*, London: Falmer Press.

36
37
38 Fletcher T and Mandigo J (2012) The primary schoolteacher and physical education: a review
39 of research and implications for Irish physical education. *Irish Educational Studies* 31(3):
40 363-376.

41
42 Flick U (2018) *An introduction to qualitative research*. London: Sage.

43
44 Fuller F (1969) Concerns of teachers: a developmental conceptualization. *American Education*
45 *Research Journal* 6(2): 207-226.

46
47
48 Gallahue D and Donnelly F (2003) *Developmental physical education for all children*. London:
49 Human Kinetics.

50
51
52 Golafshani N (2003) Understanding reliability and validity in qualitative research. *The*
53 *Qualitative Report* 8(4): 597-606.

54
55 Griggs G (2010) For sale—primary physical education. £20 per hour or nearest offer. *Education*
56 *3–13* 38(1): 39-46.

57
58
59 Gubacs-Collins K (2007) Implementing a tactical approach through action research. *Physical*
60 *Education and Sport Pedagogy* 12(2): 105-126.

1
2
3
4 Harris J, Cale L and Musson H (2011) The effects of a professional development programme
5 on primary school teachers' perceptions of physical education. *Professional Development in*
6 *Education* 37(2): 291-305.
7

8
9 Harris J, Cale L and Musson H (2012) The predicament of primary physical education: a
10 consequence of 'insufficient' itt and 'ineffective' cpd? *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*
11 17(4): 367-381.
12

13
14 Jayantilal K and O'Leary N (2017) (Reinforcing) factors influencing a physical education
15 teacher's use of the direct instruction model teaching games. *European Physical Education*
16 *Review* 23(4): 392-411.
17

18
19 Jones S (1992) Was there a hawthorne effect? *American Journal of Sociology* 98(3): 451-468.
20

21
22 Kirk D (2009) *Physical education futures*. London: Routledge.

23
24 Kirk D and MacPhail A (2002) Teaching games for understanding and situated learning:
25 rethinking the bunker-thorpe model. *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education* 21(2): 177-
26 192.
27

28
29 Lacey C (1977) *The socialization of teachers*. London: Methuen.

30
31 Lawson H (1986) Occupational socialization and the design of teacher education programs.
32 *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education* 5(2): 107-116.

33
34 Lee H. and Curtner-Smith M (2011) Impact of occupational socialization on the perspectives
35 and practices of sport pedagogy doctoral students. *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education*
36 30(3): 296-313.
37

38
39 Li C and Cruz A (2008) Pre-service PE teachers' occupational socialization experiences on
40 teaching games for understanding. *New Horizons in Education* 56(3): 20-30.

41
42 Light R and Georgakis S (2005) Integrating theory and practice in teacher education: the impact
43 of a game sense unit on female pre-service primary teachers' attitudes towards teaching
44 physical education. *New Zealand Physical Educator* 38(1): p.67.
45

46
47 Lortie D (1975) *School teacher: a sociological study*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

48
49 Mauldon E and Redfern H (1981) *Games teaching: an approach for the primary school*.
50 Estover: MacDonald and Evans.

51
52 Metzler M (2011) *Instructional models for physical education*. Arizona: Holcomb Hathaway.

53
54 Miller A, Christensen E, Eather N, Gray S, Sproule J, Keay J and Lubans D (2016) Can physical
55 education and physical activity outcomes be developed simultaneously using a game-centered
56 approach? *European Physical Education Review* 22(1): 113-133.
57

58
59 Mordal-Moen K and Green K (2014) Physical education teacher education in norway: the
60 perceptions of student teachers. *Sport, Education and Society* 19(6): 806–823.

1
2
3
4 Morgan P and Hansen V (2008) The relationship between pe biographies and pe teaching
5 practices of classroom teachers. *Sport, Education and Society* 13(4): 373-391.
6

7
8 Mosston M and Ashworth S (2002) *Teaching physical education*. London: Pearson.
9

10 Muochet A (2014) Intelligence tactique en sports collectifs. ed. J. Grehaigne. In *L'Intelligence*
11 *Tactique; des Perceptions aux Decisions Tactiques en Sports Collectifs*, Besançon: Presses de
12 l'Université de Franche-Comté.
13

14 Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted). (2004) *Ofsted subject reports 2002/03: physical*
15 *education in secondary schools*. London: Ofsted.
16

17
18 Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) (2009) *Physical Education in Schools 2005/08*.
19 [online] Available at: <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/node/2307>. [Accessed 28 May 2020].
20

21 Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) (2013) *Find an Inspection Report*. [online]
22 Available at: <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/> [Accessed 28 May 2020].
23

24
25 O'Leary N (2014) Learning informally to use teaching games for understanding: the
26 experiences of a recently qualified teacher. *European Physical Education Review* 20(3): 367-
27 384.
28

29
30 O'Leary N (2015) Learning informally to use the 'full version' of teaching games for
31 understanding. *European Physical Education Review* 22(1): 3-22.
32

33 O'Leary N (2019) Teacher socialization in physical education: new perspectives. *Sport,*
34 *Education and Society* 24(6): 668-671.
35

36 O'Leary N, Longmore C and Medcalf R (2019) Factors influencing a physical education
37 teacher's pedagogical games practices with pupils experiencing social, emotional and mental
38 health issues. *European Physical Education Review* 26(2): 305-321.
39

40
41 O'Leary N, Wattison N, Edwards T and Bryan K (2015) Closing the theory–practice gap:
42 physical education students' use of jigsaw learning in a secondary school. *European Physical*
43 *Education Review* 21(2): 176-194.
44

45
46 Patton K and Parker M (2017) Teacher education communities of practice: more than a
47 culture of collaboration. *Teaching and Teacher Education* 67: 351-360.
48

49
50 Prior L and Curtner-Smith M (2020) Effects of occupational socialization on united states
51 secondary physical education teachers' beliefs regarding curriculum design. *European*
52 *Physical Education Review* 26(1): 179-197.
53

54
55 Randall L and Maeda J (2010) Pre-service elementary generalist teachers' past experiences in
56 elementary physical education and influence of these experiences on current beliefs. *Brock*
57 *Education: A Journal of Educational Research and Practice* 19(2): 20-35.
58

59
60 Richards K (2015) Role socialization theory: the sociopolitical realities of teaching physical
education. *European Physical Education Review* 21(3): 379-393.

1
2
3
4 Richards K, Templin T and Graber K (2014) The socialization of teachers in physical
5 education: review and recommendations for future works. *Kinesiology Review* 3(2): 113-134.
6

7
8 Sofo S and Curtner-Smith M (2010) Development of preservice teachers' value orientations
9 during a secondary methods course and early field experience. *Sport, Education and Society*
10 15(3): 347-365.
11

12 Sport Structures (2019) *Coaching Strategies and Tactics in Games - Sport Structures*.
13 [online] Available at: [https://www.sportstructures.com/education-training/book-onto-a-](https://www.sportstructures.com/education-training/book-onto-a-course/additional-sport-coaching-courses/coaching-strategies-and-tactics-in-games/)
14 [course/additional-sport-coaching-courses/coaching-strategies-and-tactics-in-games/](https://www.sportstructures.com/education-training/book-onto-a-course/additional-sport-coaching-courses/coaching-strategies-and-tactics-in-games/)
15 [Accessed 30 May 2020].
16
17

18 Stran M and Curtner-Smith M (2009) Influence of occupational socialization on two
19 preservice teachers' interpretation and delivery of the sport education model. *Journal of*
20 *Teaching in Physical Education* 28(1): 38-53.
21

22 Thomas D (2006) A general inductive approach for analysing qualitative evaluation data.
23 *American Journal of Evaluation* 27(2): 237-246.
24
25

26 Ward G (2013) Examining primary schools' physical education coordinators' pedagogical
27 content knowledge of games: are we just playing as this? *Education 3-13* 41(6): 562-585.
28

29 Ward G and Griggs G (2011) Principles of play: a proposed framework towards a holistic
30 overview of games in primary physical education. *Education 3-13* 39(5): 499-516.
31
32

33 Whiting L (2008) Semi-structured interviews: guidance for novice researchers. *Nursing*
34 *Standard* 22(23): 35-41.
35

36 Williams M (2002) Generalization in interpretive research. ed. T May. In *Qualitative*
37 *Research in Action*, London: SAGE Publications.
38
39

40 Wright S (2001) The socialization of singaporean physical educators. *Journal of Teaching in*
41 *Physical Education* 20(3): 207-226.
42

43 Yin R (2014) *Case study research: design and methods*. London: Sage.
44

45 Zeichner K and Tabachnik N (1981) Are the effects of university teacher education "washed
46 out" by school practice? *Journal of Teacher Education* 32(3): 7-11.
47
48

49 Zmudy M, Curtner-Smith M and Steffen J (2009) Influence of occupational socialization on
50 the practices and perspectives of two inexperienced adventure educators. *Journal of*
51 *Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning* 9(2): 115-134.
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

Table 1: Teachers' interpretation of games and factors influencing their perspectives

Teachers' interpretation of games (RQ1)	Sub-themes	Factors influencing teachers' interpretation of games (RQ2)
a. An emphasis on technical proficiency	<p><i>Tony and David</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Technique based drills 2. Technical teaching points and feedback 	<p><i>Tony</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Continuous professional development course . PE planning scheme <p><i>David</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Nature of pupils
b. A contrasting focus on strategical and tactical understanding	<p><i>David</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Modified games 2. Tactical problem 3. Strategical and tactical feedback 	<p><i>David</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Negative childhood experiences of PE . Innovative undergraduate degree
c. A differing use in teaching styles	<p><i>Tony</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reproductive teaching styles 2. Closed questions <p><i>David</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Productive teaching styles 2. Open-ended questions 	<p><i>Tony</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Continuous professional development course . PE planning scheme <p><i>David</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Negative childhood experiences of PE . Innovative undergraduate degree . Nature of pupils