Northumbria Research Link

Coaching in the shadows: critically examining the unintended (*non*)influence of pedagogical practice

A. J. Nichol, P. Potrac, P. R. Hayes, E. Boocock, W. Vickery, C. T. Morgan & E. T. Hall

Published online: 15 Oct 2021.

Submit your article to this journal ↗

Article views: 3134

View related articles ↗

View Crossmark data ↗

Citing articles: 2 View citing articles ↗

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Coaching in the shadows: critically examining the unintended (*non*)influence of pedagogical practice

A. J. Nichol ●[a,b], P. Potrac ●[c,d,e], P. R. Hayes ●[c], E. Boocock[c], W. Vickery[f], C. T. Morgan[c] and E. T. Hall ●[c]

[a]Department of Sport and Exercise Sciences, Musculoskeletal Science and Sports Medicine Research Centre, Faculty of Science & Engineering, Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester, UK; [b]Manchester Metropolitan University Institute of Sport, Manchester, UK; [c]The Department of Sport, Exercise and Rehabilitation, Northumbria University, Newcastle, UK; [d]School of Public Health, Physiotherapy and Sports Science, University College Dublin, Dublin, Ireland; [e]School of Sport and Health Sciences, Cardiff Metropolitan University, Cardiff, UK; [f]School of Exercise and Nutrition Sciences, Deakin University, Burwood, Australia

ABSTRACT

Background: Influence is at the very core of physical education and sport pedagogy. Indeed, a large and growing body of work has focused on the (inter)actions of sport pedagogues which *are* deemed to be influential in terms of shaping the thoughts, feelings and actions of others. In comparison, little attention has been paid to the practices of sport pedagogues that are *non*influential or unintentionally influential. That is, when pedagogues or learners choose *not to* do something, how they are *not* influenced/influential, or when practice (unintentionally) influences those who were (or were not) the original target. Paying greater attention to these issues holds strong potential to develop more critical and ethical understandings of influence that can inform the education and development of sport pedagogues.

Aims: The aims of this study are two-fold. Firstly, we seek to break new ground by providing novel insights into *how*, *when*, *why*, *for whom*, and *under which circumstances* pedagogical (inter)action is *not* influential, and where (inter)actions have had an unintended influence. Secondly, and relatedly, we seek to advance and illustrate methodological perspectives capable of critically understanding this topic.

Data collection: Data were generated using a bricolage of methods (i.e. participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and stimulated recall interviews) as part of a critical realist ethnography with one representative-level junior cricket squad in the UK. Data were subject to emic and etic readings in response to the aims of the study. In total, 182 h of observational data and 46 h of interview data were generated and analysed using the Critical Incident Technique (CIT). Here, the primary sense making devices were provided by Jones and Wallace's (2005) theorising of orchestration, Elder-Vass' (2010) causal power of social structures, and Mason's (2002) concept of noticing.

Analysis and discussion: A small number of richly detailed and critical coaching (inter)actions are presented to illustrate the emergent meaning-making of different tacticians and targets of (non)influence. Specifically, the analysis introduces incidents that are illustrative of

CONTACT A.J. Nichol ✉ a.nichol@mmu.ac.uk 🖃 Department of Sport and Exercise Sciences, Manchester Metropolitan University, Institute of Sport, Manchester M1 5GD, UK

three novel types of (non)influence. The examples all highlight pathos between the coaches' original intentions for (and reading of) influence, and the *actual* influence of practice for the athlete(s). Here, the discussion provides accounts of (a) noninfluence on targeted individuals, (b) unintended influence on non-targeted individuals, and (c) unintended influence on targeted individuals.

Conclusion: Overall, this paper contributes to a growing body of critical pedagogical research, positioning the work of influence less obtrusively. It provides a novel methodological, theoretical, and empirical contribution which practitioners, educators, researchers, and other stakeholders can engage with to critically consider *how*, *when*, *why*, *for whom*, and *under which circumstances* (inter)actions are (likely to be) influential or not. Further work could examine what pedagogues and learners decide to do *and* not do, as well as what they notice *and* do not notice as a basis to develop more critical and ethical practices.

Introduction

The ability to (positively) influence others is at the very heart of physical education and sport pedagogy (Armour 2011; Jones, Edwards, and Viotto Filho 2016; Spittle and Byrne 2009). This topic is an especially important one for sport coaches, physical educators and other sport professionals who often seek to shape or influence the thoughts, feelings, and (inter)actions of a number of stakeholders within a wide relational network. Perhaps unsurprisingly then, a plethora of work has attempted to develop understandings of key pedagogical practices that *are* influential. This includes, but is not limited to, examining specific behaviours related to desirable outcomes, exploring how persuasive or convincing arguments are formed, how trust is developed in and through relationships, and how a degree of respect for, and confidence in, those leading and making decisions is established or not and why (e.g. De Meyer et al. 2014; Moen et al. 2020; Purdy and Jones 2011; Reinboth and Duda 2006).

Two key bodies of literature exist that focus on the influence of sport pedagogues' (inter)actions. These can be broadly characterised by a reductionist approach and a complexity-led or critical approach (Nichol et al. 2019). The foundations of each of these positions are briefly sketched out below. Firstly, informed by positivist logic, the reductionist approach has aimed to isolate snapshots of practice or behaviour and link these to specific outcomes. Such studies have attempted to quantify pedagogical behaviour or practice (using questionnaires to capture perceptions, or observation to systematically code behaviours), before also quantifying learner outcomes (using self-report measures) and then running statistical tests to determine (the strength of) the relationship (e.g. Chelladurai et al. 1988; Cumming et al. 2007; De Meyer et al. 2014; Gano-Overway et al. 2017; Price and Weiss 2013; Reinboth and Duda 2006; Smith, Smoll, and Curtis 1978; Tilga et al. 2020). Here, a reliance on questionnaires and cross-sectional or correlational research designs has, arguably, not best facilitated the nuanced and fine-grained examination of the temporal nature of influence (e.g. the way in which current and previous (inter)actions unfold, are related to one another, and shape the ongoing interpretation and sense-making of multiple individuals). Further, statistical tests (i.e. correlation, regression, multiple regression), tend to homogenise interpretations of coaching practice or athlete outcomes, thus assuming that practice has been received by, and is, therefore, influential for, athletes (either positively or negatively).

Secondly, the complexity-led approach attempts to consider the more subtle influences of pedagogical (inter)actions (e.g. how sport coaches, physical education teachers, and other sport professionals act micro-politically to edge towards specific goals, in recognition that complete achievement of these goals may never be possible; Jones and Wallace 2005; Jones and Wallace 2006; Moen et al. 2020; Potrac et al. 2017; Raabe, Readdy, and Zakrajsek 2017; Readdy, Zakrajsek,

and Raabe 2016; Thomson and Sparkes 2020). In sharp contrast to positivist notions of influence, the critical literature in this area positions sport pedagogues much less obtrusively. According to these critical lines of inquiry, pedagogues should be viewed as 'orchestrators' rather than 'controllers' (Readdy, Zakrajsek, and Raabe 2016; Santos, Jones, and Mesquita 2013). Indeed, orchestration, by its very definition, implies that pedagogues are always required to navigate pathos – a gap which exists between goals that have been set and the actual ability to achieve these goals in practice (Jones, Bailey, and Thompson 2013). In other words, influence is not totalitarian or revolutionary; it is instead a subtle pushing, pulling, and cajoling towards desired ends. Studies have reported how coaches, for example, experience uncertainty and cannot control, but only *influence*, the actions of others (Jones and Wallace 2005). In light of this, coaches have been found to orchestrate by developing buy-in amongst stakeholders, generating an illusion of empowerment, creating controlled instability and employing detailed noticing to inform action (Santos, Jones, and Mesquita 2013). Alternatively, the embryonic body of complexity-focused work has used longitudinal methodology (i.e. ethnography) to valuably highlight the dialectical nature of pedagogical influence. For example, research has sought to understand more about the means through which learners simultaneously conform with and resist the practices of pedagogues (e.g. by doing 'enough' to conform with coaches' instructions but withholding best effort in sessions to avoid being viewed as 'the teacher's pet' or 'busy'; Cushion and Jones 2006; Purdy and Jones 2011).

While the extant literature highlighted has made important contributions, we believe that there is scope to further develop our understandings of (non)influential practice. Specifically, the current literature base focuses almost exclusively on pedagogical acts that *are* influential. In sharp contrast, very little research has focused on acts of coaching or teaching that are *non*influential, or where practice has had an *unintended influence* (on one or more individuals). Methodologically, studies within the reductionist approach are only able to capture what sport pedagogues *have done* and/or the impact that practice *has (potentially) had*, rather than what coaches have chosen not to do, or potential influences which have not been realised, and why (Potrac et al. 2000). Given that, in practice, coaches and educators often reflect upon how not to act before and in order to inform their present (inter)actions (Jones 2006), this is an important omission requiring further attention. Some accounts belonging to the complexity-led or critical approach have begun to explore the noninfluence of coaching (inter)actions in so far as athletes have resisted practice in some way (e.g. Cushion and Jones 2006; Purdy and Jones 2011; Purdy, Potrac, and Jones 2008). However, given that the athlete(s) had an opportunity to *notice* the practice and then make a decision to use the agency that they retain, it could equally be argued that some influence must have been felt. Very few, if any studies, then, have considered acts of coaching which have been non-influential in the sense that athletes have not noticed or engaged with coach behaviour or practice whatsoever, or where different individuals may have been unintentionally influenced by (inter)-actions and why this might be the case.

The very thought of focusing on *non*influence or unintended influence may, at first glance, appear counterintuitive. However, as identified by eminent sociologist, Susie Scott, often, focusing on '*no-things*' can be just as, if not more important, than focusing on '*things*' (Scott 2018). Here, for example, Scott (2018, 2, emphasis in original) argued that the focus of epistemological inquiry has 'remained largely on what people *do* and *are* in quotidian settings', and that instead, 'as well as studying how people performatively 'do nothing', we should ask why they might 'not do' or 'not be' potential things'. In referring to acts of *commission* and *omission*, Scott (2018, 4) suggests that, in social life

> nothing is not just a passively endured condition, but a reflexively managed mode of experience. Choosing not to do something, disengaging from a group or finding nothing to relate to in a dominant cultural script, can all be considered demonstrations of individual agency.

In pedagogical terms, perhaps we could put 'background phenomena' under the sociological microscope by paying attention to what pedagogues or learners (intentionally or unintentionally) choose

not to do or become and how they are *not* influential/influenced, as well as, importantly, *why*. Further, this foregrounding of 'everyday' aspects of pedagogy could examine examples where practice has had an unintended influence (for different or the same individuals to those originally intended to be the targets of influence). Indeed, pedagogical contexts are replete with constraining factors which can impact whether a sport pedagogues' (inter)actions are perceived by their (un)intended targets (e.g. distance between kayak slalom coaches standing on the bank side while the athletes are battling a torrent of water, or PE teachers trying to give instructions to students as they noisily participate in a game). Here, previous work has highlighted that learners recall less information from feedback than pedagogues initially provide (Mason, Farrow, and Hattie 2021). Thus, it is plausible to suggest that many intended (inter)actions may be missed or (non)influential for targeted individuals, whilst being (unintentionally) influential for others. A point that closely resonates with the 'hidden curriculum': the idea that norms, values, beliefs and behaviours may be learned but not openly intended, or not learned at all (Cushion and Jones 2014; Kirk 1992). Greater understanding of pedagogical interactions, their *original intended influence* and their *actual (non)influence* would therefore help practitioners to meaningfully consider the (non)impact of their actions (e.g. when might be the most opportune moment to deliver feedback to athletes to have the greatest influence?).

Increased attention on (*non*)influence would respond directly to calls for a more critical focus on the complex and non-linear processes of learning (e.g. Renshaw et al. 2009), particularly in the light of 'everyday' and 'mundane' aspects of pedagogy (Hordvik, MacPhail, and Ronglan 2019; Jones and Wallace 2005; Strom 2015). This is something that Brekhus (1998) might refer to as the 'unmarked' or Garfinkel (1967) might pose as the 'seen but unnoticed' ordinary traffic of social life. Indeed, such insight could provide a strong footing for practitioners, educators, and athletes to develop their social literacy by critically considering how and why they choose not to behave in certain ways, as well as how and why their (inter)actions have been (non)influential. This study therefore seeks to break new ground by using a unique methodological bricolage to provide an initial foray into the critical examination of pedagogical practice which is (*non*)influential (i.e. where learners do not think, feel, or act in accordance with the original intended influence of pedagogical practice, or where individuals are unintentionally influenced) and why. In doing so, we provide novel insights which extend the critical and methodological knowledge base that positions uncertainty and pathos as central features of pedagogical practice (Jones and Wallace 2005; Hordvik, MacPhail, and Ronglan 2019; Philpot 2016).

Philosophy and methodology

Critical realism provided the present study with a fruitful opportunity to extend understanding beyond the level of the empirical (i.e. what is observed or experienced). Indeed, of fundamental importance to critical realist perspectives is *ontological depth* (Bhaskar 1975). Here, rather than being able to understand phenomena by simply observing law-like relationships or constant conjunctions between entities (e.g. instruction from the coach followed by successful athlete performance), critical realism suggests that events are multiply determined; they cannot simply be understood through observing them, or through their effects. Often, events are caused by a multitude of interacting entities that occur 'beneath the surface' of what we are able to observe or experience – what critical realists refer to as the level of the *real* and the *actual*. In other words, causal explanatory understanding of which entities are involved and how they are related to one another (i.e. the mechanism) is required to fully make sense of events within a realist philosophy (Elder-Vass 2010). Another core tenet of critical realism – epistemological relativism – suggests that, because events and entities are so complex, it is unlikely that we will ever be able to fully understand the mechanisms (i.e. entities and their relations) which underpin them. Any attempts to understand mechanism(s) must be recognised as fallible (Bhaskar 1975). Critical realism, then, provided a useful means to understand and theorise the mechanisms underpinning examples of (non)influential

and, indeed, unintentionally influential coaching practice. In order to pay sufficient attention to the complex and contingent nature of coach (non)influence, in line with the philosophical position presented above, a longitudinal approach was adopted in the present study. Specifically, an ethnography was adopted, whereby the first author spent an extended 11-month period with one representative level cricket squad in the United Kingdom. The project received full institutional ethical approval, and pseudonyms were generated to protect the anonymity of all participants and the organisation. All participants provided written informed consent.

Research context and participants

The ethnography was conducted with one county representative-level under 17 cricket squad (Nettleton CC – pseudonym), who were purposively recruited. Nettleton CC comprised one head coach (David), one assistant coach (Sam), one team manager (Douglas) and 26 players. The first author's role as an ethnographer fell somewhere between that of a 'play participant' and 'focused participant observer' (Tracy 2019). Specifically, the first author entered the context with an explicit status as a researcher, however, he also assisted with logistical and administrative matters and wore the same clothing as the coaches. Importantly, the first author did not act in the capacity of a coach throughout the duration of the study. He was already a coach with another squad in the same pathway and had previously established a good relationship with the coaches and some players. Hence, reflexivity was crucial to both maintain access to the context and develop critical understandings of data (Davies 2008).

Methodological bricolage

A methodological bricolage was utilised to generate a rich data set addressing (non)influence in a sport coaching context. This consisted of (a) participant observation and field notes, (b) semi-structured interviews, and (c) stimulated recall interviews. Two hundred and twenty-eight hours of data were generated in the present study through multiple (qualitative) research methods. The first author engaged in 182 h of participant observation which focused on the (inter)actions of coaches and athletes, and, specifically, (inter)actions which were likely to have influenced (or not) others. Examining the relations and (inter)actions of participants in this way allowed the research to connect to the in-situ complexities of the context, beyond what interviews alone would have been able to achieve (Hammersley and Atkinson 2019). Alongside participant observations, field notes were taken by the lead researcher to record observations. As will be introduced in greater detail later in this methodology section, the Critical Incident Technique drove field notes to mark and record events which were of significance to coaches, athletes and to the researcher (Bott and Tourish 2016; Nichol et al. 2021). Specifically, notes recorded what was observed in the context, from whose perspective, what was said, how coaches and athletes acted, and how others also behaved, among other things (Schensul and LeCompte 2013). Utilising participant observation and field notes in this way permitted a rich exploration of how behaviours of agents were shaped (or not) by previous (inter)actions in line with the research questions.

Alongside participant observation, semi-structured and stimulated recall interviews were conducted with coaches and athletes. Semi-structured interviews were used to gain broader insights into individual biographies, intentions for goals or practice and the potential influence of practice. Meanwhile, stimulated recall interviews were used to show segments of footage from training sessions or matches back to the participant for them to identify rich contextual understandings of their reflexive thoughts and deliberations which they perceived to influence (or not) their own or others' actions (Lyle 2003). From the coach's point of view, this enabled understandings of the intentions behind coaching practice and the perceived influence that practice had (or not) on athletes. From the athlete's point of view, recall interviews permitted readings of coaching practice and how practice was perceived to have influenced them (or not). In total, 46 h of semi-structured and stimulated

recall interview data were collected. The average duration of each individual interview was 79 min. Interviews were recorded on a digital recording device and transcribed verbatim.

Data analysis

In order to manage and make sense of the large data set in light of the research questions, the Critical Incident Technique (CIT) was employed to both collect and analyse data within the present study (Bott and Tourish 2016). Specifically, this involved identifying events which had occurred in-situ and were meaningful to either the researcher, coaches or athletes in terms of coaching practice having a potential influence (or not). Indeed, many examples of (non)influence were identified within this study. However, in order to rigorously analyse, explain, and theorise incidents, the current paper focuses on a small number of (connected incidents) in depth. We of course recognise that there are benefits to discussing a broader range of occurrences when using this type of approach (e.g. being able to compare different incidents to one another). However, to do so would mean sacrificing the inclusion of contextual, temporal, and emergent data which were imperative to the rich explanation of nuanced (non)influence episodes (Angelides 2001). Mindful of the novelty of issues being discussed, focusing on quantity over quality (of incidents) would have been detrimental to the conceptual and theoretical development required to provide adequate explanation of non/unintended influence. One key strength of this approach to analysis was that, rather than deductively shoehorning data into a pre-defined theoretical perspective, which would have limited the potential for novel, emergent findings, the CIT allowed data to 'speak for itself', whilst remaining cognisant of, and 'plugging in' (Jackson and Mazzei 2013) relevant theory throughout the research process as heuristic devices to explain (*non*)influence and unintended influence (Bott and Tourish 2016). As such, previous theory could be challenged and refined, and room was left for novel theoretical development. Data analysis was therefore an iterative (retroductive and retrodictive) process as opposed to existing as a distinct phase of work (Elder-Vass 2010; Tracy 2019).

A reflexive approach was adopted, aiming to remain self-aware of our own theoretical predispositions and open to alternative theoretical positions (Bott and Tourish 2016). Reflexivity was enabled through: (a) the set-up of the CIT (incorporating multiple perspectives), (b) the adoption of multiple methods, and (c) by inviting critical friends and participants to offer thoughts and alternative explanations on the empirical data and associated theorising (Smith and McGannon 2018). For example, through the process of collectively analysing and discussing the data, we were able to recognise the benefits of fusing theory to provide fresh conceptual explanations of coaching (inter)actions. Key quality considerations when conducting the present study included asking (a) how empirically adequate the research account is (e.g. have data been recorded accurately and have sufficient observational data been gathered to support claims made?), (b) how ontologically plausible the research account is (e.g. how well does the research engage with theoretical explanation of the evidence; how well is context and complexity accounted for; and how have competing explanations been considered?), and (c) how much practical utility the research account has (e.g. how well do the claims made guide or resonate with practical action in the real world?) (Ronkainen and Wiltshire 2021). We, of course, recognise that our interpretations are inherently fallible and unavoidably partial accounts of (non)influence (Elder-Vass 2010).

Conceptual framework

Elder-Vass' (2010) theorising of norm circles, Jones and Wallace's (2005) concept of orchestration, and Mason's (2002) writings on noticing provided a complementary framework to understand the research questions. Here, fusing multiple theoretical perspectives and 'plugging theory in' (Jackson and Mazzei 2013) throughout the research helped to provide a rich, deep understanding of

(non)influence, which would not have been possible in the event of uncritically master driving analysis using one dominant theoretical frame (Collins and Stockton 2018).

Social structure and agency are indispensable to any understanding of influence (Elder-Vass 2010). Despite this, ontological understandings of which entities at a level of social structure are responsible for influencing our behaviour and how social structure is related to agency are under-developed (Elder-Vass 2010; Nichol et al. 2021). For instance, some have suggested that social structure equates with the term society but are then vague about defining society itself (e.g. Heer 2003). Elder-Vass (2010) provides a strong critique of this stance, and, instead, posits that the influence of social structure on our behaviour can be attributed to *norm circles*. Here, rather than norms or rules directly determining our behaviour, Elder-Vass suggests that we often act in particular ways through believing that we face a systematic incentive to do so, and that a wider group of people would tend to support the enactment of such behaviour. In other words, in and through our social interactions, we come to learn specific ways that things *should* be done and store dispositions which (alongside agency) inform our behaviour. Here, then, it can be said that the norm circle (through interactions with its members) stores a belief or disposition within individuals which shapes our actions (Elder-Vass 2007). Specifically, our conscious reflexivity and deliberation on (inter)actions, and the decisions that we actually make shape our beliefs or dispositions. Furthermore, our agency can also shape or refine our decisions before we act. Hence, norm circles only produce a *tendency* to conform to the norm: they do not imply that agents' actions are deterministically conditioned by habitus (Elder-Vass 2010).

The abovementioned theory, then, provides us with a powerful means to understand influence. Particularly, this position rests on the notion that agents must sufficiently *notice* the interactions of others (who act on behalf of the norm circle) for the norm circle to causally influence behaviour. Mason's (2002) work on the discipline of noticing, and Jones and Wallace's (2005) theory of orchestration, therefore, provide valuable lenses which can be fused with Elder-Vass' work to more critically appreciate the complexity of noninfluence and unintended influence. Mason proposed three interrelated noticing concepts which could be used by pedagogues to inform and enhance their practice, and, by extension, influence: noticing, marking and recording. *Noticing* refers to perceiving or sensing something, *marking* is signifying what we notice as important, and *recording* is making a note or record of what we have noticed to 're-mark' upon it at a later date (Mason 2002). The CIT which was earlier introduced in the methodology, provided an excellent means to record events which coaches, athletes and the first author had noticed and marked as important from their epistemological viewpoint. Indeed, this concept of noticing has previously been posited as a central precursor for coaches to be able to engage in orchestration (Jones, Bailey, and Thompson 2013; Jones and Wallace 2005). As yet, however, noticing has been underutilised as a conceptual tool in understanding what athletes do (or do not) notice and what the implications of this are. Understanding noticing from multiple perspectives is important, because where noticing is not achieved this can significantly impact the coach's (or athlete's) ability to orchestrate ambiguity and pathos (Jones and Wallace 2005). Indeed, central to the work of Jones and Wallace (2005) is the idea that educators experience and work with pathos – an inherent gap or distance between goals which have been set and the actual ability to achieve these goals in practice – everyday. For example, a goal to positively influence the performance of athletes which is then not achieved in practice because the athlete has not noticed or acted upon the coaching practice. Here, it is possible that targeted athletes may act in different ways to those (normatively) endorsed by the coach (Elder-Vass 2010). Similarly, athletes who are (or are not) the direct targets of coaches' efforts to influence may themselves be unintentionally influenced by those coaches' actions. In light of uncertainty being a central feature of pedagogical practice, Jones, Bailey, and Thompson (2013) suggest that coaches attempt to navigate or 'work with' pathos by *orchestrating*. Orchestration refers to coaches 'instigating, organising and maintaining oversight of an intricate array of coordinated tasks as the coaching process unfolds and, reactively, coping with the consequences of each action, whether anticipated or unintended' (Jones and Wallace 2005, 131). This paper therefore not only holds potential in *deploying* these

theories, but it also has the capacity to *develop* these theories by considering the iterative importance of both data and theory, together, in critically understanding (*non*)influence for pedagogues and learners.

Analysis and discussion

Through implementing data analysis in line with the CIT, multiple critical incidents pertaining to (non)influence or unintended influence were identified. Indeed, through adopting a reflexive approach, we became sensitised to exploring noninfluence and unintended influence increasingly as the study progressed. Given the unexpected (high) frequency of these incidents, and their significantly limited conceptual and theoretical attention in the literature base, we decided to focus on a small number of incidents in this paper which we feel are most pertinent and significant to illustrating noninfluence/unintended influence. Indeed, we hope that, in doing so, original and fresh insights are discussed in depth and therefore have the potential to stimulate new thoughts about pedagogical (non)influence and promote new lines of inquiry into this important topic area. Specifically, in this section, we introduce three novel types of (non)influence: (a) *non*influence on the targeted individual, (b) unintended influence on non-targeted individuals, and (c) unintended influence on targeted individuals. In order to sufficiently theorise the social mechanisms of each, we 'zoom in' on and explain one rich (indicative) example in detail.

Noninfluence on the targeted individual

In one of the indoor training sessions, a critical incident initially appeared to provide what was in the first author's eyes a somewhat innocuous and routine feature of the coaching context studied, but nonetheless an important event to attempt to explain in terms of the potential influence on the athlete:

> The squad split into four separate lanes of netting practice [practice which simulates isolated segments of match play - with batters and bowlers, but without fielders, and a net to stop the ball instead]. Lanes one and four have two batters and pace [fast] bowlers bowling at them. Lanes two and three have spin-bowlers bowling at the batters. Lane two also has a corrugated mat purposefully placed on the floor, right in front of the batter, to simulate a used cricket pitch and allow the spin bowlers to generate more spin from the floor. This better replicates the 'real life' match environment, compared to the otherwise level and generally predictable surface.
>
> Dylan comes to the top of his mark [is ready to bowl] in spin lane two. The left-arm spin bowler approaches the crease and bowls a ball which lands perfectly in one of the grooves of the corrugated mat, making the ball deviate wildly from its normal path. The ball spins quickly away from the batter who has by now come down the wicket to try and hit the ball, but instead misses it. With the batter left stranded out of his crease, Lawrence – the wicket-keeper – takes a full-stretch one-handed catch and then hits the stumps with the ball in his hand to 'stump' the batter. The batter is out. This is swiftly recognised as good practice by David, the head coach, who communicates his pleasure:
>
> *David (head coach):* [shouting loudly across the hall] 'Lawrence that's brilliant, well done [prolonged clapping]!' – Field note extract (21st January 2018)

In showing this segment of ethnographic film back to David – the head coach – to ask him about his intentions in using this behaviour, he went on to discuss:

> Well it was like, I think it [the ball] turned quite quickly, it was like a one-handed take [catch] that he got in his webbing [the end of the wicket keeping gloves], and it was really good, but you could tell that he knew it was really good cos he had a fucking massive smile on his face, ha ha … so yeah, just seeing that, observation, same thing, praising it, and praising the fact that it was good – it was excellent work, erm that maybe on another day would have gone right, probably over his right shoulder. So again, it's seeing it from afar but obviously making … I think you know I do that, like that [praise], because I make a point of letting everybody know that it was

good, so that gives him a little bit more of a kick, because I've said his name and then everyone can hear and that's quite purposeful I think. – Stimulated recall interview with David (26th January 2018)

David, here, referred to a knowledge that his actions in praising this example of good performance (alongside observation of the performance itself) were intended to endorse and enforce the norm for high performance (i.e. to take wickets). A reading of this data through the lens of Elder-Vass (2010) would suggest that David was orchestrating by praising or rewarding the enactment of a norm (i.e. listening and responding to the coach's suggestions for successful performance), to increase the awareness of (other) members in the organisation that they faced a systematic incentive to enact such action (Jones and Wallace 2006). In doing so, it could also be read as an attempt to increase the spread of support in the event of the norm being enacted by others (i.e. by other players and other coaches). David had noticed what he deemed to be successful performance which conformed to the norm (Mason 2002). Such noticing underpinned David's micro-political action (praising the athlete and making his observations 'knowable' and 'observable'; Corsby and Jones 2020), in seeking to endorse and enforce the norm to reduce ambiguity in that athletes could act according to different performance standards in subsequent trials (Elder-Vass 2012). In alluding to the perceived influence that his actions had on Lawrence, here, David implied:

Well, it probably made him smile a bit more, but you know, it shows that, it showed decent technique actually – good position, good hands, you know good head position, didn't move away from the ball, dipped his left shoulder in to get his right hand up if you know what I mean … and then he brung the stumps down as well so I think he stumped him. Brilliant. Erm, like high standard keeping that. That's what you want … I'd like to think he felt fucking good, cos it was good work, so he was happy with what he'd done and probably even happier with the fact that somebody (I) had seen it and then recognised that he (I) had seen it in front of the whole group. It's one of them things that you'll mention – see that – you know what I mean. – Stimulated recall interview with David (26th January 2018)

This passage of text again demonstrates the struggle faced by coaches in fully comprehending the influence of their actions on others. David selected hedging language in his response here (i.e. 'it *probably* made him smile' and '*I'd like to think* he felt fucking good'). Specifically, David's choice of language resonates with previous work which has reported that coaches often assume their (inter)actions with athletes to have had a positive influence, but then struggle to articulate the means through which this actual influence has been generated (McCallister, Blinde, and Weiss 2000). Such comments reinforce the need for and importance of the present paper, in attempting to better understand *how*, *when*, *why*, and *under which circumstances* athletes are indeed influenced (or not) by coaches, to inform decision-making processes when working with individuals or groups of athletes. For example, in and through the process of exploring influence from multiple perspectives, it is possible for the coach to critically compare their original intentions for influence with understandings of the contextual circumstances and interpretations that have led to a specific (inter)action being influential or not, and why. In turn, this may help to inform and refine future practice.

In exploring this critical incident with the athlete concerned (Lawrence), an incredibly powerful and unexpected source of data was unearthed which would go on to challenge my assumptions (as the lead researcher), and further critique much of the literature which had come before it. In a recall interview with Lawrence, after playing the same ethnographic film whereby he had performed successfully and was subsequently praised by David, before I had an opportunity to ask a question, Lawrence immediately responded:

Ohh, I didn't even hear David say that! It was just the ringing in my ears … I heard Omar [the strength and conditioning intern] say something about it afterwards, I can't remember what it was, oh you can see him grinning, or something like that but I didn't hear much of that … I was just caught up in the moment at the time … – Stimulated recall interview with Lawrence (26th January 2018)

Here, despite the best intentions of David, Lawrence was oblivious to the fact that the coaching practice had been delivered. In other words, *pathos* existed: there was a gap between the original intentions of the coach in delivering the behaviour, and the actual influence of this behaviour in practice (Jones and Wallace 2005). Mason (2002, 29) noted in this regard:

> we notice many things in the course of a day, though we may mark relatively few of them and probably record virtually none until we set about this practice intentionally, and of course there are far more incidents and objects which we fail to notice at all.

Such data strongly reinforces the act of accurate noticing (Jones, Bailey, and Thompson 2013; Mason 2002), as an integral precursor for the actions of others to influence norms (beliefs stored within habitus as dispositions), and causally influence the subsequent (inter)action of agents through norm circles (Elder-Vass 2010). In other words, this finding directly responds to the call from Scott (2018) to focus on '*no-things*' – examples of *non*influence – rather than just *things* (i.e. influential actions).

In line with the work of Elder-Vass (2012), it is not the norm itself but the norm circle which exerts causal influence. Therefore, the storing of norms as dispositions in the habitus of individuals is predicated upon our ability to notice and observe the (inter)actions of others (Elder-Vass 2010). Where events go unnoticed for whatever reason, they are not capable of causally influencing (through the norm circle) normative behaviour *for that individual*. As Mason (2002, 29) put it, 'what we fail to notice is unlikely to have much influence upon our actions'. Although, importantly, this does not mean that the event is not real (that the event – coach behaviour – had not occurred). This event still had the potential to causally influence others if *they* noticed the event. For example, it is possible that the other wicket keepers in the squad may have heard and interpreted this praise, thus prompting them to attempt to replicate this performance in the future. Had this been the case, the coach's original intentions for influence would have been intentionally influential for these individuals, whilst remaining unintentionally noninfluential for the main target of the influence (Lawrence). Indeed, this notion of the *unintended* influence of practice on other learners (to those who were the originally intended target of the influence) was particularly pertinent in another critical incident identified in a competitive fixture against another county which is discussed below.

Unintended influence on non-targeted individuals

> The score is 64 for the loss of no wickets after 15 overs played. John – one of the opening batters – plays a loose shot and is very close to losing his wicket early in the day's play. The ball misses his bat and hits him on the pads [protective equipment worn on the legs of batters] before a huge appeal from the opposition. The umpire shakes his head and indicates that the batter is not out.
> Sam (assistant coach): [Breathes in sharply and audibly].
> Douglas (team manager): 'Careful' [verbalising his thoughts – not loud enough for John to hear, but loud enough for others to hear].
> Sam: [to Douglas] 'I tell you what it is, some umpires would have given that out just for the shot … [for all to hear] Work hard, John, WORK HARD!'
> John immediately responds by playing more defensively. He goes on to score 54 runs for the team. – Field note extract (17 July 2018 – First fixture of the season)

Reflecting upon the original intended influence of his interaction in this example, Sam – the assistant coach – suggested that he attempted to remind John, specifically, of his responsibilities as a player:

> Upon being asked what his intentions were in this incident, Sam indicated that he hoped it would remind John to play cautiously. – Field note extract (17 July 2018 – Discussion with Sam whilst walking round the pitch)

Sam had noticed potential pathos in that, if the team lost their opening batter, their goals as a team may have become less likely to be achieved. As such, he orchestrated (Readdy, Zakrajsek, and Raabe 2016), acting on behalf of the norm circle to endorse the norm that players should

adapt their style of play to the match circumstances and adopt the style recommended by the coach in attempt to manage this pathos (Elder-Vass 2010; Nichol et al. 2021). Indeed, John confirmed in a stimulated recall interview that this interaction with Sam made him reconsider his approach:

> John: [when he said that I was thinking] just try and get your head back in [the game] basically … just work hard. You've got to keep grafting, haven't you. Just, don't stop. I know it was a poor shot but if it was a bit shorter it would have been four [runs]. You've just got to pick the line and length properly and then just wait for the bad one [wait for a bad delivery from the bowler to play attackingly]. – Stimulated recall interview with John (30 July 2018)

Interestingly, however, despite being directed at John, Jamie and Roger – who at the time were in earshot of and noticed this interaction (sitting in the pavilion waiting to bat) – felt that it had also influenced them (Mason 2002):

> Jamie: they're [coaches] saying that's a silly shot and they don't want you to play anything daft. So, I'm probably thinking when I get in just don't do anything stupid; let's play straight and be careful when you get in. – Stimulated recall interview with Jamie (22 July 2018)

> Roger: with Sam having a negative reaction towards that [John's play] we're thinking like what not to do – which is that. So, we know when we first get in [to bat] we know not to do that. It's helpful because then you know what shots you need to play, what shots you don't need to play. – Stimulated recall interview with Roger (23 July 2018)

Interestingly, this practice oriented the attention of athletes on how *not* to act (Scott 2018). Further work could therefore consider, in greater depth, where coaching (inter)actions have not only been (non)influential for one athlete, but simultaneously and unintentionally influential for other athletes and how. Behaviourist theorising has traditionally focussed on positive and negative reinforcement as actions delivered by pedagogues (i.e. what pedagogues do) without considering their inter-active influence on learners. Moreover, such work has characterised influence arising from these actions as linear, unproblematic, and occurring within simplistic dyads. The present work critically challenges this representation and highlights how webs of individuals can be simultaneously influenced, in potentially divergent ways, by a given interaction. As well as generating unintended influence on other individuals (those who noticed the coaches' (inter)actions as unintended witnesses), our findings also pointed to the third type of unintended influence: an unintended influence for the same individual (originally intended to be the target of influence).

Unintended influence on targeted individuals

> It is day two of a two-day home fixture. Nettleton are chasing 341 runs to tie (342 runs to win). The score is currently 59 runs for the loss of one wicket from 16 overs. Derek is on 36 runs (not-out) and has hit a number of boundaries against the fast bowlers. Jamie is on five runs not-out and is new to the crease [he has not long been batting]. At a drinks break, David questions the two batters and provides his observations on the situation:
> David: 'Well done, Derek – excellent that. [To both batters] Thoughts?'
> Jamie: 'We're ahead [on run-rate]'.
> David: 'Yeah. What about, I'm more interested in how many overs have the seamers bowled?'
> Jamie: 'They've bowled seven'.
> David: 'Yeah, so they're gonna be fucked [tired] later. Right. What are your observations about the field to the spinner?'
> Derek: 'They're [fielders] in, [we can] hit [the ball] over [the top of them]'.
> David: 'Yeah, so they've ringed it [put a close field setting in]. They haven't attacked at all have they? So that tells you what? What does that tell you in a positive way?'
> Derek: 'They're [the opposition] on the defence. They're not very positive'.
> David: 'Yeah, yeah – they're not confident. He's [the bowler] not confident about grouping the balls in the same spot [bowling the ball in a consistent area]. So, you've [looking at Derek] got a couple there on the back foot. Mid-on and mid-off [fielding positions] are really close right. Your job is to do two things, Derek, now right: is to cement your place in the team for the rest of the year – and you'll only do that by batting and getting a half decent score, and two, play the anchor role. Right. You're [pointing at Derek's batting

partner, Jamie] naturally more aggressive, especially when it's [the ball] going over the field. Make sure you wait for the right ball. Especially if mid-on [and] mid-off [fielding positions] are creeping in. Exactly like what you did last week. Right, now we've got to get the balance right here because, because we have got so long to bat I don't, you know, I don't want you to give your wickets away by any stretch of the imagination – you have just got to be patient'. – Field note extract (25 July 2018)

Here, David had noticed an opportunity to influence the way in which the team could progress when batting (Mason 2002). Specifically, he had noticed the field settings and bowling approach of the opposition, felt it best that Jamie played more of an attacking role and that Derek played more defensively to serve the tactical plan of the team. Indeed, in his interactions with the players he micro-politically acted in an attempt to influence the role norms of the two players (Elder-Vass 2010). He used this strategy to orchestrate some of the ambiguity present in that, if athletes did not play in this manner, it might have impacted the team's collective ability to enact David's overall goals for performance (Jones and Wallace 2005). When asked what his intentions behind this practice were, David stated:

Play as the anchor role, so you are giving him [Derek] a little bit of guidance in how – you don't want him to come down the track [move closer to the bowler to have more chance of hitting the ball attackingly] and get stumped [get out], when he is, you know, a nurdler and a nudger [more defensive batter] and he'll play like behind square on the off-side and use the pace of the ball. Whereas, Jamie, you know reiterating exactly what he did last week [score a hundred]. He is really close, wait for the ball and hit … make sure, I hate when you get caught and it goes flat, you've got to try and get it [the ball] over [the fielders]. And even if you don't quite get it and it goes up in the air, you know chances are that they are not going to get the catch, running behind. So, yeah, just making them aware that, you know, there is plenty – being positive, just trying to be positive. – Stimulated recall interview with David (07 August 2019)

Further, the perceived influence of this practice on Derek and Jamie was stated:

Hopefully give them understanding of, you know, stuff that I have said. It is just a confidence builder you know. They [the opposition] have got a ring field, they are not confident to do that, so you are going to get opportunities to do this. So if we are able to bat properly … so it's just a bit of a confidence builder in terms of, you know, giving them a little bit of guidance and a bit of direction but then giving them the freedom to then back themselves to play the ball where they want to. Cos I know if Jamie gets one through [the field], or gets one over, Derek might get a bad ball that suits his strengths and then they are both away [playing well], and there's no stopping any of them. Derek will get ones [single runs] and you know Jamie is going to push Derek with his running and his athleticism and stuff like that, so run scoring isn't going to be an issue if Jamie is able to bat a decent amount of time. – Stimulated recall interview with David (07 August 2019)

Here, David had recognised that his actions in orchestrating were intended to provide direction and guidance to the players. Despite this, he also identified that his actions were intended to give players freedom (agency), especially where they got a bad ball from the bowler (opposition). After play had recommenced, Derek seemed to adopt an aggressive batting style:

In the second over after play has recommenced from the drinks break, Derek hits the ball aggressively over the top of the fielders for six runs. This is greeted with praise from his teammates, but not the coaches who continue to observe and don't intervene:

Larry [player]: 'Shoootttt'.

John [player]: 'Shot, boi. Get up Derek lad'. – Field note extract (25 July 2018)

This practice appeared to run dangerously close to contradicting some of the role norms which had been endorsed by David: to listen to the coach's instructions and play the 'anchor role'. Through Derek playing in an aggressive manner he ran the risk of losing his wicket, thus perhaps failing to play the 'anchor role' successfully. However, given that he had hit the shot successfully for six runs, this did not result in a response from the coaches to punish an act which deviated from the norm. David eloquently reflected upon why he selected *not* to punish this act when watching footage of the shot back in a recall interview:

Well obviously, like you want them [players] to play as freely as possible. He ended up playing quite freely and scoring quite quickly – quicker than I thought. Erm, but the anchor role, yeah maybe he doesn't want to play the anchor role. Maybe he just thinks well I can do that [play more attackingly]. So, I don't mind that at all. He has waited for it and then gone for it. If he had of gotten out, I'd have gone fucking ballistic. But at least he has got the bollocks to do it and he has hit it well. You know, happy days, I don't mind that at all. – Stimulated recall interview with David (07 August 2019)

Here, it can be said that David's practice had an unintentional influence on the same individual who was the original intended target of the influence. His practice in asking Derek to play the 'anchor role' had somewhat of an unintended influence in that Derek began to play more attackingly. Through noticing that, although this performance went against the planned strategy, it simultaneously allowed the team to meet their overall objectives, David decided not to intervene further. Perhaps here, orchestration was enacted by David in deciding to remain silent. He appreciated that by not intervening and punishing Derek's act, this afforded greater opportunities for players to utilise their agency whilst still being likely to achieve the overall goals of the squad. When Derek had run dangerously close to deviating from the norm (i.e. by getting out playing this shot) and thus risked being punished for doing so, he had in fact taken a risk which had paid off and had satisfied the more general role norm to score runs. Appreciating the indexical nature of the extent, applicability and strength of norms, he had achieved skilled social performance (Elder-Vass 2010). Indeed, it could be argued that this example constituted *non*influence as Derek appeared to ignore the advice from David and proceeded to bat in an aggressive manner. However, given that the athlete had acknowledged receipt of (i.e. noticed), and had an opportunity to engage with, the practice in this instance, we felt that this example was better conceptualised as unintentional influence. This can be differentiated from the example of *non*influence provided earlier because, in the example of *non*influence, the athlete had not noticed or engaged with the coaching practice.

Critical discussion and practical implications

Given that the athlete in the first example had not noticed the coaching practice, and athletes in the second and third examples had been unintentionally influenced, this paper contributes novel findings to the pedagogical and orchestration literature base (e.g. Readdy, Zakrajsek, and Raabe 2016; Santos, Jones, and Mesquita 2013). Indeed, some of the pathos experienced by coaches or other educators may be as a result of the fact that, despite their best intentions, (inter)actions with learners may go unnoticed or have unintended influences. Thus, they may be (more or) less likely to be able to achieve specific (or collective) goals which have been set. This finding also extends the embryonic literature focused on athlete orchestration (Raabe, Readdy, and Zakrajsek 2017) which suggests that athletes experience ambiguity as a result of limited information presented by coaches (i.e. limited feedback on performance or information on team line-ups). As illustrated in the current study, another source of ambiguity presented to the athlete exists in that they may be *unaware* of coach behaviour which is directed toward (and intended to influence) them, or unintentionally influenced by behaviour which was (or was not) originally intended to influence them. This might create pathos for the athlete because their ability to match (or not) the expectations or goals of coaches may be restricted as a result of missing (i.e. not noticing) or being unintentionally influenced by previous normative endorsement and enforcement acts of coaches. Equally, it could provide an opportunity for athletes to make use of the agency that they retain to act in different ways which simultaneously meet the overall objectives of the team. Indeed, these sources of athlete ambiguity would not have been uncovered had the methodological bricolage which focused on critical incidents from *multiple perspectives* not been employed.

This distinction has important consequences and implications when we reflect back upon methodologies used in much of the extant literature on coaching practice and its influence on athlete 'outcomes'. Those studies using questionnaires to assess perceptions of coaching practice and

perceptions of athlete outcomes, before correlating the two measures together (e.g. Goudas 1998; Price and Weiss 2013) often take it for granted that athletes have received and interpreted the practices being explored in their measured constructs by homogenising interpretations of coaching practice or outcomes. Further, they frequently pay insufficient attention to the temporal, nuanced micro-dynamic dimension of sessions, matches, or seasons, whereby interpretations and perceptions (of the measures taken) can continually unfold and change over the course of different time points. Crucially, what they restrict is an exploration of whether or not the specific actions of others have been noticed and interpreted in the first place (and by whom), as has been demonstrated in the present study. As such, the incorporation of participant observation and stimulated recall interviews presents a fruitful line for further inquiry into *how*, *when*, *why* and *under which circumstances* learners are influenced (or not) by pedagogues (i.e. coaches or teachers).

Resonating with the view that pedagogues' work is often done at or near the 'edge of chaos' (Bowes and Jones 2006, 235), this paper provides a rare examination of instances where coaching (inter)actions have been (*non*)influential for specific individuals. In contrast to romanticised portrayals of coaching, where the coach is positioned as an agent who unquestionably generates transformational influence, greater focus on instances like those presented in this paper are important if we are to more fully understand the pedagogical realities that we purport to study (Jones, Edwards, and Viotto Filho 2016). Data presented here also critically challenge the widely accepted and longstanding convention that practitioners should deliver praise immediately after successful performance has taken place for learners (i.e. athletes) to be able to make a connection between the desired behaviour and the praise (Alberto and Troutman 1999). As the athlete identified:

> So, maybe if he [the head coach] had said something at the end [of the session] – 'Lawrence, that stumping [performance] was mint [very good]' – then I would have heard it [the praise] more and appreciated that he had seen it type of thing. – Stimulated recall interview with Lawrence. (26th January 2018)

Indeed, this evidence may provide an opportunity or reminder for pedagogues to carefully (re)consider *how* and *when* feedback may be effectively delivered to those who are in an immersive state. While it is possible that the physical distance of the coach from the player contributed to the athlete not noticing this (inter)action, given that the coach shouted and clapped loudly across the hall, it is likely that the player missed this practice as a result of being caught up in/reflecting on his successful performance. Perhaps, praising the athlete just after the performance had occurred and also later in the session (if no response was received from the athlete upon the first use of praise) may have helped to ensure that the coach behaviour meaningfully contributed toward (endorsing or enforcing) the norm or disposition for the specific player (Lawrence) in this case, and other individuals who could be unintentionally influenced by the practice. The evidence and theorising presented within the current paper provide an opportunity for coach and teacher educators to explicitly scaffold conversations around (non)influence and unintended influence. We believe that, by paying greater explicit attention to these areas, coaches and teachers could be well-positioned to develop their professional noticing capacities and critically prepare for, deliver, and reflect upon (inter)actions with a number of key stakeholders. For example, pedagogues may be able to critically prepare for (inter)actions by considering how praising a particular player may have an (un)intended influence or noninfluence (on multiple individuals) before delivering the behaviour. Further, they could consult with players, co-coaches and coach educators to better understand and reflect upon the perceived (non)influence of practice after the (inter)action has occurred.

Conclusion

This study set out to critically explore *how*, *when*, *why*, *for whom*, and *under which circumstances* pedagogical acts may be (*non*)influential or unintentionally influential. These are issues that remain a considerably under researched aspect of pedagogy. Indeed, we attempted to challenge dominant

discourse and extend knowledge by understanding the '*no-things*' in addition to '*things*' (Scott 2018). In deconstructing and understanding a small number of highly pertinent critical incidents, it is suggested that acts of pedagogues can be noninfluential when a learner, for whatever reason, fails to *notice* the (inter)action (Mason 2002). Here, there was a disconnection between the coach perceiving his practice to be highly influential and the *actual non*influence of the practice for the athlete. In this instance, it is hypothesised that the athlete became so immersed in successful performance, that their noticing 'net' was narrowed in its cast. As such, the specific coaching interaction could not influence the subsequent actions of that specific athlete by storing or strengthening the individual's disposition that they faced a systematic incentive to act in this way (Elder-Vass 2010). However, importantly, other athletes who notice such (inter)actions may still be (unintentionally) influenced by practice. Indeed, in the second example presented, despite attempting to influence one batter, the assistant coach's practice had unintentionally influenced two other athletes who were in earshot of and noticed this practice. Upon hearing the coach's words, the two athletes had refined their intentions ahead of their performances. Further, in the third example, the head coach's practice had promoted an unintended influence (for the originally intended target of influence), which turned out to be fruitful for the overall objectives of the team. Despite being asked to play the 'anchor role' the player made use of his agency and adopted a more attacking playing style. This turned out to be successful for the overall objectives of the team, meaning that the coaches opted not to challenge such behaviour. Such uncertainty highlighted in the above incidents creates potential pathos for both the pedagogue and the learner (Jones and Wallace 2005; Raabe, Readdy, and Zakrajsek 2017), in that the ability of goals to be secured (or not) as a result of the divergent influence(s) of practice in the present may be affected.

The present study has highlighted the significance of incorporating multiple perspectives on the same incident to generate more complex, rich, and situated accounts of (non)influence. Indeed, a potential limitation of the current study is that the number of perspectives obtained on a single incident could have been increased even further. For instance, in the first example of noninfluence, other players (e.g. other wicket keepers in the squad, the batter who had just been stumped out, and the bowler who had bowled the ball) and coaches (e.g. assistant coaches) could have been consulted to obtain their perspectives on if and how the practice was influential (or not) for them, and why. This was often difficult given time constraints between sessions/fixtures and player availability. Nonetheless, future work could look to increase the number of perspectives obtained on one coaching (inter)action to develop detailed insights and extend understanding of the multiple and often divergent networks of (non)influence that simultaneously occur. Further, the current study focused on a smaller number of critical incidents to provide rich theorisation of the complex, temporal and emergent nature of (non)influence. We recognise, however, that focusing on a broader range of incidents in future work may be a fruitful line for inquiry as well. Indeed, this may help to provide a broader overview of the scale or frequency of coaching (inter)actions that are (non)influential, *for whom*, *when*, *why*, and *under which circumstances*. Doing so may help to build a more realistic and accurate portrayal of influence in sport coaching and pedagogy, challenging the view of leaders as heroic individuals who are able to set compelling visions and unproblematically influence the actions of others (Carroll, Ford, and Taylor 2019; Jones et al. 2011).

We hope that the novel and unique stance taken in this paper stimulates greater attention to the 'no-things' of pedagogical practice in a variety of contexts. Further work could, for example, focus on the shared or collective noticing which takes place within coaching/teaching contexts and the implications of this for (non)influence. For instance, what do coaches/teachers think that others (i.e. other coaches, athletes or students) have noticed (or not) and how/why does this shape their own actions? Where noticing gaps or 'pathos' (i.e. instances where coaches/teachers mis-read the noticing of learners or vice-versa) can be identified and narrowed, this may increase the productivity and criticality of practice and its (non)influence. Furthermore, research could also pay attention to wider understandings of what sport pedagogues and stakeholders (intentionally or unintentionally) choose *not* to do or be to develop the basis of more critical discussion around

ethical and effective pedagogical practices. In light of a current and growing proliferation of negative and abusive interactions being documented between coaches and athletes (Cronin and Armour 2019), we feel strongly that considering *no-things* (i.e. alternate and more ethical (inter)actions/methods of generating influence and how this could lead to an enhanced sense of wellbeing), is an incredibly important research agenda which has the potential to provide a meaningful impact in the education of educators. We contend that Scott's (2018) concepts of non-identification, non-participation, non-presence, active commission, and passive omission would provide a fruitful framework to deepen understanding in this area.

Disclosure statement

ORCID

A. J. Nichol ⬚ http://orcid.org/0000-0002-9319-9703
P. Potrac ⬚ http://orcid.org/0000-0001-9616-6491
P. R. Hayes ⬚ http://orcid.org/0000-0002-4197-2848
E. T. Hall ⬚ http://orcid.org/0000-0002-7213-4433

References

Alberto, P. A., and A. C. Troutman. 1999. *Applied Behavior Analysis for Teachers*. 5th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill.

Angelides, P. 2001. "The Development of an Efficient Technique for Collecting and Analyzing Qualitative Data: The Analysis of Critical Incidents." *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 14 (3): 429–442. doi:10.1080/09518390110029058.

Armour, K. M. 2011. *Sport Pedagogy: An Introduction for Coaching and Teaching Sport*. Harlow: Prentice Hall.

Bhaskar, R. 1975. *A Realist Theory of Science*. Leeds: Leeds Books.

Bott, G., and D. Tourish. 2016. "The Critical Incident Technique Reappraised: Using Critical Incidents to Illuminate Organizational Practices and Build Theory." *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal* 11 (4): 276–300. doi:10.1108/QROM-01-2016-1351.

Bowes, I., and R. L. Jones. 2006. "Working at the Edge of Chaos: Understanding Coaching as a Complex, Interpersonal System." *The Sport Psychologist* 20 (2): 235–245. doi:10.1123/tsp.20.2.235.

Brekhus, W. 1998. "A Sociology of the Unmarked: Redirecting our Focus." *Sociological Theory* 16 (1): 34–51. doi:10.1111/0735-2751.00041.

Carroll, B., J. Ford, and S. Taylor. 2019. *Leadership: Contemporary Critical Perspectives*. London: Sage.

Chelladurai, P., H. Imamura, Y. Yamaguchi, Y. Oinuma, and T. Miyauchi. 1988. "Sport Leadership in a Cross-National Setting: The Case of Japanese and Canadian University Athletes." *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology* 10 (4): 374–389. doi:10.1123/jsep.10.4.374.

Collins, C. S., and C. M. Stockton. 2018. "The Central Role of Theory in Qualitative Research." *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 17 (1): 1–10. doi:10.1177/1609406918797475.

Corsby, C. L., and R. L. Jones. 2020. "Complicity, Performance, and the 'Doing' of Sports Coaching: An Ethnomethodological Study of Work." *The Sociological Review* 68 (3): 590–605. doi:10.1177/0038026119897551.

Cronin, C., and K. Armour. 2019. *Care in Sport Coaching: Pedagogical Cases*. London: Routledge.

Cumming, S. P., F. L. Smoll, R. E. Smith, and J. R. Grossbard. 2007. "Is Winning Everything? The Relative Contributions of Motivational Climate and Won-Lost Percentage in Youth Sports." *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology* 19 (3): 322–336. doi:10.1080/10413200701342640.

Cushion, C., and R. L. Jones. 2006. "Power, Discourse, and Symbolic Violence in Professional Youth Soccer: The Case of Albion Football Club." *Sociology of Sport Journal* 23 (2): 142–161. doi:10.1123/ssj.23.2.142.

Cushion, C. J., and R. L. Jones. 2014. "A Bourdieusian Analysis of Cultural Reproduction: Socialisation and the 'Hidden Curriculum' in Professional Football." *Sport, Education and Society* 19 (3): 276–298. doi:10.1080/13573322.2012.666966.

Davies, C. A. 2008. *Reflexive Ethnography: A Guide to Researching Selves and Others*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge.

De Meyer, J., I. B. Tallir, B. Soenens, M. Vansteenkiste, N. Aelterman, L. Van den Berghe, L. Speleers, and L. Haerens. 2014. "Does Observed Controlling Teaching Behavior Relate to Students' Motivation in Physical Education?" *Journal of Educational Psychology* 106 (2): 541–554. doi:10.1037/a0034399.

Elder-Vass, D. 2007. "Reconciling Archer and Bourdieu in an Emergentist Theory of Action." *Sociological Theory* 25 (4): 325–346. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9558.2007.00312.x.

Elder-Vass, D. 2010. *The Causal Power of Social Structures: Emergence, Structure and Agency*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Elder-Vass, D. 2012. *The Reality of Social Construction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gano-Overway, L. A., E. Steele, B. A. Boyce, and D. Whaley. 2017. "Exploring Relationships Between the Coach-Initiated Motivational Climate and Psychological Coping Skills Over the High School American Football Season." *International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching* 12 (6): 790–794. doi:10.1177/1747954117738873.

Garfinkel, H. 1967. *Studies in Ethnomethodology*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Goudas, M. 1998. "Motivational Climate and Intrinsic Motivation of Young Basketball Players." *Perceptual and Motor Skills* 86 (1): 323–327. doi:10.2466/pms.1998.86.1.323.

Hammersley, M., and P. Atkinson. 2019. *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*. 4th ed. London: Routledge.

Heer, D. M. 2003. "Social Structure." In *The Blackwell Dictionary of Modern Social Thought*, edited by W. Outhwaite. Oxford: Blackwell.

Hordvik, M., A. MacPhail, and L. T. Ronglan. 2019. "Negotiating the Complexity of Teaching: A Rhizomatic Consideration of pre-Service Teachers' School Placement Experiences." *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy* 24 (5): 447–462. doi:10.1080/17408989.2019.1623189.

Jackson, A. Y., and L. A. Mazzei. 2013. "Plugging One Text Into Another: Thinking with Theory in Qualitative Research." *Qualitative Inquiry* 19 (4): 261–271. doi:10.1177/1077800412471510.

Jones, R. 2006. "Dilemmas, Maintaining "Face," and Paranoia: An Average Coaching Life." *Qualitative Inquiry* 12 (5): 1012–1021. doi:10.1177/1077800406288614.

Jones, R. L., J. Bailey, and A. Thompson. 2013. "Ambiguity, Noticing and Orchestration: Further Thoughts on Managing the Complex Coaching Context." In *Routledge Handbook of Sports Coaching*, edited by P. Potrac, W. D. Gilbert, and J. Denison, 271–283. London: Routledge.

Jones, R. L., C. Edwards, and I. T. Viotto Filho. 2016. "Activity Theory, Complexity and Sports Coaching: An Epistemology for a Discipline." *Sport, Education and Society* 21 (2): 200–216. doi:10.1080/13573322.2014.895713.

Jones, R., P. Potrac, C. Cushion, and L. T. Ronglan. 2011. *The Sociology of Sports Coaching*. London: Routledge.

Jones, R. L., and M. Wallace. 2005. ""Another Bad Day at the Training Ground: Coping with Ambiguity in the Coaching Context." *Sport, Education and Society* 10 (1): 119–134. doi:10.1080/1357332052000308792.

Jones, R. L., and M. Wallace. 2006. "The Coach as 'Orchestrator': More Realistically Managing the Complex Coaching Context." In *The Sports Coach as Educator: Re-Conceptualising Sports Coaching*, edited by R. L. Jones, 51–64. London: Routledge.

Kirk, D. 1992. "Physical Education, Discourse, and Ideology: Bringing the Hidden Curriculum Into View." *Quest (Grand Rapids, MI)* 44 (1): 35–56. doi:10.1080/00336297.1992.10484040.

Lyle, J. 2003. "Stimulated Recall: A Report on Its Use in Naturalistic Research." *British Educational Research Journal* 29 (6): 861–878. doi:10.1080/0141192032000137349.

Mason, J. 2002. *Researching Your Own Practice: The Discipline of Noticing*. New York: Routledge.

Mason, R. J., D. Farrow, and J. A. Hattie. 2021. "An Exploratory Investigation Into the Reception of Verbal and Video Feedback Provided to Players in an Australian Football League Club." *International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching* 16 (1): 181–191. doi:10.1177/1747954120951080.

McCallister, S. G., E. M. Blinde, and W. M. Weiss. 2000. "Teaching Values and Implementing Philosophies: Dilemmas of the Youth Sport Coach." *Physical Educator* 57 (1): 35–45.

Moen, K. M., K. Westlie, G. Gerdin, W. Smith, S. Linnér, R. Philpot, K. Schenker, and L. Larsson. 2020. "Caring Teaching and the Complexity of Building Good Relationships as Pedagogies for Social Justice in Health and Physical Education." *Sport, Education and Society* 25 (9): 1015–1028. doi:10.1080/13573322.2019.1683535.

Nichol, A. J., E. T. Hall, W. Vickery, and P. R. Hayes. 2019. "Examining the Relationships Between Coaching Practice and Athlete "Outcomes": A Systematic Review and Critical Realist Critique." *International Sport Coaching Journal* 6 (1): 13–29. doi:10.1123/iscj.2017-0105.

Nichol, A. J., P. R. Hayes, W. Vickery, E. Boocock, P. Potrac, and E. T. Hall. 2021. "Athletes as "Sites of Normative Intersectionality": Critically Exploring the Ontology of Influence in Sport Coaching." *Sociology of Sport Journal* 38 (3): 241–250. doi:10.1123/ssj.2020-0114.

Philpot, R. 2016. "Physical Education Initial Teacher Educators' Expressions of Critical Pedagogy (ies) Coherency, Complexity or Confusion?" *European Physical Education Review* 22 (2): 260–275. doi:10.1177/1356336X15603382.

Potrac, P., C. Brewer, R. Jones, K. Armour, and J. Hoff. 2000. "Toward an Holistic Understanding of the Coaching Process." *Quest (Grand Rapids, MI)* 52 (2): 186–199. doi:10.1080/00336297.2000.10491709.

Potrac, P., C. Mallett, K. Greenough, and L. Nelson. 2017. "Passion and Paranoia: An Embodied Tale of Emotion, Identity, and Pathos in Sports Coaching." *Sports Coaching Review* 6 (2): 142–161. doi:10.1080/21640629.2017.1367067.

Price, M. S., and M. R. Weiss. 2013. "Relationships among Coach Leadership, Peer Leadership, and Adolescent Athletes' Psychosocial and Team Outcomes: A Test of Transformational Leadership Theory." *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology* 25 (2): 265–279. doi:10.1080/10413200.2012.725703.

Purdy, L. G., and R. L. Jones. 2011. "Choppy Waters: Elite Rowers' Perceptions of Coaching." *Sociology of Sport Journal* 28 (3): 329–346. doi:10.1123/ssj.28.3.329.

Purdy, L., P. Potrac, and R. Jones. 2008. "Power, Consent and Resistance: An Autoethnography of Competitive Rowing." *Sport, Education and Society* 13 (3): 319–336. doi:10.1080/13573320802200693.

Raabe, J., T. Readdy, and R. A. Zakrajsek. 2017. "Pathos and Orchestration in Elite Sport: The Experiences of NCAA DI Student-Athletes." *The Sport Psychologist* 31 (4): 344–355. doi:10.1123/tsp.2016-0093.

Readdy, T., R. Zakrajsek, and J. Raabe. 2016. "Real-world Experiences of the Coaching Pathos: Orchestration of NCAA Division I Sport." *The Sport Psychologist* 30 (2): 167–178. doi:10.1123/tsp.2015-0054.

Reinboth, M., and J. L. Duda. 2006. "Perceived Motivational Climate, Need Satisfaction and Indices of Well-Being in Team Sports: A Longitudinal Perspective." *Psychology of Sport and Exercise* 7 (3): 269–286. doi:10.1016/j.psychsport.2005.06.002.

Renshaw, I., K. Davids, R. Shuttleworth, and J. Chow. 2009. "Insights from Ecological Psychology and Dynamical Systems Theory Can Underpin a Philosophy of Coaching." *International Journal of Sport Psychology* 40 (4): 580–602.

Ronkainen, N. J., and G. Wiltshire. 2021. "Rethinking Validity in Qualitative Sport and Exercise Psychology Research: A Realist Perspective." *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology* 19 (1): 13–28. doi:10.1080/1612197X.2019.1637363.

Santos, S., R. L. Jones, and I. Mesquita. 2013. "Do Coaches Orchestrate? The Working Practices of Elite Portuguese Coaches." *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport* 84 (2): 263–272. doi:10.1080/02701367.2013.784722.

Schensul, J. J., and M. D. LeCompte. 2013. *Essential Ethnoraphic Methods: A Mixed Methods Approach*. Plymouth: AltaMira Press.

Scott, S. 2018. "A Sociology of Nothing: Understanding the Unmarked." *Sociology* 52 (1): 3–19. doi:10.1177/0038038517690681.

Smith, B., and K. R. McGannon. 2018. "Developing Rigor in Qualitative Research: Problems and Opportunities Within Sport and Exercise Psychology." *International Review of Sport and Exercise Psychology* 11 (1): 101–121. doi:10.1080/1750984X.2017.1317357.

Smith, R. E., F. L. Smoll, and B. Curtis. 1978. "Coaching Behaviors in Little League Baseball." In *Psychological Perspectives in Youth Sports*, edited by F. L. Smoll and R. E. Smith, 173–201. Washington, DC: Hemisphere.

Spittle, M., and K. Byrne. 2009. "The Influence of Sport Education on Student Motivation in Physical Education." *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy* 14 (3): 253–266. doi:10.1080/17408980801995239.

Strom, K. 2015. "Teaching as Assemblage: Negotiating Learning and Practice in the First Year of Teaching." *Journal of Teacher Education* 66 (4): 321–333. doi:10.1177/0022487115589990.

Thomson, A., and A. C. Sparkes. 2020. "The Micropolitics of Being a Head of Physical Education in a Secondary School: Insights from an Ethnographic Study." *Sport, Education and Society* 25 (7): 815–828. doi:10.1080/13573322.2019.1666813.

Tilga, H., V. Hein, A. Koka, and M. S. Hagger. 2020. "How Physical Education Teachers' Interpersonal Behaviour is Related to Students' Health-Related Quality of Life." *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research* 64 (5): 661–676. doi:10.1080/00313831.2019.1595718.

Tracy, S. J. 2019. *Qualitative Research Methods: Collecting Evidence, Crafting Analysis, Communicating Impact*. 2nd ed. Hoboken: John Wiley.