



*Games Based
Pedagogies:
Theory and Practice*



St Mary's
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Knowledge sharing in
Games Theory and
Practice.

A Case study Research
in Physical Education

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OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR KNOWLEDGE SHARING ON GAMES APPROACHES

A case study of a physical education department

Games have long since been a cornerstone of the physical education curriculum in secondary schools with the likes of football, hockey, netball and rugby historically seen as a key part of the go-to toolbox for a physical education teacher. The use of Game Centred Approaches (GCAs) allows the principles of games and match-based activities to be used to teach skills as well as engage and motivate learners. GCAs are a general conceptualisation of a range of iterations of games-based pedagogical approaches to teaching and learning, for example Teaching Games for Understanding (TGfU) and Game Sense (GS). These approaches are categorised by a shift from a teacher-centred and skills-based approach to a student-centred approach aimed at developing skills in the context of games (Wang & Ha, 2012). As such, GCAs focus on learning through game appreciation, tactical awareness, decision-making and skill execution, with a core belief in empowering learners and placing the teacher as a partner in learning.

Despite the benefits of utilising GCAs, one commonly cited issue (Díaz-Cueto, Hernández-Álvarez & Castejón, 2010; Wang & Ha, 2012; Harvey & Pill, 2016; Jarrett & Light, 2019) is that physical education teachers simply do not possess sufficient pedagogical content knowledge regarding GCA and how to design and deliver GCA-based lessons. Additionally, when GCAs are used in physical education, a lack of teaching and assessment, specifically on tactical understanding and problem-solving, has been highlighted (García-López, Gutiérrez, Sánchez-Mora & Harvey, 2019). To solve knowledge gaps of physical education teachers, research has recommended programmes to support and improve teachers' inclusion of GCA. Jarrett and Light (2019) recommend that teachers should reflect on their own knowledge levels and discuss knowledge with teachers they work alongside. Consequently, this case study sought to identify the opportunities and challenges of using GCA within one physical education department.



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What did we do?

WHO – a secondary school physical education department in England with 7 qualified physical education teachers (4 male, 3 female)

WHAT – semi-structured interviews focused on knowledge and teaching practice surrounding GCA.

WHEN – 2020/2021 academic year.

WHY – identify the opportunities and challenges in sharing knowledge of GCA.

CASE STUDY

"Football for example I wouldn't know where to begin if I'm honest. I can teach a bog standard drills football lesson, but I wouldn't be able to go into detail on tactical awareness and game appreciation because it's just not my forte." (Teacher 2)

Opportunities for professional learning

"Having the ability to work with other people to develop that I think that would be the thing that would help me improve." (Teacher 1)

"With more experience will come more knowledge, then obviously that's where my confidence will then grow." (Teacher 2)

"I think you need to get out and actually work with specialist sports coaches." (Teacher 4)

"I think teachers would benefit from reading some research as well." (Teacher 6)

"We have to encourage that culture and that feeling that we can share things. I think we do that as much as possible, but I feel we could do it more." (Teacher 7)

"It's important to share ideas and come up with those new kind of creative ideas together." (Teacher 5)

Previous research by Lee *et al.* (2019) and Keegan (2019) had similar findings to those of this study, which provides concerning evidence of a significant gap in professional learning offered to teachers. To fill this gap, physical education teachers could seek involvement in supportive educational communities that help them to progress (Casey & MacPhail, 2018). They could also work with knowledgeable colleagues who have specifically trained in the area of GCAs (O'Leary, 2016). All of these methods will ensure the growth of physical education teachers' knowledge and understanding of the games approaches and, in turn, improve their games teaching.

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Why is this important?

Despite some physical education teachers' negative thoughts and feelings towards GCA (Casey & Dyson, 2009), teachers in this study were aware of the benefits GCAs bring to creating a teaching environment that is centred on pupil engagement and learning. However, Butler (2005) highlights that for GCAs to be used effectively in lessons, all teachers should be involved in relevant professional learning. This study emphasises that this is not always possible as very little exists. Instead, physical education departments could provide professional learning in-house, helping each other to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to use GCAs in their practice.

Practical recommendations

This study recommends that professional learning opportunities should be provided to improve teachers' pedagogical content knowledge of GCA, thus increasing GCA inclusion in secondary physical education games teaching. This could be achieved by education organisations working closely with sporting bodies who promote these approaches and who currently provide resources to support game design. Utilising these existing resources would be a resourceful way to support games-type sports teaching within the National Curriculum. Additionally, online networks could be utilised by physical education departments to discuss all things relating to GCA. This would expand teachers' knowledge through an easily accessible medium at both national and global levels. These two suggestions stem from the simple yet invaluable concept of knowledge sharing which this study believes is crucial to enhance the facilitation of games education for future generations.

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Can insight into personal factors affect the knowledge and understanding Physical Education teachers have of TGfU/GCA and further encourage them to share knowledge?

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Introduction:

Teachers Thoughts and Feeling Surrounding TGfU/GCA:

- Reluctant (Rossi et al., 2007).
- Uncomfortable and nervous (Díaz-Cueto, Hernández-Álvarez & Castejón, 2010).

Support for Teachers Regarding the Implementation of TGfU/GCA:

- Limited PCK and small gender difference.
(Díaz-Cueto, Hernández-Álvarez & Castejón, 2010; Wang & Ha, 2012; Harvey & Pill, 2016; Jarrett & Light, 2019).
- Knowledge sharing with others.
- Educational community.
- CPD.
(O'Leary, 2016; Miller et al., 2017; García-López, Gutiérrez, Sánchez-Mora & Harvey, 2019; Jarrett & Light, 2019).

Aims:

1. What 'personal' factors affect PE teacher TGfU/GCA knowledge and understanding?
2. Propose how knowledge levels across a PE department could be aligned?

Methodology:

Participants

7 qualified PE teachers. Aged between 26-40. 4 male 3 female.

Information Collection Questionnaire

Collected basic information used to inform interviews.

Semi-Structured Interviews

10 pre-set questions used to guide the interviews with freedom to ask further probes.

Thematic Data Analysis

Inductively suggested key areas.

- ✓ Rigorous methods as they derived from previous research.
- ✗ Trustworthiness could have been increased by triangulation of methods.

Results and Discussion:

1. Views across the department:

- Whole-part-whole method.
- Sport Education in Combination with GCA.

2. Impact of teacher's specialist sport:

- Netball, Football, Rugby, Volleyball and Powerlifting.
- Individual sports person had reduced TGfU/ GCA knowledge.
- RFU & FA = higher promotion, Netball = lower promotion.

3. Accumulation of current knowledge:

- Different undergrads offer different focuses which affected knowledge.
- Less education = reduced confidence.

4. Demonstration of knowledge and understanding:

- Small difference in female knowledge levels, not conclusive.
- More teaching experience = more confidence to use TGfU/GCA.
- High confidence = use TGfU/GCA across curriculum.

5. Suggestions for knowledge development:

- Knowledge sharing across the department to create a resources bank.
- Work with expert coaches.
- Lack of PE CPD, needs discussion.

Conclusion:

Impact of teachers specialist sport and undergrad education on TGfU/ GCA knowledge.

More experience in games teaching improves confidence and confidence leads to using games across PE curriculum.

Valuable yet simple resources used to boost knowledge can be working with your department.

Future Research:

- Several PE departments, and multiple research methods.
- Further investigate gender differences.
- Recommends PE-CPD provision be scrutinised and improved.

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