The Production of Radical Athletes: Challenging Competitive Discursive Practice in Sport Pedagogy. Canadian Tennis as a Case in Point

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> I have often wondered why the farthest-out position always feels so right to me; why extremes, although difficult and sometimes painful to maintain, are always more comfortable than one plan running straight down a line in the unruffled middle. (Lorde, 1982, p. 15)

The purpose of this paper is both conceptual and practical in nature. It is an examination of and reflection upon the concepts of "teaching to transgress" (hooks, 1994), "borderlands" (Anzaldúa, 1998), "queer pedagogy" (Britzman, 1995) and a "curriculum of irreverence" (Zuckerman, 2001) as applied to the professional development of tennis coaches and the athletic development of tennis players in a Canadian context. These emancipatory/transgressive themes represent a growing body of literature and practice, within higher education (Ellsworth, 1989; Lather, 1991; Magnusson, 1998; Mohanty, 1997), and within feminist/queer approaches in sport pedagogy (Dewar, 1996; McWilliam, 1999; Sykes, 2001), which espouse empowerment, healing and "queering" as viable approaches to the development of individuals as "critical" citizens. In spite of recent social theory that support the notions of difference, diversity and the social constructedness of our identities/realities, the standard professional development of coaches and broadly accepted practices of athlete development propagate discourses such as elitism, expert knowledge and specialization while simultaneously supporting structures which maintain heterosexist,

gendered and racist norms. For sport practitioners, there is a constant tension between the more sociological approach to pedagogy as suggested by Schempp (1996) and societal expectations of the production of "excellence", or the achievement of specific performances/results (e.g., government funding indicators). I argue that pedagogy, specifically in the case of tennis, has been divorced from curriculum[1] in the specific sense that the content of learning, i.e., its body of knowledge, is disembodied from the methodology of teaching and its "performative" (Butler, 1993) milieu. Arguably, the purpose or philosophy of coaching, namely that of "using sport as a means of helping participants develop in a holistic way (by) providing a positive sport experience (so that) participants (sic) achieve their full potential" (Coaching Association of Canada, 1998) in fact acts in multiple ways to constrain possibilities, limit voice, and align each individual's identity to the demands of the "power of the norm" (Foucault, 1980). In order to ground my conceptual analysis, I will interrogate my personal experience as a coach, facility manager, volunteer and athlete. From the standpoint of the "athlete become professional"[2], I will discuss the use of "co-operation"[3] as a methodology for

[1] My use of this term extends not only to the "hidden curriculum" but also to the learning environment, the competitive arena and all contexts that fall in between.

[2] I use the term standpoint, not as a viewpoint, but to cover both considerations of knowledge and practice. Though I discuss athlete and professional development, I entertain the notion of a singular standpoint, as in the Marxist sense of the proletariat. Organically speaking, athletes become professionals in many ways; in fact, a coach (or sport administrator, manager, agent) is more often than not an athlete at a different developmental stage. I also borrow from May's (1998) notion of the "progressive male standpoint" in the sense that critical reflection upon

professional and athletic development through the (1) horizontal integration of the sport professional workplace and (2) the "opening" of traditional athlete development contexts. My coaching praxis provides a pedagogically useful example for engaging and interrupting inequities and injustice in sport while embodying many of the anti-oppressive (e.g., anti-heterosexist and anti-racist) educational strategies similar to those suggested by Kumashiro (2001).

The Trouble with Our Identities

The postmodern (pre)occupation with the author's location, while delineating an ethical space from which one can speak and others may "read", is problematic in terms of identity formation and the "telling of one's story". It is a river, a continual process; it is also a survival tactic (Anzaldúa, 1998, p. 264). In this paper, rather than address my location and learning in a clearly defined space, I will weave its turbulent and non-linear (r)evolution throughout the discussion of my personal and professional

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experience can bring awareness of individual and collective complicity in certain social arrangements.

[3] It is with trepidation that I employ the co-operation. While seemingly unproblematically and "progressively" associated with the notion of sharing and the flattening of hierarchies (team-centred, less individualistic ideology), it is still utilized to support liberal democratic discourse. This discourse is conflated with the spirit of capitalism, which reinforces tendencies towards achievement, competitiveness and "rugged individualism". My use of the term serves as an attack on competitive learning/training environments, which I are counterproductive to development (certainly through the early/mid stages); competition is essentially a socially negotiated reality. My use also serves as an attack on the reductionist approach to the development of the individual, which currently frames athlete and professional development as

development. However, I proceed with caution and a bit of trepidation. My intention in naming myself and exploring my identity is as much a reflexive process as an interest in thinking against "one's thought of one's conceptual foundations" (Britzman, 1995). This informs my investment in queer theory, which I believe has the potential for flexibility and manoeuvrability; and as Anzaldúa (1998) states, "The more entrances, the more access for all of us" (p. 274). Scholl (2001) notes that identity categories are both profoundly important and yet ultimately inadequate mechanisms for describing the complexities of our lives (p. 156). He continues, noting that

> All those identities are profoundly formative of who I am and can be in the world, and they are also inadequate and only superficially descriptive of my identity in the sense that they do not directly reflect my personal experiences, affiliations, life choices, or political struggles. It seems to me that for all of us, identity categories both shape us and fail to contain our life experiences. (p. 141)

With this in mind, I begin the journey.

Reflecting on My Professional Roots

In retrospect, I fell into teaching and coaching at the age of eighteen while in my second year of university studies. What began as summer employment in the Department of Physical Education at the University of Toronto at Scarborough blossomed into a full-time career in sport coaching and management spanning fifteen

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mutually exclusive occurrences and professes a person-centered approach while maintaining

years. The Associate Director[4] of the department at the time informed and influenced my approach to teaching and education; indeed our conversations continue to be as lively and provocative to this day. As a physical educator, she supported approaches to physical activity that respected both the physical and mental well being of participants, emphasizing the complete development of each person. She promoted physical activity and recreation as a vehicle through which individuals could experience themselves and others in "safe" environments. I experienced what Zuckerman (2001) refers to as a "queerness", a sensuality, the creation of a "curriculum of irreverence". Inadvertently, "Part of the curriculum…(was about) making obvious that which will make one comfortable as a community participant (p. 24).

The Department encouraged my participation in the National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP)[5], acknowledging the need for recognition via credentials and the development of sport-specific technical skills. At the same time, the Associate Director spent considerable time with me addressing the difference between education

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authority/knowledge in hierarchical, top-down processes.

[4] Now the Special Assistant to the Dean in the Faculty of Physical and Health Education, main campus, University of Toronto, she was a female director in a predominantly male environment (i.e., both in the institution and the industry per se). The mother of two, she managed the college's 11 court, 1200 member tennis facility as well as developed leadership/mentoring models for student convenors/instructors in all areas of interfaculty and intramural sports.

[5] Administered by the Coaching Association of Canada, the NCCP is a nationally devised and provincially administered credentialing program for coaches and professionals in over 60 sports. Each level of certification has a theory, technical and practical component, though the method of delivery of these components varies from sport to sport.

and instruction. Where instruction implied the modelling, delivery and acquisition of skills, education[6] affirmed a broader and more inclusive approach to programming and teacher-student interactions. In order to facilitate the professional development of student leaders, mentoring and leadership models were designed that supported leaders in their daily instructional delivery while reinforcing the notion of "teacher-in-a-state-of-continual-learning".

Criticism of this "soft" approach to physical education and sport, claiming that it subordinates the pursuit of performance to socio-philosophical factors, is both present in today's commentary of elite coaching[7] and rooted in the historical professionalization of the sport sciences. Dating back to the 1970s, Canadian sport and recreation witnessed both the severing of physical education faculties from faculties of education and the promotion/financial support of high performance sport by the federal government (MacIntosh & Whitson, 1990). Neo-liberal[8] restructuring of

[6] Educational models of sport leadership focus on the growth and development of the individual (athlete-centred); stress the importance of learning how to play the game (process-oriented); and utilize experiences as vehicles to enhance self-understanding.

[7] The NCCP is currently undergoing a shift to a two-stream approach to certification. In tennis, this shift rearticulates the Coach stream and the term coach as geared towards "high-performance" athlete development and the term club professional as more "managerial and administrative" in nature thereby further decentering this discussion.

[8] Neo-liberalism is an ideological stance, manifested in economic theory and the politics in most conservative parties around the world during the mid-1970s. Neo-liberal policies and programs "represent the conscious retrenchment of national state intervention in the spheres of social reproduction", promote the dismantling of the welfare state, and support a Westernized approach to globalization (Teeple, 2000).

higher education has and continues to alter the landscape of funding and mandates (Newson & Buchbinder, 1988; Phillips, 2003). Post-secondary institutions were required to "account" for their activities in utilitarian terms (Newson & Polster, 1998), and through funding mechanisms, were encouraged to seek research dollars from non-governmental sources. Partnership building with corporate entities[9] and the introduction of an alternative set of motives[10] promoted a shift in the focus of sport from physical education towards exercise science and biomechanics, both of which ignore or obscure the experiential dimensions of sport. Sport scientists[11] sought to

> …construct a science of human performance on the model of the natural sciences and to present scientific knowledge of sport as clearly superior to the practical and personal knowledge of an earlier generation of coaches. (MacIntosh & Whitson, 1990, p. 113)

This is an example of "boundary work" as described by Gieryn (1983). Sport became a lab for the analysis of human movement.

> The sport scientists and 'performance technocrats' promote a positivist, technically oriented knowledge structure which seeks to map the way to increased levels of achievement in high performance sport. Research in the sport sciences pushes back

[9] See (CAUT, 2001-2002).

[10] See also (Polster, 1999) for a general discussion on this issue.

[11] Sport science is an interdisciplinary field, varying in scope depending on each institution. Its sub-disciplines include physiology, sociology, biomechanics, philosophy and history, as well as the fields of coaching, physical education and sport management.

> the frontiers of physical and technical performance while social science becomes focused on athlete selection instruments, behavior management, and the management of organizational change. (MacIntosh & Whitson, 1990, p. 116)

In many respects, this shift parallels Zuckerman's (2001) discussion of a progressive urban elementary school and its transition in culture from a community of sensuality to one of sexuality and a politics of identity. "The queerness of the school, the sensuality of the school, the early days of the school being composed of people with bodies…was being replaced by a more sensually conservative culture, a culture that in some ways was distancing itself from its bodies" (. 26). The aforementioned shift in sport from socio-philosophical concerns to the "mapping" of bodies of knowledge and knowledge of bodies parallels Zuckerman's discussion: a shift from a pedagogy concerned with a general relationship to knowledge, where everything including the possibility of "truth" is worth questioning, to one where the limits of heteronormativity and the "thinkable" (Britzman, 1995) are realized.

How Tennis Professionals Understand the Nature of Their Expertise

The meaning of expert[12], whilst traditionally defined by experience and success, came to be recognized through the acquisition of credentials. The NCCP, created during the 1970s, institutionally realized this rearticulation via sport-specific certification

programs, which in the case of tennis, were developed nationally by Tennis Canada and administered provincially by the Ontario Tennis Association (O.T.A.). Professional accomplishment and mobility was and continues to be structured based on the systematic movement through levels of certification. The content and distribution of technical knowledge within these levels has evolved considerably in the last ten years. An example of this is the new two-stream approach to coaching education/certification. Since the structure and composition of each level in various sports is not homogeneous, a brief explanation of the certification levels in tennis and their relationship to professional standing is helpful. Generally speaking, entry-level certification (i.e., Instructor/Coordinator) qualifies an individual to teach beginners of all ages; the technical content is focused on fundamentals such as ball controls whereas the pedagogical content is geared towards creating learning environments that facilitate the introduction of participants to the game. It should be noted that the "coach" has replaced the term "level" as a course descriptor. Presently, the certification designations proceed from Instructor/Coordinator to Coach One; from Coach One, the professional chooses between Club Professional Two and then Three or Coach Two, Three and eventually Four. At Coach Three and Coach Four (to date, the highest level offered, especially since the Club Professional stream courses have not yet been

[12] An expert is "someone whose knowledge or skill is specialized and profound, especially as

administered), certified professionals usually occupy positions as head professionals in clubs, provincial and national coaches, and administrative positions within provincial and national sport organizations[13]. The content of certification at this level is primarily geared towards the training and development of high-performance athletes.

At present, the certification process is the primary tool for professional development[14]. This is problematic given that the majority of current tennis professionals are not graduates of physical education programs or coaching institutes where one might encounter a broader spectrum of issues outside of a technical, sport-specific education (Gilbert & Trudel, 1999). In my experience as a course conductor, I have observed that as participants engage in course material and simulated teaching environments, the focus on personal development and learning as an end in and of itself is clearly secondary, especially given the overwhelming distraction that the technical examination poses. The potential of examination failure[15], which has

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the result of much practical experience" (http://www.coach.ca/cbet/gloss_e.htm).

[13] I am a Level 3 Coach in squash and tennis, a candidate in the Coach 4 program in tennis and Tennis Canada Course Conductor. I have also held positions of General Manager and Head Tennis/Squash Professional at numerous private and seasonal facilities, served as Vice-President of Player Development of the O.T.A. and traveled as one of Ontario's provincial coaches.

[14] Other opportunities include national coaching conferences (nominal participation rates) as well as certification systems in the United States (e.g., USPTR and USTA).

[15] There are several tasks/components to be passed at each level (e.g., professionalism). The two main sport specific tasks are the technical and the practical components. The technical components may involve a written examination or a take home workbook. The practical examination involves on court demonstration of technical skills, systematic teaching

immediate economic ramifications such as lower per hour remuneration and the loss of potential professional opportunities, is also heavily influenced by peer pressure and performance anxiety, both during the course as well as upon completion. In addition, courses are content rich and delivered in such a manner as to limit the assimilation of material prior to examination on the final day. This consideration ties readily into the existing "culture of completion", which heavily favors those participants who already possess the necessary experience and technical knowledge (especially at higher levels of certification). In addition to these determinants, and bearing in mind the ideological shift from physical education to sport sciences, how then do tennis professionals develop and become informed through the course of their career? How do they come to understand the nature of their expertise?

> In the model of 'professionality' that now dominates Canadian physical education, the young sport scientist or sport manager is encouraged to see his or her job as the production of performance (individual or organizational performance) and is seldom seriously introduced to the social and political questions that surround the concentration of resources on elite sport. Sport science is constructed unproblematically as the science of improvement of human performance and physical well being… (MacIntosh & Whitson, 1990, p. 120)

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methodology and facility with specific actions method language (this is not an exhaustive list). Failure usually requires retaking some aspect of the course, rewriting the written examination or retaking the on-court teaching demonstration. Failure represents a delay in passing, which is

There are limited formal opportunities for professional development outside of the certification process. This is problematic given that existing notions, techniques and "ways of knowing/being" (hooks, 1989) are imitated and modelled, essentially (re)indoctrinating and (re)affirming the status quo. In fact, most professionals gather their expertise from a variety of informal sources, the most common of which is characterized by employment with more experienced or credentialed professionals (Coaching Association of Canada, 1996; Gould, Giannini, Krane, & Hodge, 1990). In these environments, daily "interaction rituals" frame how individuals and collectives communicate and learn (Goffman, 1967). More recently, Bordo (1993) speaks of cultures' "direct grip" on our bodies through repetitive and habitual action (p. 16) whereas Morgan (1996) examines techniques of (self) surveillance in personal training. She notes that "Repeated practice leads to habit; when this becomes 'ingrained' as the very material of our life forms, it becomes ethos, a way of life. The Greeks understood well that our habits become our disposition" (p. 36). Unfortunately, in these quasi-apprenticeship relationships, the onus for development lies squarely on the individual. She/he teaches classes physically independent of the head professional. Should feedback be provided, it usually takes one of two forms: sweeping comments such as "I would like to see more activity on your court" or in economic discussions relating to

costly and timely; timely, especially at the higher levels due to large gaps between offered

participant attrition. In the instances where the assistant teaches alongside the head professional in the same instructional environment, the majority of interaction between them is based on a top-down delivery of information, which the assistant must execute precisely and unproblematically. Formal lesson plans, pre-clinic debriefing meetings or consistent professional development sessions are virtually unheard of in most clubs. In these working environments, a burgeoning (i.e., assistant) instructor spends little time acquiring new skills or engaging in philosophies of development, in effect again maintaining and reproducing the status quo. "The process of how coaching experience is transformed into coaching expertise remains a mystery" (Gilbert & Trudel, 1999).

Emancipation as a Personal and Professional Orientation

> We adults cannot hope to transmit our values and engage in dialogue with children that transforms both groups' perceptions by making these cross-generational translations without finding ways to see through children's eyes instead of the eyes of our own childhoods. Without children, the adults are left to our own reminiscent views of the present which misperceive the current context fettered by old truths. Without adults, children are left blind to the perspective history lends the present. (Zuckerman, 2001, p. 15)

I am, and have always have been, a passionate individual who treasures challenging existing views of the way things are and should be. My mother's shaping of my character, coupled with other strong West Indian female influences, remain central to

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courses and opportunities for re-examination.

my intellectual and political identity. I resonate with Digby (1998) in his discussion about how childhood experiences lend themselves to a less "masculinist" persona.

> I thus learned two important lessons: (1) that there were means other than team sports to bolster my masculine status, and (2) that gender loyalty was not crucial to being a successful heterosexual. This was clearly not a trajectory that was to lead inexorably to my becoming a feminist. Yet both of those lessons did enrich and complicate an ambivalence toward the cult of Real Manhood that had begun in my early childhood. That ambivalence may have created a sort of "readiness" for the feminist interventions in my life. (p. 5)

I believe that teachers are always in motion, always in a state of change, always continually adapting their approach. Although there are numerous instances illustrative of my shift to a more philosophical approach to teaching, the following examples capture my desire to (re)construct professional communities both on-court and off-court. It is ironic that the "white" lines of the court function in the same instance as both closed "borders" that contain and open spaces productive of counter-hegemonic possibilities.

As previously stated, early influences of "teacher as ongoing student" affirmed within me a growing belief that professional development must be an aspect of daily life, positioned as an inclusive feature of one's work. As such, it not only remains foremost in one's thoughts but also is not susceptible to changing financial and/or temporal demands, which tend to redefine and redistribute professional development

activities as superfluous or extra-curricular. As my professional interests and roles expanded to include volunteer work at the O.T.A., club and facility management and assisting athletes in attaining university scholarships, so too did my awareness of how sport and education are situated within the larger social and political context. Exposure to individuals and organizations with varying agendas and perspectives challenged my views and informed my practice. Finally, and certainly most influential, are the outcomes realized by my practice and those of the larger sporting community. Parental abuse, eating disorders and attrition among adolescent females, alongside other day to day issues in the lives of the people I teach, demanded intentional reflection and investigation into our individual, systemic and structural complicity in harmful practices and ways of being. As a certified coach involved in athlete development at the local, provincial and national level, I have resisted harmful policies and practices resulting in professional censure and marginalization. This paper represents the beginning of coming to terms with previously experienced dilemmas in my sport-specific professional community as well as a conscious shaping of future strategies for the development of generations of athletes and coaches who teach to transgress.

As a gay man of color, feminist pedagogical practices that incorporate difference, critique authority relations, commit to non-hierarchical classrooms, and

value students' experiences are central to my approach as an educator[16] (Weedon, 1987). Conversations and interactions with colleagues contributed to my growth in feminist and equity perspectives; I learned how to interpret my experiences politically in terms of interlocking and intersecting systems of oppression. I came to understand how these oppressions were politically, economically and pedagogically constituted. This facilitated in the development of a text of interpretation that would inform my praxis, my understanding and provide me with a framework for continued development as a pedagogue.

Achieving Complete Tennis[17]: Praxis

> The liberal idea to help people speak, but not to attack the structures and categories that create disablement, falls far short of what I am suggesting. The critical postmodernist assumes that the act of redefinition, of necessity, brings into question norms and values that have anchored society and formed the basis of oppression. (Tierney, 1995, p. 63)

Retrospective examination of key features in my approach to the development of athletes and coaches reveals specific instances of co-operation as a currency, i.e. a methodology for professional and athletic development. From this particular

[16] I am presently an MA student in Higher Education/Department of Theory and Policy Studies at OISE/University of Toronto.

[17] ACT (Achieving Complete Tennis ©) is a program I developed and has taken shape throughout the course of my career. Although concerned with the physical, tactical and technical components of development, the psychological (that is, how we feel about ourselves,

standpoint (the athlete become professional), co-operation accomplishes much in the way of the feminist project (Smith, 1987). In each and every aspect of the program, I challenged normalized horizons through a variety of techniques and mechanisms. Zuckerman (2001) suggests that "Maybe queering is about being at the limit of the socially comfortable and not turning away" (p. 33). These activities often met with resistance, from within the club and in that larger professional community. For example, I intentionally hired more female coaches at all levels of expertise, motivated initially by my preference for working with women. In spite of my original motivation, the achievement of an unusually well-balanced representation of gender among the staff addressed opportunity and inequity for women as well as provided athletes with role models and mentors. I also created and utilized self-evaluative and reflective tools in formal and informal ways. I purposefully interrupted pre-existing hierarchies (e.g., authority, knowledge, etc.) which existed between myself, the head professional, members of the staff and athletes. These practices, addressed below in more detail, fostered trust and a sense of family, challenged and supported different ways of knowing/being (Shiva, 1993), and facilitated learning through different modes or styles. My programs embodied emancipatory learning processes, sanctioning

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our environment and others around us), is the most important. By emphasizing this component, we can help participants develop a healthy sense of themselves, both on and off the court.

opportunities for athletes and coaches to find and exercise their voice, discover a personal style and transgress tradition roles and relationships.

This approach continues to be challenging and at times frustrating. Co-operative approaches to professional and athletic training environments are both ontologically and epistemologically problematic. Primarily, these approaches are ontologically antagonistic to sport ideologies. On the surface, they run counter to sport's competitive nature, its historical discourse of military preparedness and its current discourses of optimal human performance. This aside, a closer examination of current sport science paradigms reveals serious ontological dilemmas between the structure and practice of sport and societal values. For example, our society values the concept of investment (e.g., financial, educational, emotional, etc.) and yet sport practices privilege and reward those who acquire early success, even in light of negative long term realities (e.g., injury, burnout, stunted development). As well, while biomechanics promotes optimal performance, the practices of sport coaches are not necessarily informed, up-to-date or flexible with regards to individuals and their unique growth patterns. This essentialist tendency of sport science, which treats all bodies as homogeneous[18], has costly effects when articulated on young bodies (e.g., osteoporosis, injuries, etc.). Most ironic however is the lack of flexibility in both

coaching methodology and competitive structures when posed in opposition to cutting-edge research findings[19].

In addition to these quandaries, there also exists a kind of illusion or, as Zizek describes, an "ideological fantasy". For example, tournaments and other competitive arenas, while seeming to pit athletes in battle under "equal" conditions like those of the "free market", are in fact landscapes of illusion. These environments are filled with factors that include the privileging of: (1) those who acquire early success (and therefore preferential treatment, tournament seeding as well as additional competitive and travel opportunities); (2) those with access to the economic and geographic means necessary to train and compete in a winter context (access and cost of indoor coaching and courts); and (3) those associated with politically well-positioned coaches and programs. Balyi (2001), Gaps In The Sport Systems in B.C. And Canada, addresses this situation, although with certain emphasis on producing a more centralized Canadian sport science system of athlete development, yielding results at the international level (e.g., the Olympic Games).

> …Competitive calendar *planning* is not *based on* technical knowledge, but on *traditions and improvisations*…The *best*

[18] Sameness reflects the dominant representations of maleness, whiteness, and heteronormativity.

[19] This dilemma is remarkably similar to the critique of "accountability" as a discursive practice within Higher Education and its characteristic time lag with up-to-date practices in corporate management. See (Bensimmon, 1995; McCoy, 1999).

> *coaches work at the elite level* in the B.C. sport system. Volunteers or Level 1 coaches coach the FUNdamental and Training to Train stages. However, this is ironic because it is the FUNdamental and Training to Train stages that are the most critical to long-term development. Coaching at these levels requires knowledgeable and experienced coaches who can correctly perform and demonstrate skills for the children…*Due to the shortcomings of athlete development during the FUNdamental*, Training to Train, and Training to Compete stages, many *athletes will never reach their optimal performance levels* or genetic ceilings/potentials… A *high ratio of competition* to training activities *inhibits optimal athletic development…Male training programs are superimposed on female athletes*. This is inappropriate in light of the physiological and developmental differences between the genders…A*dult training programs are superimposed on young athletes*. This is detrimental because it means that coaching is conducted without regard for the principles of childhood development…*Adult competition schedules are superimposed on young athletes*. As a result, too much time is spend competing and not enough time is spent learning and mastering basic and sport-specific skills…*A focus on winning rather than development characterizes the preparation of the developmental athlete*. (excerpts; italics are this author's emphasis)
> (p. 26-27)

From an epistemological perspective, co-operative approaches are also problematic on numerous levels within the current sport science paradigm. For instance, Mannicom (1992) states, "sharing assumes a set of equal relations. This assumption renders invisible the very present operations of power" (p. 378). This is evidenced by the humanist (Lombardo, 1987) and invitational (Purkey & Stanley, 1991) models of coaching which profess an athlete-centered approach but are merely

disguised as highly structured, subtlety executed coach-centered approaches whose practice is best categorized as the "professional model of coaching". In fact, competent coaching, "defined as the coach's capacity to assess the needs of a specific coaching context and intervene effectively within the boundaries of an ethical framework of practice" (Coaching Association of Canada, 1998), can in fact be more accurately characterized as an authoritarian styled, product-oriented management of individuals. Sport pedagogy and the professional development of coaches is not only dominated by the interests of the coach but also fervently supports structures and practices which maintain authority and power in the role of the coach and his/her ability to exercise it at will.

Without a doubt, "troubling" our practices is problematic. Kumashiro (2001), while interested in empowerment and anti-oppressive practices, asserts that "changing multiple oppressions and embracing multiple differences are necessarily paradoxical processes" (p. 2). The "adding of difference" or the "management of diversity" (Mohanty, 1994), regardless of intention, is a dangerous but potentially fruitful territory. I believe that co-operation as a methodology creates and supports a "social imaginary" - essentially a "way of naming, ordering and representing social and physical reality whose effects simultaneously enable and constrain a set of options for practical action in the world" (Simon, 1992, p. 37).

My Approach to the Professional Development of Coaches

The introduction, inclusion and maintenance of professional development in the daily routine of coaches is both challenging and problematic.

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Horizontal integration of the workplace is fundamental to the deconstruction of traditional authority relationships and the legitimation of other ways of knowing/being. Two key roadblocks to accomplishing this end were (1) affecting attitudinal changes of club owners, themselves former coaches, as well as that of the coaching staff and (2) the inherent nature and composition of the instructional staff. As Head Professional, I walked a continual tightrope between accountability to club owners concerned with profitability and coaches whose lived realities in tennis are individualistically and competitively oriented. The following discussion references my last position at a winter tennis facility where part-time[20] teaching professionals, most of whom were Level 1 instructors, composed the majority of the instructional staff[21]. This group of

[20] Part-time in this context refers professionals who teach less than ten hours per week.

[21] Part-timers usually account for at least 85% of the instructional staff at most facilities.

individuals included high school and university students, women with children and seasonal workers. Their priorities and external commitments restrict common meeting times as well as interest in further skill development since teaching tennis for many of them was a convenient and well-paid job rather than a career. Combating entrenched attitudes regarding professional development was challenging and ironic; ironic because they could not see or feel the personal benefits and expended a great deal of energy being convinced. In fact, "…it may be a characteristic feature of all forms of oppression that it is most effective when those being oppressed have a hand in their oppression" (Thomas, 1998, p.238).

Professionals of all levels of certification taught a full range of participants, ranging from beginners to high performance athletes. This kept Level 2 and 3 coaches, who normally restrict themselves to advanced groups, in touch with the challenges and qualitative differences in beginner/intermediate lessons. For Level 1 coaches, participation in programs specifically geared towards high performance athletes[22] was

[22] Achieving Complete Tennis provides programming which recognizes the distinction between high performance and high achieving recreational athletes. Traditionally, elite or high performance athletes are defined as individuals who commit considerable resources to sport-specific specialization, participate in competitive opportunities (e.g., tournaments) and are oriented towards a college scholarship or life as a professional athlete. Normally, these athletes are separated from the general program population and accorded standing, prestige and perks in the club environment. In my program, I blended these athletes with those who were equally athletically and mentally skilled, but whose orientation was not specialization in one sport and whose goals were more recreational in nature. These individuals may also have been high performance athletes in other sports.

a major component in their professional development. During high-performance clinics[23], these coaches shared the leadership and responsibility for each type of instructional component (e.g., technical, tactical, etc.). My role as Head Professional gradually evolved into facilitation, guiding the learning process of the athletes alongside that of the instructors; this was at first an unconscious shift that became a conscious technique and political strategy. Tierney (1995) asserts that "cultural learning" involves listening and working so that others may speak for themselves. This pedagogical style afforded me great liberty in circulating on all training courts, tailoring my observation and feedback to each situational context. As opposed to traditional environments wherein the best coaches and athletes end up on the same court (i.e., court #1), the second best of each group on the next court, and so on, our approach combined different levels of both groups. This was a by-product of our "learning through games" delivery, which will be addressed in the section on athlete development. Not only were there major qualitative differences in this approach, but also some intended and unintended consequences. An opportunity to experience the long-term effects of well taught and learned fundamentals sharpened each coach's

[23] Tennis Canada designations are Under 12, Under 14 and Under 18; this classification refers to ideal development stages expressed in terms of athlete age but does not necessarily imply that older athletes may not participate in a program of a lower age designation. In my program, these programs were renamed Champions in Development and High Intensity Performance. Athletes were organized based on technical, physical and emotional factors, not chronological age.

technical skills and informed the delivery of these elements in all their classes. This enhanced athlete development at the grassroots level (e.g., schools' programs, etc.). Over the course of several program years, a surprisingly positive change in the attitude of parents and athletes also occurred with respect to these coaches. Participants and their families became more confident in the abilities of these coaches, a factor which had reciprocal effects on each groups' level of confidence.

Coaches were also given responsibility for other parts of the program, including leagues, round robins and tournament travel. They were encouraged to participate in inter-club leagues, providing fun at work while further enhancing their competitive playing abilities. This not only facilitated their growth as "complete" professionals but also solidified their sense of ownership within and outside our program. As a result of their increased participation and responsibility, I was able to deviate from standard pay schemes based on credentials and remunerated based on factors such as leadership, commitment, experience and self-evaluation tools. These tools were used to focus biweekly staff meetings, geared towards improvement of their playing and technical abilities.

What I have described in this section captures only part of the picture of inclusivity and expansion of the professional roles of the staff I have worked with. Our mutual development as "students of the game" reinforced notions of continual sharing

and learning, while flattening hierarchies of authority and knowledge. As well, broadening each instructor's participation within the club environment was instrumental to behaving and teaching "as if" the experiential dimensions of sport were primary objectives and ends in and of themselves.

Negotiating Traditional Curricular Contexts in Athlete Development

Participation in sport is constructed as a discursive practice which idealizes the development of the athlete as healthy and well-balanced, one who experiences and learns values important to capitalist relations such as commitment, personal achievement and struggle. In contrast, the discourse of specialization is entrenched in young athletes, their parents and the sport, and is antagonistic to the pursuit of virtues such as balance and health. Athletes are encouraged and supported to pursue this illogical and unhealthy ideal at any cost.

Before proceeding, a brief clarification of the distinction between high-performance and high achieving recreational athletes is necessary. Traditionally, elite or high-performance athletes are defined as individuals who commit considerable resources to sport-specific specialization, participate in competitive opportunities (tournaments), and are oriented towards a college scholarship or life as a professional athlete. Normally, these athletes are separated from the general program population and accorded standing, prestige and "perks" in the club. In my programs, I coupled

these athletes with those who were equally athletically and mentally skilled, but whose orientation was not specialization in one sport and whose goals were more recreational in nature; as well, these individuals may also have been high-performance athletes in other sports.

Although marked by moments of friction and unease, this "open" concept lent perspective to both sets of athletes, deconstructed barriers to learning and development, and brought "fun" into an otherwise rigorous training environment. In general, I observed that athletes who experience others who have taken different approaches to development temper or balance their approach to their training.

Epistemologically speaking, training programs approach athlete development through a series of skill acquisition moments designed to attack, counter-attack or defend against the "other" (i.e., the opponent). This diverts the athletes' and coaches' attention away from coming to understand the more important "other" (i.e., themselves and their potentialities). With this in mind, developing a sense of personal playing style as well as voice was accomplished through a variety of mechanisms. It must be noted that these approaches met with constant opposition from athletes who are generally more comfortable with the top-down delivery of information (e.g., "just tell me how to do it!") and tend to attend to coaches who are accomplished players.

One such mechanism was self-evaluation; these tools were employed as a means of self-directed learning, goal setting and getting to know the "other" (i.e., the inner-self). As well, I wove two fundamental themes through all aspects of the curriculum: (1) "winning in practice doesn't count for anything" and (2) "As my opponent, my "other", I want you to play your best because that challenges me to be my best". As aforementioned, students experienced an environment where power was diffused among coaches and learning available from a variety of sources. Learning through games and match-like situations were used to direct the training process.

> We said that in the classroom, there could be "no consumers and no voyeurs" and therefore in articulating possibilities for dialogue, each of us would have to develop a clear "ethics of consumption" and a "reflexive gaze". (Bryson & de Castell, page 289-291)

This runs counter to traditional approaches in coaching, which are implemented in the reverse fashion: the coach decides what technical goals will be taught, trains the acquisition of skills and then builds toward the appropriate implementation of these techniques in a practical context. This forms the essential definition of "problem solving as a competency" (Coaching Association of Canada, 1998). Any "leaps" are essentially re-articulated into the existing paradigm and "naturalized" or referred to as common sense. Our approach begins with the context and then demands that each athlete use their skill set to solve the problems presented (e.g., the technical/tactical

context). Practically speaking, this forces engagement of each athlete throughout the class and allows for the possibility of different combinations of solutions (e.g., better tactics, hitting a technically superior shot, using fitness to wear the opponent down, etc.). Athletes then gravitate towards a particular court, which is now non-hierarchical in nature, based on their approach to the context and the resulting theme to be trained. The dynamic character of this environment lends itself to co-operative learning in its truest sense.

Que(e)r(y)ing Our Practices

My practical experiences, along with my current exploration of critical theory, clearly suggest that reducing teacher-student and head professional:"other" professional authority does not imply that other relations of domination and subordination within our club or within Sport remained uninterrupted. For instance, although increased female participation and retention was noted in all levels of the program, sensitivity to ongoing issues and the maintenance of safe environments made intervention necessary. "To deconstruct authority is not to do away with it but to learn to trace its effects, to see how authority is constituted and constituting" (Lather, 1991, p. 144). As well,

> …while one may strive to develop an organization of classroom work that is for example, nonclassist, nonsexist, or nonracist, this by no means will eliminate the effects of capitalism, patriarchy, and colonialism from the classroom. That one is constantly being

> positioned within such relations while striving to stand outside them is often a great source of frustration and despair…(Simon, 1992, p. 67)

Simon (1992) goes on to say that the "emergence of conflict and difference should be expected. Within a pedagogy of possibility, cooperative learning is not to be reduced to a productive harmony" (p.64). However, by not viewing socio-philosophical questions as technical ones and thereby depoliticizing them, my teaching has created and continues to support a belief in other versions of human purpose that go beyond performance and optimal output. The flattening of professional hierarchies not only produces a synergy of leaps but also facilitates the creation of counter-hegemonic spaces where individuals can explore and discover the other (i.e., themselves, their potentialities, their colleagues, their coaches, and their opponents). As I persist with my writing and integrating radical critique into my teaching, I continue to learn about the political risks associated with challenging power relations. Like Harraway (1992), I am interested in the "insistence on irreducible difference and radical multiplicity of local knowledges; essentially the "ability partially to translate…live in meanings and bodies that have a chance for the future" (p. 187). In other words, it is not necessary to give up performance to achieve learning and agency.

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