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Barriers and Facilitators underpinning PE teachers' perspectives of the Teaching Games for Understanding approach using Occupational Socialisation

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Teaching Games for Understanding (TGfU)

PE in schools was originally taught using isolated technique practices, whilst TGfU concentrated on placing the learner in a modified game and developing tactical awareness to create competent skilful games performers (Bunker and Thorpe, 1982). Since its formation, TGfU has failed to progress into mainstream schools with the majority of teachers failing to recognise its existence (Almond, 1986; O'Leary, 2012). Barriers to the implementation of TGfU have included; behavioural management, lack of game understanding, the different abilities of children, the belief the pupils need techniques before the game and teachers' previous teaching of mini games (see for example, Barrett and Turner, 2000; Harvey and Pill, 2016; Thorpe and Bunker, 1983).

Occupational Socialisation Theory (OST)

OST examines the influences within a teachers' life that can help explain how and why teachers teach the way they do. By looking at their childhood (Acculturation), teacher training (Professional Socialisation) and job experiences (Organisational Socialisation) (Lawson, 1983) researchers can determine PE teachers' opinions about the PE curriculum and by extension the TGfU approach.

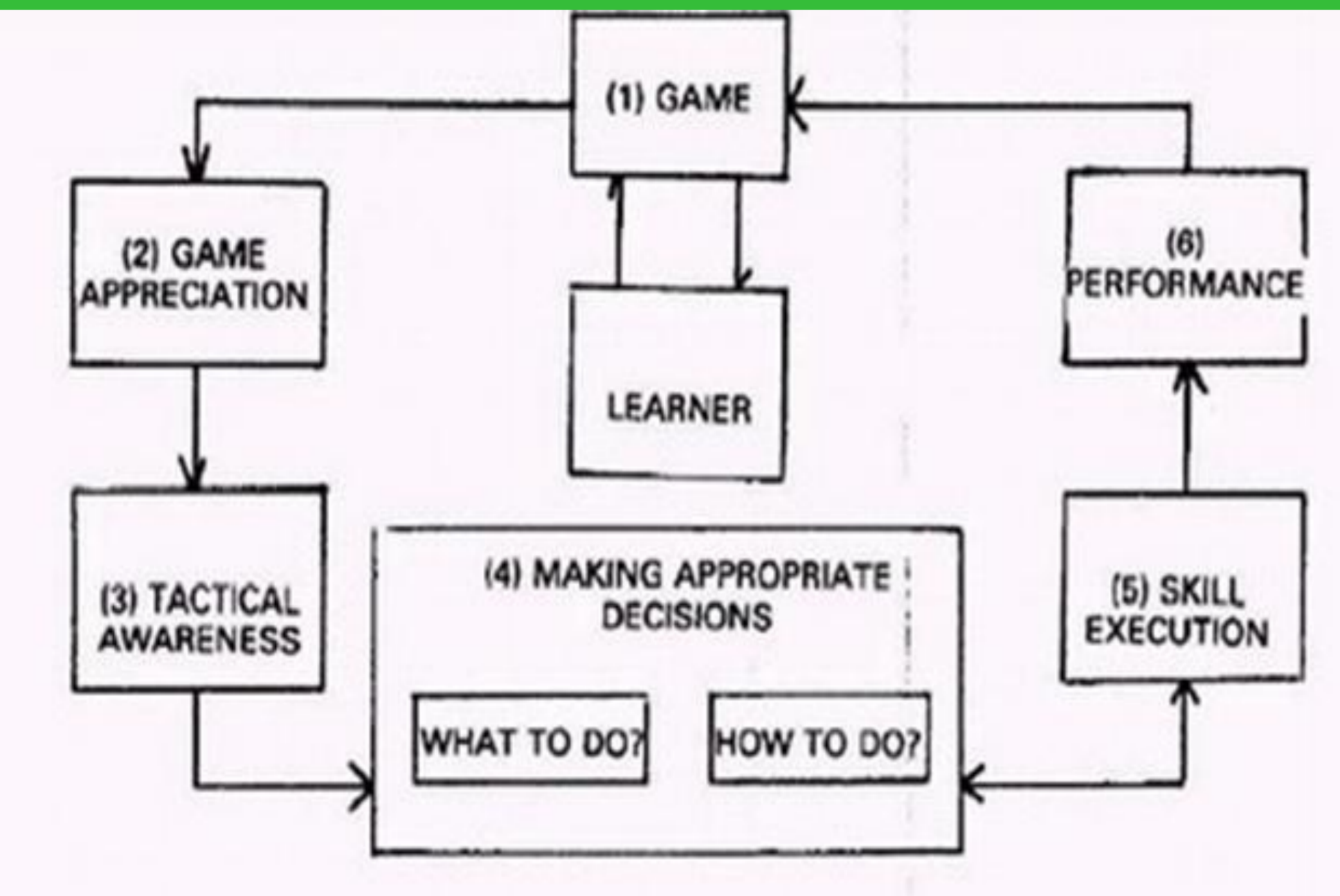


Figure 1: Teaching Games for Understanding model (Bunker and Thorpe, 1982)

Results

- The teachers' job experiences most often cited as influencing their current teaching practice
- The departments' and schools' goals, the wider impact on the department specifically the pupils and their current knowledge of teaching methods were the main reasons given by the teachers as to why they teach the way they do.
- Childhood experiences focused on parental influence in introducing the participants to sport and the influence of their childhood PE teacher inspiring them into the profession.
- University experiences were predominantly negative and the general consensus suggested that the participants' time in Higher Education had little effect on their teaching practice.
- Barriers to implementation included: lack of understanding, lack of knowledge, lack of support, reluctance to change and lack of time to plan TGfU lessons.
- Facilitators to implementation of TGfU included: coaching awards, an external individual who specialises in TGfU and subject specific resources.
- Methods of promoting TGfU: advertising through social media and teacher centred websites and teach the approach to teachers for them to spread to the greater community.

Study Aim

To identify the factors that underpin the utilisation of the TGfU approach in teaching practice using OST (Lawson, 1983). To achieve the aim of this study three objectives are set:

- To examine, through semi-structured interviews based on OST, PE teachers' key influences and beliefs that underpin each of the three phases of the occupational socialisation model.
- To identify the barriers that prevents teachers utilising the TGfU approach and facilitators of its implementation.
- To make recommendations to promote the implementation of the TGfU approach.

Methodology

- A qualitative design was conducted
- A semi-structured interview lasting between 45-60 minutes with each participant was completed
- A paragraph outlining the TGfU model was given to participants to extract further questions.
- Thematic analysis of the data was performed
- Information was gathered under the 3 phases of OST depicting childhood, university and job experiences including perceived barriers and facilitators on implementing TGfU

Sample and Recruitment Strategy

- The sampling frame for the study was secondary school PE teachers in England, including those who have and have not used the TGfU model.
- 15 PE teachers (8 male, 7 female) from 13 schools partook in this study with ages ranging from 25-56.
- Of the schools making up the final sample there were 6 State schools, 5 Academies and 2 Trust schools.
- The participants had between 4-32 years of experience teaching in schools.

Conclusions

- Focusing on teachers on the job experience is the most effective way of improving the chances of implementing TGfU in current teaching practice.
- Teachers had little to no experience of the TGfU approach because of their childhood and university experiences.
- There were several barriers to TGfU like lack of understanding and lack of knowledge that have been cited frequently in previous research- however barriers like lack of support and time to plan lessons have had little to no previous mentions.
- Facilitators in TGfU research has been a topic under-researched and therefore the findings of this study can show what teachers believe is required to make the implementation easier.
- Future Research-targeting job experiences (Organisational Socialisation) of OST as a mean of helping teachers overcome the barriers to implementing TGfU into their current teaching practice.

