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Culturally Relevant Pedagogy in Athletic Contexts and Coach Preparation

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Culturally Relevant Pedagogy in Athletic Contexts and Coach Preparation

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

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by

Erin Michelle Powers

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy in Athletic Contexts and Coach Preparation

by

Erin Michelle Powers

Doctor of Education

University of California, Los Angeles, 2024

Professor Christina A. Christie, Chair

"Coaching is teaching." – John Wooden

Collegiate athletic coaches guide young adults as student athletes, developing scholars, and human beings (Yukhymenko-Lescroart et al., 2015). Research suggests that most college athletic coaches in the United States have not experienced formal learning in coaching (Stewart & Koch, 2020). Fewer than 4% of Division I coaches hold degrees related to their coaching roles (Stewart & Koch, 2020). Instead, most coaches learn through personal experience and mentorship (Blackett et al., 2021; Jones et al., 2003; Leeder & Cushion, 2019). There is no central body of knowledge or skill that guides the collegiate coaching community (Gearity & Denison, 2012). Unlike other countries, there are few criteria set forth by a government body in the United States for athletic coaches (Gearity & Denison, 2012). Individual learning institutions set the requirements for coach positions. This lack of connection between formal coach preparation and the complex role of coach, teacher, and leader can lead to problems for student

athletes. There are documented studies that surface racism (Lee et al., 2018), sexism (Yates, 2022), homophobia (Anderson et al., 2021), religious exclusion (Bernhard, 2014), abusive leadership (Lopez et al., 2019; Yukhymenko-Lescroart et al., 2015), and bullying (Mishna et al., 2019) from college coaches.

This study discusses the culturally relevant pedagogical practices of legendary collegiate coach John Wooden who provides a model of effective athletic coaching for his winning record and his renowned respect in the field. Athletic coach preparation programs can educate aspiring and current coaches to create inclusive environments that foster a sense of belonging. They can also educate to promote self-directedness, decision making, and criticality. Using positive pedagogies, athletic coaches and athletic coach preparation programs can build on the components of Ladson-Billings's (1995) seminal work in culturally relevant pedagogies to (a) promote student achievement, (b) nurture cultural competence, and (c) support cultural critique. Ladson-Billings's theoretical framework applied in athletic contexts can empower student athletes and coaches to address complex issues on and off the field.

The dissertation of Erin Michelle Powers is approved.

Annamarie Francois

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2024

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my parents, Kay and Vernon Powers, who communicated high expectations for me from a young age. The time you spent in my kindergarten class and beyond set the stage for my academic career. Although you did not have opportunities to pursue higher education for yourselves, you selflessly supported me to pursue my intellectual dreams. My passion for learning and serving others was ignited by your encouragement and modeling. This work is a reflection of your strong beliefs in public education and in your children.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Legendary University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) basketball coach John Wooden noted, "Coaching is teaching" (Simon, 2010). Having started his career as a high school English teacher, Wooden drew from two professional contexts, coaching and teaching, to determine that pedagogical knowledge is critical to both fields (Gallimore, 2020). He also strongly believed that curiosity and constant self-examination were essential for great coaches (Gilbert, 2014). Yet athletic coaching is generally unrecognized by the public as a complex orchestration of teaching, learning, and leadership worthy of formal education. Compounded by this lack of understanding is the fact that few formal training programs are provided for collegiate-level athletic coaches in the United States, and college coaches are not required to engage in foundational or ongoing learning (Nash et al., 2017; Stewart & Koch, 2020). Effective coaches are generally recognized for their high percentage of wins or trend of improvements from year to year (David Pifer & Huml, 2020). Other than winning, there are few standard criteria by which coaches can assess their work.

From 2021 to 2022, over 520,000 student athletes competed in Divisions I, II, and III, and more than 25,000 head coaches served at institutions of higher education (National Collegiate Athletic Association [NCAA], 2022). Although this number results in student athletes making up less than 5% of the total student population, athletes undergo a unique college experience. They tend to have graduate rates that are traditionally below the general student population (Rishe, 2003). More importantly, reports of abuse and exclusion in athletics are widespread (Anderson et al., 2021; Bernhard, 2014; Lee et al., 2018; Lopez et al., 2019; Mishna et al., 2019; Yates, 2022). Such contexts put student athletes in a vulnerable category.

Studies have cited additional coach preparation and oversight as a potential remedy to the unhealthy environments that student athletes work, learn, train, and compete in (Gearity & Denison, 2012; Lee et al., 2018; Stewart & Koch, 2020). Some studies go further to suggest types of pedagogical lenses that are impactful for today's coaches and athletes who train and compete in complex and diverse settings (Jones et al., 2012; Luguetti et al., 2019; McDonald, 2014; Quennerstedt et al., 2014). Although not the specific focus of their research, other studies have suggested that elements of culturally relevant pedagogy are necessary to support effective leadership, teaching, and coaching in physical education (Blackshear & Culp 2021; Newcomer & Cowin, 2021; Nesdoly et al., 2020). My study aimed to explore to what degree culturally relevant pedagogy was used by the legendary basketball coach, John Wooden, a coach with a winning record and recognized for his ability to teach (Ladson-Billings, 1995). I also surfaced the degree to which coach preparation programs are using elements of culturally relevant pedagogy.

Background

In the United States, limited certificate programs, academic degrees, or other extensive professional learning opportunities prepare college-level coaches (Gearity & Denison, 2012; Stewart & Koch, 2020). Instead, the most common professional path for a collegiate athletic coach is for someone to be an elite athlete first, and then, through social and cultural capital gained through the sport, secure a position as a coach (Blackett et al., 2021; Stewart & Koch, 2020). In a recent survey by Stewart and Koch (2020), less than 4% of Division I coaches surveyed held degrees related to coaching. They experience little oversight as college coaches, and they have much autonomy in running their athletic programs. There are few requirements to obtain and maintain their position of power in higher education (Gearity & Denison, 2012).

The recent Yates (2022) report, an independent study of professional women's soccer coaches, found a shocking lack of oversight and standards for athletic coaches. These soccer coaches were allowed to abuse female athletes emotionally, sexually, and psychologically without consequences. The report concluded that a standard of abuse was set in youth soccer and continued through to the professional leagues. The report highlighted women's soccer coaches who began as volunteer coaches and then were hired as head coaches who lacked knowledge, skill, and ethical acumen. Reports of their abusive behavior were ignored by the larger professional women's soccer organization.

The Yates (2022) report illustrated heinous conditions for athletes, such as the environments created by women's soccer coach Paul Riley, conditions that spanned leagues, teams, and players. The report noted that "Riley's conduct was generally ignored or accepted. As one team owner noted, 'If everyone knows and no one does anything about it, then how bad can it be?'" (p. 49). Professional soccer player, Mana Shim, was interviewed for the report and described an aggressive, dehumanizing coach who made negative remarks about her weight and her appearance and tried to coerce her into dating him. She could not ignore his advances "in part because 'he just might not start me'" (p. 51). Although a similar investigation does not exist at the collegiate level, the report indicated the low standards and expectations for professional athletic coaches.

Ethical standards are not the only quality lacking. Hiring a coach for their winning record as an athlete happens even though competing as an athlete requires a different, if loosely related, skillset than that of coaching (Leeder & Cushion, 2019). Educational background is critical. Empirical studies have suggested that increased pedagogical knowledge by the coach improves student athlete performance (Chang et al., 2020; Fernandez, 2022; Jones et al., 2012). In

Fernandez's 2022 study of coaches from four universities, survey data revealed that the educational backgrounds of coaches influenced their pedagogical knowledge and student athletes' performance. Jones et al.'s 2012 study sought to incorporate the application of learning theory into the coach preparation experience and found that a cycle of plan-do-observe-reflect had an immediate impact on a coach's learning. Chang et al.'s (2020) study with physical education teachers found that once teachers were given instruction on how to teach a skill, students' athletic performance increased. Fernandez (2022) noted that in their current state, coaching programs focus on the physiological aspects of coaching (conditioning, physical strength, and ability) instead of the pedagogical aspects (how to teach concepts, skills, and strategy).

Jones et al. (2012) noted that a cycle of observation, interpretation, action, and reflection about one's own practice can result in the empowerment of athletic coach participants. Jones et al.'s study set out to explore a practice-theory gap and created a situation for participants to experience learning and then apply that learning as coaches. In this model, student coaches have an opportunity to learn a pedagogical technique, apply it themselves, and then reflect on it creating a deeper sense of learning.

Even with research to suggest that pedagogical knowledge for coaches is important, few athletic coaches have degrees related to their respective professional fields (Stewart & Koch, 2020). In a recent quantitative study of West Coast Division I coaches, only 4% of NCAA Division 1 coaches had a degree related to athletic coaching (Stewart & Koch, 2020). This weak preparation model contrasts with some countries that require a master's degree to be an athletic coach at the collegiate level, no matter what they might specifically study (Fernandez, 2022).

This lack of formal coach education can contribute not only to an uneven skill set but also to the power differential between coaches and student athletes (Gearity & Denison, 2012). Without being exposed to current best practices in how to coach, new coaches risk repeating the same practices that they experienced as athletes (Leeder & Cushion, 2019). If they are familiar with unhealthy environments, they might replicate those environments for student athletes. Documented cases of abusive leadership (Lopez et al., 2019; Yukhymenko-Lescroart et al., 2014), bullying (Mishna et al., 2019), racial microaggressions (Lee et al., 2018), LGBTQ+ exclusion (Anderson et al., 2021), and religious exclusion (Bernhard, 2014) by coaches exist at the college level.

In 2013, the NCAA surveyed 19,920 student athletes to explore a connection between abusive coaching and cheating in sports. Conversely, they found that ethical coaching led to student athlete satisfaction and an inclusive team climate (Yukhymenko-Lescroart et al., 2014). The recent 2022 Yates Report, discussed previously, an independent review to the U.S. Soccer Federation, conducted 200 interviews and analyzed more than 80,000 documents to determine that abuse is systemic in women's soccer and spans all age groups. The athletes pointed out that because verbal and emotional abuse is so common in youth sports, it is difficult for players to identify it as problematic (Gearity & Denison, 2012; Lopez et al., 2019). When players try to speak up about abuse by their coaches, they are frequently told to be grateful for the opportunity to play (Yates, 2022). Athletes often adopt the attitude that they can endure almost any abuse if it contributes to a win (Gearity & Denison, 2012). This widespread acceptance of abuse shows the lack of oversight, the lack of basic pedagogical knowledge, and the lack of ongoing professional learning (Gearity & Denison, 2012; Yates, 2022).

Without knowledge in pedagogy, in teaching and learning, coaches are unlikely to achieve a high level of success in athletics (Fernandez, 2022; Jones, 2007; Jones & Wallace, 2005; Nash et al., 2011). Less informed coaches can see their work as hierarchical, linear, and prescriptive (Jones & Wallace, 2005). Coaches without pedagogical knowledge are more likely to see athletes as a commodity and lack an understanding of the cultural, relational, and humanistic aspects of the work (Penney & McMahon, 2015). Like expert teachers, expert coaches with knowledge of pedagogy and learning theory see their work as dynamic and complex (Jones & Wallace, 2005). They understand that learning is a complex cultural practice and that their relationships with athletes and the relationships between athletes play a role in athletes' ability to learn (Penney & McMahon, 2015) and grow in their performance (Quennerstedt et al., 2014). Noting that a coach can be a positive holistic model for student athlete interactions, coconstruct empowering learning for them, and support students in their criticality, Luguetti et al. (2019) used the thinking of Freire (1987) and Ladson-Billings (1995) in their construction of a sports pedagogical model. In each study, the use of thoughtful pedagogical practices elevates the student athlete experience as well as their performance.

Furthermore, the athletic coach setting provides a context in which competing interests (i.e., winning, academics, financial gain, fame) can interrupt the cultivation of a caring community in which student athletes thrive (Fitzpatrick, 2019; Gearity & Denison, 2012). Formal learning can support the development of a coach who is capable of leading in today's complex social setting (Jones et al., 2012; Nash et al., 2017; Newman et al., 2021). Some researchers have argued for the importance of critical pedagogy (Fitzpatrick, 2019), an ethic of care (Knust & Fisher, 2015; Owens & Ennis, 2005), and a pedagogy of love (Luguetti et al., 2019), but researchers still do not know the extent of their effectiveness, nor how their lessons

might be taught in a coach preparation program (Newman et al., 2021). Culturally relevant pedagogy is cited by researchers as a basis from which essential framing for athletic education can contribute to a healthy environment for developing athletes that increases agency and a sense of belonging (Blackshear & Culp 2021; Nesdoly et al., 2020).

Existing Research

Existing research has suggested that coaching is a problematic, individual, and complex act that is far from the prescriptive approach traditionally offered by collegiate athletic coach programs (Cushion et al., 2006; Jones, 2007; Jones & Wallace, 2005). The responsibility of attending to each athlete's unique emotional, physical, intellectual, cultural, and social needs cannot be met with rote drills. Researchers have suggested that an athlete-centered approach is necessary to meet the needs of student athletes, one that equates coaching to educating (Light & Harvey, 2017; Quennerstedt et al., 2014). Suggested pedagogical approaches include inquiry-based active learning filled with opportunities for dialogue, athlete-generated solutions, (Light & Harvey, 2017), and an environment in which athlete mistakes are seen as a welcome source of growth (Mishna et al., 2019). Positive approaches to student athlete learning suggest ways to empower them through coconstructing learning and supporting them in their criticality (Luguetti et al., 2019). Additional research has suggested that the changes needed in the coach field are urgent and necessary to push back against the currently accepted environments of abuse in athletics (Fitzpatrick, 2019; Stewart & Koch, 2020). Chang et al. (2020), Quennerstedt et al. (2014), and Stewart and Koch (2020) all suggested that additional research is necessary to further explore the necessary changes in coach preparation and ongoing learning.

Additionally, aspiring and current coaches need opportunities to reflect on their social positionality (Lee et al., 2018), become better informed about implicit bias (McDonald, 2014),

and become more culturally aware of the ways their lens impacts how they perceive student athletes and their work together (Economou et al., 2022; Luguetti et al., 2019). Without this reflective practice, coaches risk creating an environment that is not inclusive and continues the cycles of abuse that currently exist in sports environments. A heteronormative, anything-to-win atmosphere sets the conditions by which immoral, abusive, and unethical behavior is accepted (Gearity & Denison, 2012; Stoll, 2011). Educational leaders have an obligation to intervene, starting with coach education (Lopez et al., 2019).

In a 2011 empirical study of coach preparation, Jones et al. (2012) suggested that what is currently offered for preparation for coaching is not valued by coaches. Through surveys and interviews, they identified a disconnect between application and theory because most coaching programs rely on didactic types of teaching. More authentic models for student coaching are needed (Jones et al., 2012). Changes in the field should be practitioner-led (Jones, 2007). There is a need for additional research about how to provide student-centered learning for athletic coaches, learning that they will seek out, value, and apply to their practice.

These changes might be informed by two recent studies. In 2021, Blackshear and Culp published research that analyzed the development of K12 standards in physical education. Although not directly focused on collegiate athletics, the authors made a case for the need for culturally relevant pedagogy in sports settings. Nesdoly et al. (2020) explored aspects of Indigenous people's perspectives of physical literacy and finds many aspects of culturally relevant pedagogy are valued in sports educators within the Indigenous community.

Some student athletes, students of coaching programs, and coaches note when they observe, experience, and apply elements of culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) in athletic settings. Similarly, athletic directors highlight the actions of successful athletic coaches at the

college level. They do so without the lens of CRP but rather use their experience and observations to tell them what works for individuals and teams of learners. Focusing on legendary UCLA basketball coach John Wooden can help us understand to what degree CRP was used in his work as an athletic coach. Researchers can also learn about the extent of embedded CRP practices in current coach preparation programs. Together, this information can shape the direction of inclusive athletic spaces in which athletes are empowered to set—and act on—their goals in safe supportive spaces.

Study Overview

To amplify and replicate effective coaching practices in coach preparation programs, this study examined the essential characteristics of CRP in athletic contexts and coach preparation programs. I analyzed data from John Wooden, a legendary athletic coach, for elements of culturally relevant practices in his work. I also examined existing curricula and instructional practices from current programs in two public universities. These sites were selected based on their published program materials and the degree to which the incorporation of social issues is either woven throughout the curriculum or offered in a specific course (race, gender, sexuality, [dis] ability, diversity, social justice, and/or inclusion). Because of their inclusion of such topics, these sites were more likely to be aware of the components of CRP and apply them in their work, explicitly and/or implicitly. This coursework influenced their selection for the study.

Research Questions

This study examined the degree to which John Wooden used elements of culturally relevant pedagogy in his practice. The framework that I developed informed the analysis of what current athletic coach programs offer through the lens of culturally relevant pedagogy. Specifically, I sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the intersections between John Wooden's approach to coaching and culturally relevant pedagogy?
2. To what degree, if any, is there evidence of culturally relevant pedagogy in the two athletic coach preparation programs? How do they compare and contrast?

Study Design

This qualitative multisite case study explored the intersections of John Wooden's approach to coaching and CRP. From this analysis, I developed a framework of CRP in athletic coaching. This framework informed my analysis of coach preparation programs. Because my goal was to learn about the relationship between a legendary collegiate coach, to understand how his work overlapped with CRP, and then to explore coach preparation programs from both individual and institutional perspectives, a multisite qualitative case study was appropriate. It enabled me to examine all aspects of these coaching programs to ascertain patterns and similarities among Wooden's coaching, CRP, and available coaching programs (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Although surveys of athletic coach education program faculty would yield some information about effective coach preparation practices, surveys would not allow me to study the relationship between coaching students, their professors, and the specific contexts in which they learn.

Few leaders in collegiate athletics have been heralded more than John Wooden. As the head basketball coach at UCLA, he won a historic 10 NCAA championships in 12 years, including 88 straight games. He was named Coach of the Century by ESPN and became a much sought-after public speaker and author (Wooden & Jamison, 1997). Although he retired from coaching basketball in 1975 and passed away in 2010, he is still the subject of recent print publications like Howard-Cooper's 2024 *Kingdom on Fire: Kareem, Wooden, Walton*. To study

this leader, I reviewed recommended archival material, lectures by Coach Wooden, scholarly articles, autobiographies, and biographies. During this process, I explored where, how, and to what degree Wooden's practices intersected with CRP. Additionally, I found practices and attitudes of Wooden's work that did not intersect with CRP. I used an inductive approach and then a deductive approach for this phase of the research.

The selection of coaching programs to be analyzed was influenced by the materials published on their websites. If they included a course dedicated to race, gender, sexuality, inclusion, (dis) ability, diversity, and/or social justice, I inferred that their program was more likely to subscribe to CRP. The selection included programs from large public universities with a commitment to research activities. By sampling curriculum from various systems—syllabi, related course descriptions, and other materials shared by the institutions—I was able to learn to what extent CRP is a feature in their written materials. I also interviewed four to five faculty members, lecturers, and/or administrators from each program. These interviews supported my inquiry into the extent to which CRP might be valued and used by the leaders and instructors of the program.

Study Significance

This research contributes to the ongoing research and conversation about how to professionalize athletic coaching and create pedagogically sound preparation programs—ones that humanize student athletes, challenge athletes intellectually, and create a sense of belonging. There are urgent calls to change the field of coach education to one that is worthy of study, scholarship, and learning (Fitzpatrick, 2019; Jones, 2007; Quennerstedt et al., 2014). The study offers information from which education organizations can gather essential knowledge to use when planning for their athletic coach education programs. It will inform collegiate athletic

departments and their expectations for the kinds of learning their coaches will engage in before and after they are hired. It also has the potential to influence coach education and requirements for K12 settings, community youth sports, and private club sports for youth.

Most importantly, this information can help alleviate the widespread issues of abuse of power in athletics and better meet the needs of diverse individual student athletes at the college level. Providing a student-athlete-centered education experience with a coach who is well-informed and well-educated in all areas designated by expert coaches and leaders has a greater chance of having a positive impact on the young people they are entrusted to work with. Ladson-Billings's (1995) seminal work about the theory of CRP aimed to humanize the experience of students who have been historically dehumanized. This study sought to do the same for student athletes.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Summary of the Problem

To qualify as a collegiate athletic coach in the United States, there are minimal requirements. The culture of athletics has historically valued brute strength, hard work, and relationships over intellectualism even while athletics developed in higher education. Although some academic programs prepare physical education teachers, few college-level programs prepare individuals to become athletic coaches. Instead of obtaining a bachelor's degree or a terminal degree with the intent to become an athletic coach, most collegiate coaches arrive at their work by being college athletes themselves and gaining experience through mentorship. Although this system has produced generations of college coaches, it has reproduced environments in which athletes are abused, devalued, and dehumanized. Athletes of color, members of the LGBTQ+ community, and women are especially vulnerable. A comprehensive athletic coach preparation program can improve the experiences of college athletes.

There are almost half a million student athletes who compete in the National Collegiate Athletic Associations' Divisions I, II, and III. In 2021, more than 25,000 head coaches served at institutions of higher education (NCAA, 2022). Although this number results in student athletes totaling a small percentage of the total student population, athletes undergo a unique college experience. Historically, student athletes' graduate rates are lower than those of traditional students (Rishe, 2003). Reports of abuse and exclusion in athletics are widespread and range from physical, emotional, sexual, and economic abuse as well as bullying, racism, sexism, and homophobia (Anderson et al., 2021; Bernhard, 2014; Lee et al., 2018; Lopez et al., 2019; Mishna et al., 2019; Yates, 2022). Such contexts increase student athletes' vulnerability.

According to a survey by Stewart and Koch (2020), less than 4% of Division I coaches hold degrees related to coaching. They have much autonomy in the way they run their athletic programs. There are few requirements to obtain and maintain their position of power in higher education (Gearity & Denison, 2012). Yet these members of higher education institutions are given the authority to create the environments in which athletes train, live, and compete. And if the student athletes experience harm, it can have lifelong repercussions. The higher education community has a moral obligation to protect all students, including those in an athletic context.

Sports coaching remains an undertheorized field that lacks recognition as a complex body of work that involves teaching, learning, and leadership (Fernandez, 2022). Although interest in research in the field has grown, it remains rare to procure a degree in this area. In 2014, fewer than 10 U.S. institutions offered an undergraduate or a graduate degree in athletic coaching. This lack of availability of formal study contributes to the perception of athletic coaching as a simplistic, orderly, and predictable activity that nearly anyone is capable of.

It is helpful to examine coaching preparation through a lens that is more commonly applied to K12 educational settings. culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) has been shown to be impactful for students from historically marginalized groups and has maintained a robust presence in K12 education for nearly 30 years. In 1995, Gloria Ladson-Billings's (1995) seminal article described what she found to be effective teaching practices for the most vulnerable students, Black students in the United States. She described three elements that teachers attended to in their students: (a) academic achievement, (b) cultural competence, and (c) cultural critique. Additionally, she identified three broader propositions that characterized educators who practiced CRP in these ways: (d) conceptions of self and others, (e) social relations, and (f) conceptions of knowledge. Given that coaching is teaching (Wooden &

Jamison, 1997; Simon, 2010), this study hypothesized that CRP can improve coaching by preventing the widespread exclusionary practices that alienate marginalized groups. This study sought to elevate and expand the relationship between CRP and successful coaching by exploring the practices and principles of successful coaching in a legendary coach and in well-regarded coach preparation programs.

In this literature review, I first outline the extent of abuse that athletes endure to orient the reader to the personal challenges athletes face. Next, I detail the history of abuse in college athletics. This history leads to a discussion of studies on potential counters to abuse in coach preparation programs. Finally, I discuss the state of existing preparation programs, including the potential of applying CRP in athletic contexts.

Abusive Environments for Athletes

Abuse in athletic contexts takes many forms that affect student athletes and professional athletes. Physical and emotional abuse is viewed as part of the coaching process and athletes endure it because they will do anything to win. They have been conditioned to expect abuse. In a quantitative survey and statistical analysis by Lopez et al. (2019), 216 student-athletes from Division I institutions were surveyed to gain a better understanding of how abusive coaching behaviors impact their well-being. The study found that although some students were more effective at coping with abusive leadership, women were less equipped to manage the negative effects of this abuse. In the sports context, abuse was assumed and widespread. Significantly, the study did not find that abusive leadership resulted in better performance.

The perceived impact of emotional abuse on elite athletes was also explored in a 2011 study by Stirling and Kerr (2012). Their grounded theory qualitative study used open-ended interviews to explore the experiences of 14 retired athletes between the ages of 17 and 28.

Although not specific to collegiate athletes, all 14 elite athletes in the study experienced a pattern of emotional abuse in the coach–athlete relationship before they were 16 years old. Almost all experienced emotional upset as a result of their coach's behavior (Stirling & Kerr, 2012). Half reported decreased motivation, low self-esteem, reduced enjoyment, and performance decrements. Several described difficulties with skill acquisition, experiencing anxiety, and anger. Three reported that the abuse was an important part of becoming successful as athletes, resulting in mixed findings from this small sampling. The authors pointed out that a limitation in this work was their sampling of successful athletes instead of reaching those who were not able to persist given the abuse.

Another study of emotional and physical abuse in 2019 focused specifically on student athletes in college contexts in Canada. Mishna et al. (2019) used an exploratory, 100-item survey that 122 student athletes completed to find out more about their experiences, specifically with bullying. Expecting to find more information about cyberbullying (social media interactions, text messaging) than traditional bullying (yelling, hitting, social exclusion), they were surprised to find that more than half of those surveyed experienced traditional bullying. The bullying was done by teammates, and perceived poor performance was the most common source of the bullying. In other words, student athletes would taunt, hit, push, trip, and harass teammates about a mistake they made in the last practice or game, telling them they were not good enough. These behaviors occurred primarily in the training facility in the presence of others, including coaches (Mishna et al., 2019). Although not perpetrated by coaches themselves, the scenarios described in this study speak to the culture of sports as an unsafe environment for many student athletes—environments that are overseen by athletic coaches.

Race and racism were also found to be sources of abuse in collegiate athletics, although in a more subtle form than traditional bullying. The 2018 Foucauldian poststructuralist qualitative study by Lee et al. held focus groups and subsequent semistructured interviews of eight collegiate student athletes of color. Initially, students described their athletic environments as raceless because every athlete's personal identity was put on hold for the sport. The goal of winning supersedes everything else, so color does not matter. However, all of these athletes could describe microaggressions from other student athletes and coaches. All of the Black students in the study had heard comments like "Of course you're fast. You're Black!" (Lee et al., 2018, p. 1028), and the Asian American and Latinx students experienced a version of the question, "Where are you *really* from?" (p. 1029). An Asian American man was referred to by his coach as "Hey Asian!" (p. 1029) instead of by name; he would have preferred to have been called by his name like his teammates. In the moment, student athletes dismissed these events until prompted through the conversations, subconsciously carrying the message that they were inferior. The examples of microaggressions by other athletes and coaches paint a picture of psychological abuse deeply embedded in the athletic psyche and add to a long history of marginalization of people of color in the United States.

In another qualitative study that focused on race, specifically Black female student athletes in a predominantly White collegiate school setting, Black basketball players were highly aware of their racial identities. Through interviews of student athletes, coaches, and select administrators, Bernhard found in 2014 that Black students were concerned about the lack of diversity on their school campus. They felt isolated because of their race and one dominant religion practiced by teammates and coaches. In their team setting, they were frequently called upon to be the experts on issues of race, which they felt was an undue burden. Additionally, their

personal needs outside of being athletes were not met. To help remedy these issues, they wanted more coaches and staff of color. They wanted the coaches to take on the responsibility of educating the team and staff regarding issues of race (Bernhard, 2014). They suffered emotionally and socially and lacked a sense of belonging on the team, because of their race and religion.

For female student athletes who are gay, emotional abuse occurs in the sports context that demands silence regarding their sexual orientation. In a qualitative study of nine female athletes, the researchers, Anderson et al. (2021), used semistructured interviews and found that athletes who came out while on a collegiate athletic team faced discrimination and harassment. Some of the consequences described included verbal and physical discrimination, having their personal lives scrutinized by coaches and administrators, and being expected to perform better athletically than heterosexual teammates. This study from 2021 marked the lack of inclusiveness on college athletic teams for members of the LGBTQ+ community and identified another group that is prone to abuse in sports contexts.

Pointing to the importance of coaches on environments of abuse, a 2019 quantitative study of nearly 20,000 athletes from collegiate NCAA Divisions I, II, and III schools, yielded results from 21 sports (Yukhymenko-Lescroart et al., 2015). The researchers examined the impact of college coaches' ethical and abusive behaviors on their athletes' college choice satisfaction, perceptions of how inclusive their environment was, and athletes' willingness to cheat. The results of the surveys indicated that abusive coaching leads to cheating in sports, but ethical coaching leads to student satisfaction and an inclusive team climate. It is important to note the premise of the study: Coach abuse has an extensive presence in collegiate athletics.

Although its focus was on professional athletes, not student athletes, the 2022 Yates Report, named for its author, former U.S. Attorney General, Sally Q. Yates, unveiled the trajectory of abuse that extends from youth sports to the professional leagues. This 319-page independent review, commissioned by the National Women's Soccer League, conducted more than 200 interviews of players, including graduates of the NCAA Division I soccer programs, coaches, owners, office staff, and other personnel. The Yates investigators also analyzed over 89,000 documents and other materials. The athletes provided "report after report of relentless, degrading tirades; manipulation that was about power not improving performance and retaliation against those who attempted to come forward. Even more disturbing were the stories of sexual misconduct" (Yates, 2022, p. 2). Rory Dames, one of the longest serving coaches in professional women's and youth soccer, was found to have regularly called players as young as 10 years old "cunt," "fat ass," "pussy," and "retarded" (p. 9). Former youth players alleged physical and sexual misconduct and grooming. Dames was accused of spending alone time with youth players outside of soccer; touching a youth player inappropriately on her upper thigh; making degrading and inappropriate sexual comments to youth players about foreplay, "blowjobs," and male climax. They found that the pattern of abuse was systemic and that every level of leadership failed to respond appropriately. Abusive coaches moved from team to team and "no one … demanded better of coaches" (p. 3). They also found that toleration of verbal abuse of players and blurred relationships with coaches was rooted in youth soccer. Parents seemed to turn a blind eye to the abuse because they trusted that the coach would make their children star players. Young athletes, in turn, come to expect this abuse from their coaches (Yates, 2022). Although not focused on college athletics in particular, this report pointed to an arc of systemic abuse that begins in youth sports and continues through professional settings.

Coaches wield power over student athletes. Collegiate coaches make decisions about which athletes are invited to be on the team, who gets scholarships, and how often they play. They hold power over athletes' time, setting training schedules, determining team dinners, requiring team study halls, and initiating team activities. They have license to scrutinize athletes' physical abilities, their bodies, and skills. They have influence over students' housing situations, especially when traveling with the team for competitions/camps/exhibitions. Head coaches set the tone of the team, creating the environment they deem necessary to win. They have access to student athletes in a way that only family members might normally have (Lee et al., 2018). In every study that focused on the student-athlete experience, the authors suggested more oversight and more education/training for athletic coaches.

A History of Abuse in Collegiate Athletics

The history of collegiate coaching can help contextualize today's ongoing issues in college athletics. Initially, sporting activities developed organically among students (Gearity & Denison, 2012). Students enjoyed the liberating experience of organizing—and coaching—their peers. They developed the earliest forms of intercollegiate athletics. In 1852, the first commercialized event was a crew match between Harvard and Yale. It was sponsored by a railroad company and offered the first business model for athletics. Early administrators at Harvard and Yale were drawn to the revenue-generating aspects of organized sports as well as the ability to control and discipline students in the games that had originally evolved organically between classes (Gearity & Denison, 2012).

In 1905, Harvard hired its first football coach. Impressed with the coach's ability to industrialize the game and follow "scientific" methods—he isolated physical skills and strength training, requiring each player to specialize in their role—they awarded him twice what a

professor made. Other universities and colleges quickly recognized the role that sports games represented for alumni, students, and the community. Sporting teams at universities and colleges have grown in popularity ever since as have the opportunities and issues for student athletes (Gearity & Denison, 2012).

Ethicist Sharon Kay Stoll (2011) argued that after more than 100 years of trying to reform college athletics, not much has changed in the coaching profession. Offending, abusive coaches are hired and fired and hired again at different institutions. The pedagogical skills that coaches do have are not valued by the higher education community. Sports coaching remains an undertheorized field that lacks recognition as a complex body of work that involves teaching, learning, and leadership. Although interest in research in the field has grown, it remains rare to procure a degree in this area. In 2014, fewer than 10 U.S. institutions offered an undergraduate or a graduate degree in athletic coaching. This lack of availability of formal study contributes to the historic perception of athletic coaching as a simplistic, orderly, and predictable activity that nearly anyone is capable of.

Counters to Abuse Lie in Coach Preparation Programs

In nearly every study that highlighted abuse in athletics and in the historical and ethical perspectives shared, authors suggested that the remedy to this abuse lies in coach preparation (Gearity & Denison, 2012; Lee et al., 2018; Lopez et al., 2019; Mishna et al., 2019; Stirling & Kerr, 2012; Stoll, 2011; Yates, 2022). The recommendations for more robust learning opportunities were also found in the 2022 *National Coach Survey: Final Report* by Anderson-Butcher and Bates for Project Play. In their study, more than 10,000 coaches were surveyed regarding their educational background, years of experience, motivations to coach, and coaching philosophy, among other pieces of information. Their findings included that coaches who

participated in training were significantly more confident in their coaching behaviors, and they recommended that more learning opportunities should exist for aspiring and continuing coaches.

Although researchers recommend more education and training for all coaches to help combat the negative outcomes for students, changing this expectation will not be easy. A 2020 study concluded that sports are highly valued in the United States, and with the population's appetite for athletics growing every year, the need for well-educated coaches has never been greater (Stewart & Koch, 2020). In 2014, there were 250,600 coaches at the high school, collegiate, and professional levels. Even so, formal coach education has not been well received by the coach community. In the study by Stewart and Koch, 109 Division 1 coaches from a western conference surveyed reported that although almost every coach in the study had a bachelor's degree, only four had a major or a minor in coaching. The existing courses in coaching did not include pedagogy, and there was a general lack of education on how to teach. This issue was ignored in favor of sports science. A related study by Fernandez in 2022 found that most coaches do the minimum when it comes to their education. Furthermore, continuing coaching education courses did not fit the needs of the coaches as reported by the practitioners. The authors cited this as an issue when more skilled coaches are needed now more than ever.

Still, more studies showed that increased pedagogical knowledge and skills in coaches result in a positive outcome for student athletes. Fernandez's 2022 survey of coaches and student athletes found a strong connection between the educational background of coaches and their skill levels. Student athletes assessed their coaches in physical training and planning, technical skills, goal setting, mental preparation, competition strategies, personal rapport, and negative personal rapport. He found that the more seminars the coaches participated in, the higher the skill level of their athletes. Fernandez connected this finding to the quality of the instruction from coaches and

not to the quantity of sports involvement. Although this spoke to the need for ongoing learning, the researcher stressed the need for more instruction in sports pedagogy, practice, and instruction instead of the more common curricular feature of sports science, which focuses on conditioning and physical fitness. He recommended that more coaches should be given an opportunity to pursue master's and doctoral degrees.

What Existing Coach Programs Lack

To saturate the collegiate coaching field with high-quality athletic coaches, coach preparation programs need to look at their methods to ensure learning experiences match the needs of coaches. In a 2012 qualitative study by Jones et al. that addressed issues in coach education, the researchers found that most coaching programs continued to lean heavily on didactics. As a result, aspiring coaches are missing an element of experience that could be gained by applying their learning in a social context and then reflecting on it. Jones et al. framed their 2012 study around a 3-week coaching intensive for two teachers, two professional coaches, and four full-time students that supplied theory to the participants as well as opportunities to apply the theory as coaches and then reflect on their experience. Through observation and interviews, they found that the participants were unanimous in their agreement that the experiential module provided better insight into their coaching. With the weight of responsibility to use what they learned with student athletes, there was a purpose for the learning and deeper learning was achieved. Overall, it was a more effective learning experience than classroom instruction alone.

In the same 2012 Jones et al. study, the concept of student coaches as identified. In many K12 teacher education programs, a gradual release of responsibility is used for novice teachers so they might apply the theoretical principles they are learning as well as learn from experienced teachers. They spend time in a university classroom and in a K12 classroom. One learning

environment informs the other. If coaching is teaching, and it is a field that is desperate for more education, experiential learning, like the learning described in the Jones et al. study, can provide a powerful combination of theory and practice for coach education.

Other studies have noted the need to situate coach preparation in a way that empowers athletes, further combating potential abuse. In 2007, Jones explored current-day coach preparation and attitudes toward coaching through a dialogue between a coaching science representative, the head of a university coach preparation program, and a critic, an educational relationship representative. In the transcript, the critic noted that coaching is seen as a simple reductive process that can be easily followed. Instead, he argued, with supporting literature, that coaching is multifaceted, interactive, fluid, problematic, and fundamentally intertwined with teaching and learning. The critic made a case for the center of coaching to be about empowering athletes with shared leadership. These points were taken in by the university leader, and they agreed to revisit their curriculum.

To add to the conversation on sports pedagogy, Light and Harvey (2017) focused on positive pedagogy as an extension of game sense pedagogy to see what lessons might be applied to the general sports context. What surfaced was a need for athlete-centered coaching that is inquiry based. They argued that athletes need authentic learning experiences that are meaningful. They invited dialogue and reflection to be the tools to inspire deep understanding in the sports context. They recommended a shift from a coach transmitting knowledge to an environment of active learning in which mistakes are essential tools for improvement. They urged coaches to stop telling athletes what to do and instead offer situations where athletes can figure out problems together. Principles of John Dewey were also highlighted in this research as essential for learning in athletic contexts: (a) engagement with the environment; (b) questions, dialogue,

and thinking; (c) testing out solutions; and (d) valuing mistakes as opportunities to learn (Light & Harvey, 2017). These principles of Game Sense pedagogy offer a promising vision for safe and empowering contexts for student athletes.

To further theorize the concept of sports pedagogy, Fitzpatrick (2019) explored critical scholarship in physical education related to sports contexts. She noted that like athletics, physical education is an exclusionary and marginalizing space for many students. She believed that "P.E.'s close association with sporting cultures might, at least in part, explain widely-hold perceptions that it remains sexist, racist, homophobic, and able-ist" (p. 1129). Through a case study in which she followed a physical education teacher for a year, she identified these key elements of his teaching: "building the environment; deconstructing power; playfulness, studying critical topics, and embodied criticality" (p. 1135). This last element was used to describe the teacher's willingness to call out social norms and resist them, modeling to students their right to question the way things are, especially as they relate to race and gender. Although studied in a physical education context, the application to college athletics is direct and could support the kinds of healthy environments sought by student athletes.

Adding to the research about providing effective learning experience for coaches, Norman (2018) examined participants' experiences of a one-time workshop titled "Equity in your Coaching." She designed a qualitative study that used semistructured interviews and invited participants to share their views on their learning. Norman concluded that during the 3-hr workshop, participants gained awareness of issues of equity, but most coaches dismissed the information provided as irrelevant to their context and practice. Norman's study suggested that ongoing learning opportunities are needed to change coach mindsets and practices regarding issues of equity.

Knowing that pedagogical study is rich and complex, contextualizing it within sports can offer more methods that meet the needs of athlete learners. In the seminal research at UCLA by Ron Gallimore (2020), his observations and recordings of John Wooden's practices for one season, his interpretation of his own research evolved over time. Initially wanting to remain objective in his work, Gallimore viewed the transcripts from practice as the singular source of information. He marveled at Wooden's ability to provide terse, spur-of-the-moment feedback to student athletes. He also pointed out how seamless the activity during practice was, never wasting a minute with student athletes. It was not until years later when he reconnected with Wooden that he changed his initial perception. Wooden's remarks were not spontaneous. Instead, Wooden had a specific learning target for each student athlete, and he focused on providing feedback regarding that goal. Each moment of practice was carefully orchestrated to provide the kind of personalized learning experience each student needed. This attention to detail in planning, as well as differentiating instruction for each athlete, is another promising element of the type of positive pedagogy that student athletes continue to need (Gallimore, 2020; Gallimore & Tharp, 2004).

Coach Education and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Although research for promising pedagogy in coach education exists, few efforts frame coach education in contemporary society. The current climate in education, informed by such movements and events as Black Lives Matter, Me Too, and the COVID-19 pandemic, has informed what education leaders recognize as mental health needs in youth. With this concern in mind, an international team of researchers and coach developers led by Newman came together in 2021 to analyze current literature, especially in the area of Positive Youth Development (Newman et al. 2021). They deduced the need for coach education to be designed with an asset-

based approach that considers the unique knowledge and skills of contemporary youth. They posed that contributing to psychosocial development means developing social justice life skills in highly inclusive environments. They found that 65% of collegiate student athletes said racism is an ongoing issue, and Black students cite it as part of everyday life. The researchers said that traditional skills from sports education, like teamwork, have new meaning in our current society. They stressed that critical reflection, allyship, advocacy, and activism should be a part of coach development. Empowering youth to engage in complex social systems is paramount to the traditional life skills cited as critical for developing athletes like teamwork, communication, and character (Newman et al., 2021). Critical reflection and activism create one of the pillars of CRP and have the potential to make a difference for student athletes. Cultural competence and cultural critique are elements of CRP that have the potential to make a difference for student athletes.

Another example of empowering students through the use of CRP in athletic contexts was conducted in Brazil. In Luguetti et al.'s 2019 study, 10 preservice teachers were observed for 18 months as they worked with a group of 90 historically underserved Brazilian students in a sports context. The teachers worked with students in an after-school soccer program. Using a diverse set of methods for data collection (observations from practices and collaborative meetings, reflective diaries, artifacts, focus groups, and interviews) the researchers found that by exploring an activist sports model, they settled on several important takeaways. They concluded the importance of pedagogic dialogue between teachers and students and how these authentic exchanges can bring new insights to each other, the importance of giving youth a space to imagine the possibilities, the moving away of the teacher as expert to a shared leadership model, and the importance of building a sense of togetherness that informs their hopes and dreams. The researchers proposed that when the work is done in a context of love, this pedagogy of naming,

critiquing, and challenging forms of oppression can transform individuals and teams. They suggested challenging oppression in the context of Ladson-Billings's work in CRP (Luguetti et al., 2019), connecting CRP to a sports context.

Furthermore, researcher Culp (2014) recommended that coach education be proactive to yield social transformation. In his qualitative study of 43 aspiring coaches, he analyzed student journals regarding the development of student mindsets regarding social justice, an appreciation of underrepresented groups, and criticality of athletic processes. He provided guidance for coach education programs to allow students to reflect on their motivations, biases, and past experiences in the context of choices they make related to coaching. He also presented the idea of promoting student critique of their learning during courses, coaching experiences, and of society in general. In this way, Culp's recommendations connect to CRP.

Although widespread formal coach education continually develops, the field of education offers relevant information regarding promising approaches for aspiring athletic coaches. To help prepare new coaches to combat the current climate of exclusion, abuse, and neglect in athletic environments, one can consider the research about an ethic of care in teaching. Owens and Ennis (2005) proposed this approach in regard to preparing physical education teachers, in particular, a sister field of sports coaching. Noddings (1986) theorized this approach and argued for an ethic of care to be at the heart of the education system, and several empirical studies further emphasized its importance.

In 1996, Tarlos conducted 84 interviews of families, school personnel, and support agencies to further explore the role of care in education settings. Many of the individuals were recommended as being caring people. The characteristics of a caring person were those willing to provide time, being there, talking, having sensitivity, serving others, caring as feeling, caring

as doing, and demonstrating reciprocity. Caring teachers were more likely to be aware of their students' needs and life demands, and they modeled caring approaches for students. In a sports context, a caring approach could help strengthen coach–student athlete relationships and combat the ill effects of competitive collegiate athletics.

Additional research, a year earlier, on an ethic of care using a narrative inquiry design was completed by Webb and Blond (1995). They spent 51 days observing a physical education teacher, collecting field notes, analyzing teacher journal entries, and documenting data pertaining to teaching strategies and surveys of student and parent needs. They found that the teacher's ethic of care was grounded in their relationship with students. It required her to be responsive to student needs and allowed a continual building of knowledge that was coconstructed with students. An athletic coach who coconstructs knowledge with student athletes would impact their orientation to knowledge and the athletes themselves.

Although CRP is not stated explicitly in most studies, what coach researchers have described as the needs in coach education fit the description. Ladson-Billings (1995) described what she observed in her qualitative research as Black students' need for teachers who (a) help them to achieve academically, (b) provide a way for their students to "maintain their cultural integrity while succeeding academically" p. 476), and (c) help students "recognize, understand, and critique current social inequities" (p. 476). Additionally, Ladson-Billings illustrated the core beliefs of teachers who demonstrate culturally relevant teaching with three broad propositions, which include teachers' (a) conceptions of themselves and others, including viewing students as capable; (b) positive social relations they maintain with students; and (c) conceptions of knowledge, and knowing that knowledge is not fixed and that the responsibility to impart knowledge sits with the teacher. When applied to a sports context, the framework can apply to

student athletes. With widespread application, it has the potential to remedy the abusive and demeaning contexts that athletes endure, replacing it with one of respect, agency, and belonging. For this reason, CRP is the lens I used for this research study.

Conclusion

Research in sports coaching is in dynamic development. New research is uncovering the negative effects that coaches can have on athletes (Anderson et al., 2021; Bernhard, 2014; Lee et al., 2018; Lopez et al., 2019; Mishna et al., 2019; Yates, 2022). Further, it offers promising pedagogies that could revolutionize how coaches approach their work (Jones, 2007; Light & Harvey, 2017; Nols et al., 2018; Quennerstedt et al., 2014). Although few researchers reference CRP, they lack specifics about existing coach preparation programs and what is essential training. This research can better shape existing training programs to improve student athletes' experiences.

CHAPTER 3: THE DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Research has shown that abuse in athletics—physical, psychological, sexual, emotional—is rampant. This is in addition to the racism, sexism, homophobia, and religious exclusion that are common practices in sports settings. What young athletes endure to be able to be competitive in their sport has lifelong repercussions. Although the demand for supportive athletic coaches and their skills is high, there are few formal learning paths—or requirements—for athletic coaches. Most coaches arrive at their work through their own personal athletic experience and often rely on mentorship and social networking to secure their position. Research has revealed that the methods, skills, attitudes, and beliefs that coaches experience while being an athlete inform their coaching work, often replicating the practices they experienced as youth. This unexamined practice sets the stage for abuse to be replicated from one context to the next.

Researchers have agreed that additional coach preparation can help to remedy the pressing issues in athletics. Several researchers of athletics and physical education recommend using the conceptual framework of culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) to usher athletics into a setting in which athletes are viewed as complex holistic human beings deserving of respect in all aspects of their lives (Luguetti et al., 2019; Newman et al., 2021). CRP has the potential to influence coach preparation so that educated coaches value each athlete's identity and positionality and can effectively create a sense of belonging. Through coach preparation, coaches can learn how to elevate the profession and contribute in positive ways to the lives of student athletes. This study sought to understand the relationship between CRP, athletic coach preparation programs, and the approaches legendary coach John Wooden identified as essential in his practice.

Research Questions

The research questions I aimed to address center on culturally relevant pedagogy:

1. What are the intersections between John Wooden's approach to coaching and culturally relevant pedagogy?
2. To what degree, if any, is there evidence of culturally relevant pedagogy in the two athletic coach preparation programs? How do they compare and contrast?

Research Design and Rationale

This study used a qualitative design featuring archival lectures, biographies and autobiographies, scholarly research articles, in-depth interviews, and document analysis in a multisite case study. A qualitative approach was appropriate to capture the complexity of the relationship between what John Wooden identified as essential in coaching, CRP, and what current coach preparation programs offer (Merriam & Tisdale, 2016). Because my goal was to learn about the essential skills, knowledge, and attitudes of coaching from a legendary coach and to understand coach preparation program structures from both individual and institutional perspectives, a multisite qualitative case study enabled me to examine all aspects of these coaching programs to ascertain patterns and similarities from a successful coach and available coaching programs. I wanted to provide a description of and analyze patterns in curriculum, instruction, CRP, and John Wooden's work (Merriam & Tisdale, 2016).

A quantitative approach was not appropriate because there are only a small number of collegiate coaches and coach preparation programs that incorporate elements of CRP into their programs. Therefore, methods such as a survey would not offer statistically significant information (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Additionally, because my interest is in the relationship between coach educators, their practice, and coach preparation programs, a quantitative approach

was not appropriate. Furthermore, I was not trying to establish causation or a relationship between variables through an intervention.

Sample Selection for John Wooden Materials

To select documents and resources for the John Wooden portion of the study, I relied on two expert scholars of Coach Wooden. They recommended four books, two scholarly articles, and two video lectures as data for analysis. To supplement these resources, especially for learning about John Wooden and race, I used the writings of Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, a world-famous athlete who was coached by John Wooden for 3 years while a college basketball player. He also experienced Wooden's mentorship and friendship for decades beyond his college years. Abdul-Jabbar (2018) wrote extensively on the topic of race, his experiences as a Black athlete and coach, and his observations of John Wooden.

Site Selection for Case Studies

To understand the relationship between CRP, coach preparation programs, and what John Wooden identified as essential approaches to working with student athletes, this study required sites that offer degrees in athletic coaching. Initially, I gathered information from 15 separate coach preparation programs from publicly available information on their websites. From this wider body of data, I determined the criteria for the purposeful selection of sites that became the focus of the study: (a) a graduate degree in athletic coaching is offered (MA/MS/M.Ed.); (b) a degree of incorporation of social issues is either woven throughout the curriculum or offered in a specific course (race, gender, sexuality, (dis) ability, diversity, social justice, and/or inclusion); (c) the institutions are public and engage in a high degree of research; (d) the program does not provide a K12 teaching credential and is separate from such programs; (e) the program is not primarily a management degree; and (f) the program is not primarily an athletic trainer program.

Based on these criteria, these programs were more likely to include elements of CRP in the context of collegiate athletic coaching.

I used the identified criteria to select two programs with maximum variation. Each institution has a different organizational context in terms of size, geography, and delivery of instruction (online and in-person). Looking at institutions with different contexts but similar priorities and outcomes uncovered some shared values or practices that might inform programs in other university settings, or perhaps reveal specific conditions at these sites that may not be relevant in other institutions.

I studied two university coach preparation programs that offer master's degrees in athletic coaching, Red River University and Happy Valley University, both pseudonyms. These two sites met the established criteria and offered a range of perspectives because they exist in different educational systems. Each serves different populations and geographic locations. Happy Valley is an in-person Master of Education degree program that serves an average of 40 students. Approximately half are students of color and female. The faculty includes retired Division I coaches, athletic administrators, sports-related researchers, former and current K12 educators, and tenure-track professors. Happy Valley's degree has been in existence for 5 years. Red River University offers a Master of Science degree using an online format. They serve an average of 20 students, most of whom are White and male. Faculty members include sports researchers, coach developers, former coaches, athletic trainers, sports management experts, and legal experts. Five out of six professors listed on their website hold PhDs. The program has existed for more than 20 years, but its current online format is 4 years old. Additional sites offer a certificate or an undergraduate minor in sports coaching. Some offer a K12 teaching credential in physical

education. Sites that offer graduate degrees are more likely to orient themselves to athletic coaching at the college level and include a variety of coursework that relates to CRP.

Sample Selection for Case Studies

To find the appropriate people to interview for my study, I read the two programs' websites and studied the faculty members' descriptions when available. I determined the director of each program and became familiar with them through posted lectures and videos on their institution's websites. Additionally, I read several publications of each to determine the degree to which they might, explicitly or implicitly, value and/or apply CRP in their practice.

For the study, aspects of CRP were framed as athletic educators who (a) promote academic growth, (b) develop students' cultural competence, and (c) help students recognize and critique social inequities. They also approach their work with a mindset that reflects (a) a conception of themselves as a constantly evolving educator, (b) intentionally creates positive relationships with students, and (c) views knowledge as something that evolves and develops with the help of students.

This information is further elaborated as criteria for sample selection of site interview participants, which includes the following: (a) are currently employed as athletic coach educators, (b) are well regarded in their field, and (c) are representative of the coach preparation program where they teach as deemed by the program's director.

In addition to the leadership of the department and a variety of faculty members, I also sought internal data at each site, including syllabi and examples of course assignments. These documents aided my ability to search for patterns of CRP during the planning stages of coursework for each site as well as publicly available documents regarding the overall program (i.e., handbooks). The latter served as material for analysis at an institutional level.

Access and Recruitment for Case Studies

To gain access to my sites, I used the director of each program as a gatekeeper. I reached out to each and sent an emailed letter presenting myself as a UCLA researcher and doctoral candidate who was interested in studying available coach preparation programs that serve coaches, leaders, and athletes. This initial contact occurred in June of 2023. I shared my interest in studying their program and its related documents (i.e., syllabi, other course descriptions, assignment descriptions, and rubrics). I also shared my desire to interview four to five key members of their program (i.e., faculty members, lecturers, administrators). In subsequent months, I set up meetings at mutually convenient times when we further discussed the study and I addressed any questions or concerns they might have. In the spring of 2024, each director supplied me with the names and email addresses of those they recommended from their staff as essential interview participants.

To gain access to interview subjects, I contacted each via email. I included a letter that presented myself as a UCLA researcher and doctoral candidate. I stated that they were recommended by their director as someone to be included in the conversation and that they were identified for their involvement in their respective coach preparation program. The trust and support of the directors helped to legitimize my request, and most responded to my outreach within days.

Identifying and Recruiting Interview Participants

To answer my second research question, I conducted nine semistructured, qualitative interviews, four and five at each site. As stated previously, these participants were purposely selected because of their role in their athletic coach preparation program. I recruited them by sending an email to individuals who mentioned they had been recommended by their program's

leader as someone who could speak about athletic coach preparation. All Happy Valley University participants agreed to participate during my initial outreach. One potential Red River University participant declined the opportunity to be interviewed based on their perceived lack of knowledge of athletic coach preparation. Table 1 introduces each participant, including a pseudonym to keep their identities confidential, and their role at each site.

Table 1

Participants

Participant pseudonym	Role
Happy Valley University participants	
Sarah	Lecturer; retired athletic coach; coaching consultant
Hannah	University administrator; lecturer
Beatrice	Professor; researcher
Linda	Lecturer; retired athletic coach; coaching consultant
Robert	Lecturer; athletic administrator
Red River University participants	
Frank	Professor; researcher
Ann	Lecturer; researcher
Michael	Professor; researcher
Patrick	Lecturer; coach developer

Data Collection Methods

This multisite case study examined and triangulated data from archival materials, document analysis, and semistructured interviews. To learn about available coach programs, my research relied on two methods: document analysis and semistructured interviews. By analyzing documents—current, available coaching programs, their content, curriculum, and structures through syllabi and other descriptive documents—I was able to identify the areas of CRP in programs for aspiring and current collegiate athletic coaches. I collected and analyzed documents

related to coach preparation programs at two sites: Red River University and Happy Valley University. I collected course syllabi, course descriptions, assignments, and related descriptive documents that lent themselves to capturing a picture of the program offered by each site. I began with documents that were readily available online and added additional documents supplied by program directors and/or interviewed faculty members. This supported the development of a comprehensive picture of program offerings.

To continue to develop a rich and complex picture of available coach programs, I interviewed select members of each program's community. Each interview was semistructured with open-ended questions guided by interview questions with a connection to various aspects of CRP (see the Appendix). Interview questions focused on their everyday work; the values and beliefs that guide them; and what they hold as the most important knowledge, skills, and attitudes for a coach as well as the challenges they face. Questions were also designed to surface any information related to the way they (a) support students' academic achievement (i.e., help students perform at high, sophisticated levels), (b) provide ways for students to maintain their cultural identity while succeeding academically (i.e., encouraging students to be themselves in language, dress, interactions), and (c) help students and themselves recognize and critique social inequities (i.e., consciously creating opportunities to analyze and dialogue about these issues). These semistructured interviews were conducted over the Zoom platform. They were recorded on an iPhone and by Zoom. Professional transcriptions of the interviews from a reputable service offered an initial stage of analysis. I amended any errors or omissions. This enabled me to examine all aspects of these coaching programs to ascertain patterns and similarities among available coach programs and compare these data to what I collected about John Wooden.

Data Analysis

Data analysis occurred in several stages throughout the study. My analysis used a deductive approach driven by the research questions and the conceptual framework and an inductive approach that allowed the incorporation of emergent themes into the analysis. I reviewed the interview transcripts for accuracy, making corrections where necessary, and did some initial analysis.

During the first stage, I used NVivo Coding method to become more familiar with John Wooden and each institution. I analyzed the documents line by line, paying special attention to any trends and patterns that surfaced. This inductive approach heightened my awareness of the unique circumstances of each (Saldaña, 2013), providing a rich understanding of the environment, values, and beliefs of John Wooden, Site 1, and Site 2.

During the second stage, I used a deductive process, elaborative coding (Saldaña, 2013), which enabled the application of an established theory to new content. I overlayed the elements and propositions of CRP to identify which aspects, if any, of CRP were valued and used by John Wooden. I anticipated some of the data would fall into one of six areas of CRP and could contain but were not limited to (a) academic achievement: "an ability to support students academically" (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 483), (b) cultural competence: "a willingness to nurture and support cultural competence" (p. 483), and (c) cultural critique: "help students to recognize, understand, critique current social inequities" (p. 476). Beyond these elements of CRP, three larger broad propositions of CRP address (d) conceptions of self and others and ways that they see athletes as capable as well as the need to refine their own practice, (e) how they develop social relations with students and encourage a collaborative community, and (f) ways they view knowledge as dynamic and coconstructed and their ability to scaffold learning. I used MAXQDA coding

software to facilitate initial deductive coding using the elements of CRP as a guide. During this stage, I also created codes for disconfirming evidence of the six facets of CRP in Wooden's practice. I created additional categories that emerged during the initial coding process to reflect a more comprehensive list of codes related to more general knowledge of what coach educators value and use in their practice (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

For the document analysis, I confirmed the accuracy of the syllabi and other documents from the heads of the programs. I used content analysis and the codes referenced in the John Wooden materials to determine when or whether they were present in the documents I collected (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I continued to apply content analysis and the codes from the Wooden interviews to determine when or whether they were present in the interview transcripts with program leaders and faculty members. I examined the areas of knowledge and skills offered in each program and how each might be related to the components of CRP. By using the codes and data that emerged during analysis of the Wooden interviews, I looked for themes in the coach preparation materials. I also looked for content that was available in the interviews but missing from the documents. This analysis helped to illuminate the relationship between what Coach Wooden identified in his practice, what elements of CRP are present, and what coach preparation programs offer.

Management of My Role

I positioned myself as a UCLA doctoral researcher who was interested in highlighting successful coach preparation programs and who sought enhancements to the field. In my role as coinstructor in one class in one program, I clarified to participants that I did not supervise any of the personnel I would speak to, nor did I hold a position that could potentially influence their responses. Some of the subjects I invited to participate were individuals I had met through my

involvement in the program where I worked, and we had collegial relationships. In these cases, I weighed my research relationships with these study participants, any validity concerns, and ethics (Maxwell, 2013). I approached each interview subject with the utmost respect, understanding that their work was complex, demanding, and had lasting impacts on the people they work with.

I highlighted for the interviewees, as well as the heads of programs, that their time and efforts would contribute to the larger conversation of athletic coach preparation. As a gesture of appreciation, I offered a small gift card and a thank you note as a token of appreciation after the conclusion of each interview. Because participants expressed an interest in learning about findings about their program, I planned to disseminate a summary report of my findings to each university program's director for their review and dissemination.

Credibility and Trustworthiness

The greatest credibility threats in my study were participant reactivity and bias. Participants knew that I selected them because they displayed promising practices in their work. They might have felt pressured to respond to questions in a particular way and had little incentive to be completely honest about how difficult their work might be. To address this concern, I carefully constructed my interview tools to be open-ended and not leading. I also emphasized to participants that they could help move this work forward most by being candid and honest about the challenges they have faced in working in athletic coach preparation and how they have addressed those challenges. Also, I asked for specific details, examples, and stories to provide rich, thick descriptions beyond surface comments. Using standardized interview and document analysis protocols and standardized coding procedures facilitated my collecting data in a systematic fashion so that I could ask participants the same questions,

regardless of their identity or how well I knew them (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). To ensure that my protocols were sound, I practiced my site-specific interview questions with two educators with coach preparation adjacent roles and a program administrator. This provided me with practice listening and encouraging honest responses (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

My own bias was a factor I needed to account for. I am a proponent of CRP because I believe it can provide an essential foundation for meaningful learning opportunities for students and student athletes. I collected rich data so that I could offer direct quotes to either confirm or contradict my own biases. I used negative case analysis to rigorously examine both the data that support what I believe and the discrepant data that may suggest that CRP is not something that practitioners are using or not using in a systematic way (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

By collecting data at multiple sites, I was able to make comparisons and analyze common themes that emerged across the sites. I did not specifically intend my results to be generalizable to other sites; however, I provided detailed descriptions in my findings so that those who read my study would be able to determine what might be applicable to their own context.

Ethical Considerations

Although Yin (2014) suggested that anonymity is not desirable for a case study because it eliminates some of the critical (and often interesting) background information that helps build the case, my research sites were anonymous. This commitment to maintaining anonymity for the sites helped to achieve anonymity for each institution's participants. I used pseudonyms for the sites and interview participants. I wanted to get the whole picture of coach preparation, including challenges, from each participant, and I wanted to make sure that there would be no repercussions for participating in my study. I was also mindful of the need for reciprocity with

each institution and individual. I offered small electronic gift cards to each participant and shared my findings with each institution.

I prepared a Memoranda of Understanding for both institutions to clarify that the original data are mine. I kept three sets of data, including audio files, transcription files, and documents for analysis (a) on my laptop, (b) in a UCLA Google Drive, (c) in a UCLA Box account, and (d) paper copies in a locked filing cabinet in my home. There is password protection for the first three storage sites and a hidden key for the last site.

Conclusion

This study used qualitative research methods, which included in-depth interviews and document analysis to provide a comprehensive picture of what was being offered in coach preparation programs and what a successful coach exemplified as necessary skills, knowledge, and dispositions. The data allowed me to compare current programs at multiple sites and contrast them with what a legendary coach reported as being essential learning and practice in his profession. I also was able to overlay the conceptual theory of CRP and further theorize its relevance in collegiate athletic settings as well as broader athletic settings. This study contributes to the gaps in the literature and practitioner discourse about the best ways to prepare collegiate athletic coaches.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

This study investigated the potential use of culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) in athletic contexts and coach preparation programs. More specifically, it sought to find the degree to which legendary basketball coach John Wooden used elements of CRP in his practice. The ensuing framework informed the analysis of what two athletic coach programs offer current and aspiring coaches through the lens of CRP. These sites, although different at first glance, share important commonalities including (a) They offer master's degrees in athletic coaching; (b) They are a part of large research universities; and (c) Each site displays a commitment to social justice and/or diversity, equity, and inclusion in their publicly available materials. Making a direct connection between robust graduate programs and improved athletic coaching is beyond the scope of this project; however, investigating programs that have the potential to improve the quality of athletic coaching is still a worthwhile endeavor.

Because many of the issues student athletes face are related to social issues experienced in spaces that athletic coaches in education institutions oversee, I sought to apply a theoretical framework that has proven helpful in educational settings: culturally relevant pedagogy. Looking through this lens, I sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the intersections between John Wooden's approach to coaching and culturally relevant pedagogy?
2. To what degree, if any, is there evidence of culturally relevant pedagogy in the two athletic coach preparation programs? How do they compare and contrast?

To answer these questions, I studied the writings, lectures, observations of, and scholarship about legendary coach John Wooden. I used an iterative, analytical process of inductive and deductive coding to find connections between his work and the essential elements of CRP to develop an

illustrative framework. Next, I studied two different athletic coach preparation programs: Happy Valley University and Red River University (both pseudonyms). I used publicly available documents from their websites, internal documents provided by the sites, and semistructured interviews of athletic coach educators. With data from each site, I overlayed the framework developed through the process of answering Research Question 1 for aspects of CRP. The findings from this study are presented in three sections: the framework developed from analysis of John Wooden's work and CRP, the comparative analysis of CRP and the two institutions' sports coaching programs, and a cross-case analysis of the differences that exist between the disparate institutions' programs.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy in Athletic Contexts: A Framework

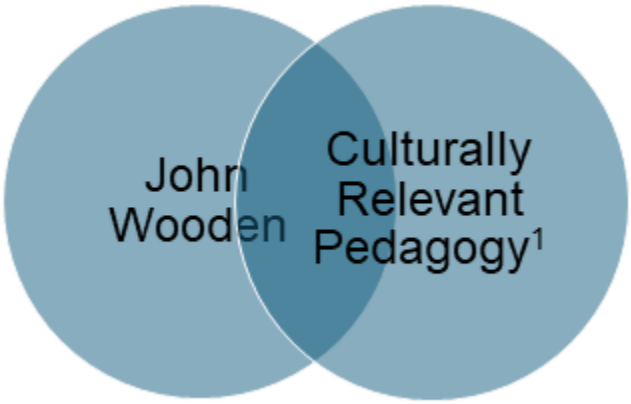
To ascertain the applicability of CRP in athletic contexts, I sought to understand the intersections of CRP with the principles and practices of a legendary coach, John Wooden. Wooden is a revered collegiate men's basketball coach, who led his teams to 10 national championships, including seven consecutive NCAA championships from 1967-1973 (UCLA, n.d.). In addition to his winning record, he is well known for his many writings, speeches, and philosophies related to coaching, teaching, and leadership. Wooden has been studied in depth by sports psychologists and to some extent, pedagogical experts. The body of primary and secondary sources related to his work, as well as his tremendous success as both an athlete and coach, make him an ideal choice for this analysis. His statement, "Coaching is teaching," provided the germinative conceptual spark for this research study.

When researcher and scholar, Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995), studied educators who were particularly effective at teaching young Black students, she theorized elements of CRP as well as three broad propositions. In doing so, she did not necessarily intend for them to be applied to a

sports context. I have also inferred that she did not imagine that these categories might be useful in a physical education setting. However, some researchers of physical education have suggested that CRP has the potential to help shift the mindsets and approaches that influence what athletes experience at the hands of coaches and educators. Knowing that student athletes can suffer in oppressive environments that sustain unhealthy social, emotional, and physical practices in athletics, I sought to explore the degree of connection possible between CRP and John Wooden (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

Intersections Between John Wooden and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy



Note. Adapted from "Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy," by G. Ladson-Billings, 1995, *American Educational Research Journal*, *32*(3), 465–491. https://doi.org/10.3102/00028312032003465

Through an iterative analytical process, I revisited Ladon-Billings's 1995 piece, "Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy," paying particular attention to the areas in which she defined elements of CRP and then elaborated to describe three board propositions of CRP. This process helped me to refine my understanding of the spirit of each category when I sought to connect evidence from John Wooden's practice in (a) *academic achievement*: "an ability to support students academically" (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 483), (b) *cultural competence*: "a

willingness to nurture and support cultural competence" (p. 483), and (c) *cultural critique*: "help students to recognize, understand, critique current social inequities" (p. 476). Beyond these elements of CRP, three larger broad propositions of CRP address (d) c*onceptions of self and others* and ways teachers see students as capable as well as the need to refine their own practice, (e) how they develop *social relations* with students and encourage a collaborative community, and (f) ways they *view knowledge* as dynamic and coconstructed and their ability to scaffold learning (see Figure 2). These elements and broad propositions of CRP intertwine to provide a complex theory of learning that supports all students, including the most vulnerable. I offer a thorough representation of each element and proposition of CRP as they stand alone and as they intersect—or not—with John Wooden's practices and principles.

Figure 2

Elements of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and Their Broad Propositions

Note. Adapted from "Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy," by G. Ladson-Billings, 1995, *American Educational Research Journal, 32*(3), 465–491. https://doi.org/10.3102/00028312032003465

Elements of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy in Wooden's Work

John Wooden, a White man, led an extraordinary life, having grown up on a farm in Indiana and become arguably the greatest basketball coach in modern history. He was an all-star high school and college athlete and played professional basketball during a time when that was considered part-time, weekend work (Wooden & Jamison, 1997). He played professionally while also a high school English teacher and coached multiple sports at the high school level for more than a decade. It was in his high school teaching position that he worked on his definition of

success and the early drafts of the Pyramid of Success. He went on to serve as the Indiana State Teacher's College basketball coach and baseball coach and taught physical education while pursuing his master's degree. Then, he accepted an offer to move to California and coach the men's basketball team at UCLA (Wooden & Tobin, 2003). At UCLA, he used the skills he learned as a teacher—careful planning, attending to students as individuals, and building a cohesive team—to win a record number of games and championships (Nater & Gallimore, 2006). Many of these records still stand today.

In the subsequent sections, I offer a framework of John Wooden's work through the lens of CRP. In some areas of CRP, Wooden exhibited multiple examples of ways that he applied CRP in his work. In other areas, CRP was not as evident.

Student Achievement and John Wooden

Ladson-Billings (1995) conveyed that first and foremost, educators who practice CRP support students academically. They are "able to help students perform at higher levels" than their peers in similar settings (p. 475). Although students demonstrated achievement on standardized tests, their teachers also valued "a variety of demonstrated student achievement," and showed "an ability to read, write, speak, compute, pose and solve problems at sophisticated levels," posing "their own questions about the nature of teacher or text-posed problems and engage in peer review of problem solutions" (p. 475). In this way, high academic achievement and high standards formed the base element of CRP.

There is some evidence to suggest that John Wooden expected his student athletes to achieve at high levels, both academically and athletically (see Figure 3). He recognized the mental demands of basketball, shouting at players to, "'Move, move, move!' I meant it both physically and mentally" (Wooden & Jamison, 1997, p. 103). In line with this thinking, Wooden

kept detailed records and plans for each team and individual athlete and provided "tailored instruction accordingly" (Nater & Gallimore, 2006, p. 71). As a former English teacher, he also valued literacy and learning and held up knowledge as precious, noting, "For most students, basketball is temporary, but knowledge is forever" (Abdul-Jabbar, 2018, p. 23).

Perhaps similar to a standardized test, Wooden considered basketball games as assessments and practiced a kind of formative assessment during practice. He studied each player, "so I would know if he needed a little more time on this or that" (Wooden & Jamison, 1997, p. 133) using multiple varieties of demonstrated achievement. There is no evidence to suggest that the student athletes Wooden worked with were encouraged to pose problems and discuss them or to evaluate the potential solutions and weigh those solutions among themselves. Instead, Wooden planned every detail of every practice and did not create space for student-led dialogue or improvisation. He was firmly in control of his team, maintaining a traditional role of authority during practice time.

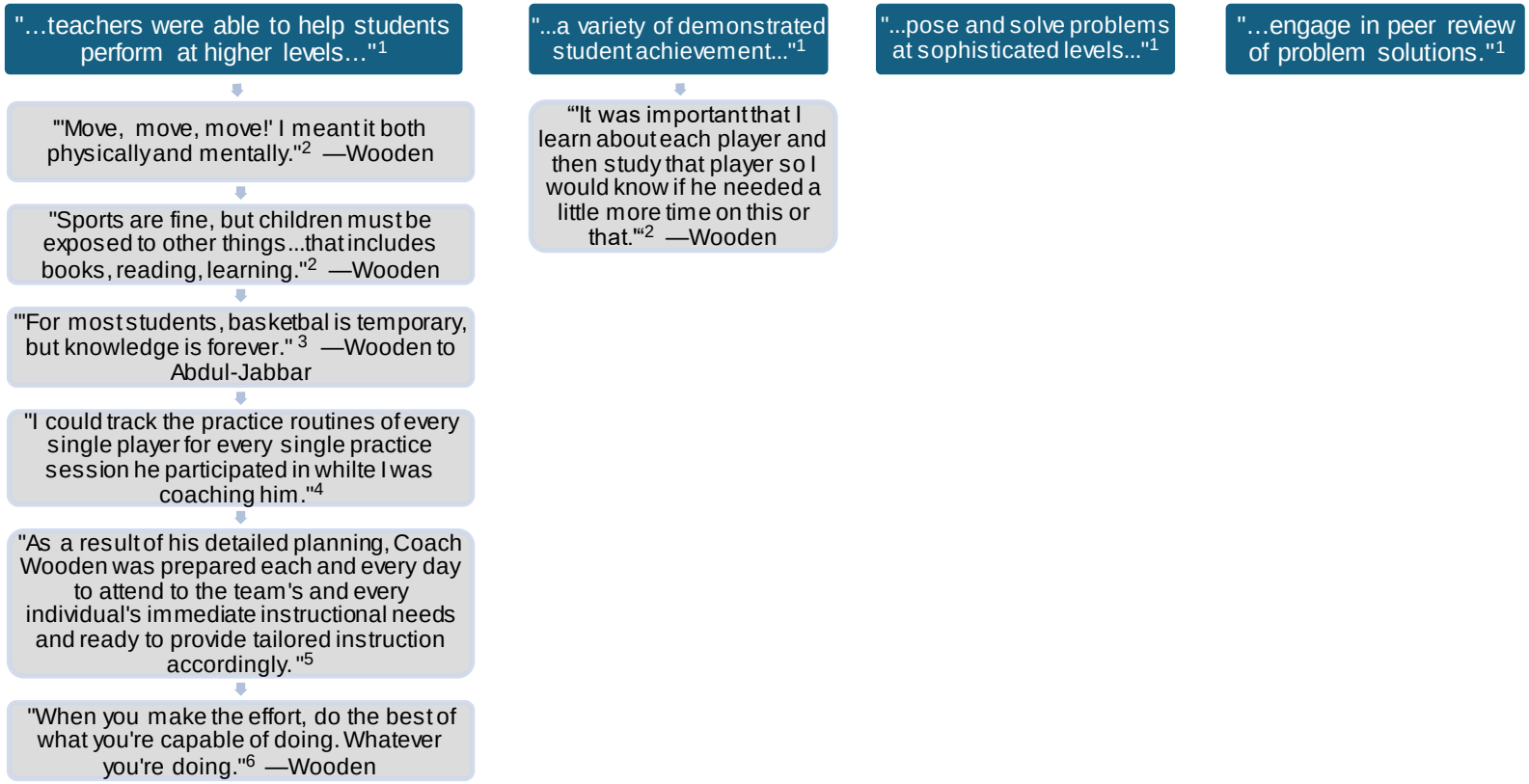
Cultural Competence and John Wooden

There is even less evidence to suggest that John Wooden had a degree of cultural competence (see Figure 4). Ladson-Billings (1995) surfaced the importance of this concept through existing research that suggested,

> Successful students' progress indicated that they were social isolates, with neither African-American nor White friends. The students believed that it was necessary for them to stand apart from other African-American students so that teachers would not attribute to them the negative characteristics they may have attributed to African-American students in general. (p. 476)

Figure 3

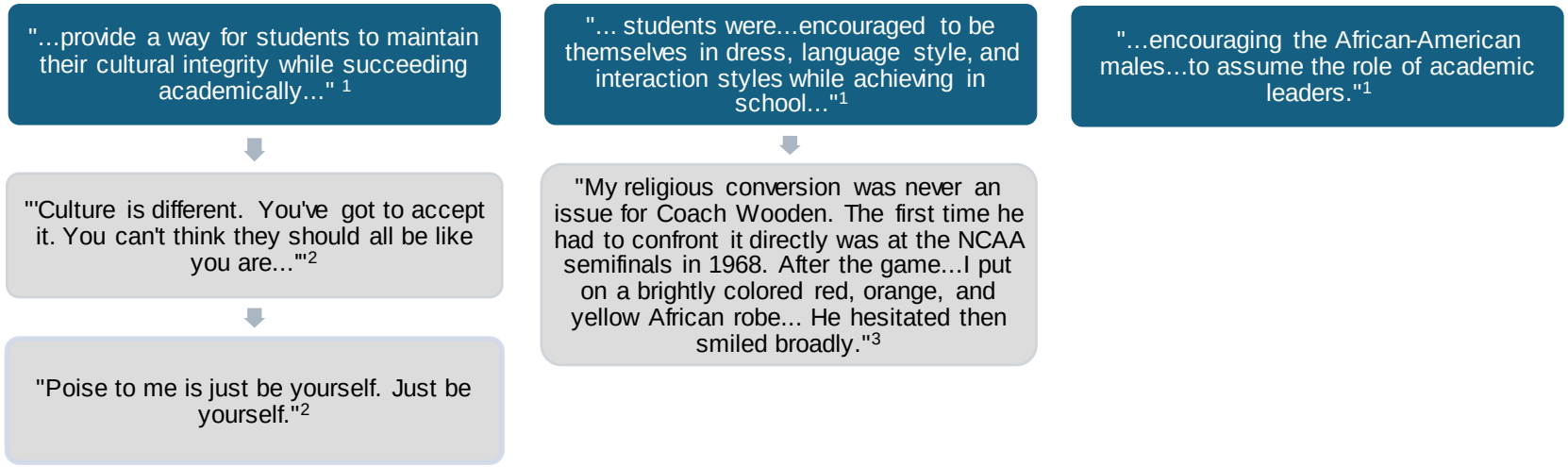
Student Achievement



Note. This figure represents a deductive approach to intersecting elements of Ladson-Billings's Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and documented practices and principles of John Wooden. [1] From "Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy," by G. Ladson-Billings, 1995, *American Educational Research Journal*, *32*(3), pp. 466, 475 (https://doi.org/10.3102/00028312032003465); [2] From *Wooden: A Lifetime of Observations and Reflections on and off the Court* (pp. 20, 133), by J. R. Wooden & S. Jamison, 1997, Contemporary Books; [3] From *Coach Wooden and Me: Our 50-year Friendship on and off the Court* (p. 24), by K. Abdul-Jabbar, 2018, Grand Central Publishing; [4] From "What a Coach Can Teach a Teacher 1975–2004: Reflections and Reanalysis of John Wooden's Teaching Practices," by R. Gallimore & R. Tharp, 2004, *The Sport Psychologist*, *18*(2), p. 126; [5] From *You Haven't Taught Until They Have Learned: John Wooden's Teaching Principles and Practices* (p. 71), by S. Nater & R. Gallimore, 2005, Fitness International Technology; [6] From Lecture to Psych 137F, by J. Wooden, 2001, UCLA.

Figure 4

Cultural Competence



Note. This figure represents a deductive approach to intersecting elements of Ladson-Billings's Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and documented practices and principles of John Wooden. [1] From "Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy," by G. Ladson-Billings, 1995, *American Educational Research Journal*, *32*(3), p. 476 (https://doi.org/10.3102/00028312032003465); [2] From Lecture to Psych 137F, by J. Wooden, 2001, UCLA; [3] From *Coach Wooden and Me: Our 50-year Friendship on and off the Court* (p. 188), by K. Abdul-Jabbar, 2018, Grand Central Publishing.

Ladson-Billings (1995) was able to identify that successful pedagogy had to "provide a way for students to maintain their cultural integrity while succeeding academically" (p. 476). To do so, "students were ... encouraged to be themselves in dress, language style, and interaction styles while achieving" (p. 476). Additionally, she recognized that students who had not been viewed as academic role models were encouraged to be academic leaders.

John Wooden did not encourage Black student athletes to be leaders in the athletic context, but he did recognize some aspects of culture. He responded to a question about culture in a class lecture, "Culture is different. You've got to accept it. You can't think they should all be like you are" (Wooden, 2001). Wooden recognized that individuals had different experiences and that every individual was unique. He said, "Poise to me is just be yourself. Just be yourself" (Wooden & Jamison, 1997, p. 189). Although he did not state that he understood the risks and challenges of being oneself if one was from a historically marginalized or oppressed group, he did seem to know the importance of honoring differences. Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, a student athlete who was raised Catholic and converted to Islam while a student at UCLA, wrote of Wooden's response to his conversion to Islam and seeing him in a traditional African robe after an important game.

> My religious conversion was never an issue for Coach Wooden. The first time he had to confront it directly was at the NCAA semifinals in 1968. After the game ... I put on a brightly colored red, orange, and yellow African robe. ... He hesitated then smiled broadly. (Abdul-Jabbar, 2018, p. 174)

Although Wooden accepted Abdul-Jabbar's personal dress and religion, Wooden did not go so far as to leverage Abdul-Jabbar's talents and skills to create situations in which all of his identities could exist as a model for his teammates. Wooden was not compelled to create cultural

autonomy for student athletes to be themselves in the basketball program he oversaw. He asked them to dress in uniform and behave in socially acceptable ways (Abdul-Jabbar, 2018). He believed that his direction and decisions should have the utmost influence.

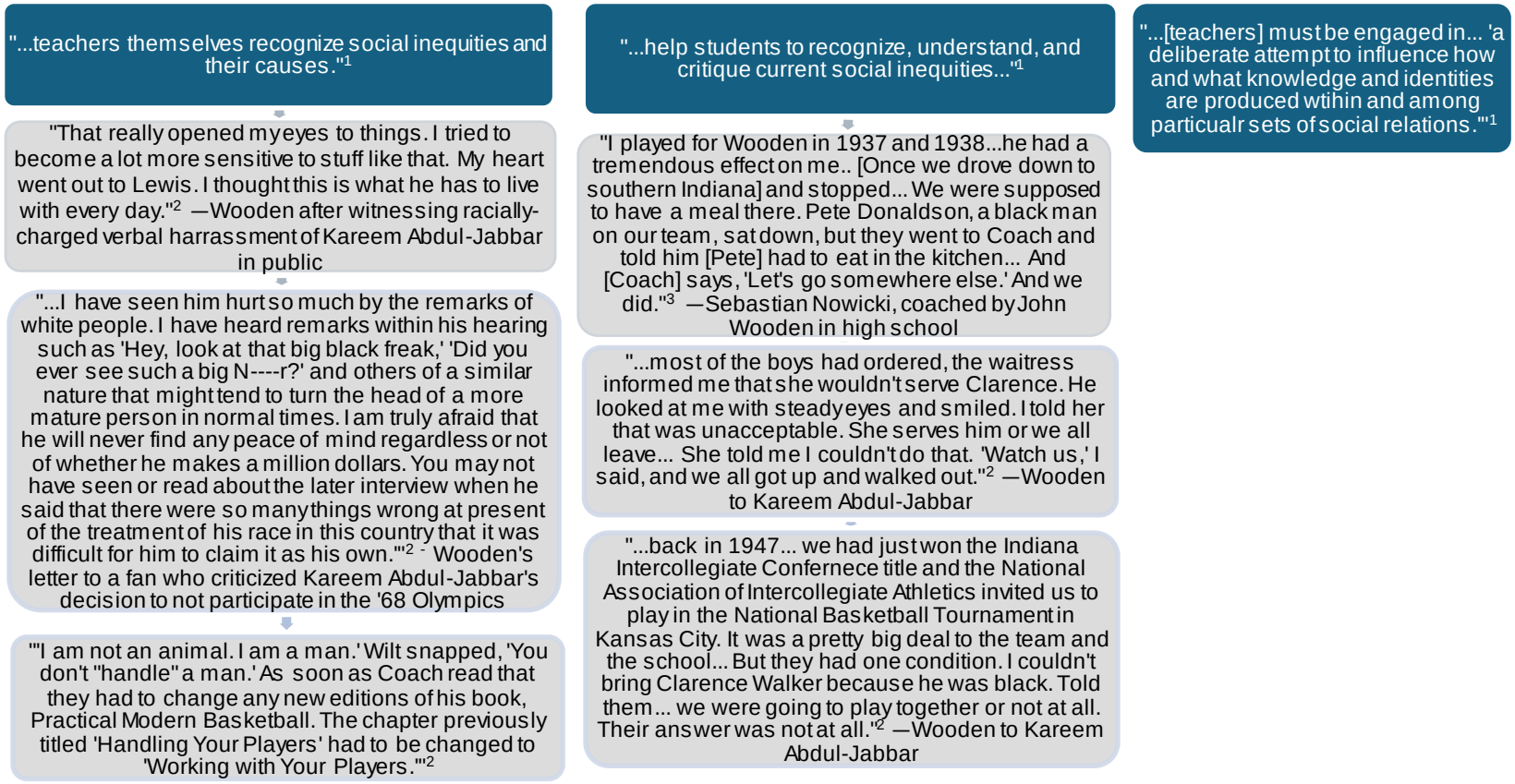
Cultural Critique and John Wooden

In the area of cultural critique, John Wooden lacked some of the described behaviors of an educator who practices CRP. Ladson-Billings (1995) described this area as teachers who "themselves recognize social inequalities and their causes" (pp. 476-477). She also pointed to the ways that these educators sought to support students to "recognize, understand, and critique social inequities" (p. 476). The teachers "engaged in ... a deliberate attempt to influence how and what knowledge and identities are produced within and among [students]" (p. 477). These educators actively sought ways to structure opportunities to empower students while educating them about current and past oppressions (see Figure 5).

Throughout his lifetime, Wooden grew in his cultural competence. Although his exposure to cultural differences was limited in his early years, he did have opportunities to grow in his cultural critique. After having dinner in a restaurant with a young Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Wooden witnessed a well-dressed White woman who saw Abdul-Jabbar and said, "Well I've never seen a nigger that tall" (Abdul-Jabbar, 2018, p. 139). Years later, Wooden described how the comment impacted him: "That really opened my eyes to things. I tried to become a lot more sensitive to stuff like that. My heart went out to [him]. I thought this is what he has to live with every day" (p. 142). In subsequent years, Wooden wrote to a fan who had criticized Abdul-Jabbar for not taking part in the Olympics. He defended Abdul-Jabbar, explaining, "I have seen him hurt so much by the remarks of white people" (p. 153). He acknowledged the role that overt

Figure 5

Cultural Critique



Note. This figure represents a deductive approach to intersecting elements of Ladson-Billings Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and documented practices and principles of John Wooden. [1] From "Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy," by G. Ladson-Billings, 1995, *American Educational Research Journal*, *32*(3), pp. 476–477 (https://doi.org/10.3102/00028312032003465); [2] From *Coach Wooden and Me: Our 50-year Friendship on and off the Court* (pp. 142, 152, 148, 161, 162), by K. Abdul-Jabbar, 2018, Grand Central Publishing; [3] From *You Haven't Taught Until They Have Learned: John Wooden's Teaching Principles and Practices* (p. 127), by S. Nater & R. Gallimore, 2005, Fitness International Technology.

racism played in Abdul-Jabbar's life. Another area in which he demonstrated cultural critique was in changing a chapter in his book *Practical Modern Basketball*. He did so after reading about an interview with Wilt Chamberlain, a Black professional basketball player who was asked how he needed to be "handled" by his coach. Chamberlain responded, "'I am not an animal. I am a man. ... You don't 'handle' a man'" (Abdul-Jabbar, 2018, p. 148). Afterward, Coach Wooden changed a chapter title from "Handling Your Players" to "Working With Your Players." His cultural critique was limited to these occasional statements and actions that addressed overt forms of racism. He did not encourage his students and/or student athletes to engage in deliberate dialogue about social and cultural issues of the times even when the context he was working in—UCLA in the 1960s—was filled with social unrest and demonstrations related to the Vietnam War and the civil rights movement. He considered these issues beyond the scope of his influence.

The possible exceptions to his limited cultural critique were Wooden's decisions as a high school and college coach in Indiana regarding where the team ate during travel games and where they played. There is evidence to suggest that he made a point to leave restaurants that refused to serve Black players along with his White players, and he refused to participate in the 1947 National Basketball Tournament because they would not allow him to bring a Black basketball player. As someone who emphasized teaching by example, Wooden made an impression on his players through these actions. One White player who was coached by Wooden in 1937 and 1938, stated,

> He had a tremendous effect on me. ... We were supposed to have a meal there. Pete Donaldson, a black man on our team, sat down, but they went to Coach and told him

> [Pete] had to eat in the kitchen. ... And [Coach] says, "Let's go somewhere else." And we did. (Nater & Gallimore, 2006, p. 127)

Wooden described a similar story to Kareem Abdul-Jabbar regarding a situation in which the team walked out of a restaurant after ordering because they refused to serve Clarence Walker, a young Black man on the team (Abdul-Jabbar, 2018, p. 161).

Perhaps Wooden's most public display of activism was in 1947. His Indiana State Teacher's College team had won the Indiana Intercollegiate Conference title, and they were invited to the National Basketball Tournament in Kansas City. It was an honor to be invited, and it meant a great deal to the team and the school. As a young coach with a family to support, Wooden took a personal risk by refusing to participate unless officials allowed him to bring Clarence Walker, a young Black man (Abdul-Jabbar, 2018). Officials did not allow it, and Wooden, his team, and the college missed the opportunity to participate. However, the following year, they were invited again. This time, Clarence Walker became the first Black intercollegiate basketball player to participate in the tournament. In these ways, Wooden engaged in cultural critique by example during a time when Jim Crow laws were still in effect. Still, he did not invite discussion or learning beyond these gestures. He did not intentionally create opportunities for his students to engage in cultural critique.

Three Broad Propositions of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy in Wooden's Work

In addition to developing three elements of CRP, Ladson-Billings (1995) also sought to explore the theoretical underpinnings, the educator beliefs and ideologies, about students and their potential that cut across all educators featured in her study (p. 478). This helped to avoid the assumption that a singular pedagogical approach might be most effective for Black children and grow the idea that teachers of multiple experiences and identities can be effective for this

vulnerable group. John Wooden's beliefs and actions matched these three broad propositions more often than not. I explore the connections in these next few sections.

Conceptions of Self and Others and John Wooden

The first proposition Ladson-Billings (1995) described is teachers' conceptions of self and others. She noticed that these exemplary teachers "believed that all the students were capable of academic success, saw their pedagogy as ... unpredictable" and always developing (p. 478). They saw themselves as part of the community where they taught and saw teaching as a way to give back to that community. They also believed in the Freirean notion of "teaching as mining" and that knowledge could be gained from the children themselves and made a part of the learning experience (p. 477). These beliefs were applied by the educators in a consistent and deliberate way.

When compared to Ladson-Billings's (1995) first broad proposition, conceptions of self and others, John Wooden demonstrated some of the same common beliefs and attitudes about students and himself as culturally relevant teachers (see Figure 6). He believed in students in a fundamental way and saw that belief as an important way to motivate them, stating "I wanted those under my own supervision to be motivated in the same way, to strive to be their best because I believed in them" (Wooden & Jamison, 1997, p. 8). His students also made note of this belief. Abdul-Jabbar (2018) wrote,

> I came to the realization he wouldn't give up on me. ... There was something in his attitude, a patient understanding, that made me feel that he was ... teaching me how to adapt. ... To push through. To endure. (p. 118)

UCLA's Swen Nater, who did not play basketball until he attended college, reflected on his time with Wooden:

Figure 6

Conceptions of Self and Others

Note. This figure represents a deductive approach to intersecting elements of Ladson-Billings Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and documented practices and principles of John Wooden. [1] From "Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy," by G. Ladson-Billings, 1995, *American Educational Research Journal*, *32*(3), pp. 478, 479 (https://doi.org/10.3102/00028312032003465); [2] From *Wooden: A Lifetime of Observations and Reflections on and off the Court* (pp. 8, 72, 103, 289), by J. R. Wooden & S. Jamison, 1997, Contemporary Books; [3] From *Coach Wooden and Me: Our 50-year Friendship on and off the Court* (pp. 117, 110), by K. Abdul-Jabbar, 2018, Grand Central Publishing; [4] From *You Haven't Taught Until They Have Learned: John Wooden's Teaching Principles and Practices* (pp. 113, 115, 14), by S. Nater & R. Gallimore, 2005; [5] From "What a Coach Can Teach a Teacher 1975–2004: Reflections and Reanalysis of John Wooden's Teaching Practices," by R. Gallimore & R. Tharp, 2004, *The Sport Psychologist*, *18*(2), pp. 126, 127.

> As a novice basketball player ... I made more errors than any other player. ... I'm frankly surprised he didn't give up on me. He believed I was capable of learning just like the rest of the players. I'm thankful he believed in me. (Nater & Gallimore, 2006, p. 113)

Wooden demonstrated a commitment to his student athletes that reflected a belief that they were all capable.

Additionally, Wooden saw his work as "always in the process of becoming" (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 478). He noted about students and athletes, "They are all different. There is no formula" (Nater & Gallimore, 2006, p. 1) when describing his approach to a winning team. He reflected on the importance of knowing the young people he worked with:

> Students are so different from each other in so many ways. ... Because of my commitment to help each one of them reach their potential, I began employing different teaching strategies for them. But I did not sit down and simply design strategies or attend seminars about methods and employ them. Those who presented the seminars did not know my children. I knew them and I designed methods and strategies to fit their particular needs. (Nater & Gallimore, 2006, p. 115)

Wooden also recognized when student athletes developed a new technique or skill and incorporated it into their work together. On the invention of the lob pass during a game, Wooden said they should practice it because it worked so well (Abdul-Jabbar, 2018). This innovation by students, and how Wooden embraced it, is an example of one of the ways that he demonstrated his concept of himself and others and centered it on his knowledge of students and a fundamental belief in students' capabilities.

Wooden also weighed heavily on his responsibility as an instructor to grow and evolve. He stated, "Know that valid self-analysis is crucial for improvement" (Wooden & Jamison, 1997,

p. 72). Wooden accepted full responsibility for the learning by students, saying "You have not taught until they have learned" (Nater & Gallimore, 2006, p. 103). He set high standards for himself as a coach, reflecting, "I hope I learned a little bit each and every year" (p. 41). Perhaps the central focus of his learning every year was the students themselves. In conversation with Nater, he stated,

> I learned from you. I watched you, listened to you, and studied you because I cared about helping you reach your potential. ... I learned how you responded to instruction. I watched carefully how you interacted with your teammates, how you got along with others, what frustrated you, and how much pressure I could put on you ... you were a sensitive young man and a gentle word of encouragement went a lot further than a scold. (Nater & Gallimore, 2006, p. 14)

This emphasis on learning about students is a theme throughout Wooden's work and it is related to how he viewed them in positive, efficacious ways, much like that of a culturally relevant practitioner. There is, however, no evidence to suggest that Wooden conceptualized his work as a community member, giving back to the community through his work as an instructor of basketball and youth. He valued individual players and the team but did not discuss his work in the context of community. He saw his work as contributing to the young men in his care but not beyond. He differed from Culturally Relevant practitioners in this way.

Social Relations and John Wooden

The area of developing social relations is perhaps the greatest area of alignment for John Wooden and CRP. Ladson-Billings (1995) described this broad proposition about teachers who "maintain fluid student-teacher relationships, demonstrate a connectedness with all of the students, develop a community of learnings, and encourage students to learn collaboratively and

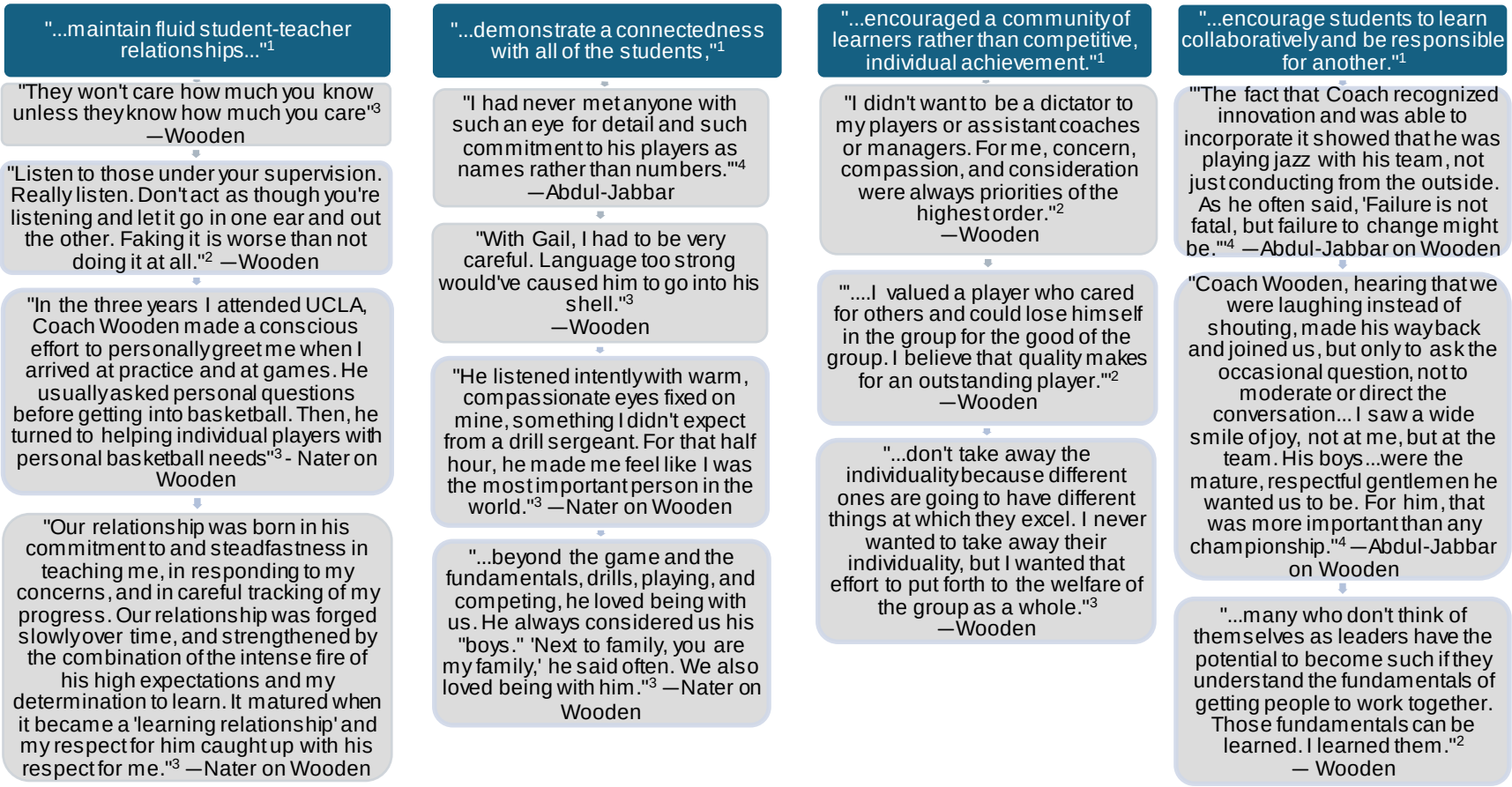
be responsible for another" (p. 480). The spirit of these approaches aimed to increase the previously stated goals of increasing student achievement while also raising cultural competence and critical consciousness.

Wooden genuinely valued his personal relationships with others, especially the players he worked with (see Figure 7). To help him "maintain fluid student-teacher relationships" (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 480), he subscribed to the old adage, "They won't care how much you know unless they know how much you care" (Nater & Gallimore, 2006, p. 9) and used this as a foundational principle of his work. He elaborated on this idea, telling others to "listen to those under your supervision. Really listen. Don't act as though you're listening and let it go in one ear and out the other. Faking it is worse than not doing it at all" (Wooden & Jamison, 1997, p. 117). In his book with Wooden scholar, Ron Gallimore, Swen Nater recalled, "Coach Wooden made a conscious effort to personally greet me when I arrived at practice and at games. He usually asked personal questions before getting into basketball. Then, he turned to helping individual players with personal basketball needs" (Nater & Gallimore, 2006, p. 113). Wooden invested in his players' lives beyond the court, wanting to know about their well-being and their families. Nater elaborated,

> Our relationship was born in his commitment to and steadfastness in teaching me, in responding to my concerns, and in careful tracking of my progress. Our relationship was forged slowly over time, and strengthened by the combination of the intense fire of his high expectations and my determination to learn. It matured when it became a 'learning relationship' and my respect for him caught up with his respect for me. (Nater & Gallimore, 2006, p. 18)

Figure 7

Social Relations



Note. This figure represents a deductive approach to intersecting elements of Ladson-Billings's Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and documented practices and principles of John Wooden. [1] From "Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy," by G. Ladson-Billings, 1995, *American Educational Research Journal*, *32*(3), p. 480 (https://doi.org/10.3102/00028312032003465); [2] From *Wooden: A Lifetime of Observations and Reflections on and off the Court* (pp. 117, 74, 77, 112, 114), by J. R. Wooden & S. Jamison, 1997, Contemporary Books; [3] From *You Haven't Taught Until They Have Learned: John Wooden's Teaching Principles and Practices* (pp. 9, 11, 113, 18, 6, 99), by S. Nater & R. Gallimore, 2005, Fitness International Technology; [4] From *Coach Wooden and Me: Our 50-year Friendship on and off the Court* (pp. 110, 195), by K. Abdul-Jabbar, 2018, Grand Central Publishing.

In hindsight, Nater recognized Wooden's respect for the athletes he worked with, and it was demonstrated in their fluid student-teacher relationship.

Closely related to this concept was Ladson-Billings's (1995) description of culturally responsive teachers who "demonstrate a connectedness with all of the students" (p. 480). Wooden applied this idea, in part, in his careful observations of students, studying them closely and holistically as full human beings. Abdul-Jabbar (2018) noted, "I had never met anyone with such an eye for detail and such commitment to his players as names rather than numbers" (p. 91). Knowing the students he worked with enabled Wooden to differentiate his approach to each, tailoring his social interactions and his instruction to optimize students' performance. Wooden noted this discernment directly while describing his work with star student athlete, Gail Goodrich, "With Gail, I had to be very careful. Language too strong would've caused him to go into his shell" (Nater & Gallimore, 2006, p. 13). On having a conversation with Wooden outside of basketball, Nater described his experience: "He made me feel like I was the most important person in the world" (Nater & Gallimore, 2006, p. 6). Nater also illustrated the social and emotional connection Wooden had with players, "beyond the game and the fundamentals, drills, playing, and competing, he loved being with us. He always considered us his 'boys.' 'Next to family, you are my family,' he said often. We also loved being with him" (Nater & Gallimore, 2006, p. 114) These observations from players and reflections from Wooden himself suggest that Wooden had a clear connectedness with the members of his team**,** one born from thoughtful observation and human connectedness.

Another way that Wooden demonstrated great achievement in social relations was how he "encouraged a community of learners rather than competitive, individual achievement" (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 481). To set the stage for this environment, he approached his team

with compassion: “I didn’t want to be a dictator to my players or assistant coaches or manager. For me, concern, compassion, and consideration were always priorities of the highest order” (Wooden & Jamison, 1997, p. 117). Wooden revealed his belief in the community of learners stating, “I valued a player who cared for others and could lose himself in the group for the good of the group. I believe that quality makes for an outstanding player” (Wooden & Jamison, 1997, p. 74). Although his recognition and value of the group are well documented, he also revealed, “I never wanted to take away their individuality, but I wanted that effort to be put forth to the welfare of the group as a whole. I don’t want to take away their thinking” (Nater & Gallimore, 2006, p. 99). In this way, Wooden was in line with Ladson-Billings’s (1995) observations about Culturally Relevant teachers who demonstrate with students that “one person’s success was the success of all and one person’s failure was the failure of all” (p. 481).

In the final area of this proposition, Ladson-Billings (1995) described teachers who “encourage students to learn collaboratively and be responsible for another” (p. 480). Once again, Wooden confirmed his adherence to this principle when he described the importance of knowing how to foster a collaborative environment with this claim, “Many who don’t think of themselves as leaders have the potential to become such if they understand the fundamentals of getting people to work together. Those fundamentals can be learned. I learned them” (Wooden & Jamison, 1997, p. 112). Abdul-Jabbar (2018) described another aspect of this area when he said, “He was playing jazz with his team, not just conducting from the outside” (p. 110). He was encouraging his players to work together to reach higher levels of achievement. Abdul-Jabbar pointed out Wooden’s satisfaction with the team while on a bus ride when players discussed various religions: “Hearing that we were laughing instead of shouting, [he] made his way back and joined us, but only to ask the occasional question, not to moderate or direct the

conversation. ... I saw a wide smile of joy, not at me, but at the team" (p. 195). Wooden highly approved of the way the team was able to engage respectfully with one another, fostering learning about the nuances of religion and spirituality. This collaborative learning provided space for some student-directed learning and encouraged the players to be responsible for one another.

The way that Wooden was not a part of the description of Ladson-Billings's (1995) definition of social relations was his lack of intention to create cultural competence and critical consciousness as a result of his work in this area. Ladson-Billings recognized that the teachers she studied created student groupings to help students make gains in cultural competence and critical consciousness because students could learn from one another. Wooden's motivation for this type of work came from valuing team cohesiveness and the ways that unanimity could impact how well they worked together on the court. In this way, Wooden's impetus differed from the original definition of Ladon-Billings. Still, his degree of commitment to fostering healthy and reciprocal social relations with student athletes is a significant finding.

Conceptions of Knowledge and John Wooden

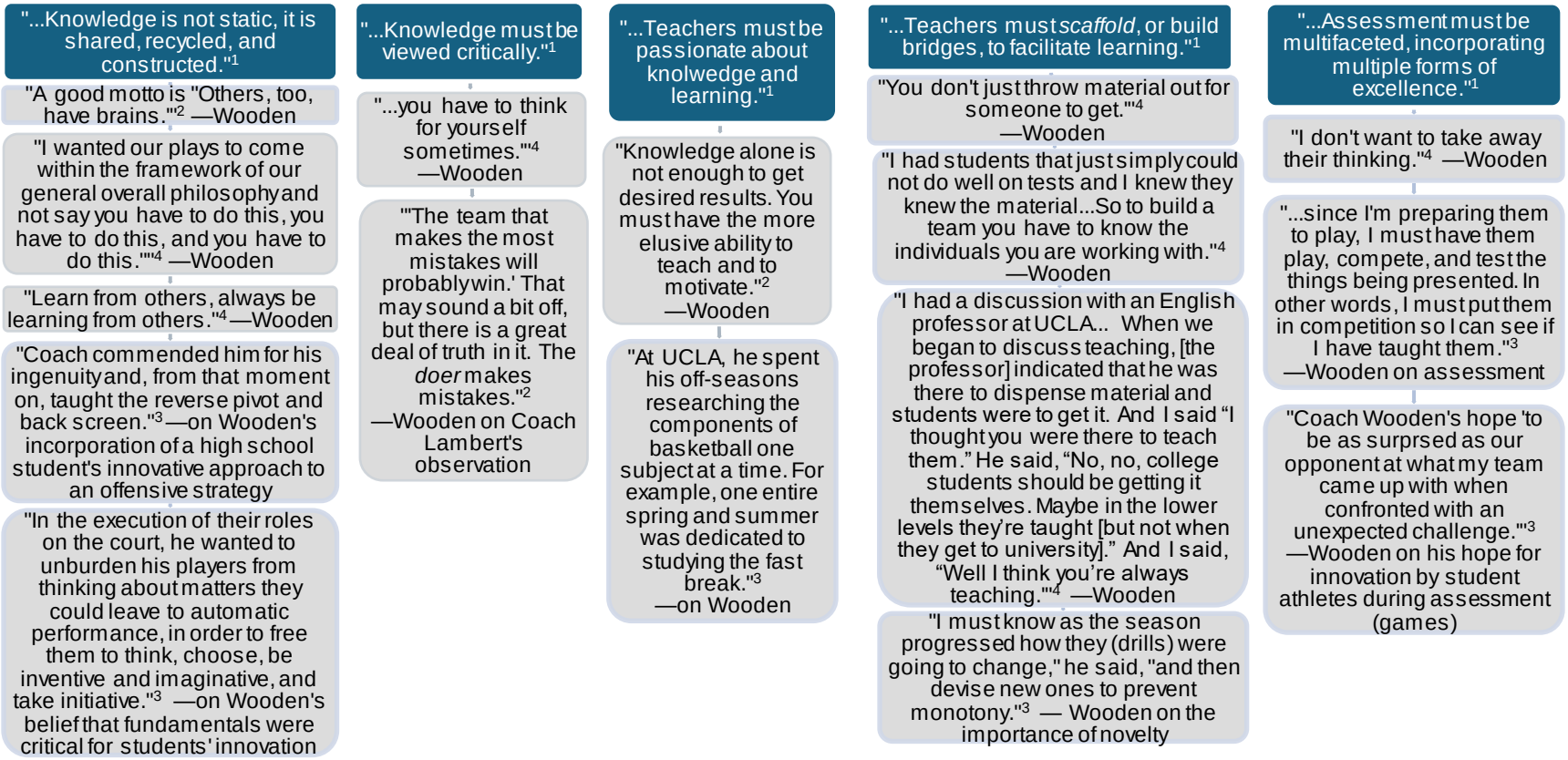
The final broad proposition described by Ladson-Billings (1995) detailed how culturally relevant teachers think about knowledge, curriculum, and assessment. She deduced that

> knowledge is not static, it is shared, recycled, and constructed; Knowledge must be viewed critically; Teachers must be passionate about knowledge and learning; [they] must scaffold, or build bridges, to facilitate learning; and assessment must be multifaceted, incorporating multiple forms of excellence. (p. 482)

In some areas, Wooden displayed parallel thinking to this broad proposition, and in other ways, he veered toward maintaining control of the knowledge (see Figure 8).

Figure 8

Conceptions of Knowledge



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Wooden agreed with the concept that knowledge is always evolving and that one can, and should, learn from others. He shared, "A good motto is 'Others, too, have brains'" (Wooden & Jamison, 1997, p. 117) and the more serious, "Learn from others, always be learning from others" (Wooden, 2001). Although he meticulously planned each minute of practice in advance, he also recognized student-athlete contributions as well as the importance of their decision making during competition. On the incorporation of a high school student's innovative approach to an offensive strategy, "Coach commended him for his ingenuity and, from that moment on, taught the reverse pivot and back screen" (Nater & Gallimore, 2006, p. 98). Wooden recognized the building and application of knowledge during games saying, "I wanted our plays to come from within the framework of our general overall philosophy and not say you have to do this, you have to do this, and you have to do this" (Gallimore & Tharp, 2004, p. 133). Nater and Gallimore (2006) noted the philosophy behind teaching fundamental skills during practice: "He wanted to unburden his players from thinking about matters they could leave to automatic performance, in order to free them to think, choose, be inventive and imaginative, and take initiative" (p. 99). In this way, he invited players to create new knowledge, skills, and plays together during competition.

Wooden also adhered to the aspect of Culturally Relevant teachers being passionate about knowledge and learning. He was relentless in his efforts to seek new knowledge: "At UCLA, he spent his off-seasons researching the components of basketball one subject at a time. For example, one entire spring and summer was dedicated to studying the fast break" (Nater & Gallimore, 2006, p. 110). When literature reviews failed to bring to light answers to the questions he developed, Wooden conducted empirical research that included diverse methods such as surveys and semistructured interviews, seeking the expertise of other college coaches and

sharing his learning with them. He also stated directly that "knowledge alone is not enough to get desired results. You must have the more elusive ability to teach and to motivate" (Wooden & Jamison, 1997, p. 122). Like Ladson-Billings, he recognized that even experts in knowledge needed additional skills to be effective educators.

Ladson-Billings (1995) pointed out that "teachers must scaffold, or build bridges, to facilitate learning" (p. 481) and not leave learning up to chance. Wooden heeded this notion in his thoughts and actions. He believed, "You don't just throw material out for someone to get" (Gallimore & Tharp, 2004, p. 132). He recounted a conversation with a UCLA professor,

> When we began to discuss teaching, [he] indicated that he was there to dispense materials and students were to get it. And I said, "'I thought you were there to teach them.' He said, 'No. No, college students should be getting it themselves.' ... And I said, 'Well, I think you're always teaching.'" (Gallimore & Tharp, 2004, p. 132)

Wooden felt the responsibility to teach in responsive, meaningful ways, which meant that he had to get to know his students well. He said, "I had students that just simply could not do well on tests and I knew they knew the materials. ... So to build a team you have to know the individuals you are working with" (Gallimore & Tharp, 2004, p. 126). Adding to this idea of the importance of considering the students when developing learning experiences, Wooden revealed, "I must know as the season progressed how [the drills] were going to change... and then devise new ones to prevent monotony" (Nater & Gallimore, 2005, p. 77). Once again, Wooden centered effective instruction on his knowledge of students. Furthering the point that Wooden emphasized the importance of his own teaching in students' ability to retain knowledge and skill, Nater and Gallimore (2005) popularized Wooden's assertion, "You haven't taught until they have learned,"

by titling their 2005 publication on Wooden's pedagogical practices with this statement. Wooden took full responsibility for his students' growth and learning.

Wooden also excelled, to some extent, in matching his approach to assessment to CRP. He believed in multiple forms of achievement. Researchers noted that "Coach Wooden's hope 'to be as surprised as our opponent at what my team came up with when confronted with an unexpected challenge" (Nater & Gallimore, 2006, p. 100), and such thinking reflects a wide variety of skills and knowledge players might use to demonstrate a high level of achievement. It also demonstrates a strong belief in the abilities of his students to think for themselves and make decisions during a game. Wooden believed in games as assessments. He said, "Since I'm preparing them to play, I must have them play, compete, and test the things being presented. In other words, I must put them in competition so I can see if I have taught them" (Nater & Gallimore, 2006, p. 109). Related to his real-world approach to assessment, he also supported their decision making on the court, stating, "I don't want to take away their thinking" (Gallimore & Tharp, 2004, p. 133). Wooden recognized that there was no one way to win a game.

There are areas in this broad proposition that do not necessarily match Wooden's beliefs. Ladson-Billings (1995) noted that in CRP, teachers encouraged students to be critical and ask why questions regarding the content and curriculum teachers offered. It is difficult to imagine Wooden actively encouraging students to be critical of the ways he designed his practices or one-on-one instruction of students. However, he did note, "You have to think for yourself sometimes" (Gallimore & Tharp, 2006, p. 133). He also pointed out his former coach, Piggy Lambert's, observation, "'The team that makes the most mistakes will probably win,' That may sound a bit off, but there is a great deal of truth in it. The doer makes mistakes" (Wooden &

Jamison, 1997. p. 73). This statement by Wooden indicates his belief in the iterative nature of teaching and learning and the ever-evolving construction of knowledge and skill.

Conclusion

The intersections between John Wooden's practice and CRP are not a veritable match. Critical areas that are missing lie within cultural competence and cultural critique. Wooden was not an activist for social justice or racial justice. He did not believe in speaking out publicly in support of meaningful change for historically oppressed groups and individuals. Instead, he believed in doing what was right according to the opinion of his God and family, writing strongly worded letters when need be and treating those in his care with respect and dignity. Having grown up in a White community and living in mostly White spaces, he began to develop an understanding of the oppressive experiences of Black athletes by spending time with Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and witnessing the remarks of White people in public. Still, in the areas defined as broad propositions of CRP, John Wooden displayed several behaviors and characteristics shared by educators who practice CRP, creating opportunities for educators in athletic spaces to consider the application of this theory in their particular contexts.

The process of analyzing the ways in which John Wooden's practice intersected with CRP highlighted examples of how this theory might appear in athletic contexts. Although this first focus of analysis was on a singular person who lived and practiced in a time before CRP had been theorized, it provided a rich description of the possible ways that athletic practitioners can apply CRP in their work. The following case studies sought to examine the degree to which current coach preparation programs use CRP for current students. This analysis differs in that I sought to understand the use of CRP at both individual educator levels and at an institutional level.

Case Studies: Coach Preparation Programs

Legendary Coach John Wooden used, unknowingly, certain elements and broad propositions of CRP. He deliberately fostered relationships with individual players, considered the contributions of players' skills and knowledge, and internalized a commitment to continual self-improvement. He also communicated high standards with high support for the athletes he worked with, approaching each with respect to each individual's needs and gifts. He did this during a time when few, if any, coach preparation programs were available.

Knowing that additional education is recommended by most studies that center improved conditions for student athletes, I explored the current educational landscape for aspiring and current athletic coaches. To further explore the use of CRP in athletic contexts, I sought to compare two athletic coach preparation programs: Happy Valley University and Red River University (both pseudonyms). I offer a description of each program, its context, and unique features, standing alone and within the framework of CRP. Then, I describe how they are different from one another.

Case Study 1: Happy Valley University

Situated in a large urban area in the western area of the United States, Happy Valley University covers more than a square mile of manicured land and over 100 buildings. It is a public institution that is part of a larger network of 4-year schools that also offers a bevy of graduate and advanced professional programs. As an R1 university, an institution at the highest level of dedication to robust research activity and doctoral candidates, it has a strong reputation as a reputable place to study. It also has a long tradition of competitive athletics and a history of celebrating athletes. It is in this context that the university offers a master's degree in athletic coaching and leadership in the Department of Education.

Context

This Master in Education degree program is a relatively new degree that has existed for less than a decade. The Department of Education cites the connection between coaching and teaching and frames the importance of pedagogical knowledge in both areas. The degree was born from a collaborative partnership with the athletic department and the Department of Education, and it continues to foster a reciprocal relationship between the organizations, informing one another regarding the latest in thinking, evidence, and practice that best supports students. It legitimizes the study of and research about the social, political, philosophical, and historical aspects of athletics and leadership. It emphasizes in-person instruction, and most classes are offered on weekday afternoons or evenings.

Students and Faculty

The in-person element of the program impacts who teaches and learns in the degree program. It hosts between 35 and 55 students at a given time, most of whom are graduate student athletes who learned about the program from teammates, coaches, or athletic administrators. Most are in their early 20s and live on or near the main campus. They balance training, competition, coursework, and other responsibilities related to their athletic endeavors (i.e., name, image, and likeness deals and part-time coaching work during summer camps). The student athletes are a diverse group in terms of race, gender, and socioeconomic status. One professor recounted a time when a Black male student said in class, “I’ve never seen so many Black students in one class before.” Other students are from the community and have a strong interest and sometimes experience in coaching. Some from this group moved to the community to be able to attend the program. There is a smaller number of students who are graduate assistants, working with one or more of the university’s sports teams as an assistant coach or athletic trainer

while attending school. This subgroup has some variety in age, gender, and race, but they are mostly White males in their 20s. Overall, the group of students has experience in athletic contexts as athletes and less experience in coaching.

Faculty members draw from a wide range of experiences, skills, and knowledge. More than half work full time in the Department of Education and have backgrounds in teaching, leadership, research, and administration with a focus on K-20 settings. The other teaching members are former and current athletic coaches, athletic administrators, researchers, and scholars. Many in this group are based in other institutions and work part time in the coaching and leadership degree program. Two thirds of the instructors are women, and of the whole teaching faculty, more than half are people of color.

Coursework and Degree Requirements

To earn the degree, students must successfully complete nine classes, a practicum, and a capstone. A total of 14 classes are offered, all in the realm of the social sciences. They include titles such as Philosophies of Coaching, Diversity and Leadership in Sport, Mental Health in Athletics and Coaching, History and Philosophy of Sport, and Ethical Issues in Sports and Data Analytics.

The practicum offers experience in a student's area of choice. This might be an experience coaching in K-12 settings or collegiate settings. They might also choose to work in a leadership role, one that is closer to their area of interest. Students take a class in conjunction with this practicum. The class offers opportunities for reflection, preparation for professional roles, and content in social issues in sports.

The capstone requires students to identify an issue in sports, offer research (existing and empirical), and present a possible solution to ameliorate the problem. In conjunction with this

course, students take an introduction to research methods to help design their research question(s), research methods, and an evaluation element. The capstone is developed with the support of faculty members and submitted for departmental review before awarding their degrees.

The coursework, practicum, and the capstone combine to fulfill the requirements for a degree. Generally, students are able to complete the degree in three or four quarters, or 1 year at a cost of about $22,000 for in-state students and $36,000 for out-of-state students.

Unique Features

There are several unique features of the program. The first is the program's focus on the social sciences. Students are exposed to a bevy of history, philosophy, leadership, and contemporary social issues in sports and athletics. Students are encouraged to apply this knowledge to their unique contexts. Assignments include empirical research, responses to readings, reflections, and group projects. There is less focus on the physical aspects of athletics and athletic coaching. Several courses have an element of leadership woven throughout the curriculum.

Another unique feature is the coteaching model represented in four of the courses. Each of these classes is taught by two different professors, but in each situation, one is from the education department and one is either an administrator in the athletics department or a former coach. This collaborative pedagogical model is important to note in subsequent findings regarding the degree of application of CRP as some professors mentioned their coteacher directly when interviewed. Additionally, the faculty meets once per quarter to exchange ideas and reflect on the teaching and learning from the quarter. One professor noted, "It has been the warmest,

most welcoming group of faculty I've ever met," indicating the high level of camaraderie shared by professors and lecturers.

Happy Valley University is also unique in that it centers the program on social justice as well as equity, diversity, and inclusion. The website itself referred to this mission, and the syllabi of individual classes often reflected this. Additionally, the education department showed a commitment to social justice on its main website:

> The degree program is informed by an ethic of social justice, where teaching and coaching in various contexts – collegiate sports, professional sports, K-12 schools, Boys and Girls Clubs and other community sports programs – are analyzed through the lends of equity, access, diversity, and human dignity

According to this statement, the conceptual frame of this programs sits in social justice, a thread that is common throughout their Department of Education.

Case Study 2: Red River University

Red River University is located in the Midwest and also has a long tradition of scholarly and athletic excellence. Its campus is sprawling, covering more than eight miles with ample greenspace, is dotted with trees, and houses over 500 buildings. Like Happy Valley, it is a public university that prides itself on diverse educational offerings. There is an emphasis on degree programs that prepare students for the workforce with offerings ranging from agriculture to the arts and sciences. Like Happy Valley, it is an R1 university with ample contributions to research. It also has a long history of competitive athletics and takes pride in its sports programs.

Context

The degree program, which sits in the Department of Kinesiology and the School of Education, is under the umbrella of an institute that focuses on the study of youth sports. This

institute offers opportunities for empirical research; ongoing professional learning for coaches, athletes, and leaders; newsletter publications; and certificates and degree programs in athletic coaching and athletic administration. The Master of Science in Sports Coaching degree has been in place for more than 20 years and has a long history of contributions to local and statewide communities through coaching clinics for local coaches. Unlike Happy Valley University, the program has little to no relationship with the university's athletic department. Prior to the 2020 global pandemic, program leaders had an interest in online learning for coaches, offering online classes in addition to occasional in-person work. Program leaders sought to promote online excellence, knowing that busy coaches and the distance required to travel made in-person education less likely. It has been a completely online degree program since 2020, and students occasionally return to the campus for graduation ceremonies.

Students and Faculty

Perhaps because of the online feature of the program, the students and faculty are somewhat geographically diverse. Students represent nearly every area of the country from Hawaii to the East Coast with occasional international students as well. The program typically hosts 15 to 20 students at a time, and most are working high school athletic coaches who have multiple commitments to work and family in addition to their degree goals. This demographic tends to represent a mature student body, and students are sometimes motivated to pursue a graduate degree by incentives like a pay increase or a job promotion. A smaller number of students are current student athletes or graduate student coaches at the university. The student body tends to represent more men than women, and although the population is diverse when compared to the general student body, one professor stated that most students "are mostly White." Another mentioned that the racial diversity they have can be attributed to the

participation of student athletes. Overall, most students have experience in coaching and a passion for coaching. This perspective informs the experience of students as a whole.

Nearly all of the faculty members have some experience in coaching athletes, and many have extensive education in kinesiology, sports management, and research. At least two members have experience teaching in K12 settings. Several members work for the university full time and were once students in the Department of Kinesiology where they teach. Others are based in multiple institutions and teach part time. Two faculty members grew up in countries outside the United States, offering an international perspective to the program, and one continues to live abroad for a portion of the year. There are slightly more men than women represented in the teaching group, and most are White.

Coursework and Degree Requirements

A degree in this program at Red River University requires students to successfully complete 11 courses, a practicum, and a capstone. A total of 19 courses is offered in the physical and psychosocial sciences as well as administration and leadership. Titles include Safety and Injury Control, Stages of Athlete Development, Skill Development and Motor Learning, Sociocultural Issues, Positive Youth Development, and Administration and Governance. Required coursework is divided into subsections, and students take a range of courses categorized as physical, psychosocial, administration, and a practicum.

The practicum is based on a coaching experience, often in a student's own professional role in a K12 setting. The accompanying practicum course offers students a chance to analyze their practice in that setting, as well as the practice of other students, through shared video, data analysis, dialogue, and reflection. The goal is to heighten coaches' awareness of their work with

athletes and create more intentional interactions and behaviors so that they can be the coach they want to be.

The capstone is often a portfolio of students' work from various courses, with additional analysis and reflection. It can also be a study or an original product like a training manual. The capstone is prepared independently by the student and then presented orally to select faculty members.

Similar to the degree offered at Happy Valley University, the coursework, practicum, and the capstone combine to meet the degree requirements. Students study for an average of five semesters or about 2 years. Cost is considered a limiting factor for working professionals at a total of about $29,000 per student.

Unique Features

There are a number of unique features of the program and the teaching community. There is an emphasis on the physical sciences and the study of movement as well as knowledge of psychology, motivation, and social issues. The practicum focuses solely on sports coaching, and professors value students having coaching experience before their degree work. There is a separate degree program for sports administration and leadership, so the student body is focused singularly on athletic coaching.

The program leaders place a high value on students having coaching experience before they enter the degree. One faculty member said,

> I'll often almost try to dissuade a student if they're 22 [and] just graduated ... and they're trying to figure out what they want to do in life. I usually try to push [them to] volunteer somewhere and get some experience with it first because a master's degree is not required to enter the coaching profession.

They also stated,

> The students that generally do the best in our program are people who come in with at least 3 of 4 years of work experience out after a graduate degree. They know how to balance a schedule and that for them an online program is the only way they're going to get a master's degree. So they're not seeing an online program as second prize.

Students' experience as a coach is a central piece of analysis and reflection.

Among the faculty, there is a high degree of collaboration, support for one another, and relational trust (Tschannen-Moran, 2014). This trust contributes to instructors' willingness to be vulnerable and share their teaching challenges with colleagues. Faculty meetings are held weekly over Zoom for 2 hr. Instructors discuss coursework, students, and any challenges they might face. Subsequently, this protected time supports continual cycles of improvement for not only individual instructors but for the program itself. Together, instructors and leaders make adjustments to coursework, and the program, as they see fit.

The online format includes a combination of online, asynchronous work, and occasional live online meetings that are scheduled with current students' availability in mind. With fewer opportunities for students to be in community with one another and to be in dialogue, professors have used more group projects to build community and increase student engagement with one another. Patrick reflected, "It's hard when you're working all online. But this year, we are trying to look at ways of creating that bravery and safety in the beginning of the class."

Working online offers another important feature. Because the coursework is conducted with digital tools, students stay in their respective communities and continue to serve those communities. This is different from a traditional program in which students might relocate and potentially reduce time with their family and leave their professional roles. Pursuing this

advanced degree online enables individuals to keep close ties with family and community and perhaps makes them more likely to continue to serve the community in a more intentional and informed way.

Regarding issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion, their website stated,

> In our role of educating future sport leaders, we have purposefully infused principles of diversity, equity and inclusion across our curriculum in order to ensure that they have the necessary skills and cultural competence required to work with all sport stakeholders.

Although the program does not emphasize a social justice lens, it does state its goal of producing "culturally competent practitioners."

Elements of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy in Athletic Coach Preparation Programs

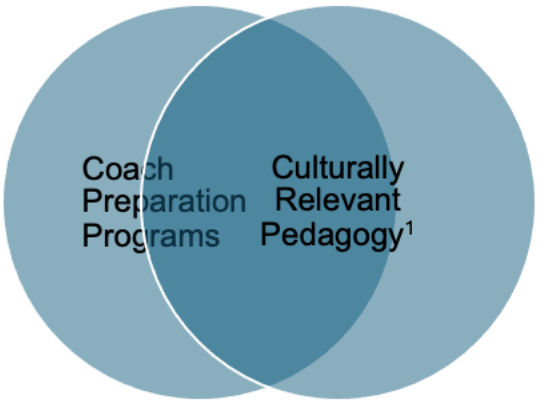
Within these two programs, there is evidence of CRP. The most apparent application of this theory resides in the three broad propositions: conceptions of self and others, the manner in which social relations are structured, and conceptions of knowledge. There is also a degree of the elements of CRP in the programs; areas of student achievement, cultural competence, and cultural critique are all at work (see Figure 9). However, like the findings regarding John Wooden, the elements of CRP are generally not as apparent as the broad propositions. I present my findings of comparison within the programs by grouping them according to the areas with the most comprehensive evidence of their use in the coach preparation programs.

Because my findings reveal that the two programs are more alike than different in their demonstrations of CRP, I present them according to the most prominent themes found in both sites. The only possible difference between the cases is that Case 2 offered more uniformity in their responses as they relate to CRP. In Case 1, there was a wider variety of responses with three

participants expressing closer alignment to CRP and two participants expressing practices and thinking that were less aligned with CRP.

Figure 9

Intersections Between Two University Coach Preparation Programs and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy



Note. Adapted from "Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy," by G. Ladson-Billings, 1995, *American Educational Research Journal, 32*(3), 465–491. https://doi.org/10.3102/00028312032003465

Conceptions of Self and Others in Athletic Coach Preparation

In Gloria Ladson-Billings's (1995) seminal work, "Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy," she described teachers who practiced CRP as believing that all students were capable of academic success and viewed their teaching as unpredictable and ever evolving. They also saw their work as a way to invest in the community. She also theorized that their work was a version of the Freirean notion of "teaching as mining" and that important knowledge can be constructed with the students themselves (Ladson-Billings, p. 477). Educators in both athletic programs described applying these beliefs in consistent and deliberate ways.

Educators Take Responsibility for Student Learning

The first indicator of this proposition in available coach preparation programs was a general responsiveness to students' needs and interests and a willingness to adjust and change to

meet those needs. Coach educator Sarah, from Case 1, stated, "It's up to you [the instructor] to figure out what makes that student tick and to inspire that student to want to learn." Educator Hannah, from Case 1, extended this responsibility of the instructor by emphasizing, "We have to ... take ownership for it if our students aren't learning, there's something that we don't know about them that we're not meeting their needs or have some blind spots." These teachers put the responsibility of learning squarely on themselves. Coach educator Ann, from Case 2, further emphasized the importance of seeing the students and how they are responding to material:

> For a teacher, learning about the students and how they learn and what they want to learn about and then how that material impacts their practice is to me, the point of my position. It would be easy for me just to put a lecture up on our learning management course, a 20-minute lecture on motivational theories. That'd be very easy for me. But if [they] didn't know that they identified with one theory more than the other, if they could put that into practice, if they could see why we need to know theory in general, then I don't think learning's occurring.

Coach educator Michael, from Case 2, emphasized, "We try to listen to the needs of our students. They talk about the challenges that they face in their coaching context, and we also try to attend to the greater challenges within our own teaching." This balance between students' learning needs and professors' teaching needs was reiterated in terms of reflective practice for teachers.

Educators Commit to Reflective Practice

The professors in these programs commit to continual learning and reflective practice for themselves. Coach educator Hannah, from Case 1, stated, "I'm still learning and that's what I want them to do. ... We ask our students to be reflective practitioners. We as a faculty have to be reflective practitioners as well." Coach educator Robert, from Case 1, shared an example of a

common practice between him and his partner teacher to increase this reflective practice: "We do a 5- to 7- minute like, 'What worked, what didn't work, what should we think about for next class, what came up that you think is good?'" This weekly practice happens along with using students' reflective journal assignments to gather data about how students are processing information:

> We try to have something ... that allows for critique of either a reading of something we've presented in class. And I think those critiques allow us to get student feedback in real time. [They] give us an idea of where students are at with the class material and with the way the class is functioning.

This use of current data about students is just one example of their reflective practice. Educator Ann, from Case 2, offered a specific example of this reflective practice in action:

> It's funny because in my positive youth development class, I'm always talking about how you can't assume they're learning life skills in sport. You actually have to teach them and evaluate if they can use them and how they can translate. And yeah, I wasn't doing that as an instructor.

This demonstrates a willingness to be vulnerable learners. Some instructors also consider the ways in which they have made significant and profound changes in their work over time. Educator Linda, also a retired coach, reflected,

> Early in my coaching, when it was all about winning, I was a transactionalist. Yes, of course I took care of my athletes. I'm proud of how I took care of them. But they will all tell you, if you didn't hustle and you didn't have a good attitude, she's going to lose her shit. And I regret that. ... I'm a work in progress too.

This trend of lifelong reflection and learning was apparent throughout the conversations with athletic coach preparation instructors at both sites.

Educators Learn in a Community of Practice

In this same spirit, several professors discussed their ongoing learning thanks to their colleagues. Although an experienced teacher and researcher, Professor Beatrice, from Case 1, was new to the program in recent years. After her first faculty Zoom meeting to debrief a period of teaching, Beatrice remarked,

> I was like, "You've got to be kidding. That's the coolest thing. Wow. People who care about teaching and who care about learning what other people are doing and the ideas I might be able to get from other people. Wow."

The enthusiasm expressed perhaps suggests a contrast with her experience in other departments. Robert, from Case 1, described an ongoing group text messaging chain with several other professors: "Almost every week we have a topic in there where we're just firing away, and then ___ is like, 'Put this away so we can talk about it in class.'" This ongoing dialogue, engagement, and learning helps to inform their teaching. Professor Linda, from Case 1, described her coteacher as an important source of meaningful learning: "She created conditions where I could ask her anything. I could ask her. I could be so dumb in something ... she never made me feel dumb." Professor Frank on being a newer professor at Red River University shared,

> The faculty members in our program, they're really kind and really helpful and they understand what I experience, what I am experiencing right now. So they try to give me ... detailed background and information.

By practicing shared learning among themselves, the instructors rehearsed the same environments they aspired to create for their students.

Educators Are Learning Partners With Students

The professors believe in the Freirean notion of teaching as mining and learning side-by-side with students. They often view themselves as guides rather than establishing a traditional hierarchy of professor over student. Beatrice, from Case 1, elaborated,

> There are languages in which the word for teaching and learning is the same. And that's sort of how I feel about it. I know that every time I get to teach a class, I grapple with the material anew. I'm as much a student too... So we share in the process.

Some professors actively work to flatten the hierarchy in an effort to distribute power and increase student agency. Robert, from Case 1, explained, "The first thing I think [we] do or try to do is remove the hierarchy of myself being an administrator in the department. ... In this class I view my role as an educator, as a thought partner, as a collaborator." This professor was explicit about framing the learning experience for students as more of a guide than an authority. From Red River University, Professor Frank stated, "For me, we ... learn [from] each other, especially for the graduate level courses. I learn from the student[s] and then I develop my class. I improve my class based on that." The intent to support students in their own unique development is also evident in documents. Coach education professors are eager to learn with students.

Educators Respect Students and Their Experiences

When discussing students, there was no language of lacking. Coach educator Robert, from Case 1, remarked,

> When I hear our student athletes speak about their experiences and speak about some of the struggles that they have and some of the challenges from a negative perspective, but also some of the positive achievements, it's just remarkable to me. I don't think people

> realize the amount of time, energy, and effort that it takes to be a student athlete in any sport.

The respect and admiration of students were evident. Ann, from Case 2, reflected this when she observed, "Coaches are a unique bunch. They learn a lot from discussions with other coaches, observing other coaches, learning from their role models in the coaching world or other top coaches." She acknowledged how different the coach population might be from other learners. Professor Patrick from Red River posited,

> One of the main things that I've learned is how little I know and the humility to actually realize that you can know a lot of stuff, but if you're not able to see it through the eyes of ... the coach experiencing the system, we can pack on a lot of education to them, but it needs to be filtered through their eyes in order to make the connection with the athletes that they're serving.

Patrick recognized the need for information and skills to be contextualized and personalized for optimum impact. This idea was also emphasized in the syllabi gathered. One from Happy Valley stated, "The purpose of the course is to help students develop their own, authentic and intentional leadership philosophy for leading with purpose and integrity all while cherishing the dignity and contributions of all persons."

In this way, professors intend for the students to develop their own ideas, a surfacing of their unique knowledge and skills. They do not propose to impose their own ideas as the only ones acceptable for student use. Instead, they value the unique identities of others and the reflection involved in student learning, inviting them to "[reflect] on their positionalities – their identities, experiences, and perspectives" as stated in a course syllabus. To the extent represented

by professors and in these documents, the coach education community at these sites believed that students are capable, much like Ladson-Billings (1995) described teachers who practice CRP.

Cultural Critique in Athletic Coach Preparation

In addition to coach education instructors' conceptions of self and others, Ladson-Billings's (1995) third element of CRP, cultural critique, was the most prominent. Ladson-Billings described teachers who "themselves recognize social inequalities and their causes" (pp. 476-477). She also pointed to the ways that these educators sought to support students to "recognize, understand, and critique social inequities" (p. 476). The teachers "engaged in ... a deliberate attempt to influence how and what knowledge and identities are produced within and among [students]" (p. 477). These educators actively sought ways to structure opportunities to empower students while educating them about current and past oppressions. To some extent, these two coach education programs sought to do the same for their graduate students, current and potential athletic coaches.

Teaching Social Issues in Sport

Professors in both programs spoke of the importance and the challenge of teaching social issues in athletics. Michael, a White man from Case 2, discussed the history of the relationship between the critique of social inequities and kinesiology:

> The summer of 2020 really made it apparent the importance of a sociocultural issues course, which is always typically a part of a kinesiology curriculum. It's rarely a major feature. When I talk to my more sociologically inclined colleagues, they're kind of like, that should be the center of your curriculum. And I'm like, it's tough to convince physiologists that that's true.

Despite the challenge to find space in the curriculum, Michael stressed the importance of recognizing these issues and addressing the related challenges in sports contexts:

> We have the myth of meritocracy in sports. And because of that, it really clouds our ability to understand systematic biases. There's systemic biases and problems that pervade sport just like any other social institution... sport is not insulated from these factors. And having an attitude that sport is an escape or a sport is immune from these issues is not pragmatic and it's not realistic ... issues tend to follow athletes from the locker room onto the field and from their lives. They don't just sort of magically disappear. And of course, you can have power dynamics within the sports setting that sport practitioners need to recognize.

Professors have some understanding of the need to address these issues in sports, even with the challenges they face. Ann, a White woman from Case 2, framed her struggle to convince students to engage in critical critique:

> The tricky part is making sure or trying to help them see the value in learning about social issues and sport and their role as the coach. ... I think it's hard sometimes to reflect on your own privilege and your own positionality, and how that influences your work. ... It takes some vulnerability. And ... it acts as a barrier to some students to really engage in the material.

Although it might be difficult for some students to be vulnerable and engage, Instructor Frank, an Asian American man from Case 2, discussed teaching issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion when he shared,

> When I got feedback from the students, they said that those [topics] are really huge [for them], huge for knowledge. Because in the past, they didn't think about that. ... But [now]. they know how to connect their experiences to the knowledge.

Michael, from Case 2, extended the idea of students' appreciation of this learning when he shared,

> Students really want to talk about [social issues] but don't have a language to talk about [them]. And I think some students find that that becomes a cornerstone or a centerpiece in their coaching or sports leadership. ... It teaches them things that they were maybe too scared to ask about, or conversations that they were maybe too scared to have with teammates or their coaches don't have the language to talk about it. ... They can see that there are problems. So if you talk to a football player or a football coach and you're going to tell me there's no racial dynamics within a D1 football team, are you kidding?

Michael purported that when students take a class that explains the social phenomenon of what they're seeing, they can better understand the things that are happening to them or the things that are happening between their teammates or their coaches.

The Importance of Teaching Social Issues in Sport

Michael, from Case 2, also noted the context of sports in the United States as an "inherently small conservative institution, and so you're not having dialogues about that kind of stuff. Most teams are not having dialogues." He pointed out that just having the conversations in class can be a risk yet "we can talk about any number of topics that would get me assassinated in the state of Texas and/or Florida. But proudly here in [home state], we don't have laws that ban that kind of shit." He pointed out that the sports community itself, as well as the political climate

of a community, can hinder athletes' and coaches' ability to have conversations about social issues.

Hannah, a biracial woman from Case 1, emphasized the importance of teaching these issues and making sure that others are confident in their cultural critique:

> Coaches are no longer in a position, leaders are no longer in a position, teachers are no longer in a position to stand on the sidewalk. You're in a position of power, you are responsible for scores of young people and adults and creating structures where they can thrive. As a transformative coach, you've got to step into that.

Michael added, "We can't take for granted that people are just developing and understanding of these principles. They're not thinking about it. They're not being exposed to 'em anywhere else but a formal course." Both programs have professors who support explicit teaching to develop cultural critique in their students.

White Professors' Fear When Teaching Issues of Race and Power

Despite a willingness on the part of most professors to engage in topics that will increase the critical consciousness of their students, two instructors mentioned the fear they carry in relationship to this. Ann, a White professor from Case 2, discussed her need for planning and structure and how it relates to class dialogue about issues of race and power. She compared her style of teaching in areas of social justice to that of a colleague and acknowledged her fear of "what might come up" during class dialogue:

> Maybe he has a loose agenda in his head of how it'll go, but for me, it's like, I need a PowerPoint presentation. I need the questions ready to go. I need to know what time I'm going to be at. So yeah, trying for me to be more open to just steering the conversation and not being fearful of what might come up is something for me.

Additionally, Michael, another White professor from Case 2, stated of his teaching about sociopolitical issues, "I'm always afraid it's going to happen where somebody gets really, really upset and there's a big controversy or something. Somebody says something offensive, and it's not handled properly." This idea of fear of what might happen was a thread among White professors.

Variety of Student Interest in Social Issues in Athletics

This fear of the unknown is perhaps fueled by their experiences with some students who are unwilling to engage with these topics. Ann, from Case 2, described a student who signed up for the course that focused on social justice through sports but then changed her mind after reading the syllabus, saying, "This isn't a topic that's relevant to my work." Ann responded, "Well, you know, it's rolled into everyone's work." Ann reflected further on students' interest, saying "I think there is a percentage that is interested. I think it's small right now, but it is growing. I've seen more interest in the last few years than I have before." In contrast, Hannah, from Case 1, observed that in her context "the women always want to talk about it. Always. They are all in," and described the level of vulnerability female students display when discussing how gender-based issues have affected them, their identities, and their career trajectories. Hannah described her experience with a small number of students:

> I had two White students only a couple of years ago, one was a football player, one was an assistant coach. When we talk about issues of race, they 100% shut down, would not participate, the eye rolling, the leaning back in the chair. The body language was off the charts. One of them wrote in his paper that he felt that he's been discriminated against in his coaching career because departments hire Black coaches who are less skilled and talented as he is. He wrote that in a paper. I have the paper. I kept the paper.

Her surprise and disappointment that such an idea might be expressed in her class emphasized her commitment to teaching coaches about the sociocultural issues that impact athletes every day. Ann, from Case 2, also shared that the group she struggles to reach the most are the graduate assistants, who tend to be athletes with little coach training. She said,

> I find it very hard to get them to be open to new ideas. Instead, the culture of the sport they're in kind of drives what they believe ... their belief in their head coach ... and the way things are done are more important to them than maybe the theory and the research and the contents of our classes.

According to these professors, a minority of students are less open to the conversation and to learning about social issues that impact athletes.

Educators Create Brave Spaces in Coach Preparation

To ensure that conversations do happen in class, professors from both institutions mentioned the relationship between positionality and creating a brave space. Patrick, a White man from Case 2, emphasizes to students, "Don't leave your identity at the door and try to ... agree with people. ... We want to make sure that you don't leave your identity and your ego and your thing at the door. Bring it in." He posited that acknowledging personal identity is a strength when having critical conversations, and they can only happen in the right environment. In a similar vein, Robert, a Black man from Case 1, acknowledged the ways that positionality impacts his everyday conversations with others: "At the end of the day, the conversations are all shaped around our positionality." He described how his conversations with the coaches he works with, a heterosexual White male, a Black female, and a gay Asian man are all very different because their unique identities allow for this difference. These professors acknowledged the role of positionality and power in dialogue.

In the documents of these institutions, there is also evidence to suggest that cultural critique is a planned element of the curriculum. From Happy Valley University, one syllabus has an explicit goal "to understand that decisions of coaches and sport management professionals may be shaped and influenced by social, cultural and political forces and contexts." Another outlined specific questions for discussion, including, "To what extent did racism impact sports? Why were girls and women generally discouraged from participating in serious athletic competition? What impact did Title IX have on girls and women's sports?" Another syllabus framed the importance of reading ahead of class time and explained, "This format affords students the opportunity to collectively interrogate the readings" and discuss students' observations during class.

Both coach education programs promote a degree of cultural critique as described by Ladson-Billings (1995). They both seek to "help students to recognize, understand, and critique social inequities" in their coursework. Both seek to create the conditions necessary for dialogue that addresses issues of power and privilege, issues of equity, while growing students' agency (p. 476).

Social Relations in Athletic Coach Preparation

The area of developing social relations with students is the third greatest area of alignment for the two sites and CRP. Ladson-Billings (1995) described this broad proposition about teachers who "maintain fluid student-teacher relationships, demonstrate a connectedness with all of the students, develop a community of learnings, and encourage students to learn collaboratively and be responsible for another" (p. 480). The spirit of these approaches aimed to increase the previously stated goals of increasing student achievement while also raising cultural competence and critical consciousness.

Developing Strong Relationships With Students

There is evidence to suggest that the professors in both programs seek to build meaningful relationships with students and demonstrate a connectedness with them. Professor Hannah from Happy Valley University remarked about working with students, "It's really about social interaction and the relationships we build with one another around the content." Linda, also from Happy Valley agreed, "It all starts with connection with another human." Professor Robert, from Case 1, described the impact of these relationships when he said,

> I can't tell you how many times ... that a student athlete who I've had a good relationship that's been in my class has told me, "Hey, I'm glad I was in your class because I didn't know you well. I see you around. But having you teach my class allowed me to open up to my teammates and say, 'Hey, [professor's name] is somebody that you can go to and have conversations." They felt comfortable telling their teammates that after the discussions and conversations that we had in class.

Coach educator Patrick, from Case 2, addressed the issue of sometimes working with a student or an athlete who might be difficult to reach noting, "It's the same thing. We just have to find ways to dig a little bit deeper and create a little bit different or stronger relationship. ... There is nothing more important than that." Also from Red River University, Michael discussed social relations as a result of professors' advising roles and important teaching and learning relationships: "If they're not getting that from me in a course, they're getting that attention through phone calls, through text messages." Hannah, from Happy Valley added, "We provide our cell phone numbers to everyone, and we actually support the students in other activity outside of class." She also acknowledged the variety of work they engage in with students:

> I've been helping students who want to get their papers that they've written for classes published. I will meet with them off the clock to talk about their work. They want to dig deeper, they want to do advocacy work, so we try to connect them up with other people in the industry too. In that way, again, you build this relationship of trust and support that transcends, we are the teachers and you're the students. No, we're actually part of this community. We're all trying to do very similar work as a collective, even as you're doing your individual work as a student and a potential professional in the field.

Her statement connects to the idea that CRP supports a true community of learners in which everyone learns from each other; even the teachers are learners.

Collaborative Student Learning in Coach Preparation

Regarding students learning collaboratively, especially in areas of critical consciousness, Red River University's Michael described what learning collaboratively about topics related to social justice can look like during a class session:

> Students routinely approach that with an informed curiosity that the ability to learn from me as the instructor, but also to learn from their peers. And it's sort of like what you're teaching as the instructor is kind of like an icebreaker because then a peer comes in, especially if you're talking about a White student learning from a non-White student or a straight student learning from a gay student or something of that nature, that content knowledge comes through and it's kind of like an icebreaker. And then in its void, somebody shares a personal experience, and then suddenly it finally hits that student who's like, they weren't hearing what the person had to say, but now that there's been some sort of formal education about it, some language, some concepts; it gives room for that personal experience to make an impact. And so having some sort of an educational

structure that allows for both that formal learning definitions of terms, theories and things like that, but also for sharing between students, that is kind of a tried-and-true approach. Robert, from Case 1, described an example of this kind of interaction when he spoke of a class dialogue about transgender athletes. He stated, "This student sat quietly and then said, 'Hey, when we're saying these things and making these judgments, I just want everybody to know I have a sister that identifies as trans.'" Robert noted that the story the student shared "helped other people to see that when we are othering people, we don't realize that there may be people that we are close to, love, and respect, that have folks that are impacted by this as well."

Developing Social Relations Online and in Person

Professors from Red River University discussed the challenges of developing social relationships in online settings. Michael stated, "The social connections between students will not naturally happen in an online program. They have to be forced or by design of instruction." To support this effort, the professors began to implement more group work, saying, "We've seen the social connections between students have really gotten a lot better just by ... doing more group work." Also from Red River, Professor Ann noted about her students, "They all seem to connect really well ... as a result of all these group projects that we started" and mentioned that students text one another on the side to "bounce ideas off of each other."

Evidence of intentionally developing social relations with students and between them was also observed in the site-based documents. One class syllabus from Happy Valley University stated, "Active involvement and participation in class discussions and presentations is crucial and is expected from everyone. Part of your grade depends on the value that you add to the class and to your group discussions." Individual contributions to the class are critical. Also from Happy Valley, "We invite everyone to help us create a welcoming environment that is respectful

of all forms of diversity, including diversity in parenting and caretaking status." This syllabus went on to describe the underrecognized labor of caretaking and how this responsibility often falls on women. They acknowledged that plans for caregiving can fail and stated, "It is perfectly acceptable to bring children to class in these situations." In a Red River syllabus, one of the student expectations was to be "respectful, understanding, tolerant, and open-minded with respect to the content, your instructor, and your peers." Both coach education programs show evidence of valuing the manner in which social relations are constructed.

Conceptions of Knowledge in Athletic Coach Preparation

The fourth area of CRP that appears in these programs is a broad proposition, Conceptions of Knowledge. In this area, Ladson-Billings (1995) defined knowledge as something that evolves and is created between students and the teacher. She also framed this area in terms of viewing knowledge critically. This framework provides an empowering environment for students to be active, critical learners. Both programs demonstrate a degree of CRP in this broad proposition.

Dialogue as a Means to Develop Knowledge

One of the strongest ways that conceptions of knowledge is evident in coach preparation is the value of the exchange of ideas in dialogue. Professors plan for this dialogue and welcome it as a source of important learning in which knowledge is created together. Regarding setting up these dialogic learning experiences, coach educator Hannah, from Case 1, described class session openings:

> Inclusion activities are part of our everyday practice, and we don't just have the students participate in those. They're not really getting-to-know-you activities, but you get to know the person as it relates to the content, and we participate with alongside them. We

> don't give them things to do and then sit back and watch them do it, we're actually weaving ourselves into all of the activities.

The participation from instructors positions them as coconstructors alongside students in the knowledge building. Additionally, instructors recognized the ways that they learn during these sessions. Instructor Sarah, from Case 1, remarked on a specific conversation during class:

> The whole discussion about transgender women completing in women's sports, and they have very strong opinions about it one way or the other. And then you start talking about it and they go, "Oh, I never thought about that. Oh, I never thought about that." And so to be able to, as an educator, to ... finesse my questions ... and how I ask the question to invite dialogue and invite thought is the important part.

Professor Robert, from Case 1, admitted, "The organic class discussion is the highlight of our classes for me," because of the unpredictability and the meaningful participation of students. Sarah remarked on the responsibility of professors to offer dialogue: "I feel it's incumbent on us as educators to truly invite the conversation."

Educators Value Students' Knowledge and Experience

The instructors recognized the expertise of their students, many of whom are current coaches or student athletes. Professor Beatrice, from Case 1, admitted, "They are in a position to know much more than I am, so I have to respect their observations on that for sure because they're the ones who are experiencing it." Coach educator Frank from Red River University remarked, "There are older [students who] have more life experiences ... than I do [in] coaching. ... I apply what I learn from the students to the discussion topic. That way, they really want to discuss the topic."

In addition to professors learning from students, several shared the importance of students sharing their own unique perspective, Hannah, from Case 1, acknowledged, "Coaching ... is such a human endeavor, we invite you to bring your experiential knowledge to bear on what the research says and then, create your own kind of pedagogy around coaching." In this way, she asks students to make meaning for themselves. Ann, from Case 2, recalled the importance of drawing from multiple experiences,

> Last semester, we had a ... softball player, a strength and conditioning coach, and then a hockey coach. So they get to see these coaching practices work in different contexts, which I think sometimes coaches think you can only learn from coaches in your same sport. But I think that having that diverse coaching background and seeing different sports. So you can kind of get more out of that, I think, than just seeing the same things in each sport.

Educators Use a Variety of Assessments

The programs use varied assessments to monitor and evaluate student learning. During Red River University's practicum, students set three specific goals for themselves. Patrick explained that they choose one goal and "have someone film them so we can see the participants, we can hear what they're saying and we can see the coach explaining." Afterward, the coach self-reflects on the video and the goal through a 3- to 5-min recording. They also receive feedback from peers and the instructor, creating knowledge together with the student in control of specifics of the process. Additionally, Professor Michael, also from Case 2, planned for another assessment for a book club. He explained,

> Last year we read *Running While Black* ... having students break into groups of three or four and then having routine discussions on chapters ... and then recording those. ... That

has been a great sort of low-stakes way to get students to engage with some of the course concepts without me being around.

The absence of a professor during the conversations, the assessment, creates a different environment for the group assessment. Ann, from Case 2, added that she strives to cocreate knowledge so that students do not, "just [give] me routine answers on a quiz." In her positive youth development through sports class, students study developmental theory and then work together in groups to create developmental checklists. Then, students "take that and they find a coach and they go observe the coach." Afterward, the students "critique a coach who maybe they thought was doing a great job, and then that cognitive dissonance comes up. ... They get to challenge their beliefs about that coach using the research in theory." Asking students to reflect and contextualize information is a common formative or summative exercise as well. Linda, from Case 1, noted about long-term athletic development, "this is so incredibly relevant for students because they can contextualize for themselves, they can ... think about the next steps of identity and healing, even, if they need to." The variety of assessments in multiple contexts with student choice at the center provides some evidence of professors' ability to build connections to facilitate learning, much like what is described in CRP.

Within the documents of these institutions, course syllabi confirmed the use of multiple forms of assessment. One syllabus listed the potential contents of a portfolio. This included "Resume & Cover Letter; Pictures/Images/Video clips that represent your philosophy; Documentation of Professional Accomplishments; Practicum Assignment; Documentation of Professional Development attended; Your Written Work; Video examples of your practice."

Another course syllabus described an assignment in which students select a popular film and analyze "the underlying ethical dilemmas of the coaches" using a combination of film clips

and videos of their commentary. Another course offered three different options for topics and tasks for a written assignment. Throughout these documents, attention to personalization, reflection, and steps toward achievement were emphasized.

Cultural Competence in Athletic Coach Preparation

In the second element of CRP, Ladson-Billings (1995) described educators who encourage students to be themselves in dress, language, and communication while also achieving at high levels. In the athletic coach preparation sites investigated, this area was one of the least represented. Still, there was evidence to suggest that cultural competence does exist in these coach education programs.

Educators Agree That Cultural Competence Is Needed in Sports Contexts

Several coach educators discussed the need for cultural competence in athletic contexts. Hannah, from Case 1, noted the importance of the general call to improve thinking about issues of culture in coaches:

> In the sports industry, it is very, very much still a very traditional do-as-I-say, win-at-all-costs industry. Yes, we have seen ... abusive environments in women's gymnastics or synchronized swimming, against LGBTQ football players and basketball players. We see these kinds of isolated incidents, but it doesn't change the way coaching happened. ... It's our responsibility to shift the way novice coaches go into the field thinking about equity, thinking about diversity, thinking about inclusion, and also thinking about disrupting systems that perpetuate winning at all costs for the almighty dollar.

Frank, from Case 2, noted from a personal perspective, "It's the inclusion issue," and explained how he had experienced being othered in his own department, "I try to explain what I experienced, what I felt when I was a stranger in my organization. ... as a coach you don't know

[what] all your kids think, experience." Robert, from Case 1, expanded the importance saying, "the goal ... is that ... students are taking this out into the world and taking these concepts and taking that cultural competency and embedding that in the work that they do."

Students' Willingness to Grow in Cultural Competence Varies

On the level of interest students show, Linda, from Case 1, remarked, "So many of our athletes now are seeing their coaching or they're competing as an opportunity to expand a bigger message." On the motivation to learn about cultural competence at her institution, Ann, from Case 2, said,

> I think it's related to age. Our more experienced coaches are a lot more open and are more understanding of why we need to be culturally competent cause they've seen that it happens. ... Our younger students ... just don't put as much value or emphasis on that.

The application of cultural competence by students seems to vary, according to professors.

Regarding some of the ways these concepts are taught, Patrick, from Case 2, described an early exercise in which

> we had them make [their] profile, describe ... your political leanings or what shaped your beliefs or whatever. We didn't challenge people to come up with all kinds of things, but we want to know who you are and where you stand because I think ... knowing that and being willing to put that out there helps you to work through biases and things and helps you understand why you think the way you are. And we are not judging, we are not saying that, oh, well that's poor, don't be like that. But to try to be aware of selves. ... We had them and use it as their backbone in discussions to think about why you're thinking what you're doing and so forth.

He wanted his students to gain awareness of their unique positionality and stated, "We have an understanding of the world and a community that is shaped by family and tradition and whatever it is. Could I be wrong? Could I be completely wrong?" He aspires for students to take another look at their values and beliefs and rethink their perspectives.

The Application of Cultural Competence in Students

As a result of the cultural competence being taught, one student reported to Robert, from Case 1, "Your class really started having me think about my identity as a Latino woman in track and field. I'm one of the only ones." This student went on to start the first Latino student-athlete group at her university. Robert reflected on the impact of his teaching:

> Even if not everyone's going to get that, the ones where that light bulb goes off and that cultural competence kicks in where they start thinking of their own identities or how they're interacting with their teammates or others, that's powerful and important.

In some instances, changes in students, their knowledge, and their behaviors happen quickly.

Multiple documents from these sites supported the professors' commitment to cultural competence. One syllabus stated, "We acknowledge that modern societies carry historical and divisive biases based on race, ethnicity, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, and religion." This same document then stated, "We seek to promote awareness and understanding through education and research and to mediate and resolve conflicts that arise from these biases in our communities." Another course syllabus stated that students need to "recognize the enormous responsibility and opportunity to advance ideas of social justice through leadership, coaching, and teaching." Additional syllabi mentioned that professors aim to "present materials that are respectful of diversity: race, color, ethnicity, gender, age, disability, religious beliefs, political preference, sexual orientation, gender identity, citizenship or national origin" and stated that "the

diversity of student experiences and perspectives is essential to deepening of knowledge in a course." This statement indicates a level of cultural competence and a commitment to it.

Student Achievement in Athletic Coach Preparation

High standards for student achievement are a cornerstone of CRP. This includes supporting students to perform at high levels, pose and solve problems at sophisticated levels, and demonstrate a variety of achievements. In the athletic coach preparation programs studied, there was the least amount of evidence of explicit work in this area. However, there was some evidence to suggest that high standards for achievement exist.

To help students perform at the highest levels, one professor compared teaching to coaching and possibly the importance of creating agency in students: "What I've learned is that you can dictate your way to a win. And when you do that, you are developing compliant, good, little soldiers, and that's not what we're after, especially in the realm of education." Sarah, from Case 1, shared her belief: "I have very high standards and I'm going to hold you to those high standards, and that is the greatest respect that I can give you." On requiring students to stand and speak during class meetings, Sarah recalled a former student's contact:

> [Student] called me and she said, "I've never felt so empowered before. ... I was so mad at you the first two classes that I had to stand up and speak. ... I'll play [sport] in front of anybody, but don't ask me to stand up and speak."

This professor believed that practicing public speaking is a high standard that is essential.

Students Work on Identifying Problems and Solutions Together

Professors offered multiple ways for students to identify problems in athletic contexts and work together on potential solutions. Robert, from Case 1, described the merits of an end-of-the-year group project:

> Number one, all the students in the group have to at least have some participation. They don't all need to speak, but they have to have some impact of participation. But I think also it shows how we give them a case study and how they dissect that case study and report out, shows some critical thought and shows that the things that we've implemented in that class, they've thought about and they're applying to their practical use.

In another class, students engage in a reflective video analysis of themselves coaching. The assignment can be uncomfortable because students are challenged to watch themselves, and they tend to want to focus on the athletes' performance instead of on their own coaching. Patrick, from Case 2, remarked, "Some of the challenging parts is to constantly remind them and channel the way that they are helping each other to learn." He emphasized students' feedback to one another as an important part of the reflective process.

Individual Support for Students Who Struggle

On supporting students who struggle academically, Linda, from Case 1, offered the idea of partnering with students saying, "You come to them and you say, 'How can I serve you in this problem?' And if you do it collaboratively. ... They don't try to protect the truth." Ann, from Case 2, noted, "I haven't had anyone who really needed a lot of support academically. We're more ... a practitioner-based master's degree." When Ann does encounter a student with challenges, she engages the students in one-on-one conversations to "clarify what their goals are and why they're not reaching those goals, or how this program can help serve those goals." Similarly, Robert described how individual conversations with students can make a difference when a fellow professor said to a student, "Hey, even if your goal is to go professional in the sport that you're playing, here's why this class is important. Here's why your engagement is important." Frank shared about teaching writing: "After I got several emails from the students, I

start[ed] to give more detailed direction about that." Professors respond to students' needs with information, collaboration, and communication.

Every Student Is Different

When it comes to offering a variety of options to demonstrate achievement, Ann, from Case 2, was explicit about being flexible to accommodate and highlight students' strengths:

> It's unfair to demand that each person fit the perfect mold of a student. Given all our different and unique characteristics and backgrounds and identities. I feel like we shouldn't demand they all fit into this perfect ideal student. And rather, if I can get a sense that they're learning and they are receiving the content, then that's the goal for me. And I think that I also do that in assignments. So they can write a reflection paper or they can record themselves talking to the computer for a reflection. They can complete a group assignment or they can just work independently. So I give a lot of choices and freedom to them, and based on different theories of motivation, that does help them stay motivated a bit more and lead to better work.

In that same vein, Michael, from Case 2, remarked,

> We understand that everybody's different. I think that's a really important thing. It's one of those things I always try to communicate to coaches. It's like the minute you understand that is the minute you can become a good coach.

These professors acknowledged the unique contexts in which students work and learn. Ann observed, "We are an online degree, and with older students. ... They have families at home. They have a full-time job. They're coaching ... in addition to a full-time job." They recognized that each student, their identities, and contexts, are different.

Within the documents of the institutions, there was evidence to suggest that professors plan for student achievement by providing multiple modes of contact ("Text messaging is recommended in cases of urgency or specificity," email, phone numbers, and office hours) and multiple assignments that incorporate students' interests and choice while holding them to a high standard. One assignment begins,

> How would your book begin? Identify a story that you believe is representative of the kind of coach/leader you are or want to be. Tell the story, then explain its key elements and what they say about you as a leader.

According to these documents, the courses provide spaces that value student identity and student experiences. In this way, the courses plan for high student achievement that can take a variety of forms.

Positionality, a History of Othering, and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Although both coaching programs plan for and use a degree of CRP, there was variety among professors regarding the extent to which they apply the areas of CRP. This variety of usage is influenced by positionality, experience, and opportunity to learn and reflect. At Happy Valley University, I interviewed five instructors, three of whom were White women. Two of these instructors expressed the least amount of evidence of CRP in their practice. The other, Linda, spoke of her positionality:

> I am a woman of White privilege. Having said that, I was a young girl in the '60s that did not get to play. I know what it feels like to be othered, but you got to be very careful as a White woman saying that. But I understand being othered. I understand discrimination. I understand when you don't have access.

She also spoke of a degree of awareness she has acquired since the racial awakening of 2020, stating that she called her former Black players in 2020 to ask "'what did I leave out?' ... Whoa. Did I get a ton of things." This growth in awareness led to her initiative to "want to give a scholarship to Black coaches. We've got to get more Black coaches, more people of color in coaching." In this way, her purpose for teaching new coaches has shifted because of her personal experience and growth.

The other faculty members from Happy Valley, a biracial woman with K12 experience and a Black man, had some of the highest degrees of use of CRP. The woman's motivation to teach current and aspiring athletic coaches was expressed, "I just want to make sure that young people that looked like my husband [a Black man], they got a high-quality experience, especially in their 5th year that they might not get any other way." Robert, who spoke in depth of his positionality as a Black man, provided evidence of the flexibility he and his coteacher use when they approach teaching,

> We try to mirror what athletics is like. So you imagine you go into a game with a game plan, let's say basketball, and you're like, "This is what we're going to do." And then the defense has figured it out and then you're like, "Okay, we've got to change the game plan." And that's how we look at class. We'll communicate to each other and say like, "Hey, I know we wanted to go here, and I know it's your turn. Do you mind if I stick on this topic for another half?"'

This responsiveness to student needs and high standards for students, although evident from many instructors, was particularly pronounced in these professors.

At Red River University, I interviewed four instructors, three were White, and one was Asian American. They all had a degree of use of CRP. However, the Asian American professor

and an adult immigrant to the United States, Frank, described his experience as a new professor in the program, “To be honest, not all faculty members [have been helpful. Some] think this is ... DEI ... they think I’m a stranger. ‘Why is he here?’” The experience of othering in his own department has influenced how he views his students and how he views their work as coaches: “It’s the inclusion issue. ... You don’t know [what] all your kids think and experience. So try to be kind to them and listen [to] what they [say].” This expression of his personal purpose influences the degree to which he uses CRP in his practice.

Two professors from Red River had experience working with K12 populations. Michael reflected on his experience as a high school science teacher working with a historically underserved population:

> I taught K12 for a few years and … I could get an emergency certification… and I was working in a charter school in [unnamed city], and 40% of our students were … directly out of the foster care system. … We had a ton of clinical psychs and professional counselors. But still, it was a tough population of kids to work with. And rule one, when we were getting our orientation a week before class started, it was like, pick your battles. … Within the first class I taught, half my students could have been kicked out of class for things that they did. And I'm like, I can't kick out half of my class.

He credits this experience with informing him to be flexible with students, acknowledging that not everyone needs the same thing.

Patrick described his experience working internationally in various countries in Europe, Africa, and Asia and how these exposures influence his coach educator lens. When comparing the cultures and contexts between South Africa and Europe, he noted,

> I'm also experiencing the differences in context in terms of extreme power dynamics on one end, while in other contexts a complete flat hierarchy with the coaches are servants and the athletes and the participants are the one who lead.

He credits these experiences around the world for his knowledge of the ways that culture impacts athletes and coaches' attitudes "about ownership, and autonomy." According to the participant, living and working in various contexts provided some of his cultural competence.

Summary

In summary, using document analysis and semistructured interviews, I found that a degree of CRP was used by legendary coach practitioner, John Wooden, and to a greater degree, two coach preparation programs. John Wooden exemplified the broad propositions of Ladson-Billings's (1995) three broad propositions of CRP, especially in the areas of conceptions of self and others; the manner in which social relations are structured, and conceptions of knowledge. However, Wooden did not display much use of cultural competence or cultural critique. In each area, the intention of CRP was missing or incomplete because this teacher's commitment was not to social justice. Wooden was not committed to advocating for systemic change. Instead, he was motivated by his own perception of how a moral person behaved regardless of race, what good teaching looked and sounded like, and how to build a cohesive team. In the absence of the recognition of race, his techniques for supporting student athletes could still earn many championships, accolades as a leader, and the love and admiration of his players. However, they cannot fully support the holistic development of students of color, nor can they fully contribute to social justice.

In the case studies, there was a higher application of CRP at two university athletic coach preparation programs. Some educators—at both sites—are committed to providing students with

a strong sense of cultural critique, closely followed by their conception of self and others. This is followed by the manner in which social relations are structured between students and students to professors. There is also evidence to suggest that professors have some level of cultural competence and can support student achievement. Still, there is some variety of usage among the professors themselves. This variety can be attributed to individuals' positionality, experience, and opportunity to learn about CRP. The sites themselves differ in their approach to teaching coaching in ways that stem from the two different departments where they sit, the methods of instructional delivery (in-person and online), and the populations they serve. In the next chapter, I describe this study's recommendations, implications, and limitations.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

During the qualitative interviews, Linda, a retired college-level coach and a coach educator from Happy Valley University shared, "The thing that is head-shaking for me is coaching today still, still, you are asked to execute, just like a teacher, and there's no certification. You would never let someone just anecdotally get hired for fourth grade math." Her comments underscore the demand for this study and for more scrutiny of the current athletic coach system in the United States where abuse of athletes is common (Anderson et al., 2021; Bernhard, 2014; Lee et al., 2018; Lopez et al., 2019; Mishna et al., 2019; Yates, 2022). Studies on athletic coaching have agreed that more education is needed to support the complex work of coaching (Gearity & Denison, 2012; Lee et al., 2018; Lopez et al., 2019; Mishna et al., 2019; Stirling & Kerr, 2012; Stoll, 2011; Yates, 2022). Some research in physical education has suggested that culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) is a theory that should be used in athletic spaces (Luguetti et al., 2019). Another study proposed the importance of social justice in athletic coach education and offered Wooden as an archetype of a social justice-minded coach (Culp, 2014). This study sought to examine the degree of use of CRP in a legendary athletic coach, John Wooden, and in current coach education programs. In this way, the variety of areas of focus provided a historical, practical, and aspirational range of findings.

Because there is a persistent issue of abuse in athletic contexts, I sought to explore the use of an educational theory that has been shown to support historically marginalized students, particularly Black youth: CRP. Ladson-Billings's seminal work was published almost 30 years ago and described the behaviors and dispositions of educators who were effective at supporting African American children (Ladson-Billings, 1995). I used this lens to examine athletic contexts by asking these research questions:

1. What are the intersections between John Wooden's approach to coaching and culturally relevant pedagogy?
2. To what degree, if any, is there evidence of culturally relevant pedagogy in the two athletic coach preparation programs? How do they compare and contrast?

This study contributes to the limited qualitative research on the applicability of CRP in athletic contexts and athletic coach preparation. It focuses on the intersections of CRP and college basketball coach, John Wooden, and CRP in two athletic coach preparation programs. The study begins to fill in the literature gap by highlighting past and current applicability of CRP in athletic settings. In this final chapter, I summarize and make meaning of the most notable findings in this study. Then, I discuss recommendations and implications for policymakers and practitioners focused on improving the experiences of athletes, coaches, and coach educators. Next, I consider limitations and directions for future research and end with a concluding statement.

Summary and Interpretation of the Findings

Through this study I sought to understand the principles and practices of John Wooden's coaching and how they intersect with CRP and CRP's use in athletic coach preparation. The purpose of asking these questions originated from a desire to find ways to ameliorate the range of various abuses in college athletics and create safer spaces for college athletes. Research on physical education suggest that CRP could be a valuable theory when applied in youth sports settings to help humanize athletic contexts (Luguetti et al., 2019). It also connects to the research that upholds Wooden as an archetype of a social justice educator (Culp, 2014). With this framing in mind, I sought to uncover the degree of CRP's use in Wooden's coaching and in modern coach education.

John Wooden and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

As one of the most celebrated coaches of all time, John Wooden's legacy has endured. In February of this year, a U.S. postage stamp bearing his resemblance was issued and hundreds attended the ceremony for it (Kivowitz & Kung, 2024). New books were released with Wooden as a central subject (Howard-Cooper, 2024). He remains a relevant and much-loved figure for many reasons. His humble demeanor and popular sayings, along with his winning record, keep sports and leadership fans returning to him for guidance and inspiration. Prior research positioned Wooden as an exemplary teacher, passionate about his work and his students (Nater & Gallimore, 2006). He was found to be a model of organization, feedback, and scaffolding (Gallimore & Tharp, 2004). But a closer inspection of his pedagogical practices when CRP was applied revealed some limitations as a culturally relevant practitioner.

Relationships Are Critical

Previous research on John Wooden valued his personal relationship with each individual he coached. As a keen observer and an intense listener, he sought to understand each player holistically. He cared about their well-being on and off the court. Player after player remarked about their love and respect for him. At Wooden's 65th birthday celebration at UCLA, he remarked to the crowd filled with local dignitaries and his former players, "Next to family, I feel closest to my players. I am sorry if I ever hurt any of them. I never meant to. There is no player I haven't loved" (Abdul-Jabbar, 2018, p. 229). This ethic of care reveals an important connection to athletic contexts that extends beyond the realm of physical education (Webb & Blond, 1995). It was central to Wooden's success as a coach: "I'm happy that not a day goes by that I don't get a call from one of my players" (Nater & Gallimore, 2006, p. xvii). For Wooden, these relationships were an end, not a means. The respect he garnered from players came from his high

expectations for them and the careful records he kept of their progress (Nater & Gallimore, 2006). Although researchers have acknowledged the importance of this aspect of Wooden's coaching, it is especially important in the context of CRP. In Ladson-Billings's study (1995), she identified the board proposition that undergirds CRP as the social relations that the teacher develops with and between students. She described teachers who "use this ethos of reciprocity and mutuality to insist that one person's success was the success of all and one person's failure was the failure of all" (p. 481). In this way, CRP teachers match John Wooden's description of a class or a team as a family. Wooden created these relationships slowly over time with the intent to help students achieve a high level of success on and off the court.

This finding builds on previous research that concluded that learning in athletic contexts is a complex cultural process. Researchers noted that coaches' relationships with athletes and between athletes impact their ability to learn and grow in their abilities (Penney & McMahon, 2015; Quennerstedt et al., 2014). This research suggests that as part of this relationship development, coaches and coach educators must play the role of detective, paying careful attention to each individual as a complete person and acknowledging the role of race and ethnicity in their lives (Hammond, 2015; Howard, 2024; Luguetti et al., 2019). The ability to see athletes as complex people and develop relationships with them in a way that supports high achievement might be part of Wooden's legacy. However, Wooden did not always see the ways that race and ethnicity had a direct influence on student athletes. He did not consider how his own positionality might impact those relationships.

According to CRP, Wooden was missing any intent to create cultural competence and cultural critique in team members. Without the ability to understand students' identities, their intersectionality, and how race, ethnicity, and gender all impact their experiences, Wooden could

not be considered a culturally relevant teacher. Although his understanding of race grew over time because of his observations of how White people treated Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, there is no evidence to suggest that this understanding changed the way he fostered social relations with or between students.

Equity, Not Equality

Coach Wooden understood that not every athlete needed the exact same treatment. He approached each athlete as an individual who responded to teaching and communication in different ways. Researchers noted his approach to learning about each: "You've got to study and analyze each individual and find out what makes them tick. ... You have to know the individuals you are working with" (Nater & Gallimore, 2005, p. 1). He did not treat everyone the same stating, "I believe, in order to be fair to all students, a teacher must give each individual student the treatment he earns and deserves. The most unfair thing to do is to treat all of them the same" (Nater & Gallimore, 2006, p. 15). Although Wooden positioned himself as the sole decider of what that treatment might be, he took into consideration what an individual needed.

Within the context of CRP and coach preparation programs, this finding holds more weight. Teachers who practice CRP understand that each child is different and no one approach will meet every child's needs. They are committed to affirming each child's identity and incorporating "multiple forms of excellence" (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 481). Wooden's differentiated approach stood apart during a time when fair meant equal. Coach educator Michael, from Case 2, elaborated,

> You want to believe that there's no 'I' in team, but that's just not really true. Every athlete is different and every athlete responds differently and each athlete will find their

> own unique pathway to success. It's your job as a coach to figure out what that pathway might be and to throw some options at 'em.

Several coach educators emphasized that each athlete and each student needed something different from teachers and coaches to be successful.

Although John Wooden exemplified some areas of CRP, the heart of Ladson-Billings's 1995 theory is not evident in Wooden's practice. In potential alignment with CRP, he was a voracious learner, and his most valued area of study was his students. He knew that learning about all aspects of them would help him be a better coach. This view of himself and his work influenced the kinds of close relationships he developed with students over time. He respected them, valued them as individuals, and treated them equitably, not equally. He trusted them to be creative and innovative during games, which was a regular assessment of a team's performance. As a young coach, he advocated for the inclusion of Black athletes in tournaments and public places like restaurants. He modeled respect for young people and their families.

However, for much of his career, Wooden was not aware of how a student's race might impact their daily experience. During a lecture at age 90, he shared a memory about when a reporter asked a Black player after a national championship game about the team's racial problems. Wooden recalled, "This player said, 'You don't know our coach, do you? He doesn't see race. He sees basketball players,' and he walked away from him. I never had anything more to make me more proud than that." At the time, the lack of acknowledgement of race was viewed as a positive by many White people. Wooden's Midwestern upbringing did not equip him with the knowledge and skill needed to give him a degree of cultural competence.

Additionally, Wooden did not create settings in which student athletes were encouraged to increase their sociopolitical awareness. Instead, he avoided content that might be controversial

and said that his students should be "writing strongly worded letters" instead of engaging in public displays of protest (Abdul-Jabbar, 2018, p. 106). He apologized to Kareem Abdul-Jabbar for the way fans treated him in public instead of confronting the fans who called Abdul-Jabbar the "n" word. In this way, Wooden maintained his White privilege and was unaware of the ways that his behaviors contributed to the status quo.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy in Athletic Coach Preparation Programs

The two sources of data for this portion of the investigation were education programs that host dynamic spaces where professors describe their responsiveness to students' needs, value dialogue related to athletic contexts, and support their students to learn from one another. Several instructors purposefully flatten the hierarchy to ensure that students feel safe to share their full identities and contribute from their unique perspectives. In this way, CRP is evident in these coach preparation programs.

The Value of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy in Sports

To combat the current issues that athletes face in sports, CRP has a place in athletic coach preparation. Both featured sites practice a degree of CRP in their external materials and internal documents, affirming students in their identities and their knowledge. Most professors showed degrees of cultural competence and cultural critique along with the broad propositions of CRP. Their willingness to be vulnerable learners, invest in relationships with students, and coconstruct knowledge with students matched some of the hallmarks of the educators Ladson-Billings (1995) studied in the early 1990s. The instructors who showed the greatest match with CRP acknowledged the influence of race, ethnicity, gender, class, and/or sexuality in athletic contexts and voiced their positionality in some of these areas.

This finding builds on the findings of Newman et al. (2022) and suggests that recognizing privilege and power in sports contexts is an important aspect of coach education. The traditional life skills of sport are no longer enough to empower youth. Instead, skills like antiracism and allyship, advocacy, and activism need to be modeled and taught. Although their article offered goals of coach education, my study offers insight into how coaches and coach educators can make these goals part of their everyday work. By adopting CRP, practitioners can embody the dispositions necessary to teach and coach in inclusive environments that prepare athletic leaders to transform young lives and also change oppressive systems.

Conditions for Cultural Critique

Creating learning experiences in which cultural critique is valued is a feature in athletic coach preparation. Professors in my study are mostly aware of the issues in sports related to race, gender, class, (dis) abilities, and LGBTQ+ communities. The degree to which professors are willing to engage in cultural critique is related to their own level of cultural competence. Their willingness to talk about these matters is connected to five factors. I found that instructors are more likely to engage in cultural critique if they (a) had formative experiences working with underrepresented minorities and opportunities to reflect on those experiences, (b) have a trusted colleague and/or a mentor who is willing to engage in critical dialogue, (c) have experience teaching in K12 systems, (d) have experience working internationally, and/or (e) have experiences being othered.

This research called for a need for coach educators to be well-informed on social issues (Economou et al., 2022; Luguetti et al., 2019; Newman et al., 2022). This finding is important because many coach educators recognize the need and are willing to lead the dialogue necessary to create meaningful learning for current and aspiring coaches. Ladson-Billings

(1995) noted that "knowledge emerges in dialectical relationships" (p. 473). However, some coach educators are more prepared to do this work than others. Moreover, some students are more open to learning about the role of social issues and to reflecting on how their positionality impacts their personal roles. To support coach educators, there should be a concentrated effort to create the conditions necessary to support them as they engage in dialogue in brave spaces (Landreman, 2023).

Dialogue to Increase Cultural Competence

This study found that both sites value dialogue. One site's educators meet quarterly to reflect on the challenges and successes of their teaching. The other site meets weekly to do the same. Several educators spoke directly about the ways they benefitted from dialogue with their colleagues and coteachers, citing the ways they gained knowledge about issues of race, transgender athletes, and other important social issues.

The finding that dialogue can support coach educators in their efforts to increase their cultural competence adds to the literature about reflective group practice in athletic settings. Athletic researchers Gilbert et al. (2009) cited explicit recommendations for professional learning communities (Gallimore et al., 2009) and recommended their use in coach settings. These recommendations included time and place to meet, job-alike teams, and a peer facilitator. His assertion was that these practices would increase reflection and learning in coaches. My study adds to the assertion by hypothesizing that in this context, coaches and coach educators can use dialogue to increase their cultural competence. However, this is only possible with a highly skilled and knowledgeable facilitator. A familiarity with CRP can support the facilitators with this goal.

Implications

The findings of this study make important contributions to the body of knowledge on the applicability of CRP in athletic contexts and coach preparation programs. In particular, they fill the research gap in understanding the extent to which CRP was used by a model collegiate athletic coach, John Wooden, and the degree CRP is used in athletic coach master's degrees. As I discuss in this section, there are notable implications for both practitioners and policymakers. For example, the findings point to the need for more education to increase athletic coaches' cultural competence and ability to invite and support cultural critique. Additionally, ongoing learning opportunities for coach educators need to be focused and expanded. Current policies and practices for hiring and supporting college coaches need to be reexamined and reevaluated.

Recommendations

Full-Time Coaches Should Be Required to Have Degrees in Coaching

To improve conditions for student athletes, reduce abuse in athletics, increase cultural competence, and uplift the coach profession as a whole, full-time coaches should be required to pursue and obtain either undergraduate or graduate degrees in coaching. These degree programs should center the elements of CRP, especially in the areas of cultural competence and cultural critique. At minimum, these degrees should be incentivized conditions of employment in collegiate settings. The work of a college-level coach is complex and demanding and requires knowledge and a skillset that cannot be absorbed by observation and experience alone. Leaving the learning up to informal mentorship risks replicating ineffective, abusive, and demoralizing environments. Instead, a formal learning program that values dialogue and action on sociopolitical issues and recognizes its role in disrupting systems of oppression should be the

standard for coaches. These programs can expand what is traditionally thought of as important skills in athletics: allyship, advocacy, and activism.

During her interview, coach educator Linda said about athletic coaching, "We are in the front end of making it more equitable and a better experience for everybody. No one has that understanding that are making decisions about how you set up the criteria to pick a coach." This added criteria of the pursuit of a degree for athletic coaches, one from an institution that is well versed in CRP, is a promising step in the effort to create safer and more inclusive spaces for student athletes.

Athletic Coaches and Coach Educators Need Dedicated Learning and Support to Achieve Cultural Competence and Cultural Critique

Both coaches and coach educators would benefit from dedicated time and space for learning to achieve cultural competence and cultural critique. Methods to promote reflection, share practices, and create the kind of community in which they can be vulnerable learners would strengthen the coach community. However, leaving these communities up to chance is the equivalent of relying on informal types of coach training. Instead, a strong instructional leader should facilitate learning that is contextual, prioritizes relationships, elevates the experiences of individuals, and provides enough safety to challenge each coach (Newman et al., 2022). Athletic programs can benefit from employing coaches who examine the theories that inform their approaches to teaching and leadership, foster dialogue, promote criticality, and promote a sense of belonging.

Additionally, coach education programs can also benefit from regular attention to instructors' cultural competence and cultural critique. Developing and maintaining a degree of sociopolitical awareness is essential to supporting students in their full identities. Assuming that

coach educators have cultural competence and support is dangerous and irresponsible. Instead, leaders in this field need to be intentional about creating opportunities for brave spaces of learning for adults.

Establishing places for dialogue and learning in either setting will not be easy. Both contexts give tremendous responsibility to both coaches and educators. Collegiate coaches are often engaged in recruitment, planning, analyzing, traveling, fundraising, and competing. Coach educators are researching, planning, teaching, meeting, grading, and possibly fundraising. Time is limited for overworked coaches and educators. Plus, this initiative might also face challenges from the dispositions of individual coaches and/or educators. And yet despite their full schedules, individuals can be motivated to engage in ongoing learning when they recognize their positions of power. It will take strong leaders dedicated to social justice to pave the way for increasing culturally relevant teaching practices as a way to combat student athlete abuse and unhealthy environments.

Limitations of the Study

Every study has limitations that frame the results of its findings. This study was limited by the participants who were interviewed and the materials collected. Interviewing students from each site may provide additional information. Furthermore, the sites of my study were within large, R1 research institutions. Factors such as institutional culture, department affiliation, student demographics, and resources may vary significantly in other contexts, potentially impacting the applicability of the findings. Additional limitations include the use of document analysis only in the study of John Wooden. Interviewing former players and scholars may provide additional information as well. Although coding for nonexamples of CRP in Wooden's practice was a stage of analysis, it was ultimately not featured in the findings because it was

beyond the scope of the study. An additional limitation was the dissection of CRP itself, which was not intended to be applied in these ways.

Recommendations for Future Research

This research contributes to the body of research on John Wooden's principles and practices of coaching and coach preparation programs. Although previous research has focused on various elements of Wooden and coach education, few empirical studies have explored the role of CRP in Wooden's work or coach preparation programs. Future research on CRP in coach preparation could incorporate the perspectives of student coaches by using qualitative interviews to understand individual experiences. Additionally, qualitative data from professional college coaches about their experience with coach education and current coach philosophies and practices could yield additional data about the applicability of CRP in athletic contexts.

Further studies that identify coaches who display cultural competence, cultural critique, and other behaviors associated with social justice can also yield valuable data regarding their ability to create healthy contexts for student athletes. A mixed method study that triangulates the data from both quantitative methods and qualitative methods could uncover methods to achieve the elements of CRP in athletic contexts and offer rich description of the potential benefits and limitations of CRP from the perspective of student athletes and their coaches.

Conclusion

Despite embodying few aspects of CRP, John Wooden was a much loved and lauded basketball coach. He continues to be respected by many fans and current and aspiring coaches. He was also a practitioner. He was not in a position to hold a formal education role in which he might study to identify an aspirational figure of a coach. Instead, he did the work of a coach day in and day out. In his mind, he thought it best to not engage in the sociopolitical issues of the

time, including the civil rights movement and the Vietnam War. He did not speak out on these issues, and he did not encourage his players to do so. He did not take a stand.

Today's issues in college athletics, including various types of abuse, still need to be addressed. To solve them will require brave coaches, coach educators, and leaders in athletics who are willing to model cultural competence and cultural critique. They will need to create the conditions necessary for students to acknowledge the sociopolitical context and their own positionality and develop critical consciousness. This requires a reorientation of what matters in sports. CRP can be an effective theory to help humanize the individual athletes whom coaches and coach educators work with. This theory can combat the current climate of abuse in athletics and bring about a healthier environment for student athletes.

APPENDIX

Site Interview Protocol

Background and Education Experience (Warm-up)

1. Please introduce yourself. ***Maybe start with your name, your current role,*** and how long you've held your position.

2. **How did you come to be a coach educator? What was your path?**

Potential follow-up: What are some formal or informal coach education experiences you've had? (Student-athlete, athletic experience, coaching experience, attended clinics taught by coaches, coursework, research, mentors, etc.)

Conceptions of Self and Others (CRP Broad Proposition 1)

3. **What are your students in your classes like**? (Probe for age, gender, culture, race, socioeconomics, learning style, social issues of the time, etc.)

Potential follow-up: How do you know what you know about students? How do you learn about them? How do you teach compared to how you were taught?

Student Achievement (1st element of CRP)

4. What is a favorite assignment or activity that you like to have students do and why is it so effective? (Observe for issues in athletics, collaboration, assessment, feedback, engagement, leadership)

Potential follow-up: What kinds of problems related to athletics do your students bring up in class or in their assignments?

Cultural Critique (3rd element of CRP)

5. Do you find that students are interested in issues related to social justice? How do you address differences of opinion among your students on social or political issues?

Potential follow-up: What opportunities, if any, do your students have to critique social inequities in your class or in the program?

6. What do you see as the role of an athletic coach in helping student athletes engage in social issues (i.e., racism, women's rights, gender equity, inclusion, poverty, etc.)? Is there a place for this in college athletics?

Cultural Competence (2nd element of CRP)

7. Do issues of culture come up in your class? This might be related to race, language, dress, hair, music, concepts of family, religion, etc.

Potential follow-up: Can you think of a time when the cultural background of your students ever came into play in your class?

8. What do students bring to the class/program as far as cultural competence? In other words, what is your sense of their awareness of/knowledge of their own culture and that of others?

Conceptions of Self and Others (CRP Broad Proposition 1)

9. Tell me about a time when a student has struggled in your class or in your program. How did you respond?

Manner in which Social Relations are Structured (CRP Broad Proposition 2)

10. How do you build a team culture in your class? (Listen for collaboration, leadership opportunities, dialogue, creating safety, etc.)

Potential follow-up: What are some ways you cultivate leadership in your students?

Conceptions of Knowledge (CRP Broad Proposition 3)

11. What are the ways you assess student learning? In other words, how do you know what they know? And what role does feedback play in your teaching?

12. The famous coach John Wooden liked to say "You haven't taught until they have learned," but there was a university professor who disagreed with him. Instead, they believed that professors were responsible for providing materials and then the responsibility was on students to learn. Where might you fall in your thinking about who is responsible for learning?

Conceptions of Self and Others (CRP Broad Proposition 1)

13. How does self-reflection play a role in your work?

14. What was your first year of teaching like compared to a recent year? What have you learned?

Potential follow-up: What, if anything, do you hope to refine in your own practice or in the program?

Closing

15. What do you hope students leave your class/program knowing and being able to do?

Potential follow-up: What would you say to a former student who got their first coaching position? What advice would you give?

Is there anything else that you might like to share regarding athletic coach preparation? Or any questions for me?

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