
Guest Editorial

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The 2013 Game Sense for Teaching and Coaching Conference held at the University of Sydney in November 2013 offered an opportunity to share and collaborate in the ongoing development of Teaching Games for Understanding (TGfU) and Game Sense (GS). The conference featured high quality presentations from international and local researchers in a friendly and collegial environment that encouraged the sharing of ideas and debating relevant issues. Presentations were split evenly between teaching and coaching ensuring a good balance between both areas and allowing participants to engage with both the similarities and differences between them. The games approach turns traditional teaching and coaching on its head by focusing on the game instead of reducing it to its component parts, such as technique. Instead of focusing on technique in isolation, students and players learn them in the game through the use of modified games and game-like activities, incorporating questioning.

It is now over thirty years since Bunker and Thorpe (1982) published their seminal work on the advantages of taking a game based approach (GBA) to teaching sport as an alternative to the traditional use of skills and drills that dominated teaching physical education in schools and coaching sport. Other forms of Teaching Games for Understanding (TGfU) have emerged since then and these include Game Sense (GS) and Play Practice. Game Sense is an Australian version of TGfU developed by the Australian Sports Commission in consultation

with Rod Thorpe for the coaching fraternity. GS and TGfU continue to grow in popularity attracting attention from researchers and practitioners across the globe. This is demonstrated by the series of well-attended conferences on TGfU held in the USA (2001), Australia (2003), Hong Kong (2005), Canada (2008) and the UK (2012) with the next one scheduled for Germany in 2016. TGfU is also included as a special area of interest at AIESEP World Congresses having been held in Finland (2006), Japan (2008), Spain (2010) and New Zealand (2013).

The wide appeal and innovative potential of TGfU and Game Sense is reflected in the international and local contributions to 2013 Game Sense for Teaching and Coaching Conference and the subsequent proceedings. This reflects the continued growth in research and practitioner interest in this area as a pedagogical approach to teaching and coaching. In 2006 the International Conference on Teaching and Coaching for Understanding was held at the University of Sydney as a means of promoting collaboration in research and development of Game Sense, TGfU and other GBA in the Asia Pacific region. The 2013 conference built on this early initiative, in a one-day format with the intention of rotating it among countries in the region that have programs of work in this area such as New Zealand, Taiwan and Japan. There is already discussion about where the next Game Sense for Teaching and Coaching conference will be held, with the University of Canterbury in New Zealand a likely location.

The 2013 Sydney Game Sense from Teaching and Coaching Conference focused on developments in the teaching of games in physical education and sport coaching in the Asia-Pacific region. It provided a forum in which academics and practitioners interacted and engaged in dialogue, learning and development of the teaching of games and sport in a collaborative environment. This included delegates who were new to the Game Sense

approach and others who were experienced in the approach but wanting to continue improving and developing their use of it. The conference included oral presentations delivered across the morning and midday sessions, and practical workshops delivered by invited experts in the afternoon.

This special issue of University of Sydney Papers in Human Movement, Health and Coach Education (HMHCE) offers articles from researchers in Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and the USA on a pedagogical approach to teaching and coaching that continues to attract attention from practitioners and researchers in Australia, the Asia Pacific region and the rest of the world. We are pleased to offer this excellent collection of articles on Game Sense to contribute towards the growth of its implementation in schools and sport.