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Luguetti, Carla; Goodyear, Victoria; André , Mauro

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‘That is like a 24 hours-day tournament!’: using social media to further an authentic sport experience within Sport Education

Carla Luguetti^{a,b1}, Victoria Anne Goodyear^c and Mauro Henrique André^d

^a*School of Physical Education and Sport, Santa Cecília University, Santos, Brazil*

^b*School of Physical Education, Ribeirão Preto University, Guarujá, Brazil*

^c*School of Sport, Exercise and Rehabilitation Sciences, University of Birmingham, United Kingdom*

^d*Leeds Beckett University, United Kingdom*

Carla Luguetti

School of Physical Education and Sport, Santa Cecília, University. Rua Oswaldo Cruz, 277 – Boqueirão, Santos-SP, CEP: 11045-907

School of Physical Education, Ribeirão Preto University, Guarujá, Brazil. Av. D. Pedro I, 3.300 Enseada, Guarujá-SP, CEP 11440-003

+55(13)981700505

Email: luguetti@hotmail.com

Victoria Anne Goodyear

School of Sport, Exercise and Rehabilitation Sciences, University of Birmingham, United Kingdom, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B15 2TT

Email: v.a.goodyear@bham.ac.uk

Mauro Henrique André

Leeds Beckett University. Leeds LS1 3HE, United Kingdom

+44 113 812 0000

Email: M.H.Andre@leedsbeckett.ac.uk

¹Corresponding author. School of Physical Education and Sport, Santa Cecília University. Rua Oswaldo Cruz, 277 – Boqueirão, Santos – SP, CEP: 11045-907. Email: luguetti@usp.br

‘That is like a 24 hours-day tournament!’: using social media to further an authentic sport experience within Sport Education

Abstract

Several studies demonstrate that Sport Education supports the development of an authentic experience of sport. Social media has the potential to further the development of an authentic sport experience since it is a key aspect of contemporary sport culture and can be a space for individuals to interact during the Sport Education. Yet the evidence-base on the use of social media within Sport Education is limited.

The purpose of this study was to explore how social media supports the development of an authentic sport experience within Sport Education. The context of this study was within a female recreational community sport futsal club. Players engaged with Sport Education as a focus for their sessions for 13 weeks. The Sport Education season embedded the six key features. During the Sport Education season, players interacted with each other through Facebook. Data were generated from; (1) researcher/player field journal, (2) Facebook posts and (3) post-season player interviews. Data analysis involved inductive, constant comparison and member-checking methods.

Results showed that players’ uses of Facebook supported the development of an authentic sport experience. Players’ uses of Facebook strengthened the development of three key Sport Education features; affiliation, festivity and season. Based on the limited amount of research on the impact of social media within Sport Education and community sport, future studies should continue to examine the effectiveness of social media as an interactional tool to enhance the development of an authentic sport experience.

Keywords: *Sport Education; Soccer; Social Media; Facebook; Learning; Technology; Pedagogical Models; Innovation; Social Networking; Communities of Practice.*

Sport Education is a pedagogical model that has been researched extensively and internationally in physical education and sport pedagogy literature (Harvey, Kirk, & O’Donovan, 2014; Hastie, Ojeda, & Luquin, 2011; Wallhead & O’Sullivan, 2005). Several studies, in a variety of settings (e.g., schools, universities and community sport) demonstrate that the model is capable of providing an authentic and educationally rich sport experience (Hastie et al., 2011; Parker & Curtner-Smith, 2012). Siedentop, Hastie,

& Van der Mars, 2011). Specifically, the model can be used to foster the development of three learning outcomes; competent, literate and enthusiastic sportspersons (Siedentop et al., 2011). A *competent* sportsperson is someone who develops skills and strategies to participate successfully in a game; a *literate* sportsperson is someone who understands rules, traditions, and values associated with sport, and also can distinguish between good and bad sport practices; and an *enthusiastic* sportsperson is someone who plays and behaves in ways that preserves, protects and enhances the sport culture (Siedentop et al., 2011). Thus, Sport Education is “the most mature of the models-based approach currently available to us” (Kirk, 2013, p.975) and is a model that encourages learners to experience the culture of sport and the diverse roles in sport (that extend beyond on a performer). In this sense, an authentic sport experience is defined by standards of excellence, ‘goods’ that are derived from the pursuit of excellence, and virtues such as honesty, justice and courage that are necessary to achieve these ‘goods’ (Kirk, 2013; Siedentop, 2002).

Digital technologies and social media sites have been recently positioned as tools that can accelerate and extend learning within Sport Education (Calderón et al., 2016; Casey, Hastie, & Rovegno, 2011; Casey & Hastie, 2011; Hastie & Sinelnikov, 2007; Sinelnikov, 2012). Hastie, Casey and Tarter (2010), for example, showed how wikis can be used to help students create games. Hastie et al. (2010) described that wikis created a community of practice (CoP) that could extend participation and learning. Hastie and Sinelnikov (2007) also demonstrated how college students developed web pages to represent their engagement with volleyball in Sport Education. These authors suggested that web pages created a new way of learning and assessment. Calderón et al. (2016) is one of the few authors to explore the use of social media. Calderón et al. (2016) demonstrated that social media promotes an authentic student-centered learning context for higher education students by offering additional opportunities for students to discuss their participation and learning. Yet while the potential for social media use within Sport Education was noted by Calderón et al. (2016), engagement by all students, digital identity and digital competence were noted to be barriers to social media integration. The authors, consequently, called for further empirical evidence to determine if and how social media can be used effectively within Sport Education.

Building on the work of Calderón et al. (2016), we believe that there are new

opportunities for learning within Sport Education through social media that could extend participants experiences of sport; the culture, roles, and ethical values. Indeed, social media has a level of relevance to the culture of sport and has been shown to be a key space to attract fans (Özsoy, 2011) and increase fan–athlete interaction (Frederick, Lim, Clavio, Pedersen, & Burch, 2012; Pegoraro, 2010). For example, to access updates on sport events, view pictures and post event reports, 1.1 million people joined the Facebook page of the London 2012 Olympic Games (Atali, Serbas, & Akkus, 2014) and 14.6 million for Rio 2016². As such, we argue that if social media is part of professional sport it could be considered as an important tool for promoting an authentic sport experience within Sport Education.

The potential for social media to further promote an authentic sport experience within Sport Education can be grounded, theoretically, in situated learning within CoP (see Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998; Wenger and Wenger-Trayner, 2015). Situated learning within a CoP could be summarized as ‘groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly’ (Wenger and Wenger-Traynor 2015, p 1). Individuals within a group come together to interact, and contribute to shared ‘public’ practices in particular spheres of life (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger & Wenger-Traynor, 2015). The assumption for learning within a CoP is that ‘learning is an integral and inseparable aspect of social practice’ (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 31). Each individual person occupies a unique identity, where their contributions are seen as important for other members and the practices of the community (Wenger, 1998). Despite this, a person is not seen just as an individual but also as part of a cultural and community context (Fleer 2003; Lave & Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998). Participation in a CoP, therefore, involves genuine participation by a diverse range of individuals who share and develop common socially shared and public practices within an authentic context (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998; Wenger & Wenger-Traynor 2015).

In using situated learning as a theoretical framework to examine learning within Sport Education, Kirk and Macdonald (1998) and Kirk and Kinchin (2003) argued that Sport Education provides an authentic sport experience by reproducing contemporary CoPs that are in-line with community based sport. The key features of Sport Education,

² <https://www.facebook.com/olympics>

that include, seasons, affiliation, competition, a culminating event, record keeping and festivity (Siedentop et al, 2011) are central practices of community sport and, therefore, provide learners with replicable experiences (Kirk & Kinchin, 2003; Kirk & Macdonald, 1998). In addition, Sport Education promotes, through the feature of affiliation, learners adopting different roles in sport, for example, a coach, journalist or record keeper (Siedentop et al., 2011). These roles allow learners to authentically participate in a CoP, through encouraging them to occupy a unique identity where their contributions are seen as important for other members (Kirk & Kinchin, 2003; Kirk & Macdonald, 1998).

The justification for social media to further the authentic experience within Sport Education comes from social media's capabilities to strengthen and support interactions and the practices within CoPs (Goodyear, Casey, & Kirk, 2014; Goodyear & Casey, 2015; Wesely, 2013). Closely aligned with the theoretical underpinnings of CoPs (see Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998), Goodyear et al. (2014), for example, demonstrated that social media acted as a space external to the school site where members of a school-based CoP could gain support, develop shared practices and promote their individual and group identities. Wesely (2013), on the other hand, has shown that social media can be a space for the formation of online CoPs. In Wesely's (2013) exploration of Twitter-chats, social media was positioned as a socially and culturally relevant space for a group of individuals to come together to contribute to and develop shared public practices.

Through the discussions on situated learning within CoPs, we have shown that Sport Education provides an authentic experience of sport through re-producing CoPs in community based sport. Social media has the potential to further an authentic sport experience since it is a key aspect of contemporary sport culture and it can be a space to support the practices of CoPs and/or the formation of CoPs. The purpose of this paper, therefore, is to explore how social media supports an authentic sport experience within a Sport Education season.

Methods

The study design was a case study. A case study is a system; the examination of this system seeks to identify the many elements that compose its structure, and how each component affects one another (Stake, 2005). In this study, the system analyzed

included (i) the six features of Sport Education (season, competition, score keeping, festivity, team affiliation and culminating event) and (ii) community sport players' uses of Facebook during a Sport Education season. The study, therefore, sought to identify how players' uses of Facebook influenced the key features of Sport Education.

Setting and participants

The setting was a female community futsal club within Santos, Brazil. At the time of this study, the players had rented a futsal³ court for more than three years to play pick-up indoor soccer twice a week. There were 21 female players in total (20 were aged 22-34 years, and 1 player was aged 14). Carla (lead author researcher) was a player within the futsal club and had been part of the futsal group for more than two years. Carla is considered an insider in this study (Collins, 2000). At the time of the study, she was 32 years old and identified as a PhD student, middle class and physically active as a recreational soccer player.

Carla introduced the idea of engaging with a Sport Education season to the players. While Sport Education is a curriculum and instructional model designed for delivery in physical education settings, the goals and outcomes of Sport Education can be extended to adults (Bennet & Hastie, 1997; Sinelnikov & Hastie, 2012). For example, studies have proposed the use of the Sport Education model in higher education as an appropriate intervention to teach sport values and skills to adults (Bennet & Hastie, 1997; Sinelnikov & Hastie, 2012). The ability to further develop their understanding of the values of sport in a different format to their normal futsal club setting was attractive to the players. Further, the outcomes of competent, literate, and enthusiastic sportspersons were something that the players expressed an interest in further developing. Sport Education was therefore contextually relevant to the players in the futsal club and all players agreed to participate in a season. Subsequently, Carla led the Sport Education season and also participated as a player. It should be noted that none of the players had any experience with Sport Education and this was the first time Carla had led a Sport Education season.

³ Futsal is a variant of soccer that is played on a smaller field (minimum 25x16m and maximum 42x25m) between two teams of five players each, one of whom is the goalkeeper.

Sport Education

The implementation of Sport Education was based on six key features; seasons, affiliation, formal competition, a culminating event, record keeping and festivity (Siedentop et al, 2011). Table 1 describes these features and how they were implemented.

[Insert tables 1]

To support the lead author's delivery of Sport Education, the third author 'Mauro' acted to guide the implementation of the model. Mauro has implemented Sport Education in variety of settings for more than six years. Carla and Mauro planned the seasons together and spoke on a weekly basis about the sessions to ensure a level of model fidelity i.e. that the implementation of Sport Education closely adhered to the key features (Hastie & Casey, 2014).

The Sport Education season lasted for 13 weeks and each week had two one-hour sessions. There were 4 teams (Spain, South Africa, Egypt and Italy) and 4 organizational roles (coach/manager, referee, scorekeepers and journalist). The coaches/managers were responsible for planning the training sessions and took care of team administrative duties, such as organizing the equipment for team practices and informing all team members of when and where matches would take place. The referees were responsible for defining rules prior to the start of the season, teaching the rules to teammates, and upholding rules during gameplay. The scorekeepers (two per team) recorded team and individual statistical performances and provided the journalists with the scores. The journalists were responsible for collecting information about their team's performance and updating their team's portfolio (see Kinchin, 2001 for an overview of Sport Education portfolios). A key place where the portfolio could exist was on a dedicated webpage. The webpage was created specifically for the study and it was an idea proposed by the journalists prior to the start of the Sport Education season. Despite the option to use the webpage to keep the team's portfolio, during the Sport Education season Facebook emerged as an additional space for discussing the Sport Education season.

Facebook as a medium for interaction

Interactions and discussions on Facebook that occurred during the season were not in the study's original design nor were they planned for aspect of the implementation of

Sport Education. While the role of Facebook interactions within Sport Education will be detailed in the results section, it is important to provide some methodological and contextual information as to how Facebook was used by the players and Carla. In particular, the types of interactions and the functions of Facebook can be understood in Table 2.

[Insert table 2]

Prior to this study Carla was friends with the players on Facebook. This Facebook friendship was mostly likely a result of Carla's participation in the community sport club as a player for the past two years or more. Alongside being friends with one another, the players were also members of the community sport club's closed Facebook page. This Facebook page was mainly used for announcements (e.g. payment notices). At the start of the season, the players began to use the Facebook page as a space to talk about rules, fixtures and match play.

Ethics

Ethical approval was provided by the university ethics committee prior to data gathering. All players provided informed consent for their participation in the study, interviews and for data to be gathered and used from the webpage. However, given that Facebook emerged as a form of interaction and data, informed consent was not sought initially for posts made to Facebook. Similar to the approaches adopted by Goodyear (2016) and ethical procedures recommended by McKee and Porter (2009), Carla sought additional consent from the players to access and use their posts made to Facebook. Facebook's terms of service were consulted and relevant procedures were followed. Yet, and again due to the emergent nature of Facebook as a data source, Facebook's terms to post a statement to a group that users' posts may be used for analysis was difficult to navigate. The subsequent informed consent processes, however, sought to address this limitation. In the reporting of the findings names have been represented by pseudonyms and data is reported on verbatim. These anonymity strategies were selected because of the private nature of the Facebook groups used in this study; while posts could still be traced, privacy settings limited the traceability of players' posts by individuals external to this study (Goodyear, 2016; McKee & Porter, 2009).

Data gathering

Over the course of the Sport Education season, 130 status updates, 398 likes, and 965 comments on the Facebook page were made. This data from Facebook were exported to Microsoft excel using the Facebook export application. In Table 3 the frequency of status update, likes and comments are provided.

[Insert table 3]

In addition to data gathered from Facebook, Carla wrote weekly field journals about her experiences of leading and participating in the Sport Education season (totaling 25 pages). Semi-structured interviews were also conducted at the end of the season (December 2013). Mauro interviewed 13 participants; at least 3 players from each team were interviewed. These interviews ranged in length from 22 to 41 minutes and were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. The interviews aimed to gather data about the players' perceptions of their experiences of Sport Education and the usefulness of Facebook during the intervention.

Data analysis

Data analysis involved four steps and was approached through an inductive lens (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Firstly, Carla and Mauro read all data sets separately (interviews transcripts, field notes and Facebook posts) and engaged in the process of coding. Through this inductive approach, statements, and ideas were developed as these authors read and re-read the data. After the data were coded, Carla and Mauro discussed the codes they had identified in relation to the research question: how does social media support the development of an authentic sport experience within Sport Education? Examples of codes by each author were offered, and then questioned and critiqued by the other author. This enabled the authors to share commonalities and differences. By engaging in this step Carla and Mauro attempted to act as external analysts of each other's reflections, seeking clarity by asking questions and probing for deeper meaning where appropriate. The third process of analysis involved constant comparison. Data were grouped and placed into categories and moved backwards and forwards until an agreement was reached. The fourth and final process of analysis involved the second author 'Victoria'. Victoria engaged in a process of member checking Carla and Mauro's interpretations. Victoria added credibility to analysis because she challenged the

interpretations of the coded data and the construction of themes. In this phase, data was moved between different themes until a level of agreement was reached.

Findings

The data demonstrated that Facebook extended the opportunities for players to participate in an authentic sport experience. Table 4 shows how interactions on Facebook supported the practices of the key features of Sport Education: seasons, competition, score keeping, festivity, team affiliation and a culminating event. Team affiliation, festivity and seasons, however, were the key features most impacted by interactions on Facebook. As a result, in this section these key features will be discussed.

[Insert Table 4]

Before the key features are discussed it is important to acknowledge players' different levels of engagement with Facebook. Variability in how the players' used Facebook is discussed first to demonstrate the differing levels of impact Facebook had on individual players' experiences of Sport Education.

The differing levels of engagement

The players used Facebook in different ways and interacted with each other on this platform to different intensities (see Table 3). For example, the number of status updates made by individual players ranged from 32 - 1 (Table 3). Although it is not possible to argue that players' engagement was related to their roles (journalists, coaches, referees and scorekeepers), there is some evidence to suggest that players' engagement with the Facebook page varied by role. Indeed, journalists (Carla, Maria and Gabriela) made the greatest number of status updates. The journalists posted all information onto the Facebook page that they had already uploaded to the website. For example,

Girls, I just uploaded fresh news in relation to the games yesterday! See photos and news in our website (website link) :- (Journalist Gabriela Facebook post 11-22).

Given that status updates are a message shared with the whole group and that all users can see (see Table 2), the frequency of status updates made by the journalists (see Table 3) is somewhat reflective of their role to disseminate and share information about team performances. Although coaches and referees were also required to disseminate

information, their role predominantly focused on sharing information during face-to-face session time. The number of posts made by the coaches and referees ranged from 2-8 status updates. Further evidence for engagement with Facebook being associated with role comes from the scorekeepers. Scorekeepers were required to collect scores and share these with the journalists. The interactive component of their role was, subsequently, minimal and this was further evidenced through the scorekeepers posting the least amount of status updates. Although role was associated with the number of status updates all players, regardless of role, engaged with the Facebook page by liking and commenting on other's status updates (Table 3). Given that journalists posted the most status updates, this finding suggests that the journalists were the key drivers of player engagement with the Facebook page.

Increasing opportunities for interaction: enhancing team affiliation

The data revealed that Facebook extended the opportunities for players to participate in an authentic sport experience through the increased opportunities for interaction that were provided. Although Sport Education happened on Mondays and Thursdays, the players reported that Facebook was responsible for a "24 hours-day tournament" (Maria - interview). As Maria's comment below shows, Facebook allowed the players to interact with each other before and after the sessions.

I found the use of Internet very positive in our tournament. I think that nowadays, the use of technology is essential, Internet these days is essential. I think that the participation in Facebook and the webpage was a really cool idea. The tournament had a limited time [i.e. Monday and Thursday]. However, the Facebook comments did not have a time to finish. We stayed all week commenting on the tournament on Facebook... That is like a 24 hours-day tournament! We sleep together, wake up together and everything. And everything was totally informal, we pretty much spent the whole day together on the Internet (Maria - interview).

Besides the interactions that took place in this closed Facebook page, each of the four teams also created a private message group where they exchanged messages. While data could not be gathered from these private spaces of Facebook the field notes and interviews showed that private messages contributed to deepening the friendship among the players.

Yesterday I realized that the girls were writing a lot on Facebook. I have noticed that I have greatly increased the time that we stay online. We made a private message of my team and we discussed the shirt color, our bios on the web page. We also organized a day to go running on the beach. I realize that our contact in the webpage and Facebook has been very intense (Carla's Fieldnote).

Although demonstrations of friendship and affection occurred in the private spaces, these were also noted to occur in the overall futsal club Facebook page. The following Facebook conversation illustrates this matter.

Tabata: Regardless of who won or lost yesterday, I want to say thank you for everything. Both games were sensational. I feel a great happiness because we are brought together and playing. Everyone who was playing yesterday deserves congratulations. It was very pleasurable.

Denise: I'm thrilled. Congratulations to you, Tabata. You are a good goalkeeper.

Gabriela: How nice Tabata!!! Even more so because you support São Paulo (Brazilian soccer team)! hahaha Egypt !!!

Laura: My goalkeeper is Perfect (11-01 Facebook post)

In summary, the Facebook page created an enjoyable space for informal and frequent conversations between players. Indeed, Facebook acted as a platform for players to talk about the Sport Education season beyond the formal sessions on Mondays and Thursdays and it was a space where players could demonstrate an affiliation toward their team mates. For example, players congratulated each other and demonstrated a sense of belonging to their team and team mates. It can be suggested, therefore, that because Facebook was a space that allowed players to interact more frequently, Facebook contributed to strengthening the key feature of affiliation.

Increasing festivity

Festivity relates to players celebrating their participation in sport through the development of a festive atmosphere (see Table 1). A festive atmosphere was supported by Facebook through the ways in which the players created and expressed their team identities on the webpage and on Facebook, and through the subsequent opportunities these spaces provided for players to engage in humorous discussions. For example, on the webpage each team created their online space with their names, colors, descriptions of their teams, and individual players' profiles. In some cases, imaginary ages, alternative nationalities and comic pictures were used to identify particular players and/or their teams. Indeed, most of the players chose funny and fictional player profiles.

Referee Denise

Team: Africa

Age: 17 – the youngest player

Nationality: Ilha Robben

Strong points: Perform plays that combine futsal, Artistic Gymnastics and Judo.

The opposing athletes usually stop playing to watch.

Weak points: when she is excited in the execution of acrobatics she forgot the ball.

Journalist Maria

1 It is considered the nicest athlete. She found space in your busy schedule to
2 compete in this tournament

3 *Positive points:* Teamwork, communication, and very helpful.

4 *Negative points:* She does not kick on goal. She said she is afraid because lack
5 confidence

6 *Expectation for the tournament:* win all games
7

8 Although there was space on the webpage for comments about these profiles, the
9 players used Facebook as a space to discuss these player and team identities. Instead of
10 creating t-shirts, team chants, banners or the decoration of festive spaces, the
11 participants created a virtual space where humor was always present that represented
12 notions of festivity.

13 Maria: #LetsSpain

14 Carolina: Let's go? Where?

15 Denise: Ha Ha Ha

16 Maria: Let's win the game against your team... hahahahaha

17 Carolina: ha ha ha (11-21 Facebook post)
18

19 I accessed the webpage every day. I even saved the webpage as my mobile's home page.
20 We commented on Facebook what the journalists posted on the site. Generally, we would
21 write funny comments about our webpage... I always laughed a lot. I posted funny
22 comments and comic pictures (Audrey - interview).
23

24 Alongside festivity existing within player and team profiles, Facebook supported
25 the development of a festive atmosphere within the culminating event. For example,
26 players used awards to recognize outstanding performances and team-related efforts
27 during the culminating event. Players rewarded each other based on game-play
28 performance (top scorer, best defender, most improved player), excellence in fulfilling
29 duty-team responsibilities (best coach/manager, best referee, best journalist and best
30 scorekeeper), and fair play behaviors (best fair play player). Although the awards for
31 game-play performances were based on statistics collected during the season, awards
32 for excellence in duty-team responsibilities and fair play behavior was voted for by
33 using the Facebook page. All pictures of the festive day were posted by the journalists
34 and players were encouraged to and comment on the Facebook page and vote.

35 Hello all!!! During our BBQ we also will award the best journalist, best statistics, best
36 coach and best referee, as well as the fair play player! It will be fun! We selected 10
37 categories to be voted on by you. I talked to the coaches and they will collect your votes
38 by private messages groups! Remember you cannot vote for yourself! ha ha ha (Carla
39 Facebook post 12-18)
40

Facebook supported the development of a festive atmosphere by re-enforcing a team identity and by creating a sense of festivity within the culminating event. The ability to engage in humorous interactions about identity and the culminating event on Facebook furthered the development of a festive atmosphere.

Creating a democratic space

Facebook created a democratic space that supported decision-making during the season that allowed players to resolve challenges related to the organizational aspects of teams and gameplay. Indeed, Facebook provided an additional space for the players to discuss the organization of games and practices. This was important as during the season, unexpected eventualities occurred (e.g. injuries, dropout, discussions and absences) in which the players had to decide how to solve problems within a short period of time. It became evident that Facebook provided a democratic space for decision making where players could express their feelings in a safe environment, supporting players to resolve and avoid conflicts during the sessions.

Andressa/Marta: Good morning girls! I really want to apologize to you and especially, I want to apologize to Denise for not having controlled my emotions yesterday. I should not behave in that way... I apologize. We are in the tournament for fun and not to fight. Signed Marta

Melissa: No worries Marta. Sometimes we got nervous in the game. But I think all of us know how things are different on the field and offside the field. Outside the field our friendship will stay the same (12-04 Facebook post).

Nowadays everything is virtual; Internet has made everything more practical in our live. In our tournament, we had several schedule changes and the Internet has facilitated our communication. It was very practical and convenient to suit the order of some games to help someone, for example (Karina - interview).

By creating a democratic environment, Facebook also increased players' understandings of how to perform in their individual roles to support the organization of the seasons. For example, some of the Facebook posts showed how players could give an opinion on their team's performance and how to improve. As the interaction on Facebook shows below, collectively the players realized that scorekeepers should have fewer criteria to observe, should share the criteria between the two scorekeepers and also should meet to discuss the criteria. Similarly, the referees could share difficulties of performing their role. Players discussed ideas on how to make better judgments (referees) during game play. Referees agreed to talk about mistakes and successes after

games and not speak to spectators during the games. In addition, they pointed out that athletes needed to respect their decisions.

Carla: Girls, I would like to hear your opinion. What do we need to improve so that we do not have statistical [score keeping] mistakes during the season?

Denise: I'm not a scorekeeper, but I noted that the data is inaccurate. For example, it does not have goalkeepers' good and bad passes

Carla: Thanks Denise! We need to consider goalkeepers' passes. Audrey also made excellent suggestions in her inbox: a) we should divide the criteria to observe between the two scorekeepers; b) we plan a meeting to organize/better train the criteria.

In summary, Facebook was a democratic space where players were able to voice their opinions, feelings and resolve many unexpected eventualities (injuries, dropout, discussions/ disagreements and absences) that are common in sport competitions. In addition, interactions that occurred on Facebook increased players' understandings of how to perform in their individual roles to support the organization of the seasons. Instead of having someone in a position of power (teacher or coach) to solve conflicts, Facebook acted as a medium for democratic decision making in a relatively short period of time.

Discussion and conclusion

Data from this study has demonstrated that Facebook acted as an additional space for interaction between futsal players participating in a Sport Education season. In turn, Facebook was a medium for players to share information and discuss roles, rules, fixtures and results before and after their face-to-face weekly sessions. Facebook, therefore, supported and extended the opportunities players had to interact with each other and engage with the practices inherent within Sport Education (see for example, Hastie et al., 2011).

There was evidence to suggest that the inclusion of Facebook as an interactional tool strengthened the existence of the key features of Sport Education (see Siedentop et al., 2011) and, consequently, supported the development of an authentic sport experience. While it should be noted that all six features were impacted by players uses of Facebook, affiliation, festivity and seasons were the features impacted the most and were evidenced explicitly. Affiliation was evident since Facebook provided a medium for players to express their sense of belonging to their team and team mates; festivity was developed through interactions on Facebook that represented humor; seasons were supported through the opportunities for players to voice opinions and resolve challenges

1 related to the organizational nature of tournaments. Given that the features of affiliation,
2 festivity and seasons are representative of community-based sport (Kirk & Kinchin,
3 2003; Kirk & Macdonald, 1998), we argue that there is evidence to suggest that social
4 media acted as a tool to support the development of an authentic sport experience.

5 Drawing on the theoretical underpinnings of situated learning within CoPs (see
6 Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998; Wenger & Wenger-Traynor, 2015), players' uses
7 of Facebook supported the development of an authentic sport experience Facebook was
8 a platform that provided more opportunities for interaction. Indeed, Wenger and
9 Wenger-Traynor (2015) and Wenger (1998) emphasised that a CoP represents a group
10 of individuals who share concerns and come together to interact regularly to contribute
11 to shared public practices. The point around interacting regularly is significant to this
12 study. A key finding was how players felt that Facebook enabled them to interact more
13 frequently, before and after face-to-face sessions. Facebook was also used by the
14 players because it was a socially and culturally relevant form of communication to
15 them; as seen through the players prior uses of Facebook, the players established
16 Facebook profiles, the players' preferences to interact through Facebook instead of the
17 webpage, and the players uses of the community club's Facebook page prior to the
18 beginning of the Sport Education season. It can be suggested, therefore, that more
19 opportunities to interact in a space that was socially and culturally relevant to the
20 players supported the development of an authentic sport context in this study.

21 Facebook's role in supporting an authentic sport experience can also be related
22 to the identity as aspect of CoPs (see Wenger, 1998), since opportunities existed for the
23 players to perform a particular identity on Facebook. In particular, Facebook acted as a
24 medium for the journalists to share information with their teams and perform in their
25 role in a more efficient and effective manner. The positive responses from other
26 members, in the form of comments and likes, suggest that other team members were
27 aware of, and supportive of, the journalists' identity and their unique contribution to the
28 team. Yet while the journalists could perform their identity on Facebook, this was not
29 evident for all players or roles. Notably, the scorekeepers rarely interacted with their
30 team through Facebook and there were differences amongst the players in their
31 willingness to comment or like in their Facebook group. The differences in how the
32 players used Facebook provide two key implications for the uses of social media within
33 Sport Education. First, social media can strengthen particular players' ability to perform
34 in their roles and contribute to the development of an authentic sport experience for

others in their team and players within the wider Sport Education season. For example, a direct association can be made between social media and the media orientated role of the journalist. Second, the use of social media within Sport Education does not mean that all players will be subjected to the same authentic sport experience and that all players' experiences will be supported by social media. While variability in uses of social media between individuals has been reported in investigations of teachers and students within physical education contexts (Calderón et al., 2016; Goodyear et al., 2014; Wesely, 2013), differences in how players used Facebook highlight the variability of impact that interactions on Facebook could have. Overall, these two implications suggest that coaches should not rely on social media as the sole form of communication or the only space in which particular players, such as journalists, can perform in their roles. Indeed, we emphasize that social media should be positioned as a supportive interactive tool for Sport Education.

Although this study has demonstrated that social media can support the development of an authentic sport experience, there were key limitations that should be acknowledged. Firstly, Carla was an insider to the community sport club. Carla gathered and analyzed data throughout the study and then re-analyzed her initial interpretations of the data. Moreover, she had prior relations with the participants. Despite this, attempts to meet Lincoln and Guba's (1985) notions of trustworthiness were made. Carla contextual knowledge meets to some extent the notion of *credibility* (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) since her understandings of the recreational community club and participants adds significant depth to the data. Indeed, as Dwyer and Buckle (2009) argue, insider role status can allow a greater depth of data to be gathered because a researcher often shares an identity, language, and experiential evidence base with participants that provides a level of openness and trust in the data gathering process. To reduce the impact of this limitation, the second and third authors have added *dependability* (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) to the results through their on-going challenges to the interpretation of the data, during the analysis, and in the reporting of the findings. The results section also showed credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) through the triangulation of data from the multiple data gathering sources. It should be acknowledged, however, that the insider role status of Carla was both a strength and weakness of this research.

The second limitation of this study relates to transferability. While the use of a case study approach into a singular community sport club provided detailed insights

1 into the role of social media within Sport Education, a larger sample size of a diverse
2 range of community sport clubs and players would strengthen and legitimize the
3 transferability of the findings. Future investigations, therefore, should aim to explore
4 how players and coaches, from a diverse range of sport clubs, use and engage with
5 social media.

6 The last limitation is regarding ethics. In this study, and similar to Goodyear
7 (2016), due to the emergent nature of Facebook as a data source traditional procedures
8 for informed consent were difficult to navigate. As a result, when players posted to the
9 Facebook page they were not aware that their posts could be used for research purposes.
10 Although this can strengthen the authenticity of the data (see McKee & Porter, 2009),
11 key questions might be raised as to whether participants were deceived in any way. The
12 subsequent gathering of consent, as has been recommended by others, (see Goodyear,
13 2016; McKee & Porter, 2009), sought to address this concern. It is clear, however, that
14 future research should begin to address the ethical issues of social media research.
15 Indeed, while there is a growing body of literature dealing with the ethical issues of
16 conducting digital and Internet-based research (see McKee & Porter, 2009), relatively
17 little has been written about social media (Barnes et al. 2015). As such, there is no clear
18 ethical framework for researchers entering this field of research (Beninger et al., 2014;
19 Evans et al., 2015), where traditional procedures of informed consent and anonymity
20 have been reported as being complex and difficult to navigate (Goodyear, 2016).

21 In conclusion, the discussions in this paper have shown that social media plays a
22 key role in sport, and more specifically community sport. In using Sport Education and
23 in an effort to develop an authentic sport experience, social media should be considered
24 as a platform for communication. Players' interactions on social media can provide
25 increased opportunities for dialogue, before and after face-to-face sessions, and these
26 social media interactions can support the development of particular players' identities
27 within their team. Given the pace at which social media is being used by individuals in
28 wider society (Selwyn & Stirling, 2016) and the difficulties in separating online and
29 offline worlds (Bundon, 2016), this study has provided further empirical evidence to
30 suggest that we cannot separate social media from sport. Indeed, an authentic sport
31 experience, we suggest, encompasses social media interactions and if CoPs within Sport
32 Education are said to be in-line with community sport (see Kirk & Kinchin, 2003; Kirk
33 & Macdonald, 1998), social media should serve as a basis for communication between
34 players.

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