Framing the Paper

Sean was a first-year student at the University of Dayton when he wrote this paper. He was enrolled in a two-semester composition sequence that allowed him to work on this ethnography for a year. His paper was chosen as one of the best from two such courses and was published in a one-time-only university publication called *Looking for Literacy: Reporting the Research*. Sean’s interest in the discourse community of football coaches arose from his own experience as a high school football player and as a student in college. At the time of the publication of *Writing about Writing*, Sean was a student football coach at the University of Hawai’i at Manoa.

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Coaches Can Read, Too:
An Ethnographic Study of a Football Coaching Discourse Community

The profession of coaching football is one of the most influential professions that exists in today’s world. It is a profession essential to the game whether it is a third-grade team or a pro team. Coaches may range from parents volunteering with a child’s youth program to people who dedicate every waking hour to the game. Coaches are made up of both everyday Joes and legends that will live in memory as long as the game is played. It is a profession that requires putting the athletes first:
and honest with the coach. The third aspect is developing a coaching model

coaches to grow. While the coach will feel comfortable being

work to develop an honest relationship to help create an environment

relationship between the coach and player. This means that a coach must

relationship. The second part is developing a strong coaching

their parts are well balanced with the whole. The coach must

coaching career. The first part is setting good goals. The coach must

Can explain why these are key components in the coach's role.

The coach’s role is to:

the action to enhance performance. And this leads to:

performance (strength and conditioning) and the coaching

performance (strength and conditioning) and the coaching

sets a goal, develops a plan of action, begins action, monitors the

process of using goals, which consists of the following:

need to recall the steps involved to set the goal and competent

the process of setting and changing goals to advance a
desire on the goal, the goal, and the goal. People have

Goal-Focused Coaching

the characteristics of effective coaches.

there are the ideas of goal-focused coaching with the component

Recall that the goal must be clear, specific, and measurable.

a process of setting and changing goals to advance a
desire on the goal, the goal, and the goal. People have

The next responsibility of the coach is to guide their athletes to

Brenda
which means helping the athlete develop solutions to help him achieve his goals. The fourth part is managing process. This includes developing actions steps and holding the athlete accountable for completing the agreed steps. The fifth and final aspect is achieving the desired outcome.

**Characteristics of an Effective Coach**

While successful coaches have been exposed to the spotlight throughout history, certain personal qualities of these coaches have emerged as essential to success in the coaching business. Sports psychologist Sandra Short explores five specific qualities of effective coaches. The first of these qualities is being a teacher. This is important because coaches must be able to teach their players about the game and what to do during competition.

The second quality is being organized. Being organized is typically a behind-the-scenes job but it is important because a coach must be organized to keep track of players, competitions, and practice schedules. It is important to organize a plan for success and be able to stick to it. Coaches in team sports must be organized before stepping onto the playing field so that they will know how to handle specific situations such as substitutions and timeout management.

The third quality is being competitive. Coaches must have an inner desire to compete and work to instill that desire to compete in their athletes. Being competitive must be a foundational quality in athletes. It doesn’t matter how gifted an athlete is or how much he knows, if he does not have the desire to compete then he will not be successful.

The fourth quality is being a learner. Coaches must continue to learn every day they are on the job. They must learn about their players’ personality and they must learn about the newest trends, philosophies, and strategies in the sport that they coach.
Books have been written on the characteristics of good coaches. Studies have been done on confidence in coaching, the method of setting goals, and the role of the coach in coach-athlete relationships; however scholars have yet to study a coach’s ability to read his players and the game as a form of literacy. Many people may think that literacy is not part of the responsibilities that go with coaching. However, they couldn’t be farther from the truth. Tony Mirabelli gives an unorthodox definition of literacy, arguing that “Literacy extends beyond individual experiences of reading and writing to include the various modes of communication and situations of any socially meaningful group” (146). He talks about reading people and knowing when to do something to help them as forms of literacy.

This idea of multiple literacies can be applied to football coaching staff as well. Coaches need to be able to do so much more than just read. They need to know how to read people. They need to know how to read their players so that they can find out how to get the most out of them. They must also know how to read and teach the plays. The coaches must know their plays because many plays have certain “reads” or “progressions” that the coach must be able to teach the players. Coaches also must be able to read the game so that they can call the best plays that suit certain situations properly.

Coaching as a complex literacy practice has not been examined. How do football coaches, as members of a specific discourse community, go about reading their players and the game in order to get optimal performance and a positive end result? To figure this out, I conducted an ethnographic study on how the coaches at the University of Dayton go about reading people and reading the game.
Methods
Results

Because we are studying the multiple literacies of football coaches by looking at coaching as a discourse community, it will be clearest to separate the results for the characteristics of a discourse community and the results for multiple literacies.

Characteristics of a Discourse Community

A football coaching staff is an excellent example of a discourse community. The characteristics are clearly defined and easy to recognize. The clearest characteristics to pick up on are the goals, lexis, and genres.

Goals. Coach Kelly and Coach Whilding helped make up one of the most successful coaching staffs in the history of division 1 college football. This is mainly due to their ability to set and achieve goals, both team and personal goals. There is always the goal of winning the game. The University of Dayton had goal charts with a list of about 10 goals for every game, for offense, defense, and special teams. They use these charts with stickers to help monitor how well they achieve these goals and figure out the goals they need to work on.

Coaches also have many individual goals. Many of these goals include getting the most out of their players physically and mentally. Coaches always strive to make their players push themselves to heights that they never thought they could reach. Coaches also have the goal of seeing their players develop as people. Coach Whilding talked about how he enjoyed seeing his players succeed in real-life situations after football: “It's good to see those guys mature and go on and get good jobs and raise families and be very responsible people in their communities.”

Along with these goals, there are many rewards. While many big time college coaches may receive a hefty paycheck, Coach Whilding explained that
and the people who are supposed to can hear.

Create by the coaches and show to the players. This is the part of the game that is the coach.

Perhaps the more essential part is the players. The coach is

teen's pre-season training.

and football coaching will operate efficiently. Coaches often use the

discourage communication. There are certain beliefs that help a coach.

people and in this example all communication exists place within the

classroom. A coach is a role that helps develop communication through

Planning: the players and the coaches would not have this...

will not know what it means. Without many hours spent practicing and

the lack varies from team to team. So the opposing team plans not to

may decrease societal actions. This lack is also important because

practice is seen as the place to learn. The lack helps save time because one

practicing and if it seems anything other than effective, the

be things like the coaching names such as "Box," "C_team", "C_formation," "T Tallon," "Rear."

paying sources such as "Tallons," "C_formation," "Rear."

then, are not even known until after. There are however, their

more common terms which are more euros to the

seen and help the community better to... to... to... to... to... to... to... to... to... to... to... to...

that not only make sense to most people but among a large number of

their are many terms that are ignored in coaching communications.

there is a pool of coaches' or set of terms that make the communication

Lack: Another important characteristic of discourage communication is that

the morning that I go to work and I have seen the list with.

some of the players are not important? I know eight who will have to get up.
get the playbooks at the beginning of the season and need to learn the plays before they are “installed” during practice. The players must guard these books and make sure that no members from opposing teams get the information. The playbook is essential to success because there are many plays and without a playbook the players would become confused and make mistakes that could be disastrous to the outcome of the football game.

Another genre is a scouting report. The scouting report is also made up by the coaches for the players. It shows the other team’s personnel, what plays they like to run, and when they like to run them. It helps the players know what to expect going into the game so they can prepare accordingly. The coaches will usually spend the day after a game putting together a scouting report and distribute the report to their players at the beginning of the week.

A third genre is a play-calling sheet. This is made up by the coaches and is only for the coaches, mainly the offensive coordinator. The play-calling sheet helps the coach remember all the plays that they have and what situation that the plays are favorable in. Without a play-calling sheet, the coach would have to remember the names of all the plays on his own, and that is something that could be a distraction to calling the proper plays, and could effectively cost a team a game.

Now that we understand what exactly a football coaching discourse community is and what it is made up of, we can learn exactly how the concept of literacy applies to this group.

**Multiple Literacies**

Many people do not see the concept of literacy as something that would apply to a football coaching staff. However, Mirabelli defines literacy as not
Properties: Every comic, crossword, or other page is designed to be read as part of a larger context. The page content may differ in size, shape, or layout, but it always aims to engage the reader in a specific way. Whether it's a comic strip, a crossword puzzle, or a set of instructions, each page is crafted to enhance the reader's experience and encourage active participation. The design of each page is intentional, guiding the reader through a narrative or set of challenges. The reward for reading and completing the page is a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction.
respond to different types of motivation in different ways. This can be done by taking an emotional, fiery approach or a calm and collected approach. Coach Kelly emphasized the importance of motivation, explaining.

That's a key element in becoming a coach. Can they motivate? Can they identify what makes this guy go? Can you hit that button and how fast can you hit that button? The sooner you find that motivational tool the better off you're going to be. You can tell immediately if it works or not.

Finding out what motivates each individual is no easy task, but Coach Whilding explains, "You have to be able to understand 'How do I reach that player...that young man?' And there are a lot of ways to do that. Through the years, you figure it out." He went more in depth and explained that you have to be able to reach everybody as an individual player and that there are many types of players: "There are some that like to yell and scream and get excited. There are others who don't play well like that, who are a little quieter and keep it within themselves but are still very motivated." Coach Painter from Cincinnati points out the balance between these two opposing motivational styles: "You have to use both and know when to use them...Too much fire and you will lose the team and its effectiveness. Too much calm and you will lose control over the environment."

These explanations show that reading players to know when they are ready to play and reading players to know how to motivate them are two very difficult parts of the coaching profession. They require balance, patience, and perseverance. Coach Whilding sums it up, saying, sometimes "it just doesn't work and you find out you have to just use another method."
Chapter 4: Building a Second Essential Coaching Legacy: Bridge 2

Chapter 4:

Committed coaches know that they are always learning. They understand that coaching is a process of constant improvement and that they must constantly seek new ideas and strategies to enhance their coaching skills.

A key component of being a committed coach is the ability to read and understand the game. This involves being able to read the game in real time, making quick decisions and adjusting strategies as necessary.

In this chapter, we will explore the concept of "reading the game". This involves being able to anticipate what the other team is going to do, then adjusting your own strategy accordingly.

The first step in reading the game is to understand the fundamentals of the game. This includes knowing the rules, the history of the game, and the current trends in coaching.

Once you have a solid understanding of the game, you can start to develop your own style of coaching. This involves identifying your strengths and weaknesses as a coach, then developing strategies that will allow you to capitalize on your strengths and compensate for your weaknesses.

In the end, reading the game is about being able to anticipate the other team's moves and adjust your own strategy accordingly. It requires a combination of knowledge, intuition, and flexibility.

Throughout this chapter, we will discuss various techniques and strategies for reading the game. We will also provide practical examples and case studies to help you develop your own skill set.

By the end of this chapter, you should have a better understanding of how to read the game and enhance your coaching skills. You will be ready to take your coaching to the next level.

Brendan D.
Coach Whilden explains that a key aspect of making these adjustments is that “You have to get a feel on the field for what is working, and I think that’s something you develop through the years . . . and it changes from week to week, from year to year sometimes, depending on your personnel. You have to know your personnel. What you’re good at, what you’re not good at.”

Because coaches don’t always have the best view and are not in a position to be heard by all the players when they are on the field, sometimes they will delegate this responsibility to their players. Coach Painter explains, “Our players are allowed a small amount of freedom on the fly. We ask our quarterback to check us out of plays when necessary, but we have established what and when he can make such checks.” These checks (changing the play at the line) give the team a better chance of calling a play that will be more likely to be successful.

Halftime adjustments are also very important. Sometimes a team will come out in the first half and do something that was not expected or maybe a certain strategy is not working the way the coach expected it to. The coaches will come together at the end of the half and discuss possible changes that might help the team. They then use halftime to explain these changes and make sure everyone is on the same page. This can turn into a chess match because sometimes one team will adjust to something that another team does, but at the same time the other team changes up what they were doing. Coach Painter explains it best by saying, “Your opponent is going to adjust, if you do not then you will be at a disadvantage. No matter how much preparation you have put in, there are going to be things you did not expect. This is where your on-the-field adjustments give you the final edge.”
Coaching functions as a discourse community that uses a variety of complex literacies, textual, interpersonal, and situational. All of these literacies can be seen functioning together in a game situation.

Before the game, the coach had to spend time evaluating his players and deciding who was going to play. To do this he used interpersonal literacies. Now fast forward to a game situation. Let’s say that the team we are looking at is on offense. While the players are playing the game, there are assistant coaches in the press box watching to see how the defense reacts to what the offense does. They are looking for any keys or告诉 that could give the offense an advantage. This is an example of situational literacies.

The assistant coaches in the press box will then communicate what they see to the coach calling the offense. This process involves using text literacies. The coach will then process what the assistant coaches told him and will look at his play calling sheet and decide what play to run. The play calling part is an example of genre. He will then tell the quarterback what play to run.

The name of the play consists of keys as well. The quarterback will then look at the defense and see if anything needs to be changed. This is an example of situational literacies. If the defensive decides to “check” the play, then the quarterback will need to change his play calling. The quarterback will then call for the play to go. He will tell the line to snap the ball and the play will be run with the hope of scoring a touchdown, which is the goal on any given play.

Conclusion

The world of coaching is more complicated than it may seem to the casual observer. Whether it is looking at some of the characteristics of a coaching relationship between textual, situational, and interpersonal literacies.
community or looking at the tasks that coaches partake in, such as reading players and the game, there are still many characteristics and responsibilities that are unexplored to those outside of these communities. After looking in depth at some of the behind-the-scenes factors that go into coaching, I hope to have helped increase knowledge on the literacy aspects involved in coaching. I hope this helps spark interest in the connection between literacy and sports. This connection will now help people have a better sense of empathy with what the coaches are thinking when they make a specific call on the field or partake in an action off the field, and hopefully I have brought people closer to being able to answer the common question asked at any sporting event: “What was that coach thinking?!?”
Inference Questions for Teachers

Appendix A

1990. 21-22 PM

English in Academic and Workforce Settings: Boston Cambridge Ed

Swedish: "The concept of Brockway Community: An underestimated


1. The relationship between Brockway and Inferiority


Show Sandra E. Brown of the Brock in the Canadian Journal of Education.

New York: Peter Lang 2001. 1-67-23 PM

For beginning teachers. "Uses for Brock in school ed.

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International Journal 15 (2004): 7-6-6. PM

Prejudice 1994. Social Deviance: A Perspective on

Criminal Antisocial M. The Goal-Focused Teaching Skill Questionnaire.

Worries, Good.

References

L72 Chapter 4
specific examples that stick out of when you made an attempt to motivate a player and it was either very successful or unsuccessful? If you were unsuccessful how did you change your approach?

4. Would you consider your approach to correcting athletes more of positive reinforcement or negative reinforcement? Do you think that players respond better to one method better than the other? Is it better to correct mistakes publicly or privately? How do the players react to each method?

**Situational Literacies**

1. What do you feel are the most important factors to reading and calling a game? Do you use any specific methods to help you mediate reading the game (scripting plays, play-calling sheet with specific situations)?

2. Do you put any of this on your players (system of checks or audibles, plays that are run differently depending on the defense's look)?

3. How much of the outcome of a game do you feel is attributed to pregame coaching preparations (game planning, watching film)?

4. How important are in-game decisions such as halftime adjustments, substitutions, and when to gamble on big plays? Do you go with the overall feel of the game or do you look for specific details when it comes to making a game-time decision?

**Some Other Questions to Consider**

- On pages 560–61, Branick claims “There have been many articles written on the X's and O's... of the game... however scholars have yet to study a coach's ability to read his players and the game as a form of literacy.” Does Branick convince you that these abilities are, in fact, a form of literacy? Explain why or why not.

- Branick's methods include analyzing the coaches' discourse community using John Swales's six characteristics. How well does he conduct this analysis? What, if anything, would you change or expand?

- How does Branick define “situational literacies”? Are you convinced that this is a real skill? Are you convinced it is a form of literacy? Why or why not?