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## Towards a Critical Coaching Curriculum

Hunter M. Chadwick

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## TOWARDS A CRITICAL COACHING CURRICULUM

by

HUNTER M. CHADWICK

## ABSTRACT

This historical case study utilizes Critical Discourse Analysis in order to investigate its availability or absence within American football coaching curriculum outside of the traditional education setting. The study examines texts written by or about football coaches to find where critical pedagogy exists and what it looks like within coaching curriculum. The research attempts to add to the conversation of critical pedagogy, critical theory and their use outside the classroom. Critical pedagogy is investigated in this study in order to add validity to its use within football coaching school curriculum. Critical theory is discussed as a positive element in coaching curriculum and the possibilities of critical theory within football coaching curriculum is demonstrated. During this study three themes were discovered from the texts examined: Capitalism, Power and Goals. This study investigates these texts to demonstrate the influence of these three themes on critical coaching and shows where critical coaching exists currently as well as in the past.

INDEX WORDS: Curriculum Studies, Critical Theory, Coaching

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by

HUNTER M. CHADWICK

BA, Georgia Southern University, 2001

MED, Armstrong Atlantic State University, 2004

EDS, NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY, 2005

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by

HUNTER M. CHADWICK

Major Professor: Dr. Grigory Dmitriyev

Committee: Dr. John Weaver  
Dr. Daniel Czech  
Dr. Trey Burdette

Electronic Version Approved:

## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family. First my thanks go to my wife, Erin. You inspire me to be a better person everyday and your love is shown by all that you do and the sacrifices you continue to make. Second, my thanks go to my two children, Braxton and Cade, for your willingness to support this adventure even though it took away from my time with you both. Third my thanks go to my parents, who never gave up on the child who gave them the most headaches. Thank you both for always consistently supporting me and continuing to invest in something that was a long shot. And, lastly my gratitude goes to my brother, you were there when I needed you most and without your nudging and support I would not have gotten the first degree.

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## Towards a Critical Coaching Curriculum

### Chapter I

#### Introduction

I often wonder how I got to the playing field where I now stand fixed on changing the paradigms of coaches, parents and students of the game. I began searching for texts which would demonstrate what I was looking for, coaching philosophies which embraced critical pedagogy as their base. As a young boy I was captivated by my father's love of sports. When it was football season, my brother and I played football; perhaps on a team as we grew older, but at the very least in the neighborhood, the back-yard, the living room, or while holding the joystick of a video game. We battled and fought on the field and off, but it was our father who led us in the direction of sports. It was our father who allowed us to dream. And those dreams came from sports and I agree with Paulo Freire that "it is impossible to live without dreams" (2007, p. 4).

While still a young boy, I became enthralled with those who taught the game. The coaches were people whom I looked up to, like my father, who was my coach. I was amazed at their sense of scholarship of games they loved. Knowing the rules was not good enough; questioning those rules and pushing their limits was an area my father thrived on. I believe it was his desire to know more and to be a student of the game that led me toward becoming

a coach/teacher. I continue to coach/teach today with the same hunger for more knowledge that my father had. I continue to question the rules and the way they are applied; however, what has intrigued me is the attitude and atmosphere of sports coaching. As a child I wondered what life was like at the next level of competition and was always surprised at the experience I gained.

I presumed that the next level would always be very different. I hoped that when I achieved those levels the attitude would not be about winning but about teaching. I believed that the coaches at the next level of competition would eventually be more like my father, who loved the game of football. He loved it no matter who was playing. I envisioned these football experts surrounded by their prodigies. I dreamt these prodigies would see the game differently. I believed they had the passion and desire to see past the scoreboard, to see the game was more than winning; it was about education and the freedom that came with it.

My father taught me to look at sports through a different lens than the other players. One such lesson came when I was a middle school basketball player. We were trailing by two at home, the ball was inbounded on the side, at our end of the floor. Our gym was tiny and looked like a scene from Romper Room with bouncing balls painted all over the walls. The ball was

passed to our best player, Brian; he drove toward the basket like a miniature Magic Johnson, pulled up at the free throw line, and shot what could have been the game winner with just fifteen seconds on the clock. The ball hit the back of the rim and bounced backward toward me on the left-hand side of the gym floor about twelve feet from the basket. Falling away, I shot the ball with (in my mind) the same grace Michael Jordan had against the Cleveland Cavaliers in the 1989 NBA playoffs. The ball, sailing toward the basket, had a slightly backward rotation as it continued its flight toward Nativity of Our Lord School basketball history. As the buzzer sounded, it dropped toward the center of the basket; and just before the ball touched nylon, it hit the back edge of the rim and rolled around and out. We lost by one.

My dad, after the game, had a question he probably does not remember. "What would you have done if the ball had gone in?" he asked. Already down from missing my "Wheaties box" moment, I replied, "I would have run to center court and made a big "dog pile" of players right there on the floor!" My dad said, "Why wouldn't you have just run to the locker room and acted as if you were supposed to make the shot and celebrated the fact your team won; not you? You should be thinking about what you learned from the game not just about the score. If you play to the best

of your ability, then the winning and losing will take care of itself."

That thought has led me in my life many times; how misguided was I to believe the game was about me and only me! I have been able to apply that logic to my life and to my teaching. For some reason my father did not realize that critical pedagogy is what he taught us as children. He expected us to know what he knew and to teach him what we knew. He thought that sharing his passion for the game was normal and that sharing the task of teaching players was equally normal. The game was to be shared and respected in contrast to the score, which everyone else seemed to care about. He cared about teaching what we wanted to learn rather than teaching only what he wanted us to know. He wanted us to learn about all aspects of the game rather than just how to win. He often said you have to "think the game."

#### Statement of the Problem

We have become a sports society where the game of football is not the major activity. The team, its players, the coaches, and the fans have lost touch with what games and life have in common, perhaps everyone should bring with them the understanding of why coaches or players are there, on the field or why we choose to work in a particular profession like John

Gruden (2003) who in *Do You Love Football* says "Find your passion," (2003, p. 51) when he speaks of examining what you want to do in life. Games should teach us to be better people and better members of our community. Most coaches' goals are now exactly the same (*Bobby Bowden, 2001; Camp & Deland, 1896; Weis,, 2006; J. Clary, 1976; Davis, 2006; Gruden & Carucci, 2003; Halberstam, 2005; Holtz, 1978, 2006; Holtz & Heisler, 1989; H. H. Jones, 1923; Kramer, 1970; Mack Brown, 2001, 2006; O'Toole, 2008; Parcels & McDonough, 2000; Paterno & NetLibrary Inc., 1997; Phillips, 2001; Smith, 1984; Stagg & Stout, 1927; Watterson, 2002; Yost, 1905*). The equity and non-diversification among coaching pedagogy is astonishing. After reading the works of many coaches who have won championships, I find they strive to write books that explain how different their philosophies are when compared to other coaches; however, what they write is the same truth over and over again. The repeated pedagogy of one winning coach after another suggests critical pedagogy rarely exists and there are many who are far from critical pedagogy (*Parcels & McDonough, 2000*). The game for these coaches is about themselves, not the team, not the community. The driving force behind many of these coaches is not teaching and coaching but rather winning, destroying, crushing, beating the opponent and the material rewards that come with it. Critical coaching appears only in small doses within contemporary coaching

curriculum but within more empirical writings we find that critical pedagogy was available and the rules of the game may have helped create that philosophy (Reed, 1913; Yost, 1905). We may also find that coaches were forced to teach their players everything they knew because the role of the players involved more responsibility. As we see with Camp (1894) who states "The Quarter is, under the captain, the director of the game. No law can govern his tactics in this respect, but he should be a law unto himself, and show by his cleverness that he is more valuable than any man in the line whose position is fixed" (p. 79 - 90). As discussed in great detail later in this study the term "old-school" has one meaning in contemporary football but with careful inspection it could be called "old-school" football which was far different from its contemporary definition in the past.

In my own coaching experience, I have worked with coaches who believed they were teaching the players using the best methods they knew. Many students encounter the reproduction of teaching methods which many coaches have experienced for themselves. Similar to the teaching methods of classroom teachers, some coaches copy or reproduce the atmosphere they are familiar with and believe the same environment should be applied to all teams and all players. It is important for me to

investigate the text of coaches in order to find the freedoms that critical pedagogy favor.

#### Purpose of the Study

This work will investigate the involvement of critical theory in contemporary school football curriculum. Through the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) I will study what the current pedagogy looks like within the American football coaching field. Like many educational texts, I will inquire to what extent the works of coaches demonstrate critical coaching within the framework of their work. Many of these football teachers strive to have freedom within their teams; however, the amount of freedom is actually minute; for example Bill Parcells, the former head coach of the New York Giants, who would "give Belichick his defensive coordinator magnificent players and essentially a free hand to use them as he wanted" (Halberstam, 2005, p. 154). But freedom is far from what Parcells wants to deliver. He uses the word "freedom" in his text but only with a great sense of power and control from coaches attached to it.

Most of the texts are written to show how different these coaches are, but through CDA I will demonstrate what they write is in reality a reproduction of what has already been completed. The freedom which is sought by so many involved in the game is lost in the prison of many football teams. By using critical

perspectives while analyzing football pedagogy, I will strive to study the effectiveness of critical pedagogy's involvement in critical coaching.

#### Research Questions

How do current and historical football practices and curriculum theories define the concept of critical coaching?  
What themes emerge from the analysis of current and past practices within coaching curriculum?  
What are some effective ways of involving critical pedagogy in football coaching in a school setting?

Critical pedagogy in coaching and critical coaching is significant because it allows for freedom within the class. While being the teacher, a teacher also becomes a student. This give-and-take allows the education to go in both directions. Critical coaching allows for freedom for the student. The students are then able to develop a social awareness that gives them a critical consciousness of their roles and effects on society. Sports, and, in this case football, can help educate the players about their role outside of the game. By educating the players within a critical coaching atmosphere, we may be able to reduce the bodies' "desire . . . . To earning and consuming" (*Reynolds & Webber, 2004, p. 30*); therefore, we may be able to reduce our dependence on capitalist thinking and to



integrate new ideas and a new way of viewing our world and the world of the players.

I write with a sense of importance and relevance to the field of coaching but also to the field of curriculum. My work is different from others because it takes a critical look at sports coaching curriculum from a perspective of equity within educational curriculum. This analysis of coaching pedagogy is relevant for coaching on the field as well as coaching in the classroom because it demonstrates how we can change what is already there with a revolutionary attitude towards current pedagogy.

My inquiry looks at coaching pedagogy through a critical lens while analyzing coaching text which is original in methodology. By demonstrating what critical pedagogy would look like, I added to the curriculum field a unique look at critical pedagogy within a field which rarely appears in curriculum theory texts. I was able to use this work to provide evidence that critical theory is important to education at all levels and in all venues. I will also show that coaching pedagogy has been influenced by capitalism, and, therefore, critical pedagogy has been drowned in the aftermath. In order to show the benefit of critical pedagogy and for its rewards to be fully developed, dehumanizing capitalism must be removed from educational settings, and in its place critical pedagogy must emerge for the

enhancement of all educational settings. The effects of critical pedagogy in the curriculum field will enhance the curriculum field and affect our students socially and our communities by removing economic pressure and offering authentic humanistic development of football players which allows for self actualization rather than profit. Critical coaching will allow critical pedagogy to enter areas in which it is rarely found.

It is important to understand that critical perspectives in popular culture have a significant role in curriculum studies because they help to demonstrate the need for better understanding of the importance of the way we live. What is popular often gets manipulated by capitalism; consequently capitalism has become the norm for many in sports. Like popular culture which can help "tie the experiences of students to the experiences of school..." (Weaver, 2005, p. 105), popular culture has also influenced capitalism's effect within football and within coaching curriculum. Capitalism has crept its way into the minds, hearts, and brains of everyone inside and outside the classroom. By removing capitalism from education in all areas of life, we will be able to understand and accept what our jobs are as teachers. Win-lose records and test scores should not be the defining scoreboard of what education is. Whether we are teaching a game, life skills, or an English lesson, the goal will not be one of capital but of learning - learning to be a

better person, a better member of society and above all, how to become a teacher while also being the student should be the expectation. We can have high expectations and remove capitalist thinking like Dungy (2007), who says, "We expect to win a Super Bowl. But if that's all we do, it will be pretty shallow. We need to not only win but win with players who positively impact the Tampa Bay area" (*Dungy & Whitaker, 2007, p. 106*). We can walk down the road of learning while setting our expectations high but removing the capital as our measurement of success. Test scores and box scores cannot be our units of capital in any form of education. This work helps to add to the journey of a critical teacher and student. By removing capitalist thinking, the position of power and expectations will be allowed to change and be shared among the players.

This study also includes the analysis of the winning philosophies of the coaches who were examined during this research. Winning at all costs appears to be the major goal of many contemporary football teams (Kramer, 1970; Smith, 1984) but it is not the major topic from texts written in the early days or beginnings of the game (Roper, 1920). What we find in many cases of contemporary football is coaches believing football is about winning and in contrast coaches from the foundation of football often believed football was about much more. This statement is problematic and is the fuel which helps propel my

research forward. Winning should not be the ultimate goal or expectation. Because "significance does not show up in win-loss records, long resumes, or the trophies gathering dust on our mantels, it is found in the hearts and lives of those we've come across who are in some way better because of the way we lived" (*Dungy & Whitaker, 2007, p. 144*). Sports should affect our lives in ways other than through our wallets and in the record books. The three following themes will be analyzed in chapter four.

The first theme is shown through the meaning of the games being lost; and the most influential force affecting this loss of meaning is the purposeful infiltration of capitalism into organized sports at all levels. There is a reason for the Nike "Swoosh" on everything the company sells. There is a reason why Adidas wants football teams to wear its shoes in what appears to be a free campaign. Companies are not giving away products because they have suddenly lost the capitalist "hunger pains" which accelerate them into our living rooms. They are after capital, and their goal is for every team to wear their athletic shoes and gear during and after the games. One of the largest components of their rating scale is success. Companies like Nike, Gatorade and Wilson define success with winning, and the winning comes from the capitalist thinking that seeps into our lives, like the capitalist workday which is described as being "absent of knowledge of the work process, control and executions

functions because of the division of labor" (Jay, 1973, p. 59); therefore, parents and players define success with winning. Knowledge of the game is secondary to execution and control. The coach is compensated according to his success and, therefore, is driven by capital as well. Like Ayers (2004) we must understand the message of the coach is this, "You can change your life and you must; you can transform your world, if you will" (p. 96). The idea of being part of a team which is responsible for more than what is on the scoreboard and being part of that educational process is what critical coaching is looking for. As coaches/teachers we should ask how what we do everyday can impact those we teach as well as their communities not only for a day but for a lifetime.

Is the goal money or learning to play the game to the best of your ability while being a positive contributor to your community and society? The answer is difficult to swallow for those who love sports. I know because I am one of those people. I love sports, especially football, and the facts show that sports have become "big business." It is time to look at how capitalism has deliberately bullied its way into sports. The effect is similar to high stakes testing where the results on the scoreboard are all that are judged. It will be difficult to rid football of this capitalist domination but unless sports

like football are returned to their roots, their foundation, where freedom and learning are the expectation and winning becomes secondary, football like education will be a pit of quicksand where the faster we move the faster we sink.

“Football teams at universities like Michigan, Florida and Notre Dame are now more valuable than most professional franchises” (*Reynolds & Webber, 2004, p. 27*). The products, the teachers, and in this case, football coaches, are not being evaluated; instead the scores on the tests (the numbers on the scoreboard) are all the teachers (the coaches) are judged on. We must look toward critical coaching and the small success some football coaches have had using it to see what can be drawn from these different critical ideas toward a new paradigm of success.

Critical Coaching is a cyclical model of teaching/coaching and learning in which the student/player is taught while also learning and the teacher/coach learns while also teaching. Absent is the idea of winning as the ultimate measure or highest form of currency in the subject. Through the idea of a shared responsibility to each other, the student and teacher use this freedom to push each other to new limits within every encounter rather than the encouragement only coming from one direction (the teacher/coach) and being received by only one piece of the equation (the student/player).

Critical Coaching occurs through a mutual understanding and agreement of the expectations for all parties involved. Teachers and students must accept and understand what the expectation is, to strive to push each other to new heights everyday, realizing that the opportunity to sit stagnant is not ever possible. The critical coach and student will continue to step forward, knowing any step other than forward will be a step back. Critical Coaching is looking internally while searching externally as well. The student and teacher relationship must be established in a cyclical network in which both parties strive to make each other better. Continuous improvement for everyone involved will lead to achieved expectations. Critical coaches will not only condition the physical but also the mental while allowing new directions and new opportunities to arise. All the knowledge of the critical coach will be entrusted to those who play the game and with this knowledge will come equal responsibility for every student/player involved. Critical coaching can be defined as the following: the constant search for the creation and acquisition of liberation or freedom within the education of those involved in sports, through this liberation will come humanization which will require sharing the responsibility of learning and teaching rather than the oppressor/oppressed relationship which may be present. It is crucial to understand that these new relationships or, as Freire

(1987) calls them, the “annunciations” caused by the “result of mutual struggle against oppression” (McLaren & Lankshear, 1994, p. 15). The newly formed relationships (annunciations) will help create a humanistic approach to an educational setting which has a foundation in liberation due to many other historical factors. But these relationships have been through a metamorphosis which has struggled to be eradicated but rather has been embraced by those who may not know any other method. The new or alternative method is critical coaching which may not be new at all. Critical coaching needs to be given consideration within major and minor coaching settings.

The second theme is misappropriated goal setting. Goals are set, and a benchmark is created which asks coaches to win, similar to the objective, benchmark and assessment generation within the education setting. Winning and teaching are not necessarily equals. Because I teach and learn from my players and they become better at what they have been taught, and I become a better coach because of what they teach me does not equate to reaching the goals of winning a championship. How can we set expectations before we know our students? Almost all coaches in their texts speak of reaching their ultimate goal, which is to win a championship; and the means by which to get there. Winning is in everyone’s vocabulary even if their goal



for the future is more than winning; it shines through in their words and in their actions. Most would agree with John Gagliardi's statement, "The mark of a champion is the guy who gets up when no one thinks he can get back up" (Murphy, 2001, p. 136); but we must first look at what our goals are, and like John Gagliardi (Murphy, 2001) at St. Johns relates, perhaps the substitute would be high expectations rather than goal setting. We will set out to win by attempting to learn as much as possible and perform to the best of our abilities while improving everyday. We should not set expectations without input from the students (players); but because they are expectations and not goals, if we do not reach them, we will not say everything is lost. We will not judge ourselves solely on whether we achieve the expectation. Legendary football coach Erk Russell (1991) shared the feeling of reaching one's potential rather than solely winning when he said, "If you don't have the best of everything, make the best of everything you have" (p. 125). Like Coach Russell (1991) taught, you have everyday a chance to get better but what he missed was the expectation. Winning is not the ultimate expectation. The expectation should be to improve to the best of my ability and then find out how I compare to my peers. The winning, as Coach Russell knew, would take care of itself with the improvement every day and reaching one's potential. As we set major goals,

coaches will ultimately think about ways to reach those who are outside of our reach. We find that we must turn to other means of performance enhancement; therefore, we must look at what we want to achieve when we are teaching someone a game. Our expectation should be for an education and improvement in a game as well as how it relates to our lives. We play the games for enjoyment, learning and better understanding of the opportunities we are presented in life. The game is simply a place to work on our skills as people, companions, teammates, students, and teachers. The game should help us prepare for life, and life should help prepare us for the game.

The third theme that appears in most of the texts is the position or attitude towards power. Perhaps power, which appears through many different vehicles in coaching pedagogy, is what is most common among coaches. If the coach gives away or shares power, then he is viewed as less of a coach than his peers. He is letting the players run the program. I would ask who else is better to lead the team than the members. They know what they want. They know what they have learned and what they need to work on. Power at times is not mentioned in word but in deed. Power is clouded or hidden by the word discipline. "It was our job to train the team to remain disciplined even in unusual situations" (*Dungy & Whitaker, 2007, p. 107*). Many coaches do not state that they consider power an issue but after reading

their works we find that power is a major issue with most coaches. In many cases they do not realize that power is being taken away or shown within their teams. We know that power can be a major factor for coaches, and while they teach their players, the theme of power emerges throughout most of the text. Discipline and power are evident in the writing of many coaches.

This work will also show what critical coaching should look like. Although critics can write that critical coaching will never work or that it will never be supported, I will show what has worked. Although very rare, there are glimpses of critical coaching which have appeared at times in the game of football. I will attempt to show how these glimpses can be added to a true critical pedagogical experience which teachers, coaches, players, parents, and fans all could benefit from. It is essential to look at coaching pedagogy throughout the history of football. Because football has existed for a considerable time it can be stated that these changes and the perceptions of what is old and what is new could be distorted. The existence of critical pedagogy with coaching might appear in places one would not expect to find and it is with great anticipation that this research moves forward hoping to discover and define where critical pedagogy exists and where its absence is and was since the beginning.

## Chapter II

### Review of Literature

In order to properly understand where this study is situated it is important to begin with an understanding of the historical and contemporary writings of those who have influenced the many aspects of this study. Building a quality case study involves research into the background of what is being examined in order to find some of the factors that may contribute positively or negatively to the issues being investigated. In order to investigate properly the researcher must first look at what has been written which has relevance to the subject. In this case the following literature review will attempt to examine the literature of football coaches and the history of football as well as the foundations of critical theory.

### Faces of Football

There have been many faces in the game of football. The man known as the "father of American football" is Walter C. Camp (1894) who coached at Yale University and Stanford University from 1888-1895 and is given credit for a record of 81-5-3. In the days of Coach Camp (1910), football was at its very roots, taking the game of rugby and adapting its rules to a version of

American football that would be very different from today. Camp (1896), who wrote many texts on football, was best known for his contributions to the early game and the early emergence of it which is described in *Football (Camp & Deland, 1896)*. The game of football as we know it today was started by Camp but was refined by others who include: John Heisman, Amos Alonzo Stagg, Glenn Scobey Warner, Fielding H. Yost, George Halas and Paul Brown. It is important to understand that because football was so young during Camp's time it was coaches like Camp who were leading the way in innovation. The rules were adapted over time to accommodate and to initiate innovation as well. One example would be the forward pass which was not legal for many years in the game. Its inception lead to a complete overhaul of some coaching philosophy (Camp, 1910). However, by reading the empirical archives of football we find that many of the philosophies of "days gone by" are still alive and well in American football today. But we also find the foundations and attitudes of football are not always portrayed or reported accurately as this study will demonstrate.

Fielding H. Yost (Yost, 1905) best known for his coaching days at the University of Michigan, is considered to be another cornerstone in the establishment of football. He coached from 1897-1926, beginning his career at Ohio Wesleyan and then making

stops at Nebraska, Kansas and Stanford before ending his career at the University of Michigan, where he coached from 1901-1926.

Many give Yost (1905) credit for the rise of coaching as a profession. For Yost, football was a saving grace, of sorts, for the college student. He believed that there were two choices for students before football was introduced: "the bookworm or the gilded youth who sought and enjoyed the reputation of being the best billiard and card player in the institution" (Yost, 1905, p. 16). He believed that students more clearly understood their role by participating in sports, especially football. With regard to student-athletes Yost said, "He realizes and regards it more seriously than did his active, young prototype thirty years ago. He is imbued with the definite ambition and knows that, before its accomplishment can possibly be attained, he must first of all, be the student" (p. 18). Yost clearly demonstrated the importance of being a student first and he saw the role of the player/student as being interchangeable.

Yost (1905) spoke of football as if it were essential to forming a quality institution. He believed that the game of football not only tied the players to the experience but also the spectators to the experience. Therefore, "there are no ties so potent to bind him to the college through the business of after years" (p.18). Yost was a man who believed many areas of

the game of football flowed into the game of life. He did not believe the game and the education inside the buildings were separated. And in his opinion they both had much to gain from each other (Yost, 1905). Here, with Yost, we can see the connection between life and football as well as football and education.

Yost (1905) very clearly demonstrated his belief in what football could do for those involved in participation on the field and in those whose participation was off the field:

“The same vital points continually drummed into a player in his training, are sure to influence the spectators who daily gather on the field to witness the practice. These attributes, personified in the ideal football player, dominate the entire student body and create a spirit which reaches out from the athletic field through the campus and into the very recitation room. The influence for the good exerted in this way is incalculable” (p. 19).

Yost (1905) is speaking of the influence the game of football has on not only the players but the spectators and inside the classroom. Yost speaks of the roughness of football being outweighed by the good it provides to the students and spectators of his day. Yost speaks of football in different terms than what we find years later. To Yost football is

something that has just begun and its popularity in 1905 is just catching on in many places across the country. In his work *Football for Player and Spectator* (1905), Yost does not describe football programs in the South in the detail that he describes other football programs across the country. If someone were to update his work today we would expect to find a great deal about football in the South as well as the details of the southern spectators.

There have been many coaches who have made an impact on the game of football and John Heisman (Whittingham, 2001) has definitely been one of them. His coaching career spans from 1892-1927. While spending most of his years at Georgia Tech (1904-1919) his career ended in 1927 at Rice Institute. Heisman, in whose honor the national trophy given to the best college football player is named, is known as an innovator within the game of football. He is credited with many new ideas such as the "snap count," shifting, and splitting the game into quarters to name a few. Although Heisman is best known today for the trophy bearing his name, he led the way for more innovation to the game today (Umphlett, 1992). Like his contemporaries, Heisman felt football had more to offer than just "skill and drill" but rather lessons for life. (Whittingham, 2001).



Another pioneer of football was Amos Alonzo Stagg, also known as "the grand old man" of college football. Stagg (*Stagg & Stout, 1927*) has been credited, as well, with many innovations to the game. Some of his contributions include putting the names of the back of jerseys and numbering plays and players. Some of his players were the first to wear helmets and he is credited with inventing the tackling dummy. Stagg was revered by his players as a genius and viewed himself as an educator rather than just someone who knew football. He loved the idea of teaching different types of sports and left his mark on many different areas of the game and on education. His career began in 1890 at Springfield College and ended in 1946 at College of the Pacific (*Watterson, 2002*).

Glenn "Pop" Scobey Warner coached from 1895-1938 and was described well in *Pop Warner: Football's Greatest Teacher: The Epic Autobiography of Major College Football's Winningest Coach* (*Bynum, 1993*). He is credited with being the first paid coach in the profession. He also coached several teams at one time during his career. Warner was also one for innovation and originated the screen pass, the spiral punt and shoulder pads. His decision to allow running backs to wear one color helmet and ends to wear another lead to many rule changes as well as all teams wanting their own distinct helmet design. Warner is also well respected

for his work at Carlisle Indian Industrial School where he coached the great Jim Thorpe. It was Warner who helped organize youth football programs, which would grow to become Pop Warner Football programs across the country.

Through his work young people have been introduced to the game of football for decades. Warner (Bynum, 1993) was diligent in his task as teacher of the game of football. He saw the game as if he were a teacher who had a lesson to share. Warner coached several teams all in the same season and did so because of his organization and determination for the game. A legend in the game of football, Warner will always be mentioned when speaking of the great coaches in the game because of the sacrifices he made and the changes that would come from his work with it. He also believed he was teaching something worthwhile and relevant off the field (Bynum, 1993).

George Halas (1979) began coaching in 1920 and ended his coaching career with the team he owned, the Chicago Bears, in 1967. Halas was one of the creators of the T formation and was respected by those in his profession, which was important to him and discussed in depth in Halas by Halas: the Autobiography of George Halas (1979). His teams, which were known throughout the 1940's as the monsters of midway, were dominate because of Halas's style. The perfectionist was often imitated by coaches

who sought to reach his level of success in their field. Halas was a winner and, because of his name and fortune, whatever Halas did, others wanted to imitate. George Halas would go on to win 318 games during his coaching career with a winning percentage of .682. Halas is another face in the crowd of well respected coaches who had their own style and philosophy which left a mark on the game he loved. His philosophy would be placed on a pedestal by others in his profession not only for his wins but also because he only suffered six losing seasons in his 40 year coaching career. His name would be placed on the Trophy for the National Football Conference (NFC) Champion. Like those who played the game during his coaching career, those that play the game today yearn to have their name next to his. In years past players wanted to be placed on the team coached by him and today they desire be placed on a team that wins his trophy. Halas is a legend in the NFL and will always be because of his dedication to the game and the success he had while serving his profession and the game of football (Davis, 2006).

Football has a definite family tree which can be traced and followed as you move throughout its inception and initial organization to today's list of current coaches. One of the famous "four horsemen" of Notre Dame who led Notre Dame from 1922-1924 was Jim Crowley. Later in 1933 we find Crowley as the

Head Coach of Fordham University, where he is coaching a team which is made up of the well known "seven blocks of granite" which would include the legendary coach Vince Lombardi. Lombardi would go on to coach in high school beginning in 1940 and later return to Fordham as an assistant in 1946. He would leave Fordham to work for Earl Blaik at the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1948. Lombardi would leave West Point to take the offensive coordinator position for the New York Giants where he coached with eventual NFL hall of fame coach Tom Landry. After a successful career with the Giants, Lombardi left New York to take the head coaching position with the Green Bay Packers in 1958. While known as a tyrant on and off the field, Lombardi would use what he had experienced over the years to educate his teams in a different manner (Maraniss, 2000). However, his dictatorship remained always present to anyone who played for him. Overshadowed by his dominating ways Lombardi brought many facets to the game of football and his style of preparation lingers in the game today. Lombardi would coach in Green Bay until 1968 and later return to the field in 1969. He died in 1970 after being diagnosed with cancer while planning for the upcoming season (O'Brian, 1987).

Knute Rockne was also one of the most renowned coaches of all time. His coaching style and philosophy is well documented,

especially in Richard Whittingham's (2001) work, *Rites of Autumn: The Story of College Football*. Rockne was the coach at Notre Dame from 1918-1930 and adds to the coaching tree of successful coaches who have had tremendous impact on the game. Rockne coached the well known "four horsemen" and is considered responsible for helping make the forward pass an integral part of offensive football strategy.

While Paul Brown is considered to be one of the most influential people to ever coach the game of football, he definitely left a substantial mark on the game because of his influence on the coaches who would follow. He began his career in 1930 at Washington High School and ended his career in 1976. Brown was credited with the communication system from the press box and to the field as well as being the first to put facemasks on helmets (O'Toole, 2008).

Football coaches have passed along a lineage of football coaching curriculum which spans over 120 years. It is evident in these works, whether they are more contemporary or from the men who were involved in the early days of football, these coaches were and remain passionate about the game they taught. These men did not write in the early days as if they would be part of a long standing legacy because they had no idea where football would be 120 years later. While most teams were lucky to have a

coach of their own and many coaches were in charge of more than one team even at the collegiate level, juxtaposing modern and former coaches allows us to see that coaching curriculum has changed and in many cases these texts from the past give us insight into what "old-school football" was really like. While one may agree coaching football in the early 1900's was a tremendous task and was not for the faint at heart, it is also understandable that true "old school" football gave much more responsibility to the players rather than the coaches which will be discussed in much more depth in this study.

While all of these coaches have had overlapping connections and have been born from one generation to the next, these are just snapshots of how the game's historical roots can be traced back to its very beginnings.

One must understand that it would be impossible to list all of the coaches who have had an impact on the game of football but the purpose of this research is worthwhile to demonstrate the lineage of the football coaching profession and how its roots have affected its current trends and philosophy. While many have coached the game these men have been able to mold the lives of those with whom they come in contact and they have been positive influences on some men they have never known.

While the family tree of football has had many faces within it, the coaches have made many contributions and have changed the game to what we know today. Whether all of their philosophies were the most affective or the most politically correct is not what is most essential, but rather what they have taught the men who played the game and what those young men have taught them is what this research will reveal. The results on the scoreboard will not be discussed in great depth; rather the depth of what they have taught and have learned is more evident of how their philosophy meshes with critical pedagogy.

### Critical Theory

The roots of critical theory have been firmly established. In order to fully understand critical theory it must be examined from its beginnings. It is important to note that critical social theory and critical literary theory are two very distinct ideas. For the purpose of this research critical theory will refer to critical social theory which came from the Frankfurt School (Jay, 1973).

When first dissecting critical theory, the names Marx (2002) and Kant (Chadwick & Cazeaux, 1992; Kant & Meiklejohn, 2004) must be mentioned because they were at the very root of the evolution of the term. Kant was critical of philosophers and his concept of transcendental idealism questioned the very heart

of what people hold to be true. Kant was concerned with the evaluation of theological and metaphysical ideas which led him to write about authority and the role of reason within it. During the eighteenth century Kant was involved in the Age of Enlightenment which dealt with the divine and natural rights as well as self governance (*Chadwick & Cazeaux, 1992; Kant & Meiklejohn, 2004*).

This would lead to his writings in *Theses on Feuerbach* (*Marx & Engels, 1998*) which spoke loudly and still rings out today when he says "Philosophers have only interpreted the world in certain ways; the point is to change it" (Tiles, 1992, p. 26). Marx expanded on Kant's notions and would eventually be led to the practice of Social Revolution. Marx would state, "We see then: the means of production and of exchange, on whose foundation the bourgeoisie built itself up, were generated in feudal society. At a certain stage in the development of these means of production and of exchange, the conditions under which feudal society produced and exchanged...the feudal relations of property became no longer compatible with the already developed productive forces; they became so many fetters. They had to be burst asunder; they were burst asunder. Into their place stepped free competition, accompanied by a social and political constitution adapted in it, and the economic and political sway



of the bourgeois class. A similar movement is going on before our own eyes.... The productive forces at the disposal of society no longer tend to further the development of the conditions of bourgeois property; on the contrary, they have become too powerful for these conditions, by which they are fettered, and so soon as they overcome these fetters, they bring disorder into the whole of bourgeois society, endanger the existence of bourgeois property" (1998, p. 225). This thinking would be pivotal to the critical theory movement and these thoughts and ideas would eventually be where critical theory developed from.

The Frankfurt School would bring together intellectuals who would consider what Marx had left out. His omissions and the pieces of Marxist theory which they believed would help clarify societal conditions were what they began considering. This would eventually lead the group back to Kant and German philosopher Hegel (Petrović, 1967). *Marx's Economic-Philosophical Manuscripts* (Marx, 2008) and *The German Ideology* (Marx & Engels, 1998) demonstrated the relationship between Hegelianism and Karl Marx's thoughts.

The Frankfurt School was formed from many voices of different philosophers. There are even those who believe what was developed from Frankfurt was a repeat of what Marx and many

other philosophers supported. However, Adorno's *Minima Moralia* (Adorno, 2006) and Adorno's and Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (Horkheimer & Adorno, 2007) would move the discussion away from the critique of capitalism and a concentration on western civilization. Western society's domination became their focus and with it the role of people within this domination. Horkheimer as well as Adorno gave considerable time in their writings to the subject and Adorno (Adorno & O'Connor, 2000) explains his position when he says:

"For since the overwhelming objectivity of historical movement in its present phase consists so far only in the dissolution of the subject, without yet giving rise to a new one, individual experience necessarily bases itself on the old subject, now historically condemned, which is still for-itself, but no longer in-itself. The subject still feels sure of its autonomy, but the nullity demonstrated to subjects by the concentration camp is already overtaking the form of subjectivity itself" (Adorno & O'Connor, 2000, p. 81).

The Frankfurt School has a great deal of Marx within it but just as important is the understanding that Kant, Hegel and even Marx are not completely woven into Frankfurt Philosophy. These Frankfurt Philosophers took pieces of Hegel, Kant and Marx and

constructed critical theory from it by adding what they believed had been left out and what the true focus should be.

By the 1960's the Frankfurt philosophers were moving in different directions in juxtaposing Marcuse's (1991) *One-Dimensional Man* with Adorno's (1990) *Negative Dialectics* the difference in these two philosophers focus is clearly visible. As these fellow philosophers converged and eventually diverged no matter how close or far apart their philosophies were eventually brought together in the work of Habermas. Habermas (1991) demonstrates his ability to take the Frankfurt School's interests in the human subject, the dialectical method, etc. and directly deals with the problems of critical theory. He was able to lead critical theory into different areas such as the area of hermeneutics and critical social theory. Through his work in *Knowledge and Human Interests* (1972), he was able to give a form of interpretation or investigation which leads to understanding and explanations which limit domination systems. Habermas took critical theory and led it into different areas which allowed for further expansion into different areas of academia.

Out of critical theory would come critical pedagogy. One of the major philosophers of critical pedagogy is Paulo Freire. Through *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire, 1993), Freire was

able to give us a critique of what he called the "banking" system of education. Through Freire and others we find that critical pedagogy gives us the ability to look at what we learn critically and decide how their education relates to their own lives and the social situation they live in. Without Freire's dedication to Critical Pedagogy others like Giroux would not have had the path cleared for them.

Giroux helps explain critical pedagogy when he says, "[Critical] pedagogy . . . signals how questions of audience, voice, power, and evaluation actively work to construct particular relations between teachers and students, institutions and society, and classrooms and communities. . . . Pedagogy in the critical sense illuminates the relationship among knowledge, authority, and power" (Giroux, 1994, p. 30). It is easy to understand how critical pedagogy is linked to critical theory and critical theories link to Marxism. Ira Shor makes it clear what he believes critical pedagogy is when he states:

"Habits of thought, reading, writing, and speaking which go beneath surface meaning, first impressions, dominant myths, official pronouncements, traditional clichés, received wisdom, and mere opinions, to understand the deep meaning, root causes, social context, ideology, and personal consequences of any action, event, object, process, organization, experience, text,

subject matter, policy, mass media, or discourse" (Shor, 1992, p. 129). Shor points out in great illumination how broad critical pedagogy can take us and how all encompassing it can be.

Continued research and writings of theorists such as Kincheloe (2007) helps explain how we can discover pieces of ourselves through the use of critical theory and, in doing so, it is possible to discover much about the world around us. Kincheloe (2003) explains the benefits of this type of action research when he says, "A critical democratic approach to teacher research would always be mindful of the relationship between teachers', students', and administrators' consciousness and the socio-historical contexts in which they operate" (p. 57). McLaren and Giarelli (1995) add to this conversation by explaining critical theorists' desires for acquisition of understanding how knowledge is created, dispersed, etc and also believe that "critical theorists see a need and basis for forming and understanding hierarchies of contexts and types of knowledge and evaluating them for their possibilities of contributing to progressive material and symbolic emancipation" (p. 2).

"The educator must stick with the knowledge of living experience" (Freire & Barr, 2004, p. 72). This statement best

describes where critical coaching and critical pedagogy merge. The lived experience of which Freire (2004) refers allows the critical coaching theorist to look at critical coaching through a particular lens with a perspective which allows the discovery of a common definition. Critical Pedagogy allows critical coaching to emerge and flourish outside the classroom as well as inside the classroom. Critical coaching would not be possible without Freire's contribution to the critical theory and critical pedagogy conversation.

It is also worthwhile to look elsewhere in sports to coaches such as John Wooden, who help us define success. This is something he struggled with and had trouble defining, but it is interesting when speaking about success Wooden believes "only one person can judge it-you" (1972, p. 72). He believes that success cannot be only discovered in numbers and championships; rather it is a personal struggle which everyone must deal with and discover what they will do to accomplish it. The success of others is also important to Wooden and he makes it clear that he believes "the team is owned by its members" (Wooden & Jamison, 2007a, p. 143). Wooden is different, in his writing, than many coaches because he was very well educated and was a student of not only the game of basketball but also had a tireless quest to become a better leader and by doing so became a better follower.

A meticulous planner and well organized administrator, Wooden was quick to point out his success was always attributed to those around him and he felt the better he made them, the better the team and the individuals would be and this model could be used to help society as a whole. His involvement in life outside of basketball demonstrates that he understands the role of critical coaching in some forms but for the purpose of this study it will be important to find coaches who fit this same model or have at a minimum the desire to find similar knowledge and understanding to that of Wooden.

Equally important is the work of Michel Foucault who gives us the term "power-knowledge" and explains the power over this knowledge in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (Foucault, 1977). Foucault gives us specifics towards what he believes power acquisition and knowledge control does to the individual when we read, "A 'political anatomy', which was also a 'mechanics of power', was being born; it defined how one may have a hold over others' bodies, not only so that they may do what one wishes, but so that they may operate as one wishes, with the techniques, the speed and the efficiency that one determines. Thus discipline produces subjected and practiced bodies, 'docile' bodies" (Foucault, 1977, p. 138). Critical coaching has to encounter the "power-knowledge" struggle and the

battle over who has access to knowledge. Open and free flowing access to all of the knowledge is typically an issue which is not equal among all coaches and Foucault will lend superior insight into the difficulties within the distribution of power over knowledge. Perhaps Foucault's description of unwilling and, in some cases, unknowing confinement applies to critical coaching in that it is possible to treat problem students and problem players so that instead of addressing the issues and helping find solutions the student eventually internalizes the problems similar to those in Foucault's work *Madness and Civilization* (Foucault, Howard, & Cooper, 2001).

It could be stated that this study should not limit itself to only football coaches or that possibly this study should have been more focused or narrowed by selecting coaches of a particular time period but the research is intended to investigate the theoretical framework of football coaches over time. While the scope was focused on football coaches I believe it is important to include coaches outside of football in order to investigate their philosophy and decipher where critical pedagogy fits into their coaching models. However, in order to examine the genre of sports coaching that I wanted to focus on I believe it was in this study's best interest to focus on



American football coaches and their approaches to the game through what they have written or has been written about them.

This review could not include an in depth portrayal of all of those who have affected critical pedagogy, critical theory, or football coaching. But it is important to illuminate those who have played important roles in the creation and expansion of the areas of research in which this study was conducted. Critical theorists have played major roles in the expansion of critical pedagogy and are always looking for different directions in which to take the field. Critical theory and critical pedagogy will offer information which can be added to the conversation by the work that will be completed in this study and studies which continue this work into the future. In order to fully appreciate the area of critical theory and critical pedagogy there are many others who could be mentioned in this conversation who have taken the field to different areas and continue to push the limits of critical theory and critical pedagogy. The educational world will continue to benefit from all of the pushing and prodding of those in the past and those in the future. It is important to understand the lists of credible theorist changes everyday which is similar to the list of credible coaches on that type of list as well.

## Chapter III

### Methodology

#### Qualitative Research

Qualitative research cannot be easily defined. There are many approaches to qualitative research and many different names have been associated with this field. Naturalistic, constructivist, and interpretive have all been and are terms that have been mentioned while referring to qualitative research. Qualitative research can be presented in many different forms and in some cases can be positive, negative, interpretive, etc. (Locke, 2000). Some research within qualitative research makes use of case studies.

Case studies can be classified according to Merriam (2009) into 4 types according to their disciplinary orientations as follows:

1. An 'Ethnographic case study' is a socio-cultural analysis and interpretation of the unit of study.

2. A 'Historical case study' presents a holistic description and analysis of a specific case from a historical perspective.

Historical case studies have tended to be descriptions of institutions, programs and practices as they have evolved in time.

3. A 'Psychological case study' focuses on an individual as a way to investigate some aspects of human behavior.

4. A 'Sociological case study' attends to the constructs of society and socialization in studying educational phenomenon.

While there are many forms of qualitative research available the historical case study appeared most appropriate in this research. When the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident multiple sources of evidence are used, the case study research method is best suited for this type of research. The historical method of analysis allows empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context (Yin, 1984). While this research is a case study it is important to ensure all historical angles and avenues are explored within the case. For the purpose of this research the case to be studied will be critical coaching participation, understanding, and their absence from football coaching curriculum.

There are several conditions which should be taken into consideration when deciding whether a case study is appropriate. Those conditions include: when the emphasis is on cultural differences instead of behavioral outcomes or individual differences; when the situation lends itself to being unique;

and when the research is not subject to truth or falsity but can be verified by the credibility of the source or sources involved (Merriam, 2009). This would also lead to the criticism of historical case studies. Critics will contend that the validity in many case studies is difficult to confirm. And in many case studies the bias of the interviewer will lead to invalidity because of not wanting to hurt those being interviewed. However, one way to validate the research would be to allow the subjects to review the information which is used. But within this research the interviewing will be left out. What is used for the basis of this research is the works written by or about the coaches in question and in most cases has been reviewed or published by the subject or in conjunction with the subject.

The use of critical discourse analysis (CDA) will be essential for this research. It is difficult to identify or define an exact meaning for critical discourse analysis but this type of analysis has proven to be a valuable tool in gathering data from text and searching for patterns within the text. As with all research methods there is much debate over the elements and methodology of critical discourse analysis but while referring to the empirical data within this field it is possible to use CDA and the results to be of high quality and value for this study as well as studies in the future. Therefore this

research contains valid and reasonable information which adds to the conversation of critical coaching as well as critical discourse analysis (Rogers, 2004).

However, works written by others about coaches, even in cooperation with them, could have some misfortunate criticism because the writer could have the same bias as the case study interviewer. In reality the author is the interviewer in these cases. The texts written about or with these coaches are interviews and observations which will be analyzed and examined. So we will entrust that because these coaches have allowed this material to be published, in most cases with their knowledge and cooperation, the information which the works contain is valid.

It is reasonable to assume that there is information that has been left out or omitted and in some cases it would be reasonable to believe that the information that is not presented or omitted was done so on purpose. But this research is not concerned with what has been left out; rather it is concerned with what these coaches want to be heard. The research questions search for common themes which appear within these texts and because of the researcher's goal, the information used will be valid because it will not be affected by such omissions. By analyzing the text and coding these texts, the research will provide patterns and themes which will allow for categories to

be formed. By using these categories the researcher will be able to make determinations as to the absence or presence of critical coaching and be able to describe what critical coaching would look like and give some opinion as to the benefit of critical coaching's presence. It will be equally important to examine where and why these patterns exist.

### Historical Case Study Research

"Qualitative case study can be defined as an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single entity, phenomenon or social unit. Case studies are particularistic, descriptive and heuristic, and rely heavily on inductive reasoning in handling multiple data sources" (Merriam, 2009). In order to understand the past, present and future trends of a particular subject it is important to look at the background and growth over time. The qualitative case study utilizing the historical method approach was chosen as the most useful and relative qualitative method because critical discourse analysis could be woven into this method and utilized to examine the text to answer the research questions desired by this particular research. "The process of deciding on the methodology for testing research hypotheses (whether it be survey, experiment, field research, or historical analysis) should not be dictated by one's "favorite" methodology. Rather, the decision for

methodological type is influenced by: 1) the nature of the research hypotheses, 2) the body of knowledge concerning the relationship between the variables of interest, 3) one's expertise in a given methodology (okay, favoritism may play some role), and 4) the resources at hand for carrying out the research. Therefore, the research hypotheses and the body of knowledge concerning the topic should be the primary factors in the selection of method. The "kosher" researcher does not first decide what method to use and then try to shape the hypotheses to the methodology" (Leming, 2009). Through the qualitative, historical, critical discourse analysis of research I will recognize and investigate the trends in coaching curriculum from the texts available. The significance of the qualitative, historical, critical discourse analysis for this research is tethered to the research questions and the desire to look at what has been written about coaching philosophy and where critical pedagogy fits within the profession.

It is vital to this research topic to inquire from a qualitative perspective rather than a quantitative paradigm because of the nature of competitive sports. Competitive sports can be easily dissected with quantitative measures but in this study the numeric outcomes of these coaches are not what are most important. However, I will focus my study on texts written by or about football coaches who in most cases are viewed as

successful from a numeric point of view. What are important from these texts are the theories and philosophies of football coaches, especially those who are viewed as teachers to be emulated by other coaches in the field. I will consider the conclusions of these texts and scrutinize what themes emerge from them. Coding these texts will provide a more visible arena for the discovery of themes and will provide categories to be organized and defined. A more theoretical approach allows me to investigate selected text in order to discover if critical pedagogy/critical theory exist and to what degree it is being utilized.

As with all research, the historical critical discourse analysis method could be scrutinized in many ways. The research could be affected by the personal accounts written in these works. There are not many works written by football coaches who are viewed as successful which include negative ideas toward their methods of education or descriptions of ways in which they would change their philosophy if given the opportunity. It could be stated that these coaches have less to gain (monetarily or otherwise) if they were to write about what is wrong with their pedagogical beliefs, etc. Therefore, it could be argued that using the texts of these coaches, which in most cases are written by or at the least in cooperation with the subjects themselves, would devalue what is being written. But considering



these arguments, the qualitative historical method is the most appropriate method and will result in the most useful data given the current research in the field.

#### Sources of Data

The use of primary sources, which in many cases are written by the coaches themselves or in cooperation with the coaches, allowed for more authentic research. By looking at the texts written by football coaches I was able to consider what differences these coaches have within their curriculum and what similarities are reported. There is a possibility by choosing or limiting the texts I may have chosen text or left some text out they may reveal different data. But this exclusion of over-sight was not intentional. Historical analysis allows for careful investigation into what these coaches believe they are doing and what they say they are doing (Denzin, 1998). It also allows the researcher to look at what has been written and what is currently being written about and by former and current football coaches. By using critical discourse analysis within this case study the research will provide evidence within empirical literature as well as contemporary literature to demonstrate links between what has been written in the past and the current philosophies and theories of coaches today. Coding these texts

in order to find these themes will provide essential organizational elements for this research.

I constructed this case study based upon research questions which will apply to all text written by or about football coaches. It would be best to look at only texts which are written by the coaches in an autobiographical manner but these coaches' autobiographies are far less available than works written about or in cooperation with them. Another factor to consider was coaches at different levels within the game of football. Because the coaches of all levels affect one another, especially those at the professional level and college level, this research will use text written about football coaches from multiple levels.

#### Critical Discourse Analysis

Through Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) this study hopes to demonstrate what critical coaching looks like and how often it appears while understanding like Rodgers (2004) "The CDA, then, is an analysis of not only what is said, but what is left -not only what is present in the text, but what is absent. In this sense, CDA does not read political and social ideologies onto texts" (p. 52). The football coaching texts will be examined in order to find what the common themes are and what causes or drives these themes. In order to discover where these themes or patterns come from it is important to look at where

coaching curriculum has come from and what current coaching discourse says. It will be important to this research to look at what has been written about coaching and what areas have not been written about within the field. This will also lead to understanding what critical coaching looks like and what critical coaching could look like in the future.

While referring to the research questions the text will be evaluated to find if these questions are answered within the text and if the answers to these questions change over time. This research is not going to be conducted in order to prove any given hypothesis; rather it will attempt to uncover the answers to the research questions which will give insight into critical pedagogies' usefulness in the past, present and future.

The texts which will be used will be gathered from several different eras of football. Since football was organized in the late 1800's, it is essential to gather data from literature written by the first generation of football coaches as well as those that followed. While football has changed over the years it is the philosophy and theories of how the game should be played and what forces outside and inside the game have changed these philosophies that we will be concerned with.

I will also attempt to define some effective ways of constructing coaching curriculum from a critical perspective. Critical coaching will be shown by bringing forth the few

elements of critical coaching that rarely appear in current coaching texts. By showing examples of critical coaching, I hope to demonstrate how coaching curriculum can be changed to allow freedom to emerge while a community consciousness is given to all players. I will attempt to construct examples of what critical coaching looks like.

There is literature which attempts to give the strategies, procedures, "best practice," etc., for coaches. Being able to look critically at this curriculum of coaching will add to the critical coaching conversation while questioning the foundation of traditional coaching curriculum. In addition, I will discuss the patterns within the curriculum which should allow improvement in the pedagogy of the profession by changing the path or direction of current coaching. This work will carve a new path for coaches to develop their curriculums which should allow them to change in an ebb and flow manner while questioning many of the beliefs in current coaching pedagogy.

Critical pedagogy and critical theory were used to examine these texts and evaluate the themes which emerge from these works to discover if critical theory and/or critical pedagogy exist with the football writing and or philosophy of these coaches. Critical pedagogy and, more importantly, the work of Paulo Freire (1993) will be used as the basis to define what critical pedagogy is and what it is not. Many of Freire's

theories apply to sports education and the outdoor classroom. It is this researcher's opinion that through this CDA case study it is possible to demonstrate where critical pedagogy exists and how it could be utilized effectively.

Another goal of this research is to show how critical theory and critical pedagogy can be applied in coaches' lives on the field, but also in their lives off the field; so it is important that the use of autobiographies and biographies be maximized to learn more about their lives inside of football. Readers will be able to use this research method to apply to other areas of sports as well as other areas of their lives. Critical pedagogy could be woven not only into educational settings inside the school buildings but also outside the schools on the playing fields and in the homes of the students/players, teachers/coaches and parents.

## Chapter IV

### Findings

While analyzing the texts of football coaches it was important to approach the texts first from the perspective of the average reader only interested in reading to gain knowledge about the particular subject of football from the selected texts. McGregor (2003) explains the researcher must first approach the texts from an uncritical perspective; then return with a critical perspective in order to accomplish the appropriate analysis.

During the analysis of the literature I searched for answers to the following research questions:

1. How do current and historical football practices and curriculum theories define the concept of critical coaching?
2. What themes emerge from the analysis of current practices within coaching curriculum?
3. What are some effective ways of involving critical pedagogy in football coaching in a school setting?

Through the analysis of the literature three themes emerged: Capitalism & Coaching; Power and Coaching; and Misappropriated Goal Setting and Coaching.

### Capitalism and Coaching

Capitalism has had a major influence in sports and its role has not always been positive. When I speak of capitalism I am not just talking about making money. What is discovered in these texts are examples of capitalist thinking where the currency is not always money, but victories. But currency has its own influences on football. The role of capital in sports has driven the goal of football coaching from its historical foundation which was partnered with academia and has led this sport in a direction of money. The capital is not always the monetary means in which the players, coaches and organization compensate one another but more importantly the scoreboard has become the most influential means of judging whether or not what is being taught, performed or learned is "profitable". A football team's profitability can be gauged by those coaches who produce teams with winning records and records which equal high television or enrollment ratings. While the concept of capitalism in the game of football and its historical meaning may be seen as positive to many, it has been negative and, in fact, may have been more destructive than beneficial.

Contemporary texts of football coaches written about or by them revealed many themes through Critical Discourse Analysis

(CDA). Capitalism appears throughout the discourse in many statements and also appears in what is not said but understood within the writings. We find the word and/or theme of money appears regularly throughout many of the analyzed text. In Maraniss (2000) *When Pride Still Mattered* the term money appears over thirty times and is a consistent component of coaching pedagogy which is clearly indicated in statements like, “. . . . . new weapons, more money, recognition of prowess in battle and all of those struggles were played out symbolically in the game of football” (p. 139). Statements like this tell us there is already something happening in football. As the popularity of the sport grows during the 1950's and 1960's so does the growth of capitalism within the game and along with the money, grows the pressure of capitalistic influence on winning above everything else. And Lombardi would be swallowed by this philosophy (He would later be recognized as a motivational speaker and would be compensated for his contributions to the business world). Lombardi is remembered as a coach and teacher who demanded a tremendous commitment, dedication and faithfulness from his players and his fellow coaches. But the tyrant on the field was also a capitalist off the field as well. His theory and philosophy is well documented in three books which were analyzed for this study: *What It Takes to Be Number One* (Lombardi, 2003), *When Pride Still Mattered: A life of Vince*



Lombardi (Maraniss, 2000) and *Vince: A Personal Biography of Vince Lombardi* (O'Brian, 1987). The work of Lombardi illuminates capitalism and this analysis brings forth many of those issues. It is significant that the study uses Lombardi because his views and philosophies have been used as the root or basis for many philosophies after him and in contemporary football coaching curriculum as well as motivation for many businesses.

In *What It Takes to Be Number One* (2003) we are allowed to see Vince Lombardi through the eyes of someone who knew him well. The author is his son Vince Lombardi, Jr. He gives the reader a clear picture of what winning in Lombardi's mind was partnered with. Lombardi (2003) states "What Vince Lombardi was really about was building a winning organization, one that performed off the field and on the field" (p. 164). Not many details about his ideas about life outside or away from football are talked about in the texts. We are not told of his desire for his team's participation within the community. There is not any discussion of social awareness or what training they receive about being better citizens, better fathers, better husbands or better role models. However, there is careful consideration on how to build a franchise that will ultimately make money. Capitalism is oozing from the cracks of the locker room where men are supposedly being made.

Toughness is discussed at length with its own section (Mental Toughness) as Lombardi (2003) depicts what his father was striving for in this regard. Lombardi (2003) gives us detail into what is important under his father's coaching style. And more than honesty, integrity or anything else he believes "the most important element is mental toughness" (2003, p. 118). It is clear that when we look at Vince Lombardi we find his son repeating the words that Coach Lombardi spoke to his players. What is of concern is his attitude and it being placed upon a pedestal by coaches because of one issue; he won. "We were trained to win" (p. 150), explains what his players found through his instruction. Like a military drill instructor he required he required his players to repeat their drills over and over but one could ask: What happens to the student after the drilling and the testing ends? What happens when players live their lives outside of football? Like the classroom, the field will one day be gone and life will begin.

In *When Pride Still Mattered: A Life of Vince Lombardi* (2000) many of the statements make clear what Lombardi's personal desires within coaching are: "Winning isn't everything, it's the only thing" (p. 365). He is clear that he believes in winning and winning at all cost is what he desires. He wanted nothing less than winning. "Lombardi was consumed with the idea of winning three NFL championships in a row," (p. 348) is

another statement which displays Lombardi's fascination with winning. He firmly believed winning was the most important goal. "Winning is not a sometime thing; it's an all the time thing. . . ." (p. 347), Lombardi was often heard repeating this phrase. Winning was the only option to Lombardi. His speech in front of the American Management Association describes or helps define what Vince Lombardi had set as his goals. He would repeat the major themes and ideas from his speech he delivered in 1960 to this group many times over the years following, but the idea that Lombardi was a winner and what made him a winner was what businessmen came to hear. Lombardi believed that his ideas about how to lead, coach, manage or rule a group of people were absorbed by businessmen around the country and this is identifiable through the intrigue of attending one of his speeches (p. 400).

In *The Four Winners: The Head, The Hands, The Foot, The Ball*, Rockne (1925), speaks of why he wants to win when he says, "We are sending out lawyers, and these lawyers cannot be successful unless they win cases. . . . We are sending out men into the business world, and they cannot be successful unless they win (p. 100). Football should not be about judging the players on whether they make lots of money. In fact he only speaks of the word money four times in the entire text. He also only refers to winning on three occasions in the

text. Rockne is referring to the type of winning that his peers are interested in. As we will see in other works throughout this analysis many of his contemporaries look at success as what they teach the players in relationship to living their lives. Winning outside the game is what they are trying to instill in each of their players. The term championship appears only twice throughout his writings and it is clear what he desires when Rockne (1925) says, "we on the faculty are trying to develop young men for life" (p. 100). He is trying to make them better men for life but more importantly he allows them to see a purpose for football which is more than just winning and losing. Again we can see the old-school ways which are not the rough and tough demands but rather the use of the sport to make them understand what life can be about, sacrifice and hard work which will pay dividends not only for you but for your teammates. Then, maybe the players will go out and apply these same beliefs and principles outside of football which will reward themselves and the community around them.

Through the language of the works of Rockne we can see the coaches of the early or beginning times of football may not have been teaching from the same set of expectations as the coaches of contemporary times. We can see other examples of a different approach to the game of football when we read Yost (1905) *Football for player and spectator*, he states that "Both theory

and experience teach that a team can play faster if the quarter runs the game than if some other member is in charge" (1905, p. 162). He speaks of discipline throughout the text but this should not be confused with control. He gives away his knowledge to the players and, in this text, to the fan of the game. Although he may have desired to have more control, from this analysis we can only read his wish to give the quarterback more knowledge to be a better student/player of the game.

For Yost(1905)the game is about teaching and educating student athletes, not just winning football games. He felt that college life without athletics was a detriment to the physical development of the student. He was concerned with the education of the students outside the classroom and he also felt students would benefit from the activities within football. Not only the students who were participating in the sport but the students who surrounded the game would also benefit from football. The students were "filled with spirit" (p. 11), and he believed student involvement as spectators in sports had just as much value for them as it did for the players themselves (7-11). It taught the students and athletes there is more to education than just earning degrees to make money. "These attributes, personified in the ideal football player, dominate the entire student body and create a spirit which reaches out from the athletic field through the classrooms and into the recitation

room" (p. 11). Benefits of football should be and may have been more about the student/player experience rather than winning.

Yost (1905) was enthralled with the idea of what he taught his players having application to their lives. He wrote, "Athletics are moved to habits of temperance and regularity. The perseverance which eventually brings success on the football field is an open book to every member of the undergraduate body and points the way to both athlete and student, not only during the college days but later in life as well. Independence of action and quickness of thought are sharpened by the active participation in the game. . . . In no way is the utter futility of incompetence better illustrated than on the football field" (p. 13). His works speak directly in opposition to the goal of simply winning the game. He rarely speaks of winning the game in juxtaposition. He speaks of the education of the athlete and of the student. He also speaks of the education of the student body and the benefit of the football team to the student body and the student body to the team. Winning is not the ultimate prize but rather a byproduct of the education itself. Winning in this case takes care of itself because those surrounded by this atmosphere want to be competent and educated in their particular field of study which happens to be football in this case.

We can find more "old-school" coaches writing about their attitude towards capitalism's influence within sports and one

that speaks of this directly is Amos Alonzo Stagg. Lester (1995) writes that Stagg (1995) believed "money was the root of the evils in intercollegiate in America. He believed physical education might have a proper place in higher learning" (p. 163). He believed physical education was essential to building athletic programs and like Yost (1905) believed the athletic programs and physical education programs were vital to the success of the students. Stagg believed and would eventually have to stand up and fight his on university on his beliefs that football "was a branch of recreative life for students" (p. 72).

It is evident that some, if not many of the coaches, who participated in the founding of today's game coached in a very different set of circumstances. But it is equally clear that these coaches did not pursue their desires simply to subdue the masses and become dictators of their newly created organizations. It could be argued that these men were disciplinarians but when we analyze this argument in the texts, they were far from disciplinarians and do not appear to be "old-school." The question then becomes, what is this coaching curriculum from 1879-1940 and why did it change?

The answer is critical coaching is what had to occur during the formative years of football. The rules were changing over this period of time. Because the rules were changing the coaches of this era were constantly trying new approaches that had never

been attempted before. Items that we now take for granted were not part of the game during this time. According to Nelson (1994) in *The Anatomy of the Game: Football, the Rules and the Men Who Made the Game*, the forward pass would appear on the surface as one of the major rule changes which took place between the 1905 and 1906 football seasons. The first legal forward pass would take place and be debated about in 1906 and continue to be a major part of the game and of the rules debate over the next ninety years and continues today. However, allowing coaching from the sideline would not appear until 1967 and by this time many rules had come and gone which affected the coach's role in the game. While the forward pass was definitely a game changing addition, free substitution which had been put in football and taken out several times was now a permanent part since being back in football in 1965 (National Collegiate Athletic Association, 1999). Because coaches were not allowed to coach from the sideline the coaches of this time period, while affective in their knowledge, had to approach the game from a different point of view.

They were not allowed to control the game the way contemporary coaches do. And in some cases, coaches today have tried to go back to teaching their players what to do and give away the knowledge they have. So if "old-school" involved discipline and control there is a direct event that could not



occur in the beginning of football that very often occurs today. The coach did not know what play was going to be called because he was not allowed to call the plays during the game. In fact coaching from the sideline was specifically prohibited for some time. Coaching in general was not as involved and because of this not as many coaches were involved in the team. Compared to today's coaching staffs, which are very large in number - some ranging into the twenties for some teams - the game was very different and perhaps we can place the blame for today's corruption of football more on the rule changes than on money or capitalism. But many of these coaches did not choose their profession on financial considerations but rather their love of the sport and the intrigue of critically thinking about new ways and new avenues to pursue through their game. Critical theory was alive and well within "old-school" football and perhaps a look at the texts of more modern coaches will allow us to see what themes emerge from these more contemporary, although descendents of coaching legends.

Upon close examination of the texts, perhaps no one says it better or makes the focus more clear than Parcells (2000) in *The Final Season: My Last Year as Head Coach in the NFL* he makes it clear that the goal of coaching is to "win and winning means everything" (2000, p. 102). In *Tales from the New York Jets Sideline* (Cannizzaro, 2007) we find that Parcells is perhaps the

ideal coach to follow in what appears to be “old-school” to many but in reality is a fabrication of modern day coaching dialogs. Parcells and Cannizzaro (2007) make it clear in the text when we read: “Winning a championship would be very important for the players. When you’re a part of an organization in the National Football League (NFL), your whole state of mind is focused on winning a championship. That’s what this thing is all about. Players want that very badly. As a coach, I have set the stage to give them the ability to do that. That’s what’s laid on your desk when you become the head coach. Then it becomes: How are you going to do that?” (2007, p. xi). Again winning is the only measure of success. It is the capital or currency used to evaluate success in modern day coaching.

#### Power and Coaching

Another theme that emerged in research concerning football coaches is that of power. When I refer to power I am also speaking of terms which imply power such as control, discipline, etc. Power is a key component to coaches and many contemporary texts refer to “old-school” coaching as if this type of control and loss of freedom for the players is typical and expected from football’s founding until today. Many believe that football must be coached in this manner. The players must be treated in this

controlling manner and they must pass this thinking along to their assistant coaches and to the players themselves.

However, as I have demonstrated, football coaching was very different within its founding from what many envision today. Today the ultimate power is in the hands of the head coach. Because of the pressure to win, coaches have been placed in an awkward position. Like teachers who are being challenged with performance based standards, coaches are being asked to show progress and high performance standards are being met; although in many cases what they are coaching is not equal. For example, Gruden (2003) was asked to be the coach of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers and his major task was to win. Gruden in *Do You Love Football: Winning with Heart, Passion and not much Sleep* writes exactly what he is asked to do when he says he was asked "to produce a winning attitude" (2003, p. 87). In his local area there are many different coaches at college levels who are asked to do the same thing; win. But there is a particular group of coaches who are being asked to do the same thing and that is to win at their local high schools. They are being governed by the same set of standards and they believe they need to coach with the same set of beliefs.

"We shared the same objective- a winning season" (Holtz, 1998, p. 176) helps paint a picture of what modern day football coaches have their minds set upon. Gone are the days of wanting

to build a community around a football team for the benefit of people other than the players and the coaches. Gone are the days of caring about whether the other students are benefiting from the sport itself. Here are the days of wanting power and control over every aspect of the team. Now we have coaches who have embraced this opportunity to win and make more money as the head football coach than if they were the head of the science department. Power equals capital. Capital therefore equals power in the minds of most football programs.

I agree compensation for these men should be equal to the counterparts within the walls of academia but I do not agree with what we are asking these coaches and players to do. The goal should not be only winning. The goal should be education. Coaches should not be hired or fired over winning and losing only, and this issue is stated in many of the texts like Parcells (2000) who says if he had been fired after his first year . . . . and failed with the Giants (2000, p. 50).

Education on a field or in a gymnasium should benefit not only the student and the coaches but also the students who support and, in many cases, help finance the programs they cheer for. We should not make statements like Saban (2005) in *How Good Do You Want to Be?: A Champion's Tips on How to Lead and Succeed at Work and in Life*. When referring to thinking about winning, he writes "stop and think about what you have to do to dominate

your opponent for sixty minutes" (2005, p. 15) which sounds great for many but leaves out so much of the role of a coach and a player. Imagine if the role of the player was reduced to believing their only reward will come from their dominance of the player in front of them. Again we see power and domination as a focus in the text.

Now Saban (2005) has the luxury of knowing the players he will go up against most weeks will be very competitive but what if these same players were not competitive and he and his players knew they were going to win. Then what would they concentrate on. Certainly they would not care about dominance as the only component of completing their goals.

Coaches are teachers and they should be paid accordingly and in many cases they have begun to raise enough money to not only fund their programs but other programs in their schools but the pressure to win should be eliminated. Because unlike Gruden (2003) and his college counterparts these coaches should be coaching what they are given. Because of this coaches have begun to feel they must go out and get players to attend their schools. High school recruiting and the pressure to win is in full swing not just in little pockets of our country but in most of our country, and it is big business.

What must be asked is, where is football headed and how can we adjust football into a new direction. For John "Gags"

Gagliardi (Murphy, 2001) football is played around him the way it should be and in his text we can see the issue of power in a very different context. Gagliardi (2001) does not believe in celebrations or stickers on your helmet in order to celebrate your individuality. He takes power and gives an extraordinary amount back to his players in some form. I must also note that for Gagliardi (2001), football is about honoring the game and honoring the other team by not embarrassing them. He coaches with intensity but he coaches from a sense of respect. He respects the players and they respect him. Power again is different in this case but it is not gone. Gagliardi (2001) has a great deal of control over his players and fellow coaches but he gives his players more freedom than most modern coaches. Since at the time of the publishing of his text Gagliardi (2001) was the oldest active coach, he would be a better source for "old-school" football than any other coach around (Murphy, 2001). There is nothing more different than hearing Gagliardi (Murphy, 2001) state he wants his "players to visualize executing their blocks instead of actually doing them" (2001, p. 16). It is evident throughout the text of Brown (2001), Parcells (2000), and Holtz (1998) they believe power and dominance must be part of their practice. But Gagliardi (2001) likes to focus on execution through mental practice rather than practicing on each other.

Critiques could say that goals are necessary in sports. One could ask: Are goals appropriate? And I would agree that goals are positive for sports and sports coaching. But the problem as we can see in the following writings comes from misunderstood goal setting. The goals are overrun by the desire to win and the desire for power. There is a link between the goals being misappropriated and the power. The supreme authority in many cases is positioned solely within the head coach and in other cases it exists within all of the coaches on the staff. Like Parcells and Cannizzaro (2007) in *Tales From the New York Jets Sidelines* when speaking about the problems with Parcells' tyrant and dictator behaviors, "winning cures all problems" (2007, p. xi). But what is missed is the power that should exist with the entire team. The students of the game should have the power but as rules changed so does the power within the game. The idea of player coaches has become a thing of the past because the coaches do not want to have anyone with authority within the team. They want all power to reside within the coach. Parcells demonstrates the desire for power often. "If you are going to cook the meal . . . you should be allowed to buy the groceries" (Cannizzaro, 2007, p. 52). Parcells (2007) is referring to his demand that he be in control of not only the team but who gets to be a part of the team.

Power can be given away. The position of the supreme-being and the tyrant as head coach is not just by happenstance. The change and yes it was a change in philosophy, is not something that happened by chance. The rules were changed to make the role of the coach more involved. Before 1967 (Nelson, 1994) the coach could not have "control over everything" (Parcells, 2000, p. 169). Although the rules were often broken by coaches like Paul Brown (O'Toole, 2008), coaching from the sideline during the game was not legal and forced the players to have more responsibility and the coach to have less dominance over his players. Who made these rule changes? Who wanted these changes to be made?

The answer is simple to these questions. The rule changes came from coaches who wanted to have more power. The desire for this power created the desire to change the rules and when Paul Brown (1979) came into the game of football the changes he would make would help lead to what we have today. Although Brown would coach many years without some of these changes, he would help change the game towards the coach having more control/dominance/power (O'Toole, 2008). Could football have become a game played by twenty-two players and controlled by two coaches?

The game has changed, as evidenced in this study, but power appears to be one of the main motivating factors behind the



changes. Like in the classroom, most people would like some sense of order and the idea of desks in rows appears to be set as the norm for many classrooms and many teachers. But there have been some who have released some of their power and in some cases have returned to the roots of the game by getting rid of some of these ideals. John Gagliardi (Murphy, 2001) never accepted the idea that when the team practiced that everyone and everything needed to be so structured. He also believed that he did not need to include rigorous practices which lead to beating and banging each other every day. The practice routine and control of everything involved in the football program for Gagliardi (2001) was not as important as getting the players to graduate and making sure they understood why they played the game. It would have been extremely rare for Gagliardi (2001) to have coached a player who was destined for the NFL. Rather than teach him only about what would get him to the end zone he focused on making sure the player understood their role inside and outside of football with some control remaining within him, but much of the demand and control was placed upon the team.

Gagliardi (2001) has given great insight into a game that has become dominated by tyrant coaches who believe in rigorous and never-ending practices. Football has been regimented by a military influence which has driven some coaches to believe they must be more controlling and powerful. Not Gagliardi (2001), he

is the exception to the rule. He is a true "throw-back," with his unorganized ways and his list of "noes." You will not see St. John's University players, where Gagliardi (2001) is the coach, doing many of the things that you see often on Saturdays or Sundays as you watch a game on television. You will not see many of the end zone celebrations. You will not see whistles around the coaches necks. You will not see anything flashy on their uniforms. You will not see them hit during practice. In fact they are very different in their approach to the game. They don't hit during the week. In fact they don't ever wear all of their equipment, other than when they play on Saturdays. If you need to miss practice to go to tutoring, no problem, you are a student first (Murphy, 2001).

So here is this coach who does all of this different and what is termed by many as unconventional. But Gagliardi (2001) is eighty-two, he has coached at St. John's for fifty-six years. He can't be considered new. Through this study we can see that Gagliardi (2001) is anything but new. Gagalardi is what he should be "old-school." For Gagliardi (2001) the game is about the game. "The game is about becoming better every day and loving the game you play. The game is about respecting your opponent and the game enough to not disrespect either one with end zone dances and sack celebrations" (Murphy, 2001, p. 112). How does he get his players to do this? He does not allow it. He

does not allow anyone to do those things. While his "winning with no" may appear to be controlling, he does these things because it reminds his players why they play the game. They play the game so they can excel. They play the game because it benefits everyone. Not just the players, not just the coaches but as Yost (1905) tells us everyone benefits from "competing in the game" (p. 151) and, like Stagg (1927), Gagliardi (2001) understands the benefit of playing such a lovable game. Very often we hear about football and the word love never appears. But Gruden (2003) says "do you love football, do you love it?" (2003, p. 119) which allows us to understand there are coaches out there who understand that football can be about love. In fact Pat "Doc" Spurgeon who has been part of 9 National Championships speaks every year to college and high school players about love. In *The Winners Manual: For the Game of Life*, Jim Tressel (2008) writes that Spurgeon speaks to his team each year in the beginning of fall practice and one issue he harps on is the topic of love along with discipline. This is important because through this analysis power is given away but discipline does not have to be sacrificed. This theory of discipline and giving away of power is easily explained by Spurgeon and Tressel's (2008) writing. And Spurgeon (2008) may say it best when he says "if you have love you will have discipline" (Tressel, 2008, p. 174).

If you love one another then the discipline part will come along because you will not want to let down your fellow player (Spurgeon, 2008). He uses a different approach as well. A former educator himself Spurgeon allows the players to see the value in things they may have learned in school. It is customary for him to use poetry or other elements from his work with English literature to tell his students about his love for the game. They can see a bridge between the game they play and the world around them which is consumed by football. Power is given away by Spurgeon and Tressel (2008), not by allowing players to give up their responsibilities, but rather by teaching the players what love truly is and why they must "play better than they are" (2008, p. 179). This is where critical coaching can move current coaches towards and with the examples of programs like Tressel's. Perhaps they can trust they will be viewed as successful by their peers but will have the ability to experience what critical coaching success can look like.

Power then can be recognized through our discovery of language used in texts written about or by football coaches and in many cases these texts are written to highlight the positive aspects of these coaches. However, what is uncovered is the power relationship between player and coach. The power which truly exists in the hands of the players has been given away to the coach. Often this power is associated or placed upon the

head coach of the football team. We can see examples of that in the work by Saban (2005) and Holtz (2006). Saban (2005) says that we must have "discipline and control as a head coach" (2005, p. 134) in order to build a program which will become successful. He makes that clear when he states that winning comes from "discipline and coaches who ensure success through making sure they stay on top of their players" (Holtz, 1978, p. 61). Holtz (2006) also believes that "discipline will cure many of troubles of unsuccessful teams" (2006, p. 176). It is comments like these which are repeated throughout many of the texts examined that give evidence towards the absence of critical coaching. Power is an element which coaches must be willing to share in order for critical coaching to emerge and be something that is useful for all.

I believe worthwhile to note as far back as *The Republic* (Plato, 1985) we read about the body and the belief we must have a strong body and a strong mind. Plato (1985) states, . . . "in gymnastic it brings health to the body" (p. 103). He clearly believes there is value in maintaining or exercising a healthy body. He goes further to explain that a trained body will aid a trained mind and a trained soul. "And what better education than that which has been for so long part of our own heritage? That would mean, I suppose, gymnastic for the body and music for the soul" (Plato, 1985, p. 73). Football has been part of our

heritage and I suppose football for the body and love for your soul can become essential parts of anyone's life it critical coaching is welcomed into the field of coaching.

### Goals and Coaching

Most coaches set goals and all of their goals are the same. They want to win the championship. Most of the texts, especially of contemporary coaches, were written from the perspective that winning the championship is the only goal. But this is the goal of every team. It is appropriate to set goals but those goals should be about the education of the player and helping expand the players ability to its full potential. Then if winning occurs we may have something we can use as motivation to further expand our teaching, our expectations and our potential. However, the simple goal of winning the championship is misappropriate because if the players and coaches fall short of that goal, the reason could be far from the education, preparation and execution of what was learned. The potential of the team may have been far exceeded and in some cases those involved may understand and recognize this achievement, but because of non-appropriate goals, the achieved positive results are far overshadowed.

So what should we set as goals and what should be our emphasis with players in regard to setting goals. As Erk Russell (*Plato, 1985, p. 73*) writes in his work *Erk: Football, Fans and*

Friends, we can see the goals he set are far different from those that we are accustomed to seeing. Rules were very simple for the former coach and 5-time National Champion. Erk who helped build a football program from "scratch" at Georgia Southern University, left many rules out when starting the program at then a small college in Statesboro, Georgia. And while it could be argued that critical coaching was not what Russell sought, it can be easily identified as what Russell desired. He wanted the same thing that a critical educator wants in many cases: students who give as much effort as they can and love what they are playing and learning without the fear of not getting the "right" answer or understanding there is more than one right answer.

Learning can be like play and play can be like learning. We can see the value of play in Winnicott (2005) when he speaks of playing as important to the development of the person from a young age into adulthood. "But playing needs to be studied as a subject on its own, supplementary to the concept of sublimation of instinct" (Winnicott, 2005, p. 53). This leads to the conversation of why playing a game could be important. However, the goal of winning should not be the ultimate benchmark but the development of those involved in the game which are not only players but coaches as well. Russell set his goals accordingly by asking each player to get better. He is quoted as saying

"what is today, another day in which to excel" (1991, p. 145). This philosophy leads us to the understanding that Russell set his goals a little differently. He wanted to win and displayed that ideal outwardly with what he often said and did. But he also led by example trying to get better himself as a coach. Like Wooden (2007b) who says that "it is what you learn after you know it all that really counts" (Wooden & Jamison, 2007b, p. 211). Wooden (1988), like Russell (1991), understood the desire to constantly be a student of the game he loved. Again Wooden (1988) may not be one this study would offer as an example of critical coaching but it could easily be understood that Wooden (2006) wanted his players, like Russell to be students of the game.

Russell (1991) had only one team rule which was "Do right!" This would be transcended in everything they did. Russell asks his players to do just that all the time. He asks his players to try to get better everyday. He would say "you never stay the same you either get better or worse every day (Russell, 1991, p. 10)". Like Spurgeon and Tressel (2008) who ask their players to "play better than you are" coaches must challenge their players to exceed their expectations (2008, p. 179). Both legendary coaches are asking the same thing. Never take a break from making yourself better. This philosophy matches the attitude of those who would ask: What can be gained from this game toward



academics? This is a clear example of why the goals should not be just winning and how living your life like Russell and Spurgeon ask will allow players to be not only better players but also better students and better members of their communities.

So goal setting becomes easier within critical coaching. The goals become dispersed and apply to everyone no matter what their position within the team or the classroom. We are no longer teaching to the bottom or the top of the class we are teaching to everyone on the team. The best player is asked to make himself better everyday and the worst student is asked to make himself better everyday as well. We can ask ourselves how to evaluate this type of coaching and whether or not the coach has completed his task? But it would be difficult to look in only one area and be able to determine if the coach was able to do his job. We can see that, through the examples of people like Russell (1991), Gagliardi (2001) and Tressel (2008), these men are able to instill something within their teams that many do not understand. The goal is not simply winning but making yourself better everyday no matter how good, how successful or how many wins you have in a given season or a career.

So if we place purpose over goals, like Tressel (2008), then it makes evaluating our performance so much easier and it makes the common purpose of the team easily defined. If we place

our entire purpose for playing or coaching a game on winning a championship can we have fulfillment in anything less than that? If someone places their purpose on being the largest company in the world and they come up short of that goal then can they achieve success? If our ultimate reward is to win and winning comes, then it could be said the goal was reached and anyone can achieve this goal by following this example.

Goal setting is appropriate for critical coaches but rather than setting up goals which have numerical values and goals which show achievement through winning, it may be more beneficial for the critical coach to enforce goals which are far more simple and encompass all members of the team including coaches and the players who may never get in the game. Improvement and exceeding one's potential may be a goal set higher than any championship could ever uncover.

After analyzing these texts we find Mack Brown (2001) who helps affirm that goals for coaches are very simple. Many coaches want to win a championship. But when you examine more closely what it takes to be a champion, they have many different ideas, such as Brown (2001), who understands that while hating to lose and making his goal to win came to realize that "there is much bigger picture than winning and losing" (2001, p. 151).

This research investigates what would push players towards achieving areas of understanding the difference between setting

a goal of winning and what their overall purpose should be. What we have seen is understood by some coaches as essential to becoming a true champion. Many coaches have the desire to inspire their players to be great but are not equipped to teach them without making their goal a simple one, win. Winning is a simple task and can be easily evaluated by everyone. But the complicated feature is created when we eliminate winning and make our purpose more complex and rich with ideas which revolve around our potential and the transcendence of our expectations. Brown demonstrates the problems with making winning the only priority "there are times you risk a game in order to build a program" (2001, p. 150). Here we can see that the goal of Brown (2001) was to win, but he began to realize that winning could not and should not be the only reason for coaching.

While reaching a particular expectation would appear to be admirable, the ability of a person in football is often not known. Many can go further than they expect and their goals are further from them than they should be. Most coaches would agree that exceeding one's potential is a key element to reaching the championship but that element is not a goal of the teams and is very rarely discussed. What is discussed is winning, whether referred to in the context of the team winning or, more importantly, about winning for one's self. It is not rare for coaches to deal directly with players who are not about the team

but are more interested in themselves and the success they will have on the field. Bowden (2001) says it best when he states that "you win with the right people properly led" (p. 119). And this is similar to the star student who cares about making their own high grades rather than what they have learned or what their classmate has learned. All players/students can be successful can be successful with the right guidance and leadership.

It is written in almost every text that the coach wants his players to play to their potential. In some way the authors of these texts want the readers to understand the goal of the coach is that the team reaches its potential. But the goals which are written down in these texts most often state winning as the most common purpose. Winning should not be the common purpose but surpassing one's potential while bringing others along with you would be the purpose according to Tressel (2008).

Critical coaching asks all parties involved to agree that there are more ways than we know to win a championship. Critical coaching asks players to develop themselves in order to be the best they can be while helping their teammates be concerned with purpose rather than just winning. Critical coaching does not ask that everyone forget about the winning and losing and not keep score. Critical coaching makes the participants aware there is more to the score than just the numbers on it. The job of the coach is to educate the players not only about the material he

is coaching but about the game's relevance to life and the participation in this sport and its relevance to life as well. It is when this type of attitude is found that we can truly find the goals of the football coach are set at a standard that is very rarely reached even by the teams who win championships.

## Chapter V

### Conclusion

Critical theory and critical discourse analysis has led this researcher to discover or uncover what critical coaching involves. Clearly critical coaching and its relevance, or similarities, in teaching give proof to the value of such research. Critical coaching allows for freedom; whereas many within the classroom or on the field would believe such freedom may not be a positive influence to accomplishing their expectations for the given students. As a critical educator, one must understand that students come to the table of learning with different backgrounds and different circumstances which affect the body of knowledge they have and what they may be interested in.

Like the classroom, the football field was used for research in this study to find out if critical theory and, more importantly, if critical pedagogy exists on the football field at different levels. Some of the evidence in this study demonstrated clearly that football has transformed in many ways across the country. Coaches who once were performing the task of coach for free are now highly compensated individuals with pressures put on them that have nothing to do with raising quality students. Student-athletes are pulled in many directions and the sport of football is a demanding one. The coaches who

coach this great game have been left to feel the pressure of building teams which are competitive and many of the supporters of these programs want nothing short of a championship.

This would be a new frontier in coaching to many but I would argue the following is "old-school". Critical coaching would be new in its entirety but it has had a role in football before. Critical Coaching is "old-school". "Old-school" football is not about having all the answers. It is about asking questions and probing for the answer. "Old-school" football is critical coaching because it allows someone other than the coach to be in charge. It allows for the sharing of knowledge in both directions. Can we imagine what would happen if we allowed the players to coach the team and develop their own ways of doing things? Critical coaching is allowing the players to decide which blocking scheme to use. Critical coaching is teaching what plays work against what type of defense and allowing the players to decide what to run. Critical coaching is teaching players what the other team likes to run on offense and what defense will stop them. Critical coaching is about teaching players where to line up and allowing them to move around in their own way to get there. Critical coaching is about making the worse player better and the best player great. Critical coaching is allowing the players to be coaches and the coaches to learn from their players. Possible sharing authority and sharing

responsibility could be explored. Critical coaching is not easy or popular among those who love to be in control and want to have all the answers all the time. Critical coaching is not about screaming and demeaning a bunch of players. It is about teaching and educating for more than just wins and losses. Critical coaching allows coaches to become better people while educating young people about life. Critical coaching is not only judged by a score board but by the products they produce off the field as well as on the field. Critical coaching is not about championships and trophies but, in contrast, it is about making young people the best they can be. Critical coaching is not new, it's "old-school."

What was clearly evident from this research was the difference in what people consider success. Success on the field of play is judged solely by the numbers. These numbers include wins and losses, salaries, attendance numbers, yards rushing, yards passing, third down conversion percentages, season ticket sales, fund raising, donations, players who are sent to the next level of play, and championship banners.

What has been lost is the sense of accomplishment for achieving the original goal. Allowing young people the opportunity to compete in a sport which requires sacrifice, discipline, intelligence and determination while increasing the moral and spirit of all those surrounding the game should be a



major goal of football coaching curriculum. Lost are the coaches who believed football had more to do with life than most would ever understand. Lost are the life lessons and the values which could be instilled in those who play this game. Lost are the countless lives that could be changed by men who understand and study a game in order to make young people better by showing the true meaning of excellence.

So what comes from a study of this nature which can be used within the sport and outside of the sport? The first element which can be used inside of the sport is the understanding of what coaches and players should be striving for. The question could be asked if a coach wins all of his games but does not reach his potential, is the championship as meaningful as to the team which loses most of its games but excels far past their potential. Spurgeon and Tressel (2008) say they ask their players to do only one simple thing before each game. They ask them "to go out and play better than they are!" (p. 179) This may appear to be a strange request when one first hears this but this is exactly what football is all about. There is not a simple answer to this request. There is not one answer to this request.

There is not anyone who can tell the player how to fulfill this request in a single statement nor could a coach begin to describe what he is talking about in a brief explanation.

Critical coaching and critical pedagogy is Spurgeon's request and the answer to it. There is not a controlling element in his statement. It is up to each and every student to play better than they are. It is within the control of only the player to play better than they are and to ensure they play that way for the entire game. To play below your talent level or at your talent level is not enough.

We have been told very often about aptitude and standardized tests but in sports this rule is often broken. Many times we find players who can exceed all expectations and all standardized scores which would indicate their potential. Football and critical coaching would ask these players to go beyond that potential. Critical coaching would allow players to achieve these tasks by having the freedom to understand what they are asked to do and try to do it better than they are capable of.

Critical coaching can be accomplished through the use of critical theory on the field. Critical coaching would look very different from today's game but this study demonstrates critical coaching is not new. If studied closely football reveals that critical coaching is at its roots. From the very beginning we can see football was not dominated by the goal to win at all costs. Did players, coaches and fans want to win? Yes, they desired to have success and success was evaluated by wins and

losses, but wins and losses were only part of the plan. Students were seen as students and athletes, and the benefits of football on each institution was delivered many times from the administration and their support of the football programs. While football can be credited with building up school enrollment throughout history of education, it is also evident that quality education can be obtained without football. The role of football was to enhance the education being gained through the enthusiasm and participation in the games and activities which surround them. Coaches coached not for the money but for the ability to help mold lives and shape them in a positive direction through the game of football.

Freedom was very evident on the football fields during the foundation of this game. Players were in control of many elements of the team and while coaches loved the sport it was the students who helped get players to the team and it was the students who supported the events which surrounded those games. Freedom was easy to identify and many of these freedoms come from the rules which were in place during the beginning years of football. Players called many of the plays and in many cases there were player-coaches who put together the game plan and taught the plays to the rest of the team. Football has evolved not only due to innovation but also due to the rule changes which forced adaptation and organizational changes which were

created by those who no longer or had never played the game but desired more control over it.

Today football looks very different than when it was just beginning. Football today involves many coaches even at the high school level. This could be seen as a positive change which gives players more coaches to learn the game from or could be seen as another way in which the coaches can control what the players are doing and how they process the game itself. Coaches in many situations would like programmed players who react in a particular way to each situation presented. But the problem with this form of football education is that it does not represent reality. The ball is shaped funny and does not always bounce the way it should. The weather and the conditions of play change the game from venue to venue. Players are allowed to do many things now that in the beginning were illegal and the influence of a coach on a player during a game represents a tremendous change in how the game was played years ago.

Football players have a responsibility to their community and that responsibility has lost its significance to coaches every year. Football players are not socially conscious of their role within their communities. Football players and coaches do not understand their influence on the world around them. With television and the internet, community members have access to everyone involved in sports from the NFL player to the high

school quarterback. Most players' actions are watched by thousands of people. The role of football is far more important today than it was during its founding and that importance must be understood by all those involved in the game. Thinking critically about the community's role and being socially conscious of what a player or coach should retain as significant football programs could be a loud positive voice in communities which need leadership and want to deliver for those in need, who may never get it without support from their communities.

Coaches should influence their communities to be accepting of teams which improve and reach their potential. This will not be an easy task. Many will ask how we understand what the potential is? Many players will not understand why winning is not the only focus. But what must be central to this concept is the idea of accepting you will have success regardless of the results on the field. Truly, successful teams do not strive to overcome or subdue their opponent. Success and critical coaching surpass your own expectations and the willingness to give in to being good or staying the same. Coaches must yearn to transcend any expectation for any one player or team as well as expectations for themselves. When we have surpassed or outdone ourselves, then true success has been achieved. Our potential is reached and we can step back and admire how far we have come. If we want to get to the improbable, we must first seek the

impossible while allowing everyone to add to the complicated conversation of how to get there. There must be an acceptance of the unknown or the inability to have all the answers so that the players, the students, understand it is their responsibility to improve with the coach not just because of the coach.

Expectations, not just goals, should be set, which include increasing awareness of the use of critical coaching within the football curriculum. This critical coaching will allow others involved with the football community, as well as those outside the football community, to see the value in critical coaching and understand it can add to their particular field of interest. Critical coaching allows the coach to demonstrate critical theory outside of the classroom and allow others in their discipline to ask if this is possible in their area.

Critical coaching has an important role in education as well. Critical coaching allows educators to see value and relevance of football to their classrooms. There is a direct connection between what the players and coaches are doing and how to interact within a team. In a game where so many have wanted to subdue the participants and make them react in a robotic or controlled way, critical coaching offers a very different alternative. Critical coaching allows players to figure out the best way to solve the problem and in a way which no one may have considered. Since its football's beginning,

critical coaching has allowed football programs to be positive influences on school communities and the school environments. There might not have been great intent for these coaches to have the influence on the field affect what was going on inside the classroom but in many cases football roots played a positive role in the emotional environment around the campus.

True success comes from the players and coaches changing the environment in which they play the game. True success will come in the form of programs which do away with championship banners and focus on excelling on the field and off the field. Players should not be judged by whether they win or lose and in some cases (not discussed in this study) football has begun to look at some other classifications. Years ago graduation rates among athletes were not considered for discussion, not only among scholars, but among football enthusiasts as well. But today graduation rates are discussed in many different forums because the organizations which require a particular number with regard to this rate have made it known that it is important to make sure students are getting their education. But don't be fooled these requirements don't send in the death squad for these programs, In many cases the requirements are so low that players remain behind and the education they sought is just as elusive as it was in the past. Education can help shape where critical coaching is headed and in years to come we will either

have football programs which have totally stripped away any significance to education in not only colleges, but also high schools or we will have programs which require those privileged enough to be a part of the football program are required to be positive influences in their community.

Critical coaching should be easily evident and in football would look very different from today. Football teams would not have a separation of coaches and players. They would allow representatives from the team to be part of the game planning session which would allow those players to understand and help determine what the game plan would be. The players would have a voice and could share with the representative what they would like to see or what they did not understand. The coaches would have an understanding they would learn as much from the players as the players would learn from them.

During practice, players would be taught in an educational setting which would allow for mistakes but request an effort level and satisfaction level that would exceed the production or outcome of any play or player. Players would be asked to exceed their abilities which would lead some players to discover their abilities were far greater than what they believed. Players would be taught as if they were becoming coaches and would be expected to master the material in the same fashion. Players would be allowed input into what the practice should involve and



how each practice is conducted. Players would be urged to evaluate each practice and find ways each player and coach could improve. Stripped away would be the threat of limited playing time and punishment and in its place would be excellence.

This form of excellence would not be measured in touchdowns and points on the scoreboard. Instead would be the measurement of transcendence of expectations or goals; the goals or expectations being far more specific than winning a championship. These goals would be evaluated and measured by the players and coaches together. These goals for improvement would lead to a program that would continue to prosper before a championship and after. The goals of this team would look and feel different from those of many of the other teams because they would be looking at their performances much differently than the others around them. Therefore this would be "old-school" because it would not matter who played the game, instead the coach would remain vigilant ensuring improvement takes place by evaluating the players upon their own ability and not the ability of their opponent.

Critical coaching would require coaches who were students of the game and who studied with their players rather than about the players and the game alone. Allowing players to have a voice would be different from the past and would require dedication and devotion from coaches to understand the idea of critical

coaching and what the goals and expectations are. Critical coaching could be common practice as it was long ago if given the opportunity within football settings. I believe one day that a return to or an escape to critical coaching will occur when coaches realize the ones who have come to be a part want to learn the game, exceed their potentials and become better players regardless of the score. Winning will come in different forms for some but, overall critical coaching could produce championship teams without them ever talking about winning a championship.

I believe it is equally important to understand that there will not be a quick and easy solution to every situation. There will never be a magic bullet which will send a program speeding towards success no matter how it is measured. However, what would be consistent is the never ending desire to acquire knowledge inside of a program which allows players to have freedom and ownership of their team, where coaches are encouraged to allow players to express themselves. This does not give open access to all players to do as they choose. This does not remove responsibilities of coaches to act as adults and remove the requirements that students respect their coaches. But it requires a mutual respect from player to coach and coach to player. A respect for the knowledge a player has to share and

the respect for the information and understanding a coach has to learn.

Coaches and players sharing access to information, sharing common goals which raise their expectations far above winning or producing high numbers is what critical coaching requests. Expectations for improving as a team and as a group of people in a community are some of the ingredients of critical coaching. Responsibility towards our own communities and those involved in the team as well as those outside the team should be a trait of all components of a football team. Our responsibility reaches beyond football and into the streets and hallways of our school community. Football should be the example of how we can educate a large number of people who all come from different circumstances and situations towards a common goal of continuous improvement, reaching out to exceed all expectations and predictions. Critical coaching offers the chance to become a part of a group which allows for change and allows for freedom. There is never only one answer to the problems which arise and by having more than one person who makes those decisions and everyone having ownership and a voice they all will care for one another and, like Spurgeon (2008), I believe if they love one another the discipline will take care of itself.

In many ways I see a parallel between what is occurring in government schools across the United States and this philosophy.

A particular teacher or school is winning with this set of test scores and here is how they did it. Now take this set of ideas and procedures and apply them to your low scoring school and you will have the same result. The idea appears to be one that many find appealing and relative. But like football, schools are not factories and just because you push students, parents and faculty through the assembly line does not mean the final product will reflect the same results.

I would agree that exposing players to or allowing them to experience similar circumstances, materials, and experiences may have some correlation to a similar outcome. But we cannot assume that all parts are equal and if one set of circumstances works in one case that it will work in another. Therefore, having the same goal for everyone does not appear logical.

Improvement rather than championships may be a more appropriate and more measureable goal. It is just as important to understand that the unit of measure cannot solely be the scoreboard for those involved. Critics of this philosophy may say society grades a coach on wins and losses. I cannot deny what many judge a coach upon but coaches and players cannot point only to the scoreboard. It is this mode of thinking which makes practice appear to be a struggle to coaches. If we are not keeping score, are the players attempting to improve or are they

simple going along with the process to complete the task at hand, which is to finish another practice?

Critical coaching allows the team to work on all components of the process while each member has equal responsibility and participation. Participation may not equal playing in the game for all players or being in control of every aspect of the team for coaches. Critical coaches will allow the members of the team to develop the plan for the future which will enable the team to create clear expectations and participate in the transcendence of ability beyond preconceived goals.

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