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DEMYSTIFYING CRITICAL REFLECTION

Improving Pedagogy and Practice with Legitimation Code Theory

Legitimation Code Theory

ROUTLEDGE

11

FOOTBALL YADAYADA

Learning how to critically reflect about sport as a social field

Mark Brooke

Introduction

This chapter reports on a course which aims to foster undergraduate students' abilities to critically reflect on sport through engagement with the grand theories of the sociology of sport. Much of what students learn as critical reflection before they take the module is based on Paul's (1984) and Elder's (2005) work, with notions like "all reasoning is expressed through, and shaped by, concepts and ideas" and "all reasoning is done from some point of view" (as cited in Vink et al. 2017: 156). Teaching critical reflection also often draws on Facione's (2007) critical thinking dispositions such as demonstrating the ability to select, structure, analyze, and integrate information effectively. Albeit useful starts, this input is not related to learning critical reflection. Students are only exploring cognitive constructs in terms of knowing processes (Szenes et al. 2015: 574). Brookfield (2016) notes that true 'critical' reflection is the "uncovering of power and hegemony" and to engage in this form of reflection is to "demonstrate how ideological manipulation forces us to behave in ways that seem to make sense, but that actually keep us powerless" (Brookfield 2016: 11). For Brookfield (2016: 16), true critical reflection seeks out social justice, and uncovers power inequities. Similarly, in Legitimation Code Theory (Maton 2013, 2014a; Maton et al. 2016) the goal is to develop a gaze or "a mode of thinking, acting and being" (Dong et al. 2014: 8) through the explanatory power of the codes, that is making visible inequalities.

This chapter focuses on engaging with true 'critical theory' in Brookfield's (2016) terms so that students' understanding of sport shifts from common sense to un-common sense, and that ideological forces are uncovered and evaluated. Students tend to lack this critical gaze as they come from positivist backgrounds and do not have the knowledge to do this. Hence the title of the chapter referring to *yadayada*, a term used to depict very common, every day,

DOI: 10.4324/9781003177210-14

and predictable perceptions and opinions on sport as a social field. Other challenges are teaching students how to engage in qualitative social science research and to write the theoretical framework of their Introduction-Method-Research-Discussion (IMRD) paper, which explains to the reader how they intend to operationalize the theories in the research design and data analysis. These challenges can be met by enacting the concept of *semantic gravity* from Legitimation Code Theory (Maton 2013, 2014a, 2020) which makes visible the dominant organizing principles needed to produce highly successful texts in the sociology of sport. Legitimation Code Theory (LCT) helps to build students critical orientations to text through a scaffolded approach drawing on semantic gravity. LCT can be used to teach students how to move away from everyday context-dependent knowledge or practices and to select the appropriate theory or more context-independent abstractions, that allow them great explanatory power to uncover struggles between unequal groups in society.

In order to build students' understanding of humanities and qualitative research, and to develop their capacity for critical reflection, the teaching introduces undergraduate students for the first time to the five grand theories in the Sociology of Sport: Functionalist; Conflict; Feminist; Interactionist; and Critical Theories (Beedie & Craig 2010), and in particular, by enacting semantic gravity profiles, how to link abstract knowledge from the grand theories to empirical contexts in the form of sports in practice. As in other disciplines, each theoretical framework functions as a toolbox of concepts that help to represent the current appropriate explanations of evidence of the nature of phenomena and their relationships (Beedie & Craig 2010: 44). In this way, LCT facilitates critical reflection which seeks out social justice, and uncovers power inequities (Brookfield 2016: 16) within the field of sports sociology.

The study

The module introduces students to principles and strategies that will help them produce scholarly research and writing throughout their academic careers and develop their understandings of what it really means to reflect critically by examining struggles between unequal groups in society. Many students on the course come from STEM, Business, Design, Economics, and Psychology backgrounds. Hence, they tend to start the module with a technical rationality or "epistemology of practice derived from positivist philosophy", which as Schon explains tends to concentrate on "rigorous application of well-formed instrumental problems by applying theory and technique derived from systematic preferably scientific knowledge" (Schon 1987 as cited in Kinsella 2007: 104). Students tend to be newcomers to the social sciences and qualitative research, which is the preferred paradigm of the module. Because of this, their understanding of critical reflection is more akin to 'practice reflectively', by thinking about the 'nuts and bolts of process' rather than exploring power dynamics and wider structures that frame sport in

society (Brookfield 2016: 13). As noted, embracing 'critical reflection' is to uncover the "struggles between unequal interests and groups that exist in the wider world" (Brookfield 2016: 13). Moreover, students tend to start with everyday experience and opinions rather than an academic interpretation. Helping students to adopt an academic and theoretically informed critical stance about social phenomena in sport is one of the main challenges in developing their critical reflection capabilities.

The research conducted was part of a collective case study approach over six 13-week semesters from 2018 to 2021. It involved several action research cycles of data gathering and observational experimentation in the classroom to establish best practices for facilitating student learning. Data gathering involved multiple sources and methods: teacher field notes from observations in the classroom as well as during sessions of one-to-one student-teacher consultations and student-student pair and group interactions; two surveys, one after the first two weeks, a critical moment for the research; and another at the end of the module; informal feedback from asynchronous email discussions with students; and the analysis of a student's written text at the end of the interventions. This data provides a thick description of the five stages taught to achieve the ultimate goal: demonstrating critical reflection through the writing of a successful theoretical framework section for an Introduction-Method-Research-Discussion (IMRD) paper. Ethical clearance was applied for and received for the study from the university.

Legitimation Code Theory: Semantic gravity

As noted, the concept of *semantic gravity* from LCT can be used to deal with the challenges students face by making visible the dominant organizing principles needed to produce highly successful texts in the sociology of sport. In this study, semantic gravity helps to reveal knowledge practices of critical reflection and can be used to show students how to engage with theory in terms of social practices. This is achieved by employing the analytic of *semantic gravity profiles* (see Maton 2013, 2014a, 2020). The profiles presented are related to what is termed *semantic gravity waves*, *semantic gravity flatlines*, *semantic gravity entry points*, *semantic gravity upshifts*, *semantic gravity downshifts*, and *semantic gravity ranges*. This section provides an overview of these concepts related to semantic gravity profiling.

Semantic gravity conceptualizes how meanings depend on context to make sense. It is defined as the:

> degree to which meaning relates to its context, whether that is social or symbolic. Semantic gravity may be relatively stronger (+) or weaker (–) along a continuum of strengths. The stronger the semantic gravity (SG+), the more closely meaning is related to its context; the weaker the gravity (SG–), the less dependent meaning is on its context (Maton 2013: 11).

Practices can range from more context-dependent or stronger semantic gravity (SG+) to less context-dependent or weaker semantic gravity (SG–), in as many gradations as required. For example, a term in the field of the sociology of sport such as 'hegemony' from Gramsci (1971) (as cited in Rowe 2004: 97–110) refers to how power is constituted for ideological means. Domination may exist in many forms, for example, in terms of socio-economic status, gender, or ethnicity. The concept 'hegemony' exhibits relatively weak semantic gravity (SG–) as it is relatively context-independent; exemplifying the term 'hegemony' within a specific context can strengthen its semantic gravity (SG+). Changes in the strengths of semantic gravity can be visualized by *semantic profiles* (Maton 2013), as shown in Figure 11.1. The meanings are commonly recorded as heuristic visual representations.

In Figure 11.1, 'A' represents a *high flatline* of meanings that are consistently weaker semantic gravity (abstract or general), such as those centring on theoretical subject matter. In contrast, the 'B' profile represents a *low flatline* of meanings that are consistently stronger semantic gravity (concrete or particular), such as focusing on empirical subject matter. 'C' represents a semantic gravity wave, which visualizes changes in context-dependence between more abstract or general meanings (SG–) and more concrete or particular meanings (SG+).

In order to demonstrate how a concept from a theoretical framework in the sociology of sport is going to be employed in research design, students need to produce a *semantic gravity downshift* or *upshift*, that is, a change in semantic gravity in one direction or the other. For example, writing that "hegemony theory can be employed to explore how black African Americans are socially channelled into basketball" is a downshift as the abstract concept is contextualized. In contrast, "Black African Americans being channelled into

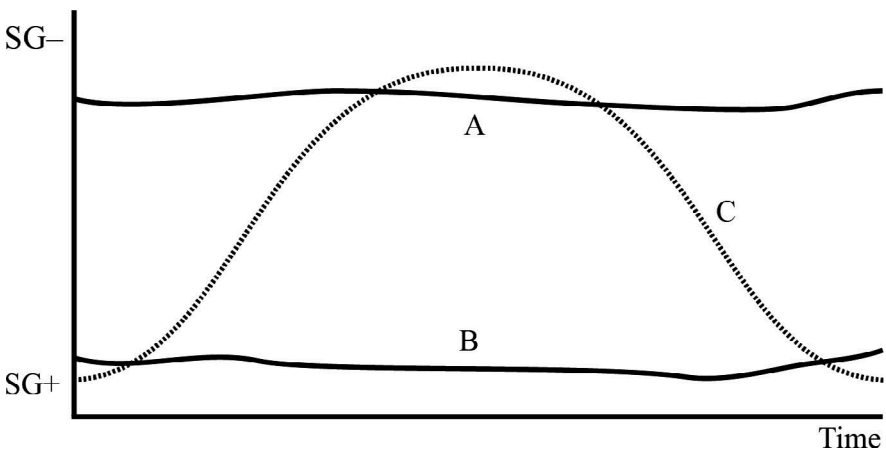

FIGURE 11.1 Illustrative profiles and semantic ranges
Source: Adapted from Maton (2013: 13)

basketball can be explained using hegemony theory" is an upshift in meaning as the case is generalized and abstracted to the theory. For both clauses it is possible to heuristically indicate the *entry point* as closer to SG– or SG+ and to follow the shifts to other levels of context-dependency on the semantic range. The semantic threshold or students' current levels of conceptual understanding (Georgiou et al. 2014) can be found in the middle level of the semantic gravity range. It is considered essential that the educator enables students' understandings to achieve higher SG– ranges toward more technical abstract meanings (Georgiou et al. 2014: 262). If the input commences too high on the SG– range, it might be too abstract for students. If this is the case, it may be beginning beyond students' semantic threshold in the field.

When clauses are strung together, it is possible to demonstrate semantic gravity ranges that produce waves or flatlines of semantic gravity because multiple meanings are related to each other across the text produced. High-achieving students demonstrate an ability to transit from abstract context-independent knowledge to context-dependent knowledge; in other words, from degrees of abstract to degrees of situated, empirical knowledge and vice-versa, a movement that forms semantic gravity waves. Szenes et al. (2015) demonstrate, by analyzing papers from different disciplines, that this waving is considered by lecturers as high-achieving work across multiple disciplines. This is also the case in this module. Successful critical thinking in this chapter is related to the ability to make these transitions in context-dependency meanings. These shifts count as evidence of the students' ability to demonstrate their capacity to be engaged with critical theory in the field. They also show how students have moved past technical rationalist orientations to understanding how sport sociologists challenge the power dynamics that exist within this field. Additionally, the shifts in meaning reveal how students analyze these dominant practices through their observation of empirical data collected through qualitative research.

The model presented in Figure 11.2 was developed over six 13-week semesters. It summarizes the activities facilitated to demonstrate to students how to achieve the capacity to engage in critical reflection in the field of sports sociology.

The first two stages relate predominantly to teacher input as students are guided to understand how their more common-sense meanings can be related to more complex theoretical ones. The third stage is also an input stage as students are guided to notice how semantic gravity waving is essential for coherence in a theoretical framework text. Stage four is a combination of both input and output as students are guided to first notice concepts in a complex published academic text, and how they are defined and exemplified. Students then add concepts from the text to complete a semantic gravity profile. The fifth stage is an output stage during which students produce their own

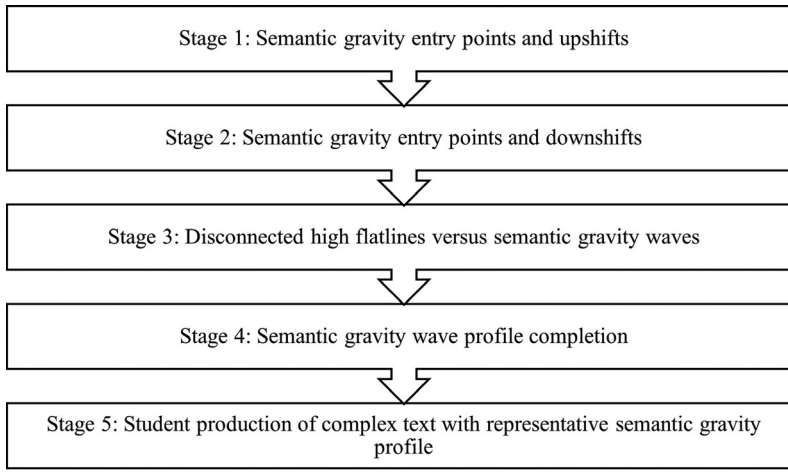

FIGURE 11.2 Five stages of teaching students how to produce a theoretical framework section of an Introduction-Method-Research-Discussion paper (IMRD) paper enacting sematic gravity profiling

theoretical framework text and provide a semantic gravity profile to represent conceptual meanings and how they are defined and exemplified to ensure a logical flow of ideas and facilitate comprehension. At the end of the process, students are producing effective critical reflection (Brookfield 2016).

Findings

In the following section, strategies enacting semantic gravity profiling over the five stages of the sociology of sport module described in Figure 11.3 are presented.

Stage 1: Entry points and upshifts to teach SG– meanings related to the grand theories

The first stage of the instructional cycle begins with assessing students' semantic threshold (Georgiou et al. 2014: 262). Typically, at the beginning of a semester, students are given a list of concepts related to the grand theories such as hegemonic masculinity; pariah femininity; and the male gaze which relate to Feminist theory and asked about their familiarity with these. They are also asked to read a chapter from a well-known sociology of sport book from Beedie & Craig (2010) that summarizes, for newcomers to the field, the types of research subjects that the grand theories explore. These theories are Functionalist; Conflict; Feminist; Interactionist; and Critical Theories (Beedie & Craig 2010).

Commonly, students have little if any prior knowledge of the concepts and, despite being adapted for non-specialists, students find the chapter challenging. They report difficulties "differentiating between the theories", "comprehending

the concepts related to theories", "being confused about how to frame the questions for the theories", and "finding an appropriate context to apply a theory". This feedback is collected from an initial anonymous survey in the first two weeks of the module after theories have been introduced.

To help students to increase their theoretical understanding in this area, teacher-prepared texts are presented supported with visuals. An example text is provided exploring how Functionalists consider the importance of social norms, and shared codes of conduct to produce a functioning society as well as how Functionalists view activity not following these norms, such as doping in sport, as deviant behaviour.

> A functionalist seeks social harmony. A phenomenon such as doping in sport can be seen to reflect *negative social values*, a win at all costs mentality, according to Coakley and Pike (2014), which *disrupts harmony*. For a functionalist, sport as a 'social institution', with its *own belief systems* and *codes of conduct*, functions to develop *positive core values* like fair play and healthy competition. So illicit steroid use is *cheating*; it produces distrust between athletes; it can also be dangerous. So, it negates these functions. Thus, the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) sets up *sanctioned behaviour* and if athletes *do not follow these rules*, this is wrong, it represents 'deviance'. If athletes cheat, they are breaking the *social contract*, that is, they are breaking *agreed codes of conduct to maintain social stability*. There is an issue with the 'organic solidarity'. Durkheim uses the term 'organic solidarity' (see for example, Pope 2008) to refer to complementary

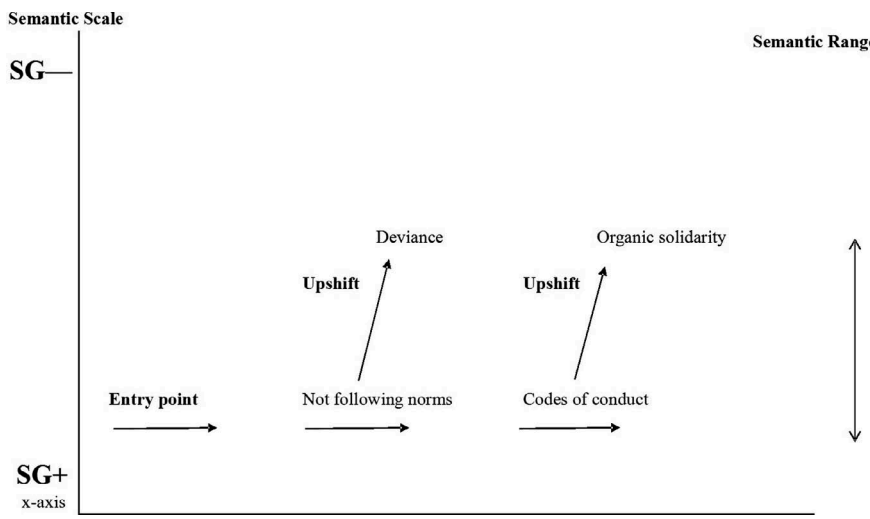

FIGURE 11.3 Semantic gravity entry points and upshifts for teaching how Functionalists might view doping in sport

interdependence between social actors. If everyone has a social role and abides by agreed codes of conduct, harmony can be maintained.

Discussion of sample teacher text in the classroom

Using the example figure and teacher text, the teacher explains that the highly conceptual abstract terms deviance and organic solidarity are underlined. As represented in the figure, these terms are towards SG– meanings. They are first foregrounded using less technical wording such as negative social values, disrupts harmony, do not follow these rules as well as codes of conduct. These are less abstract academic terms and are ideal as *entry points* for the presentation. What then occurs is a *semantic gravity upshift* as the SG– terms deviance and organic solidarity are introduced. At the beginning of the module, several input sessions of this nature focussing on *semantic gravity entry points and upshifts* are commonly provided to help students understand these theorists' interpretations of empirical contexts.

Evaluation of the classroom activity with students

The teacher-written text is closely prepared to link to students' levels of understanding, or semantic threshold (Georgiou et al. 2014) to scaffold comprehension. Semantic gravity profiling guides how to bring essential conceptual learning into the curriculum through *upshifts*, where theorizing is foregrounded. Aligning with research (Lindstrøm 2010; Conana et al. 2019; Georgiou 2020), enacting semantic gravity for *entry points* to facilitate conceptual understanding is effective as the content is linked to students' prior knowledge. One issue arising during this research focusing on *entry points and upshifts*, which has also been remarked by other studies (Georgiou et al. 2014; Conana et al. 2019), is taking for granted the social and cultural embeddedness of everyday examples. In the context of this research, students may have little knowledge of doping scandals in sport, and the World Anti-Doping Association's (WADA) (https://www.wada-ama.org/en) activities. Therefore, also providing some time for students to research the empirical contexts might be necessary.

Stage 2: Entry points and downshifts to demonstrate how context-dependent (SG+) meanings might be explored using the grand theories

Once the conceptual underpinnings of the theories have been presented in stage 1, students are guided to apply the theories to empirical contexts. Teacher-fronted presentations can be supported with visuals demonstrating *semantic gravity downshifts* as in Figure 11.4. This stage helps to show students how the grand theories analyze social contexts. A short, written example of how an Interactionist theorists might explore women's football, along with a figure representing the *semantic gravity downshift*, are provided below.

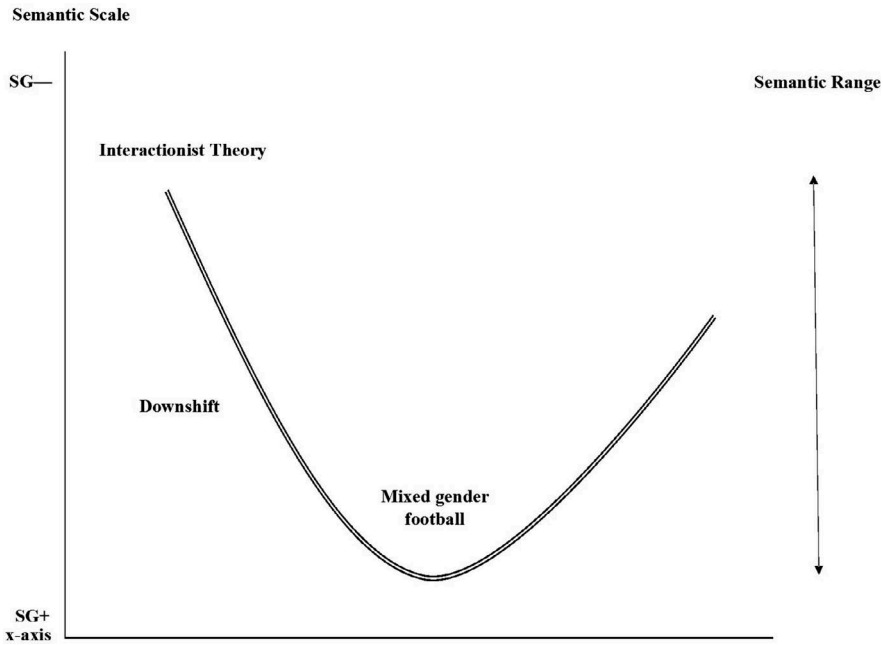

FIGURE 11.4 Entry points and downshifts representing how theoretical frameworks might be employed to analyze social contexts

Interactionist theorists might want to explore processes of *intersubjectivity* or what we imagine others might think of our *public self,* and *impression management.* Men's football dominates the global sport nexus and media coverage. This domination might impact gender dynamics in a social field such as mixed gender sport. Women may be exposed to *toxic masculinity* and *stigmatization.*

Discussion of sample teacher text in the classroom

Using the example figure and teacher text above, the teacher explains that Interactionist theories like Cooley's (1902) Looking Glass Self and Goffman's (1978) Dramaturgy commonly explore notions of intersubjectivity, the public self and impression management. These SG– terms are underlined in the sample text and have been taught in stage 1. The teacher text reveals how these concepts might be related to stigma, a predominant subject of interactionist research. A context is then provided for these theoretical concepts: *Are women in mixed gender teams stigmatized? Do they imagine what others think about them playing football? How do they deal with toxic masculinity if it exists?* As the context is introduced in this way, *semantic gravity downshifts* foreground application.

Evaluation of the classroom activity with students

The teacher written text and figure is carefully constructed to start at a higher level of conceptual understanding with abstract concepts (SG–) and then shifts to empirical contexts (SG+) for research purposes. Figure 11.4 can be used as a visual tool to explain *downshifting* to students. A caveat with *semantic gravity downshifting* is the potential for the 'Icarus effect' (Georgiou et al. 2014), which is when students' knowledge towards SG– is inappropriate (262). In other words, students may not have attained an appropriate conceptual understanding of a theory and so might endorse one without being ready to use it. An example from this action research is when a student expressed an interest in employing neo-Marxist Antonio Gramsci's Hegemony Theory and in particular what this theorist states about the 'manufacture of consent' (Gramsci 1971, as cited in Rowe 2004: 97–110) through ideology. The student drew on Gramsci's Hegemony Theory for corporate employee relations arguing that listening more to ideas from frontline staff would win the 'hearts and minds' of the personnel and lead to a consenting workforce. This context is clearly inappropriate for Gramsci's neo-Marxist ideas.

Stage 3: Semantic gravity ranges for developing students' theoretical frameworks for an IMRD

For the most part, students have a working understanding of the conceptual underpinning of their stances drawing on the 'grand' theories taught through stages 1 and 2 and can talk about how they might apply them to a chosen social context. However, at this stage, some students do still face challenges demonstrating how the concepts from the theories relate to each other. To deal with this, two different example student texts from a prior struggling and prior successful student are presented accompanied by semantic gravity profiles of the texts.

Text 1: Unsuccessful student text

> Boardley and Grix (2014) provide insight on female bodybuilders and show their socialization process through muscularity. Curry (1993) explains how one's body affects self-identity, particularly regarding discipline of the self and the normalization of pain. Wellard (2009) brings embodiment into a broader perspective as he illustrates how the media perpetuates the traditional notion of the female body. Moreover, Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) present hegemonic masculinity and the set of practices that maintain male dominance.

Discussion of unsuccessful student text for modelling IMRD in the classroom

Using the example text and Figure 11.5, the teacher explains that context-independent concepts such as the 'discipline of the self' and the 'normalization of

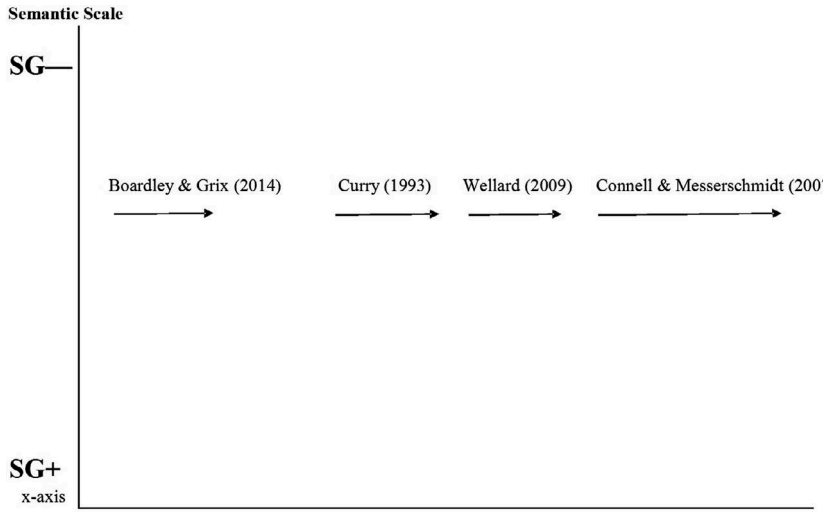

FIGURE 11.5 Disconnected high flatlines demonstrating issues in unpacking and not connecting abstract concepts for a theoretical framework section

pain' (SG–) are presented but not defined, nor are examples used to help convey meaning. This lack of unpacking produces a high flatline. For Foucault, self-discipline (as cited in Markula 2003) is a form of bio-power which regulates the behaviour of individuals in the social body. Through complex cultural concepts such as healthy living, individuals are nurtured into systems of self-surveillance, structuring their lifestyle. One of the consequences of this self-surveillance is a regime of pain that a bodybuilder may construct. The regime normalizes everyday pain through physical exercise and dietary control, sometimes to extreme levels. From this analysis, it is clear how the discipline of the self and the normalization of pain can be connected. However, these related meanings are not explained in the students' text. The result can be called *a disconnected high flatline,* as shown in Figure 11.6, because the meanings are towards SG– are not connected semantically.

Text 2: Successful student text

> This paper draws on a critical feminist approach to explore how sport can be empowering for women. Schippers (2007) demonstrates that a counter-hegemonic femininity is the muscular female, or as she coins her, the 'badass' feminine. This embodied form, the way society is written into the body, resists male domination or hegemonic masculinity, male practices that promote the superior social position of men. As such, the female bodybuilder can successfully transcend the physical boundaries set by men.

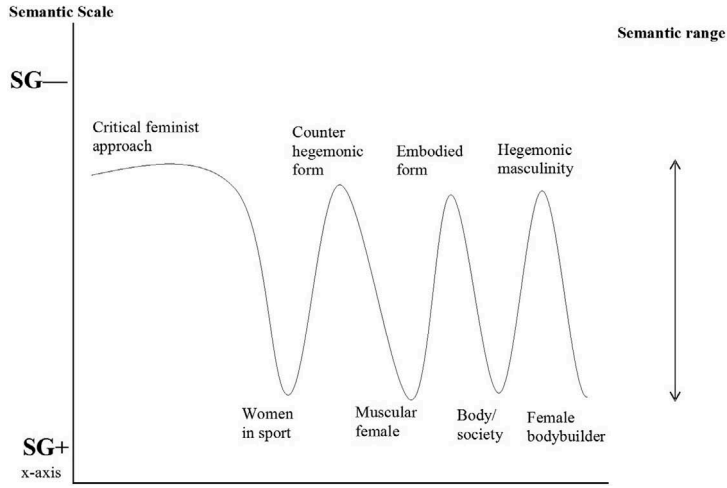

FIGURE 11.6 Semantic gravity waves demonstrating coherent use of Feminist Theory for a theoretical framework section

Discussion of successful student text for modelling IMRD in the classroom in the classroom

In the second text, meanings weave from SG– to SG+ throughout *creating semantic gravity waves* and produce a much more effective coherent flow of ideas. There are very densely packed, context-independent meanings underlined (e.g. "counter-hegemonic femininity"). Nonetheless, it is clear in the text through exemplification and definition such as "muscular female" and "male practices that promote the superior social position of men" what SG– terms like 'badass feminine' (Schippers 2007) and 'hegemonic masculinity' mean. The text enables students to notice that definition and exemplification are essential components of effective coherence in a theoretical framework section of an Introduction-Method-Research-Discussion paper (IMRD).

Evaluation of the classroom activity with two different example student texts

Students stated that the two texts were quite differently organized, and their visual representations demonstrated differences in "how to think and write". Students also reported that contrasting the two texts visually helped to "provide a structure" to follow. Other students reported: "it helps to make our writing clearer and flow better", and "by giving examples and definitions, it makes technical concepts easier to understand". Student feedback about the first text was that the writer "needed to explain" the key terms better and that there was "no help for the reader to connect the terms". What tends to be

seen in successful texts is not just one, but several *semantic gravity downshifts* followed by *semantic gravity upshifts*. This is produced through a process of unpacking of technicality into more familiar common-sense language, followed by upward movements and the repacking of knowledge into more densely packed conceptual terms. Assisting students to notice how concepts are unpacked and then repacked across the semantic range in this way is essential to demonstrate true 'critical' reflection as the "uncovering of power and hegemony" and to engage in this form of reflection is to "demonstrate how ideological manipulation forces us to behave in ways that seem to make sense, but that actually keep us powerless" (Brookfield 2016: 11). The student text uncovers discrimination against female bodybuilders.

Stage 4: Using semantic ranges to produce an effective theoretical framework for an Introduction-Method-Research-Discussion paper (IMRD) in a model academic text

At this stage, the course focus shifts to modelling how a theoretical framework is written in a published academic journal text. The model provided is by Mirjam Stuij (2015) entitled 'Habitus and social class: A case study on socialisation into sports and exercise' from the journal *Sport, Education and Society*. Stuij (2015) employs Bourdieu's (1984) theory of habitus. The aim of this activity is to guide students to notice how the theoretical framework is written and, similarly to the students' texts above, this can be deconstructed by producing a semantic gravity wave profile as presented in the example published text on habitus from Stuij (2015):

> The habitus produces practice in combination with capital and in a particular field (Bourdieu, 1984). Capital can be defined as *usable resources and powers*, the main forms being economic (income, monetary assets), cultural (skills, knowledge), social (connections) and symbolic (status). 'Sporting capital' can be seen as a form of cultural capital, which comprises *skills and knowledge necessary for successful participation in sports and exercise* (Nielsen et al. 2012). In a specific field, i.e. a relatively autonomous particular social arena with its own logic and social conditions, the combination of one's habitus or *embodied and lasting schemes of practice* and the specific volume and composition of capital results in certain behaviour. *For example, in the field of organized sports, this can result in participation in a certain sport at a specific club because one has a "sense of one's place" or no participation at all as one feels that "that's not for the likes of us"* (Bourdieu, 1984: 471). Therefore, "each person has a unique individual variant of the common matrix" (Wacquant, 1998: 221), but "people subject to similar experiences", e.g. members of the same social class, share a corresponding habitus (Wacquant, 1998: 221).

Students read the text and underline the important concepts in the first clause: 'habitus', 'practice', 'capital', 'sporting capital' and 'field'. They then follow how the terms are defined throughout the text and complete a semantic gravity wave profile by adding concepts in text boxes to the *upshifts* in meaning. This is illustrated by Figure 11.7, which was used to accompany the published text. The terms should be 'field', 'habitus' and 'specific volume and composition of capital'.

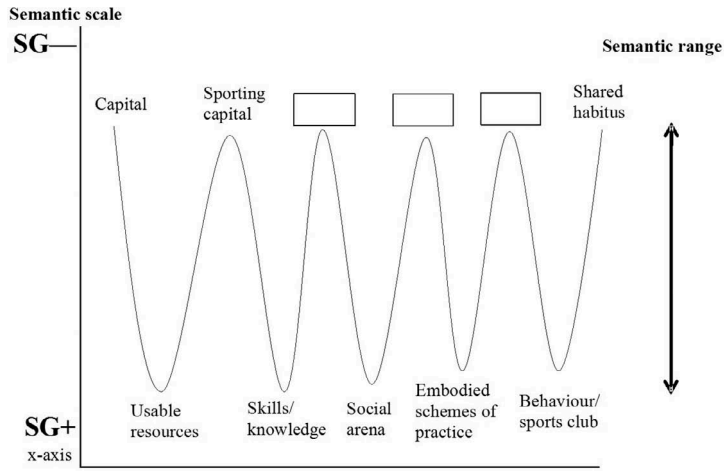

FIGURE 11.7 Semantic gravity wave profile of academic journal text for modelling

Discussion of sample academic model text used in the classroom

Following student analyses of the text above, the teacher discusses the example figure and teacher text by enacting semantic gravity. The teacher starts by explaining that the meaning of 'habitus' is provided in the first clause. This is the clause towards the weakest semantic gravity (SG–) point as it contains a great deal of conceptual context-independent meaning with the main terms of the theory: 'habitus', 'practice', 'capital' and 'field'. The rest adds context to these terms through definition and exemplification. The concept 'Capital' (SG–) is first defined as 'usable resources and powers' (SG+). Then particular capital types are presented giving further context to 'capital'. 'Field' is defined as 'a relatively autonomous particular social arena with its own logic and social conditions', which gives it context as it provides attributes to it related to consciousness and behaviour. These meanings are therefore stronger in semantic gravity (SG+). The concept 'habitus' is defined as "embodied and lasting schemes of practice" and "certain behaviour" in a certain social context. These meanings are towards SG+ as they help to relate it to behaviour. In Stuij's text, 'sporting capital' is also unpacked as "skills and knowledge at a

certain sport" (SG+). Stuij (2015) then exemplifies how 'habitus' relates to 'practice' by citing Bourdieu: "sense of one's place" and "that's not for the likes of us" (Bourdieu 1984: 471) giving context to 'habitus' by relating it to feelings. Stuij (2015) then rounds off her theoretical framework section by arguing that the combination of the concepts, 'habitus', 'practice', 'field' and 'capital' produces a 'common matrix', and she juxtaposes this with "a unique individual variant", citing Wacquant (1998: 221 as cited in Stuij 2015: 221). 'Common matrix' is given context as 'corresponding habitus' and "shared identity amongst social demographic groups (matrix)" as well as "members of the same social class" and "people subject to similar experiences". It is further contextualized by contrasting it with "a unique individual variant".

Evaluation of the classroom activity with the sample academic model text

The activity and discussion in class demonstrates to students that more complex published academic texts can also be explored by enacting semantic gravity profiling. Asking students to complete text boxes in Figure 11.7 is an effective strategy for scaffolding the deconstruction of the text. Students were mostly able to identify the essential conceptual terms related to Bourdieu's (1984) theory of 'habitus' in the text (e.g. 'capital') and notice how Stuij (2015) unpacks them (e.g. "usable resources and powers"). However, a caveat exploring *semantic ranges* is that this form of instruction may take for granted students' capacity to understand the complex meanings of technical terms related to a specific theory. Therefore, awareness of the complexity of *upshifting* is important. For example, several students after the presentation of Stuij's (2015) text reported that they were not exactly clear about the meaning of Bourdieu's (1984) term 'field' defined by Stuij as a "relatively autonomous particular social arena with its own logic and social conditions" (Stuij 2015: 781). Some students found this definition strongly SG– as it combines multiple abstract meanings. Therefore, definitions with more common-sense academic meanings to facilitate *upshifts* may be provided. For example, Wagg et al. (2009) talk about 'field' as "a social location and specific empirical context", which is comprised of particular "social agents' who tend to participate in "taken-for-granted ways".

Stage 5: Students produce their own theoretical framework accompanied with a semantic gravity profile representing it

Students now go on to produce their own theoretical framework texts for their Introduction-Method-Research-Discussion (IMRD) paper. These student texts are similar in word count to the Stuij (2015) example. Students are asked to describe complex concepts and to show how they relate to each other. Students also demonstrate how they intend to operationalize the theory as in the example provided exploring Serena Williams. Students are also asked to provide a semantic gravity profile of their texts as in Figure 11.8.

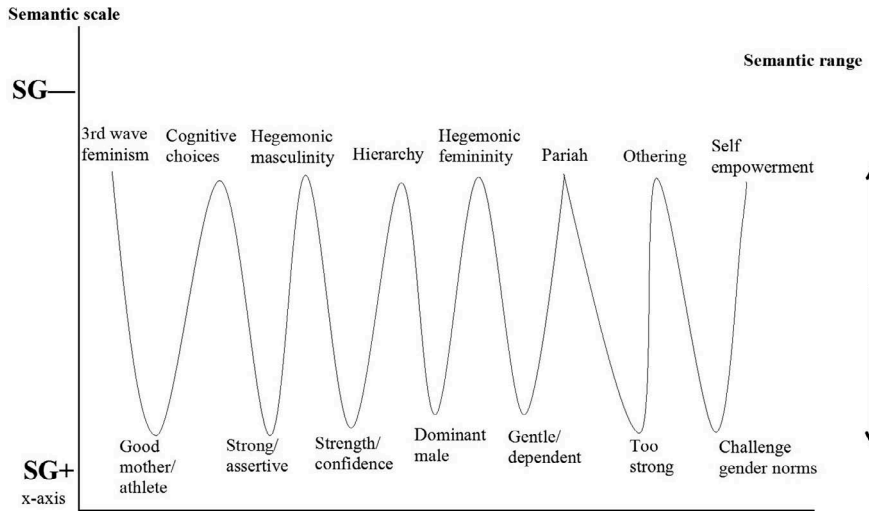

FIGURE 11.8 A student's own semantic wave profile of her theoretical framework section for her Introduction-Method-Research-Discussion paper (IMRD) paper

Example student theoretical framework text

This paper draws on Synder-Hall's interpretation of third wave feminism and choice feminism to analyze whether Serena Williams displays self-empowerment by transcending gender norms and being outspoken on social media. Third wave feminists argue that feminism is pluralistic and allows for multiple versions of feminism to co-exist e.g. one can be a good mother and a good athlete at the same time. Synder-Hall (2010) suggests that a woman displays empowerment by consciously making choices while being cognizant of the societal demands of femininity: for example, when a woman remains strong and assertive despite societal pressure for her to conform to being submissive. To understand how Serena Williams is subject to societal demands of femininity, this paper utilizes Connell's (2005) Hegemonic Masculinity and Schippers' (2007) Hegemonic Femininity. According to Connell (2005), hegemonic masculinity refers to a specific set of traits that are valued as masculine, including strength and confidence. This establishes a hierarchal relationship between masculinity and femininity, in which the male gender is dominant while the female gender is subordinate. Schippers (2007) further develops upon this idea by defining hegemonic femininity as a particular set of traits that are deemed as feminine, such as being gentle and dependent. Women who embody pariah femininity, i.e. forms of femininity that do not conform to hegemonic femininity, face marginalization by society because they threaten the dominant position of men. For example, Serena Williams is

subject to othering by the media because she is deemed too strong as a woman. On the one hand, Williams may consequently be seen as a pariah, or an outcast, from a patriarchal perspective. On the other hand, from a third wave feminist perspective, it can be argued that Williams achieves self-empowerment by challenging gender norms and being outspoken against discrimination and sexism.

Discussion of student's theoretical framework text

From the text and Figure 11.8 accompanying it, the student has considered carefully how to unpack and then connect complex conceptual meanings related to Feminist Theory. She builds these relations between meanings effectively through exemplification and definition. For example, she points out that "[t]hird wave and choice feminism is pluralistic", which is defined as "allows for multiple versions of feminism to co-exist" and exemplified using Serena Williams. Serena embodies 'empowerment' as she resists "societal demands of femininity" by being "a good mother and a good athlete at the same time". The student, more importantly, explores Serena Williams' case in terms of the discrimination she faces as an alternative feminine, and how she may empower women. In many sports cases, women have been discriminated against if they are too athletic or as they announce pregnancy. Serena reveals how women can embody complexity and transcend the hegemonic stereotypes and ideology of patriarchy in sport practices.

Evaluation of the semantic gravity profile activity

Students reported "thinking carefully" for the writing of the theoretical framework accompanied by a semantic gravity profile. The example reveals how they were able to be truly critically reflective (Brookfield 2016) by waving between SG– and SG+. Additionally, the student whose example is provided reported in interview that this was an effective strategy for "explaining how concepts relate to a study", as well as for "writing a coherent text", and that this was a sound way "to cater for a non-expert readership", something in her science faculty that is often highlighted. As Maton (2014b: 181) posits, mastery of semantic waving represents 'powerful knowledge'. Knowledge of waving can inform higher institute educators about how to approach their syllabus design and delivery.

Conclusion

In the introduction to this chapter, 'yadayada' was used to explain how students beginning the module tend to have common, every day, and predictable perceptions and opinions about sport as a social field. Students bring these common-sense understandings to the classroom and have no familiarity with

the grand theories. This is problematic as it is these theories that give them the capacity to critically reflect on the power dynamics that constitute the field. Therefore, a main aim of the course is to familiarize students with the theories and guide them to select one for their own research.

At the end of the series of five stages presented, students are asked to complete an anonymous survey about whether they have gained a theoretical understanding of sport as a social phenomenon and to evaluate why the theories might be useful to learn. Some sample survey responses are "I am much more confident talking about the theories now"; "the theories help to understand sport from different perspectives and how their view influences the way they write about a particular topic in sport and the theories provide frameworks of thinking to analyze a sport, giving us a better appreciation of its impacts instead of just looking at sports at a surface level". Students see value in the use of the theories as they realize that learning to apply concepts belonging to theories facilitates critical reflection (Brookfield 2016). Enacting theoretical concepts through semantic gravity profiles helps to demonstrate to students how the concepts are relatively context-independent and can integrate a large number of empirical phenomena (Maton 2009: 45). They guide the design and production of a research paper because the theory dictates the types of social contexts explored and questions asked.

Research in semantic gravity is illustrating "the capacity of the concepts to underpin research and praxis and how they are revealing the contours of powerful intellectual, curricular and pedagogic practices" (Maton 2014b: 195). The knowledge gained in the module can be linked to processes that Paul (1984) and Elder (2005) discuss such as "all reasoning is expressed through, and shaped by, concepts and ideas" and "all reasoning is done from some point of view" (as cited in Vink et al. 2017: 156) as well as Facione's (2011) 'critical thinking dispositions' of selecting, structuring, analysing and integrating information effectively. The semantic profiling presented in this case study not only shows students how to reason and what theoretical frameworks to use to support their reasoning but also how to express their reasoning appropriately through written text in order to demonstrate their mastery of concepts through relevant context dependant examples and unpacking.

Moreover, true critical reflection does more than invite students to participate in cognitive processes of reasoning. The five-stage model presented can be transforming for students in several ways. It exposes them to views removed from their comfort zone of the technical rationalist. It requires them to be critically reflective and understand that the social sciences deal with the unquantifiable non-positivistic phenomena that constitute human experience. Moreover, and perhaps more importantly, students can select a theory with its toolbox of concepts and critically reflect on a phenomenon that occupies their lives as lifestyle or simply as leisure activity and make it into an observable empirical phenomenon that they can critique. Therefore, the model engages students to employ critical theory to uncover assumptions about social fields

that are diffused with hegemony. Having more understanding of the importance of these theories to explore empirical contexts is an essential step for the development of students' critical reflection capacities in the true sense of the term, which is to help uncover 'power and hegemony' and to seek out social justice (Brookfield 2016). Similarly, in LCT, the goal is to develop a gaze that can make visible inequalities through the explanatory power of its concepts.

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