Life gave me lemons, so I made lemonade

 Jordan Radwell (University of Central Lancashire)

To cite this article:

Self-archived URL link to this article:
https://www.academia.edu/6323031/JQRSS_Volume_8_Issue_1_December_2014

Advice to submitters - see JQRSS Guide to Contents & Open Call for Papers:
https://www.academia.edu/3513281/JQRSS_Overview_Guide_to_Contents_and_Editorials_by_Volume_-_Open_Call_for_Papers

JQRSS Mapping of Articles (2007- to date):
https://www.academia.edu/8827414/Mapping_of_JQRSS_articles_across_Undergraduate_and_Postgraduate_research

Copyright © Clive Palmer and the individual authors

Notice:
The discussions, statements of fact and opinions contained in the articles of The Journal of Qualitative Research in Sports Studies are those of the respective authors and cited contributors and are set out in good faith for the general guidance of student supported research and the promotion of pedagogical discussion in teaching and learning contexts. No liability can be accepted by the Editor, Editorial Board, Advisory Board, the reviewers or the authors/submitters for loss or expense incurred as a result of relying upon particular statements made or circumstances outlined in this journal.

Online Research Profiles:
academia.edu: https://uclan.academia.edu/ClivePalmer
ResearchGate: http://www.researchgate.net/profile/Clive_Palmer
British Conference of Undergraduate Research http://bcur.org/journals/
Life gave me lemons, so I made lemonade

Jordan Radwell
(University of Central Lancashire)

Keywords: talent identification, creative writing, football, growth and maturation

Chapter review essay


The path to glory is a fictional tale of two boys, Reggie and Brian who find themselves following their dreams in sport whilst at the same time being judged through the eyes of coaches from a Talent Identification perspective. The story reflects on how misplaced judgement of a child’s potential in sport can be if made upon on their physique or maturation at a given moment in a young life, and on how there are different barriers to entry into a Talent ID programme which can affect the chances an athlete has in being successfully or even accurately identified in a sport.

What the ‘lemonade’ says to me

From the creative story we learn about the factors affecting the chance of a future sporting talent being identified in a sport. One of the first things noted in the tale of the two boys is their passion for the sport of football as they spent much of their free time down at the local park playing football. This passion for the game is ever-present in the story reflecting that it is a major influence determining a child’s aspirations. The story shows how social influences, such as parents and peer pressure can affect the identification of talent. The story illustrates how powerful the support of parents can be in motivating a child, either to take that next step towards committing training or start over again in the case of Reggie. Moreover, within this story it is evident how the father of Brain is constantly pushing for his child to be challenged but also worried about his development and progress as an athlete. The story highlights how unreliable the identification processes are, focusing on the players that are biologically older and stronger than their peers but maybe not as technically or psychologically developed. Finally, the story demonstrates how many athletes are taken into elite training schemes or academies creating the impression that they are a promising talent and may even be special in some way, only to be let down. This can often make them feel like they have made it as a professional athlete.
but then are released without warning and often without any educational qualifications but most importantly without any hope for the future. Is this the true consequence and real outcome of Talent Identification?

It is quickly evident from the opening lines of the story how easy it is to read. Comparing it to an academic journal article by Burgess and Naughton (2010) they are polar opposites. The first lines of the story draw you in, you hunger for more, you carry on reading and realise it’s not the same as the journal but is discussing issues that the journal deals with. It’s a slow burner allowing the reader to make links with talent ID theory and is an accessible read. This could be down to the context in which the story is told as it feels much more creative and aimed at an undergraduate level of reading and understanding where as the journal article assumes that the reader has a lot of background knowledge of talent identification and associated language. It is clear that the journal article is not aimed towards an undergraduate readership. For me, this poses an important question; if the style of writing in the creative story is more accessible to undergraduates and signposts the same contextual theory, why are we [as undergraduates] forced to read journal articles that are, well, ‘unreadable’ from a learning perspective?

The story is very effective at reinforcing the points it puts across. Throughout, the author uses examples and always puts key information into a scenario which the reader can relate to and make the story their own. In contrast to this, an article by Ford et al. (2011) shows how academic journals constantly refer to other literature to influence the points being made, like a weight of evidence but without explaining what the evidence is - in the instance Ford et al. (2011) there are 125 articles/sources referenced but rarely does the citation incorporate informative context. As an undergraduate it is difficult to follow or make sense of these articles as not all the information is presented and an unfeasible amount of extra reading is expected just to make sense of one article.

The scenario-orientated creative writing does allow for many points to be explained, however, at times because it is so contextual the detail can be brief and in some cases this may be where a journal article might prevail over the story. That said, it is clear that the story is a product of teaching at undergraduate level and shared to promote learning at that level. From this perspective the style of creative writing interests me (as an undergraduate) as it seems much less restrictive than the way I am currently encouraged to write. This freedom could lead to the possibility of going down many different avenues and subsequently cover many points in one piece of writing as well as potentially enhance my learning of the topic. I also feel that the style of writing would challenge me more than the way I currently write as it is forcing me to imagine and envisage the reality of issues around Talent ID but around a fictional tale to cover factual points. This seems to have been challenging
but fun and engaging to do for the authors. I feel that for these reasons alone, thinking about learning in this way could lead me to enjoying this style of writing, being proud of the product and what I am trying to communicate - which in turn could make for better reading to help others.

**From sour lemons to sweet lemonade**

A major strength of this chapter comes from the style of writing used. As an undergraduate we are taught to write in a very particular style, in third person and to reference in a particular way however, this story writes in a very creative way. It is a style that engages the reader who is ‘absorbed’ into the story almost instantly, putting terminology into scenarios that are easy to understand. This engagement means that an undergraduate is more likely to read the entirety of this story and obtain more information from it. I don’t know many undergraduates who have actually got to the end of reading a mainstream journal article on Talent ID, and lived to tell us about it.

Furthermore, this creative style oozes passion as well as confidence which leads me to believe that the individuals who authored this enjoyed the writing process and this enjoyment led to an engaging story which is a current problem with University style writing; undergraduates are forced to write in a style that many find hard to get passionate about which in turn can make their writing dull and unexciting to read. As a result of reading the creative chapter, the following questions may be posed;

1. Is the way that undergraduates are currently taught to write the best way for them to learn?
2. Would more creative writing allow undergraduates to reach a higher level of understanding and application of a topic?
3. Does the University style of writing actually provoke thought and engagement for the student or is simply just a chore for them?

On reflection I seem to have been ‘chewing lemons’ at stages of my education and have the rather ‘sour’ literary products to show for it. But these student authors, on their *Path to Glory*, seized the educational opportunity afforded to them and chose to make sweet lemonade. Very tasty, I learned a great deal.

**References**


J QRSS Author Profile:

Jordan Radwell is 22 years old at the time of writing, and in his final year of studying for a BA Honours degree in Sports Coaching and will graduate from the University of Central Lancashire in 2015. He has volunteered over 700 hours through various roles in different sports but has a particular passion for basketball. His 3rd year dissertation is investigating the topic of Talent Identification, an area in which Jordan hopes to secure employment in the near future.