

# Professional Development in Teaching and Soccer Refereeing: Parallels and Contrasts

S. R. Chaudhury, *University of South Alabama*

**ABSTRACT:** The National Research Council report on How People Learn (HPL) [1] was ground breaking in its synthesis of the nascent learning sciences literature and provided an early resource for educational developers engaged in the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL). As a transformative tool, it opened many people's eyes to better understanding learning frameworks that would allow them to conduct significant inquiry with regards to their 'teaching problem' [2]. In my own transformation from a physicist to an educational developer, the insights gained from HPL proved invaluable. In particular, the differences between novices and experts in terms of cognitive functioning, monitoring their own understanding and adaptive growth have been particularly useful in talking to other faculty about their teaching practices.

The functional problem that often arises in applying HPL principles to helping university faculty become better teachers is that the novice viewpoint is so distant from them in terms of time and content that it becomes very hard for them to empathize with a student's cognitive and affective state. I was able to subject myself to a novice viewpoint when I first became a soccer (football) referee – certified by the United States Soccer Federation. I was a mature adult at the time – with fifteen years college teaching experience. However, I had to start refereeing from the novice state. While I was a lifelong soccer fan and player, entering the training to become a certified referee was a new experience for me especially when I found myself training with many others who were many years junior to me.

In this presentation, I shall describe my gradual development into a competent referee and share my awareness of critical phases of my development, as well as aspects of the USSF referee mentoring program [3]. Timely, constructive feedback in near real-time is a built-in component of the assessment process. As my understanding grows, of managing the game, players, coaches, spectators, and even my assistant referees, I am able to focus attention on the metacognitive reasoning that a referee brings into play when making difficult decisions quickly on the football pitch. This topic should be interesting to EuroSoTL attendees given the passion for football throughout Europe as there are lessons to be learned for educational developers who work with faculty to increase their teaching effectiveness.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Bransford, J. D., Brown, A.L., and Cocking, R.R., (eds). (2000), How People Learn: Brain, Mind, Experience and School, Washington D.C.: National Academy Press.
- [2] Bass, R., (1999), The Scholarship of Teaching: What's the Problem?, *Inventio*, Vol. 1, No. 1.
- [3] US Soccer Referee Resource Center, <https://www.ussoccer.com/referees/resource-center>, Retrieved on April 23, 2017