

Coaching others to coach



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Contents

Session 1: What do coach developers do?	7
Introduction	7
1 Who are coach developers?	9
1.1 What do coach developers do?	10
2 Coach developers' potential to transform practice	13
3 The mysteries of coaching and a model of behaviour change	15
4 What makes an effective coach developer?	17
5 Understanding coach developer expertise	20
5.1 Exploring expertise further	21
6 Enhancing your coach developer skills	23
7 Building your coach developer 101 guide	25
8 This session's quiz	26
9 Summary of Session 1	27
Session: 2 How do coaches learn?	29
Introduction	29
1 Can you remember how you improved as a coach?	31
2 Looking at learning from a different perspective	34
3 Theories to explain learning	36
4 Do coaches filter new ideas when they learn?	38
5 How do adults learn?	41
5.1 Applying adult learning principles to your practice	42
6 Cognitive rigidity: learning often needs unlearning	46
7 Your chance to contribute: share your ideas	48
8 Building your coach developer 101 guide	49
9 This session's quiz	50
10 Summary of Session 2	51
Session 3: How do you build effective learning relationships?	53
Introduction	53
1 Coach–coach developer relationships	55
2 High octane pressure in a motor racing team	57
3 Learning from the humanist approach	59
4 First impressions count	61
5 Planning a first one-to-one meeting	63
6 Pulling together ideas	65
7 Learning from teacher–mentor relationships	66

8 Balancing challenge and support	68
9 Learning from setbacks	71
10 Building your coach developer 101 guide	73
11 This session's quiz	74
12 Summary of Session 3	75

Session 4: Becoming self-aware of power in your role 77

Introduction	77
1 Power and social circumstances	79
2 Power and coach developers	81
3 Coach developers in control	84
4 It's my way!	86
5 When power is turned upside down	88
6 The reflexive coach developer	91
7 Building your coach developer 101 guide	93
8 This session's quiz	94
9 Summary of Session 4	95

Session 5: Developing your teaching repertoire and skills 97

Introduction	97
1 Beyond the assumptions of adult learning	99
2 Exploring problem-based learning (PBL)	101
2.1 When would you use PBL?	103
3 Exploring a flipped learning model	104
3.1 When would you use flipped learning?	105
4 Instruction: widely misunderstood?	107
4.1 Reviewing your current instruction practices	108
4.2 When would you use instruction?	109
5 What can we learn from the teaching profession?	110
6 Your chance to contribute	112
7 Building your coach developer 101 guide	114
8 This session's quiz	115
9 Summary of Session 5	116

Session 6: Asking good questions and listening actively 118

Introduction	118
1 Why ask questions?	120
2 Principles for good questions	123
3 Experiences of using questioning practices	126
4 Deeper questions: from the inside out	128
5 From bite-sized to banquet responses	131
6 Active listening: more than just paying attention	133
7 Active listening in action	136

7.1 Better listening	136
7.2 Active listening summarised	137
7.3 Use minimal encouragers	138
8 Building your coach developer 101 guide	139
9 This session's quiz	140
10 Summary of Session 6	141
Session 7: Effective observations and feedback	143
Introduction	143
1 Are teacher observations a waste of time?	144
2 Analysing coaches: structuring the observation process	146
3 Systematic observation	149
4 How should you plan an observation?	152
5 Discussing feedback and encouraging dialogue	154
6 Creating a peer-to-peer observation culture	157
7 Coach observation: pulling it all together	159
8 Building your coach developer 101 guide	162
9 This session's quiz	163
Session 8: Refreshing coach development for the digital age	165
Introduction	165
1 Collaboration, information gathering and learning	167
2 The role of digital messaging	170
3 Coach developers as content curators	174
4 Fostering more mentoring	177
5 Technology for peer support	179
6 Forum posting	182
7 Building your coach developer 101 guide	184
8 This session's quiz	185
9 Summary of Session 8	186
10 Bringing things together	187
Where next?	188
Tell us what you think	189
References	189
Acknowledgements	191

Session 1: What do coach developers do?

Introduction

Welcome to Session 1 of this free course which aims to improve your capability as a coach developer.

It is common to describe the process of learning to become a better coach as a journey, one that is unique to every coach. This journey has many twists, turns and difficulties. This course assumes that as a coach developer you are a 'skilled helper' (Egan, 1998); you guide a coach on their way, helping them with a particularly difficult challenge, suggesting an alternative path or a different way of getting them to where they want to go. Your role can add value to their journey by enriching the learning that takes place along the way.



Figure 1 Making sense of the coach developer role

In this, the first of 8 sessions, you will consider the different roles coach developers can undertake and follow the case study of a relationship between a coach and a coach developer that has been transformational. You'll then examine ideas about what makes an effective coach developer and how the expertise of a coach developer can be described. Finally, you'll begin to explore the ways your practice as a coach developer can be developed. There are a lot of fascinating things to consider, so it is time to get started.

By the end of this session, you should be able to:

- understand the different roles coach developers undertake and the contexts in which they are undertaken
- describe the process of building relationships in a model of behaviour change
- explain how coaches describe an effective coach developer
- consider how the expertise of a coach developer can be articulated.

The Open University would really appreciate a few minutes of your time to tell us about yourself and your expectations for the course before you begin, in our optional [start-of-course survey](#). Participation will be completely confidential and we will not pass on your details to others.

1 Who are coach developers?

You'll start by hearing from two coach developers discussing their own experiences.

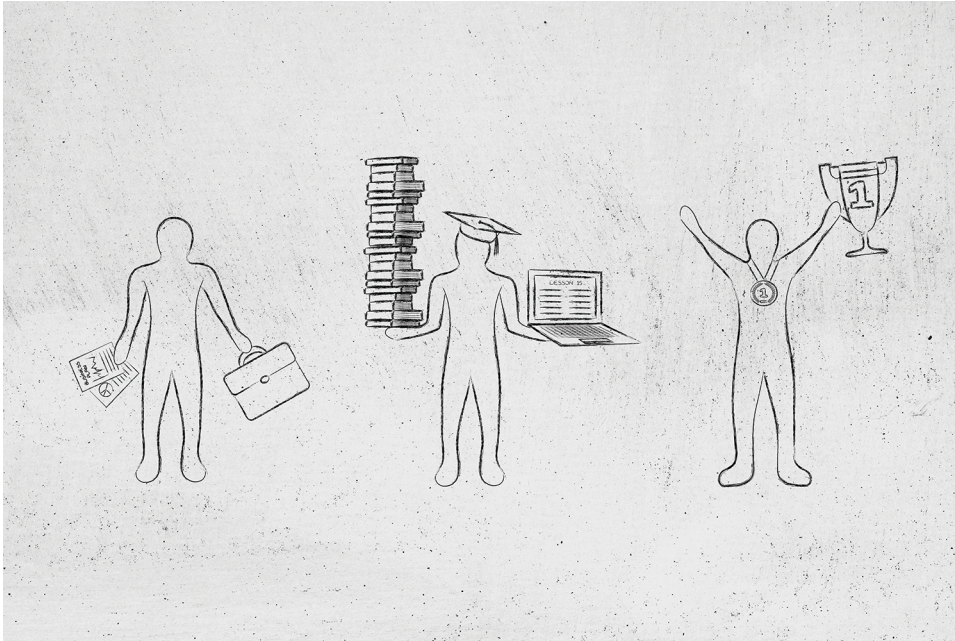


Figure 2 What roles do coach developers undertake?

To introduce this section, watch the video with Lucy Moore and Stuart Armstrong where they reflect on aspects they wish they had known more about at the outset of their experience as coach developers.

Video content is not available in this format.

[Video 1](#)



There are three points that can be taken from the discussion:

1. Knowing the range of 'tools' that coach developers can use to help coaches.
2. Not being too eager to 'step in' and start giving advice before understanding the needs of the coach and what they want.
3. That coach developers don't have all the answers and instead should be helping coaches to reflect and discover knowledge and ideas for themselves.

1.1 What do coach developers do?

Lucy and Stuart have learned this through their experiences and through the different roles they have undertaken as coach developers. The term 'coach developer' can itself be a tricky concept and in the following activity you will meet one of the writers of this course, Alex Twitchen. Alex has been supporting coaches and helping them to learn and develop for twenty years and in this short video he describes how he understands the role of a coach developer.

Activity 1 Who is a coach developer and what do they do?

Allow about 15 minutes

Watch and as you listen to Alex make some notes on the following questions.

1. In what different situations or environments does Alex support the development of coaches (e.g. workshops)?
2. What four main characteristics does Alex believe it is important to possess if you want to help coaches learn and develop?

Video content is not available in this format.

[Video 2](#)



Text boxes are provided in all activities. You can use these to note down your answers to the questions. Once you click Save, your answers will be stored and you can return to them at any point to view or amend your response. Your responses will only be visible to you. However, if you would prefer to make notes using pen and paper or a different format you can.

Provide your answer...

Discussion

1. Alex indicates that the role of a coach developer can embrace different situations and environments, for example working with a group of coaches on a course or helping an individual coach. In both situations he is supporting learning and development.
2. Regardless of the situation Alex believes that the following characteristics are important:
 - knowing how people learn
 - understanding the people involved and how to build effective relationships with them
 - having a sense of humility and understanding that it's about the coach and not about him, and
 - a good level of self-awareness.

Alex also mentions he is conscious that coaches require different forms of support, and this can vary according to their level of experience and the people they coach. Supporting a coach should be specific to their context and their own circumstances and this requires flexibility and adaptability on the part of coach developers.

Having listened to Alex's thoughts the term coach developer can be applied to a range of possible roles, which describe the different activities that coach developers undertake. These are:

- Mentoring – supporting and advising a coach who is usually less experienced and knowledgeable in some way.
- Tutoring – teaching small groups of coaches usually through a syllabus provided by an organisation.
- Assessing – evaluating the competence, capability or skill of a coach.
- Facilitating – enabling learning by designing, generating and organising content and activities for coaches to engage in.
- Training – providing instruction to develop specific skills.
- Critical friendship – supporting a coach, usually a colleague, of similar status, experience and expertise.

Each of these roles are based on the intention to provide the support that coaches ask for. These roles are connected through this common intent but require slightly different approaches and methods that need time to have an impact.

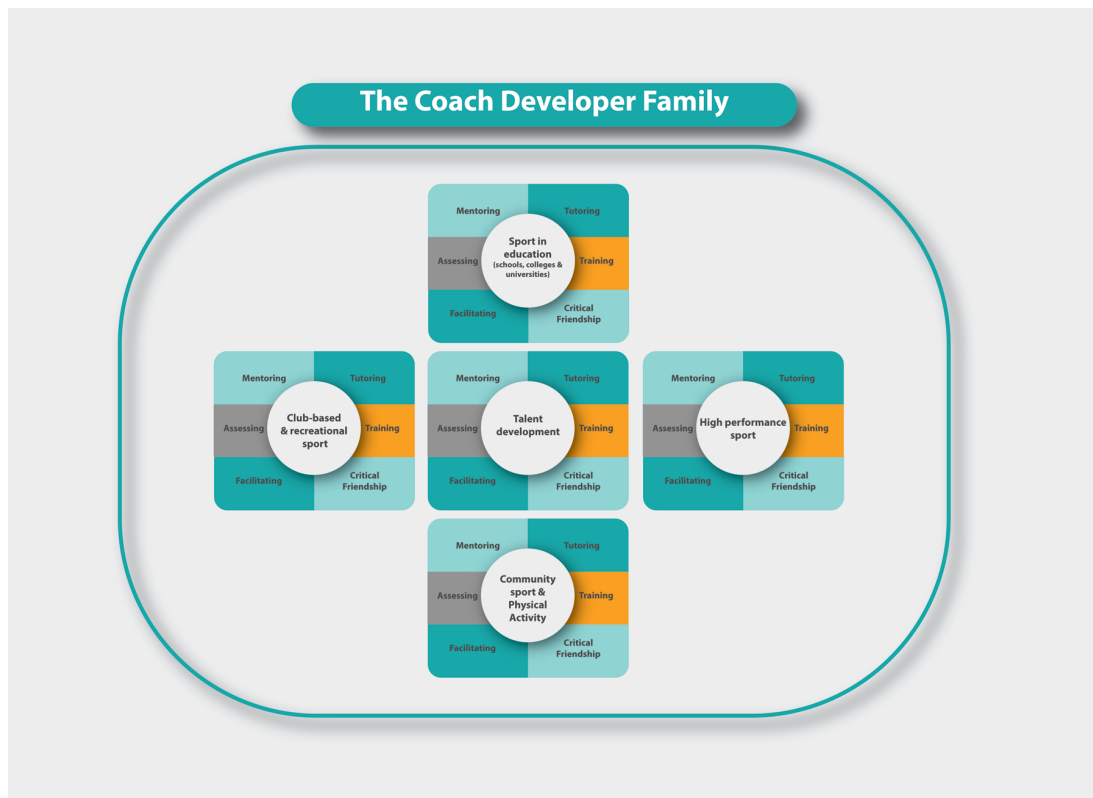


Figure 3 What role do you fulfil as a coach developer? Do you have one role or many, and in what context do you fulfil them?

In Figure 3, you can see how each coach developer role can be situated in one of several different contexts. As a coach developer you might not fulfil every role or feel comfortable operating across all these roles. It is possible you may also fulfil different roles in different contexts or predominantly support coaches within one context.

There is no straightforward definition of a coach developer. It potentially refers to somebody providing focused individual support to coaches, as well as being a broader umbrella term that encompasses the roles undertaken by the 'coach developer family' depicted in Figure 3. This course adopts a perspective similar to the 'professional standard' developed by the

[Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity \(CIMSPA\)](#) – that a coach developer is essentially a people developer, skilled in providing coaches with an appropriate level of support at the right time – and over time – to better their coaching and therefore improve the experience of the people they coach.

2 Coach developers' potential to transform practice

In the following activity you will analyse the experiences of Alan Keane, while Head Coach of the England Under-16 Basketball team, when working with his mentor Mark Bennett. Alan and Mark met through a programme delivered by [UK Coaching](#), the UK's lead agency for developing coaches and coaching.



Figure 4 How can a coach developer put you on a different track to success?

During this activity you will see how Mark is fulfilling one of the roles of a coach developer, as shown in Figure 3, since he is mentoring Alan within a Talent Development context.

Activity 2 Alan's story: moving away from being a 'playstation coach'

Allow about 25 minutes

Watch the short video below which introduces Alan, and then listen to the audio from the Talent Equation podcast where his story is described in more detail during a conversation with Stuart Armstrong, who you met during the introduction to this course.

As you listen to Alan's story, analyse how and why Mark had such an impact on Alan's coaching.

Video content is not available in this format.

[Video 3](#)



Audio content is not available in this format.



Audio 1 Alan's account of working with Mark.

Provide your answer...

Discussion

Mark's impact on Alan can be summarised as follows:

1. Alan has a good sense of what he wanted from a mentor and he saw this in Mark.
2. Mark's ability to build a positive relationship with Alan over time became increasingly founded on mutual trust and respect.
3. Alan was willing to take risks, and Mark was able to utilise this willingness to facilitate learning.
4. Mark was able to show and illustrate a different and alternative approach. For example, Mark focused on demonstrating a different way of working with the players as opposed to just providing more technical and tactical information.
5. Transforming Alan's coaching practice stems from Mark's ability to influence. It is not easy for a coach to have their current practice challenged. It can, as Alan discovered, be uncomfortable and perseverance is required.

This is coach development since there is the *intent* to support Alan, and together Mark and Alan have built a relationship *over time*. It is also a story about the extent to which a coach developer can transform a coach's practice. It would be unrealistic, however, to expect that every coach and coach developer relationship can have this scale of impact. Sometimes a coach developer may focus on reinforcing good practice, as opposed to bringing about transformational change.

3 The mysteries of coaching and a model of behaviour change

In this section you will draw more learning from Alan and Mark's story. First you'll consider the metaphor of coaching as a mystery, and then coaching as part of a model: a stairway towards behavioural change.

Gregory Treverton (2007) has described the distinction between a puzzle and a mystery. If coaching were a puzzle – like a crossword – Treverton would argue the answers are found by acquiring more information. Coaching is more like the mysteries that Treverton describes – it is more complex, and many of the problems coaches encounter do not always have a right answer or the correct solutions of a puzzle. Mysteries need to be re-framed and seen from a different perspective, so just acquiring more information will not always help.



Figure 5 Mysteries and puzzles in coaching

Mark's skill as a coach developer illustrates this distinction: he avoids providing Alan with more technical and tactical information or showing him more practices. Instead Mark has sought to re-frame Alan's method of coaching by offering a different solution, an alternative approach to the one Alan has been using. A temptation for coaches is to believe that coach developers have the right answers to their problems. Instead, some of the skill and expertise of a coach developer comes from understanding their role in helping coaches view problems from a different perspective. It is to make the mysteries of coaching a little less mysterious by re-framing problems and working with coaches to create solutions that improve the experience of the people they coach.

The relationship between Alan and Mark can also be viewed from the perspective of a model used to train negotiators handling a crisis situation (Vecchi et al., 2005). The Behavioural change stairway model (BCSM), represented in Figure 6, claims that five steps can lead to a desirable change in behaviour.

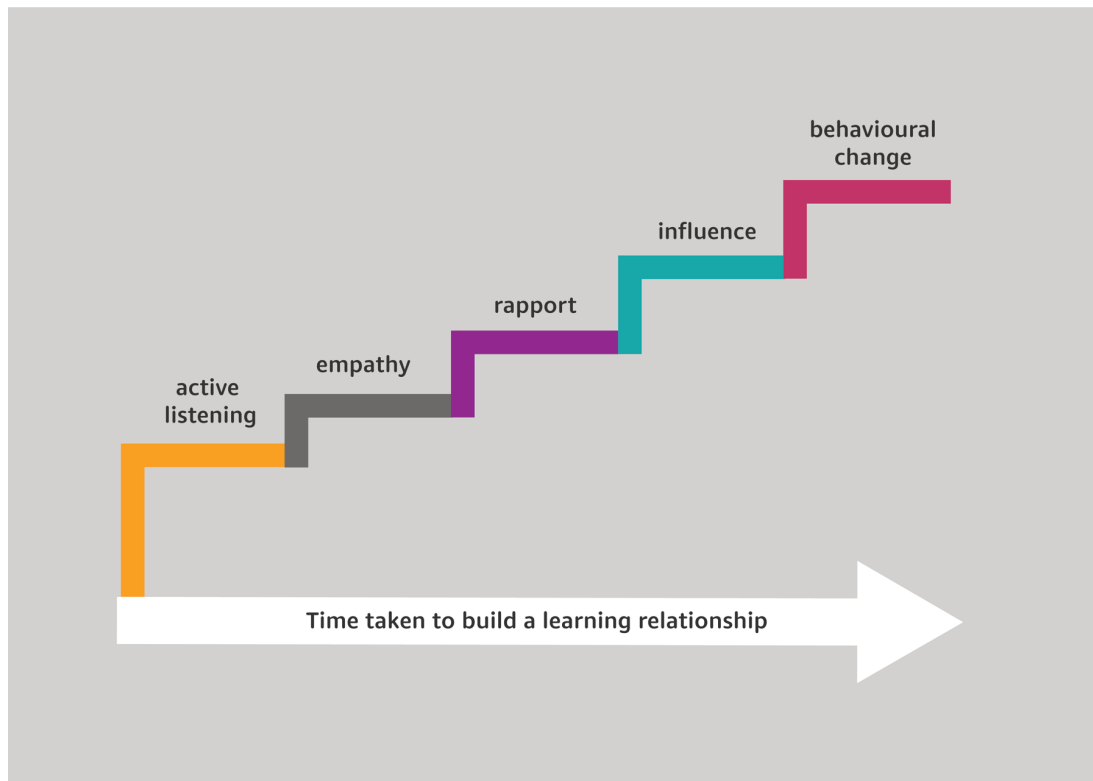


Figure 6 The Behavioural change stairway model

This model suggests that each step is one part of a sequence that builds on another. For example, it is claimed influence cannot be achieved before rapport has been developed; building rapport in turn requires engaging in empathy and active listening. It also takes time to bring about a change in behaviour, as shown by the white arrow, where time is measured relative to the speed of the relationship building process, however quickly or slowly it develops. In Alan's story you can arguably hear the stairway model in action. The initial phase of building rapport and creating a positive relationship preceded the stage where Mark was able to exert the influence which led Alan to re-think and alter his approach to coaching and the behaviours he used. Such is the importance of rapport that the whole of Session 3 is devoted to building effective learning relationships while active listening is explored more fully in Session 6.

So far in this session you have considered what is meant by the term 'coach developer'. You have also considered how your role as a coach developer often means enabling coaches to make better sense of what they already know. Now you turn to the question: what makes an effective coach developer?

4 What makes an effective coach developer?



Figure 7 Thinking about what makes an effective coach developer

The International Coach Developer Framework, developed by the International Council for Coaching Excellence (ICCE), suggests coach developers are:

trained to develop, support and challenge coaches to go on honing and improving their knowledge and skills in order to provide positive and effective sport experiences for all participants.

(International Coach Developer Framework, 2014, p. 8)

The most important person here is the participant – the person being coached. While coach developers should be mindful of meeting the needs of the coaches they support, this should also be framed by the needs of the participants. This three-way relationship is represented in Figure 8. Notice how the participant is at the top and centre. Improving the participant's experience of being coached should therefore be the focal point in every relationship between a coach and coach developer.

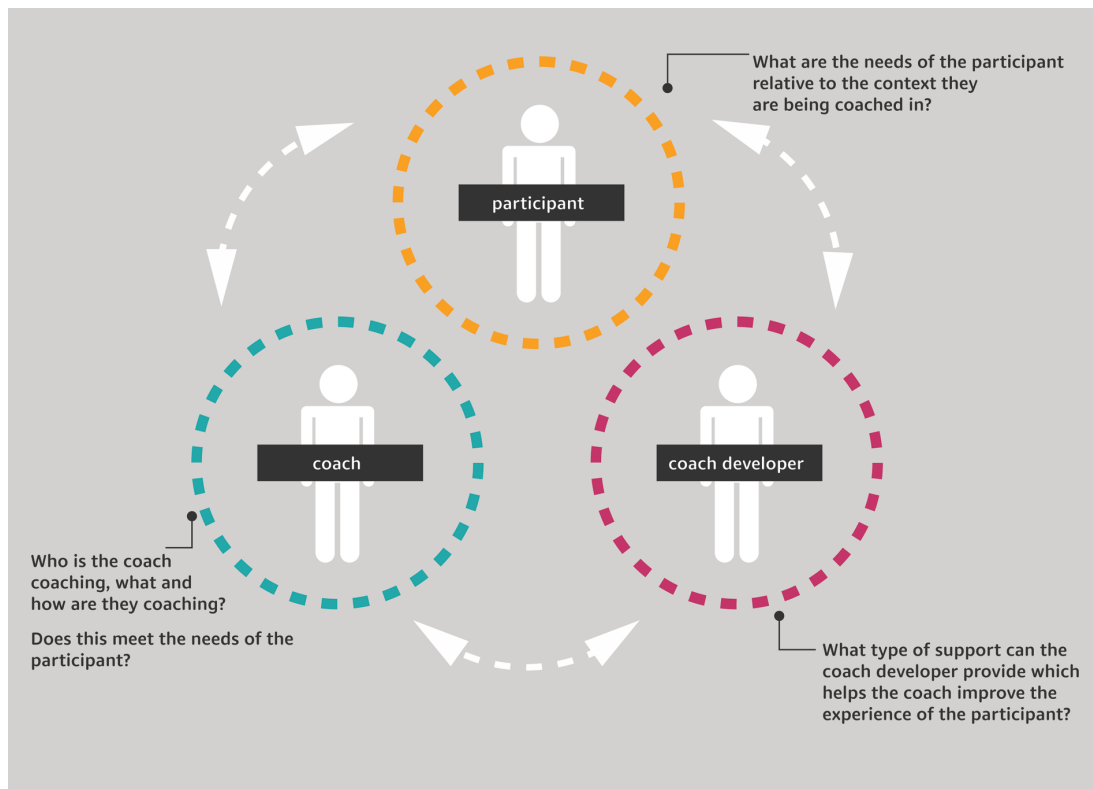


Figure 8 The three-way relationship between participant–coach–coach developer

Now you understand the importance of this three-way relationship, and some of the key questions coach developers might ask themselves, you can turn to the question of what – from a coach's point of view – makes an effective coach developer. More precisely, how do coaches describe the knowledge, skills and personal qualities of a coach developer which hone and improve their own knowledge and practice? In the next activity you'll watch three experienced coaches share their ideas and thoughts about effective coach developers.

Activity 3 What makes an effective coach developer?

Allow about 20 minutes

Watch the video below. What skills, knowledge and personal qualities do the coaches say make someone an effective coach developer?

Video content is not available in this format.

[Video 4](#)



Provide your answer...

Discussion

The coaches featured in the video refer to a range of qualities they thought effective coach developers should possess. They thought effective coach developers should:

1. Show a willingness to help coaches learn and develop and invest time into this process.
2. Demonstrate empathy and listen to the coach and understand the context and environment they work in.
3. Stretch and challenge a coach's thinking and their practice.
4. Create a positive learning environment where information and knowledge can be shared and discussed without fear.
5. Help a coach improve the experience of the participants they are coaching.

Effective coach developers have a positive and meaningful impact on a coach's knowledge, decision-making and practice. Very effective coach developers are also highly skilled and possess considerable expertise which they apply consistently. Acquiring this expertise takes time and experience, alongside the ability to reflect on practice.

In whatever context and role you support coaches, it is important that reflection is built into your work. In the next section you'll consider how expertise as a coach developer can be described and explained: knowing this gives you a clearer vision of what you might be aiming for in terms of making your own practice more effective.

5 Understanding coach developer expertise

Compared to coaching, there is relatively little research evidence that describes or explains coach developer expertise (Abraham, 2016). In the next two back-to-back activities you'll consider a possible approach to articulating the expertise of a coach developer.

During these activities there are no claims that an evidence-based explanation of coach developer expertise is being presented. Instead the purpose is to prompt your thinking about what you do, or should do, if you want to develop your own expertise as a coach developer.



Figure 9 How can coach developer expertise be understood?

Activity 4 Coach developer expertise 1: Surfacing beliefs?

Allow about 15 minutes

In this activity, you are asked to think about the meaning you attach to the term 'surfacing beliefs'.

Read the following statement:

'Surfacing values and beliefs is an important part of coach learning and development.'

1. Using your personal interpretation of the statement, how much is this a key part of a coach developer's expertise?
2. With your response to the first question in mind, now consider Figure 10 and the accompanying description which talks about the 'iceberg principle'. How much attention should a coach developer pay to this element of their expertise?

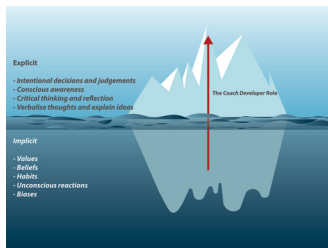


Figure 10 The iceberg principle: coach developers attempt to bring hidden, implicit aspects into the open

Description of Figure 10

Many aspects that impact on coaching practice and behaviour are **implicit**. They are taken for granted, they have become habits and stem from ideas, values and beliefs that are not consciously reflected on (e.g. the use of different instructional behaviours is often implicit). Therefore, they are very difficult to change because either coaches are unaware that they hold them, or because they seem so obvious to coaches that they don't warrant their attention.

The process that coach developers undertake is to make coaches think and reflect about the ideas, values and beliefs they have. It is to make what is implicit **explicit**: to make what is unconscious, conscious and therefore open to reflection, discussion and change. This is represented in Figure 10.

Provide your answer...

Discussion

1. Some coaches may find change harder if they don't begin to understand why they use the behaviours they do and how their deeply held ideas, values and beliefs shape this. So, for those working as coach developers it is important to help make coaches more self-aware about their beliefs and where these beliefs might come from.
2. In whatever specific role you undertake as a coach developer, guiding coaches to become more self-aware takes real expertise. Being able to support and challenge coaches might be called a soft skill, but it is hard to do well. This is why surfacing values and beliefs is a key component of a coach developer's role and a significant marker of expertise.

5.1 Exploring expertise further

In the following activity you will pursue your thoughts on coach developer expertise further.

Activity 5 Coach developer expertise 2: What insights can be gained from elsewhere?

Allow about 30 minutes

Read this short article (4 minute read time):

[Exploring coach developer expertise, by Ben Oakley and Alex Twitchen](#)

The purpose of this reading is to act as a further prompt to your thinking about coach developer expertise. To what extent would you agree with the argument and characteristics identified in the article?

Provide your answer...

Discussion

In the absence of systematic studies of expertise among coach developers the article suggests a possible way of recognising and discussing expertise. You may have agreed or disagreed with some of the ideas in the article but learning from what expertise looks like amongst teachers has some merit, while an approach that focuses on professional judgement and decision-making is also useful. Figure 1 in the article, defining what authenticity might mean as a coach developer, is a further stimulus for your thinking.

Note: You will have an opportunity in Session 2 to share with others your ideas on the articles and videos you have viewed while working through this material. This will be optional, but hopefully you'll enjoy taking part if you do choose to.

The last three sections have been full of ideas about what coach developer expertise looks like. The ideas range from the 'surfacing beliefs' discussion, to knowing when, how and why tools, techniques and ingredients should be used (in the chef analogy), to ideas relating to expert teachers and authenticity (Hattie, 2003). In the next section you'll hear two experienced coach developers describe the learning opportunities they have drawn on to develop their own expertise.

6 Enhancing your coach developer skills

This course takes the perspective that becoming a more effective coach developer is an ongoing learning process, and you need tangible forms of support and guidance to help you learn and acquire more expertise.



Figure 11 Developing your own expertise as a coach developer

In the following activity two experienced coach developers provide a personal reflection on their own learning and development.

Activity 6 Developing your coach developer expertise

Allow about 15 minutes

Watch the following video of an interview with two experienced coach developers: Andy Bradshaw, Coaching Manager (Talent and Inclusion) at UK Coaching and coach/mentor with England Hockey, and Jane Lomax, Senior Lecturer in PE and Coaching at the University of Chichester and England Netball tutor. How do they believe they have accumulated the expertise that has helped them become more effective coach developers?

Video content is not available in this format.

[Video 5](#)



Provide your answer...

Discussion

Andy and Jane identify a range of learning opportunities from which they have benefited. These opportunities include:

1. Learning by working alongside more experienced colleagues, making sense of their practice and bouncing ideas off them.
2. Finding the time and space to critically reflect on their practice and learning from what works and what didn't and why.
3. Being curious and drawing on research and evidence to support and develop their practice and understanding why they are doing what they are doing.
4. Having a trusted group of colleagues who can challenge their thinking and a supportive network within their own governing body.

Like learning to become a better coach, becoming a better coach developer is a journey with its own challenges, difficulties and different paths to follow. This course itself can be part of your journey towards becoming a more effective and expert coach developer.

7 Building your coach developer 101 guide

Already in this first session of the course you have come across five practices and ideas that you can implement in your own work. You will see them summarised in Table 1 below.

At the end of each session, the main expertise practices – between three and five practices for each session – will be summarised and developed into a ‘101 guide’. ‘101’ is a term that is often used to refer to an introductory book or a document that provides an overview of a subject. The intention of the ‘Coach developer 101 guide’ is to provide you with a summary of the coach developer role in a succinct and concise format that can be shared and discussed with your colleagues, particularly others who have already completed this course. The guide is a point of reference about how coach developers should support coaches to learn and improve their practice.

By Session 8, you will have studied thirty-six practices and ideas in total. The complete 101 guide, containing all the practices and ideas, will be available for you to download in Session 8.

Here are the practices and ideas covered in Session 1.

Table 1 Some practices coach developers can use to build expertise in their role

Practices and ideas	Description
1. Sense-making	The role of a coach developer is often to help coaches make better sense of what they already know rather than just providing more information.
2. Surfacing beliefs	The process of raising awareness and making implicitly held beliefs, ideas, values and biases explicit, therefore making them subject to discussion, debate and change.
3. Behavioural change stairway	An illustrative model that describes a process of behaviour change through a sequence of five steps: it takes time.
4. Effective coach developers	People who have a positive and meaningful impact on learning and development which is achieved consistently from coach to coach.
5. Coach developer expertise	The ability to skillfully use a variety of tools, techniques and ingredients to facilitate and enrich learning to improve coaching practice.

8 This session's quiz

Check what you've learned this session by taking the end-of-session quiz.

Session 1 practice quiz

Open the quiz in a new window or tab then come back here when you've finished.

9 Summary of Session 1

The main learning points from this session are:

1. A coach developer is a people developer who is trained to help and support a coach. This is a process which occurs over time, and coach developers can undertake a range of roles in one or more contexts.
2. You followed a case study of a coach and coach developer relationship that was transformational; it significantly influenced and re-shaped the coach's practice. Not all coach-coach developer relationships have this transformational impact. Sometimes reinforcing good practice is still effective development.
3. You heard from three experienced coaches about what they thought makes an effective coach developer. To have a positive and meaningful impact effective coach developers demonstrate a willingness to help people learn, personally connect with coaches, set high standards, command respect and they make coaches think, reflect and question what they know and don't know.
4. The expertise that a coach developer possesses was examined and explained. There is little evidence that conclusively explains the expertise that coach developers possess, but ideas can be drawn from closely allied roles such as teaching.
5. You have been introduced to a range of learning opportunities that can be drawn on to improve your own practice as a coach developer. These opportunities are not unlike those that coaches draw on to improve their practice.
6. A coach developer 101 guide has been started that will build into a list of 36 practices and ideas that concisely articulate the coach developer role.

In the next session you will explore how coaches learn and the implications for coach developers. At the beginning of this session it was suggested that knowing how people learn is an important body of knowledge for coach developers to possess. Without understanding how people learn your effectiveness as a coach developer may be limited, this will make it more challenging for you to help coaches develop.

You can now go to [Session 2](#)

Session: 2 How do coaches learn?

Introduction

At some point in their careers, most coach developers will themselves have been a coach. Some may still be coaching. If this is you, can you remember how you learned to become a better coach? Are there any similarities to the way you are learning to become a better coach developer?



Figure 1 Learning is increasingly thought of as ‘participation’ rather than ‘acquisition’

At the start of this session you’ll hear again from Stuart Armstrong and Lucy Moore when they discuss what learning means to them. You’ll then consider different types of learning opportunities and follow this by exploring how coaches filter new ideas by rejecting some and incorporating others into their practice. These thoughts are complemented by activities in which you learn about the characteristics of adult learning and how they can be used to create purposeful learning environments. Finally, you’ll be asked to consider a provocative idea: learning sometimes requires **unlearning** the things you already know and do.

You will have an opportunity to interact online with others on the course about their opinions on some of these topics. This is via an optional course forum feature which you will be introduced to at the end of the session.

By the end of this session, you should be able to:

- know how to classify different types of learning experiences

- explain the application of social constructivist theories of learning to coach development
- understand how coaches filter new ideas before potentially implementing some of them into their coaching practice
- describe the principles of adult learning and how they can relate to your practice as a coach developer.

1 Can you remember how you improved as a coach?

We are all constantly learning, but are we conscious of how we learn? As you work through this session reflect not only on the extent to which it examines how coaches learn, but also how it informs your learning as a coach developer.



Figure 2 How might learning occur through informal social situations such as this?

In the following activity you will hear from Stuart Armstrong and Lucy Moore who discuss their ideas about learning and what has influenced their learning and development.

Activity 1 Comparing personal learning stories of becoming a better coach

Allow about 20 minutes

As you watch this conversation between Stuart and Lucy can you describe what learning means to them, and how they describe it? Stuart and Lucy also mention a range of learning experiences – how might you classify or name the different types of learning they refer to?

Video content is not available in this format.

[Video 1](#)



Provide your answer...

Discussion

Learning is a ubiquitous term. Learning is also complex, personal and continuous, and it can also be hard work. Stuart and Lucy believe learning is about:

1. Developing knowledge and skills that lead to a change in an individual's behaviour which may mean underlying ideas, beliefs and decision-making skills are altered and reconstructed.
2. Working with other people; learning is social, and it is about sharing and exploring ideas together and drawing on people's different viewpoints and perspectives.
3. Learning occurs in context and through reflecting on practice – in coaching, learning tends to be a practical process where new ideas and knowledge are tried and assessed, mistakes are made and learned from, and insights from others are adapted and modified to a coach's own environment.

There are many ways of describing coach learning but one of the most common is the distinction between formal, informal and non-formal categories of learning (Coombs and Ahmed, 1974). These are explained below in the context of comments made by Stuart and Lucy.

Formal learning: these are structured programmes of learning generally with a form of assessment attached to them and designed around a prescribed syllabus. Lucy highlighted how she valued the benefit of her coaching qualifications and training. Most National Governing Body (NGB) coaching qualification courses represent this type of learning experience.

Informal learning: a self-directed process whereby coaches acquire skills and knowledge from experience and the educative influences and resources in their own environment. Discussing issues with other coaches and colleagues, watching others coach, reading books and articles and the use of online resources, podcasts and videos would fall under this category. Stuart explains how this is a very important part of his own learning.

Non-formal learning: this is any organised educational activity outside a formal programme, so this course, a workshop, a conference or a form of continuing

professional development (CPD) represent the types of activities categorised under this label. Lucy links this with the value she has gained from her formal qualifications and talks about attending conferences and workshops to see and hear from people she might not seek out herself.

It is not always easy to neatly classify every learning experience into these categories and, as Lucy and Stuart indicate, coaches will combine and connect several different forms of learning to develop their practice.

You have so far heard two views about coach learning but now you explore an entirely different perspective on learning. It comes from a craftsperson in another complicated environment: a master chef working in a professional kitchen.

2 Looking at learning from a different perspective

In the following activity you will learn about one chef's progression in honing his craft and the different learning opportunities he has drawn on to achieve this.



Figure 3 By looking at something through a different lens you can often see things in different ways

As you follow the story think about how it can apply to the way coaches and coach developers might develop their learning. It is a great story and full of ideas and insights.

Activity 2 Ross Stacey: a craftsman's road to expertise

Allow about 25 minutes

Read the following article (5 minute read time) about Ross Stacey, a chef at The River Café: [The craftsman's road to expertise: Ross Stacey, a chef's story](#)

Ross's story is used by the English Institute of Sport (EIS) to illustrate how people learn in different ways. How do you think the ideas it contains about the following apply to coaches?

- Situated learning
- The apprenticeship
- A craftsman's journey
- Tribal learning.

Provide your answer...

Discussion

Possible links from the article to the role of a coach developer – for each of the four learning situations – include:

- Situated learning – there is no doubt coaches learn a great deal from their own coaching environment, and coach developers can enhance this type of learning through skilful guidance, particularly by supporting coaches to critically reflect on their practice.
- The apprenticeship – this seems a recognised path for trainee chefs. Coaches would benefit from a type of ‘apprentice–master’ relationship but such role models are not always available within their own environment. Creating programmes where coach developers can undertake a similar role is possible.
- A craftsman’s journey – the best and most expert coaches have learned their craft by engaging in as many varied learning experiences as possible and travelling around to experience ideas to help them develop. Perhaps coach developers should open coaches’ eyes to alternative ways of doing things by stimulating them to try new approaches or learn from other sports and from environments other than their own.
- Tribal learning – the term ‘community of practice’ (Lave and Wenger, 1991) is often used in coaching and increasingly there are attempts to create social learning among the coaching community. A tight-knit team in a kitchen can be a powerful learning resource. Coach developers need to stimulate a similar open environment; it is not always easy when working with people, status and hierarchies, but it is achievable with a focus on improvement.

This article illustrates the importance of learning through everyday working relationships and the value of collaboration and the support and guidance provided by others. It emphasises the value of informal learning and the willingness of individuals to take responsibility for their own learning. The quality of relationships between like-minded people seems fundamental and for this reason Session 3 is devoted to understanding social relationships in more detail.

You will now move on to examine some theories of learning.

3 Theories to explain learning

What is the nature of learning? Traditionally, coaching has drawn on cognitive and behavioural theories in which a coach is viewed like a cognitive sponge soaking up knowledge, skills and ideas in an objective, non-personal way. A term that has been used is learning through 'acquisition' (Sfard, 1998).

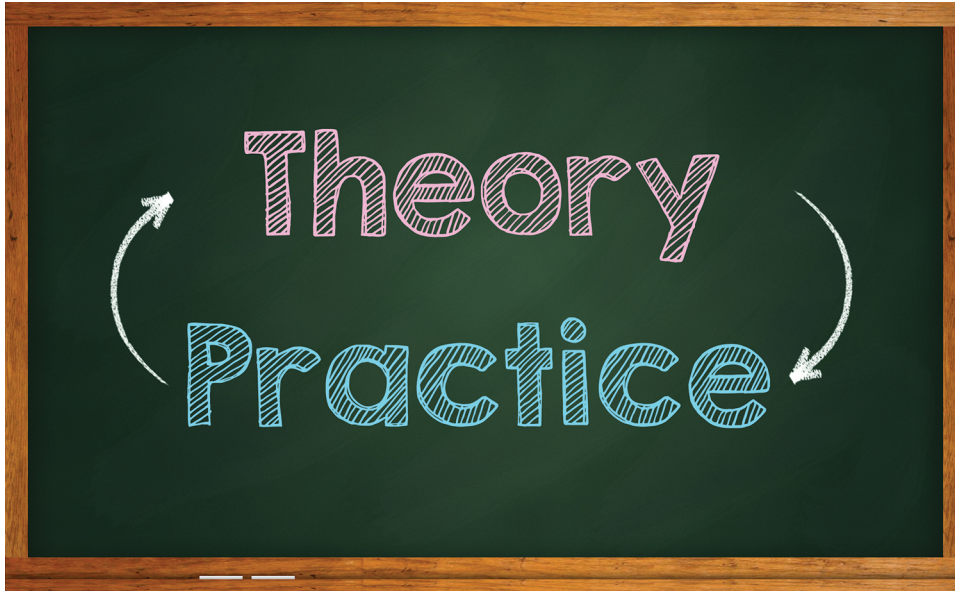


Figure 4 Theory informs practice and practice informs theory

Elements of these theories are useful. However, practice-based learning is focused more on participation rather than acquisition.

Activity 3 Exploring social constructivist theories of learning

Allow about 20 minutes

Using a search engine, look for text or video explanations of a 'Social Constructivist Theory of Learning' (use these search terms). Choose two or three of your search results and spend about ten minutes researching these links to 'get a feel' for what this theory is about.

If you find material that mentions terms such as 'construction', 'collaboration', 'making sense', 'culture', 'language' or 'social' you will be on the right lines. Think about how your search results relate to coaches and your own learning.

Provide your answer...

Discussion

Social constructivist theories argue that people learn by constructing knowledge through their experiences. This often involves actively participating in making sense of information to construct their knowledge about:

- the environment around them
- their relationships with people
- their own sense of self-identity

- their values and ideas which influence their behaviour and actions.

This is a continuous process informed by reflecting on, layering and interweaving new experiences and information onto their existing thoughts and knowledge, potentially transforming their behaviour. As a coach developer you should understand that social constructivist theories attempt to explain learning as a predominantly **active**, **social** and **collaborative** process.

There are many explanations of learning which fall under the social constructivist term. These are all concerned with how learners build their own mental structures through interaction with their environment, i.e. learning does not occur in a vacuum (Merriam and Caffarella, 1999).

In your work as a coach developer you might recognise that coaches 'cherry pick' aspects of their learning to apply to their practice. Since each coach is different, the same learning opportunity is likely to have a different impact on individual coaches (Stodter and Cushion, 2017) due to influences such as:

- the organisational culture within which they coach
- established social norms and conventions
- hierarchy, status and power
- gender and ethnicity
- access to educational opportunities
- personal identity and
- the impressions people try to portray in order to 'fit in'.

Coach developers need to appreciate all of these broad social influences on coach learning.

4 Do coaches filter new ideas when they learn?

Research by Stodter and Cushion (2017) describes a filtering process through which coaches 'adopted, adapted and rejected elements of their experiences, leading to uneven learning in apparently similar situations' (p. 321).

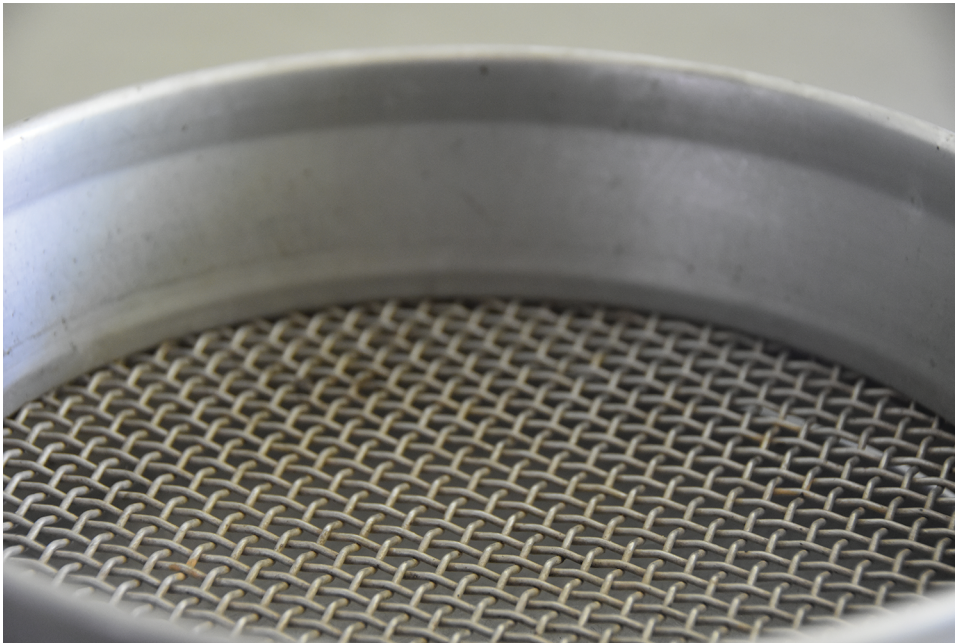


Figure 5 How might coaches filter new ideas in their development journey?

If you begin to appreciate how coaches filter new ideas and knowledge, it could help you design learning experiences which are more likely to be effective.

Activity 4 Exploring Stodter and Cushion's filtering processes

Allow about 20 minutes

Read the description of Stodter and Cushion's (2017) filtering processes below and examine its representation in Figure 6. After you have read the description you will be asked to answer two questions.

Filtering processes – a description

Coaches construct and develop their knowledge from learning experiences through two main filter mechanisms and a reflective feedback loop [see Figure 6]:

1. **A beliefs and attitudes filter:** coaches first approach and understand learning experiences through the lens of their existing beliefs, attitudes, knowledge and coaching practice; this influences their perspective and acts as an initial filtering process. Ideas which mismatch their existing beliefs are filtered out and rejected, ideas that match or seem to fit are explored further.

2. **A context filter:** coaches then ask themselves 'how might this work in my context?' and sometimes will avoid trying something due to a perception that it may not be relevant to their situation. Ideas that might seem appropriate pass through this filter and coaches experiment and adapt them and test whether they might work or not.
3. **Reflective cycle:** coaches will continue to experiment, adapt and try-out ideas that have not yet been filtered out via a reflective feedback loop. This loop continues until they finally decide to adopt the idea into their practice or reject it. If an idea is accepted it can help to evolve their initial beliefs and attitudes filter.

Another influence was identified - 'seeing is believing' - in which new ideas were likely to bypass the first filter if coaches could see someone else using them (i.e. first hand, or via video). The openness of a coach to learning and their development, as well as the degree to which their working environment affords them the opportunity to experiment and adapt new ideas, are also important influences on the operation of the filtering mechanisms.

(Stodter and Cushion, 2017)

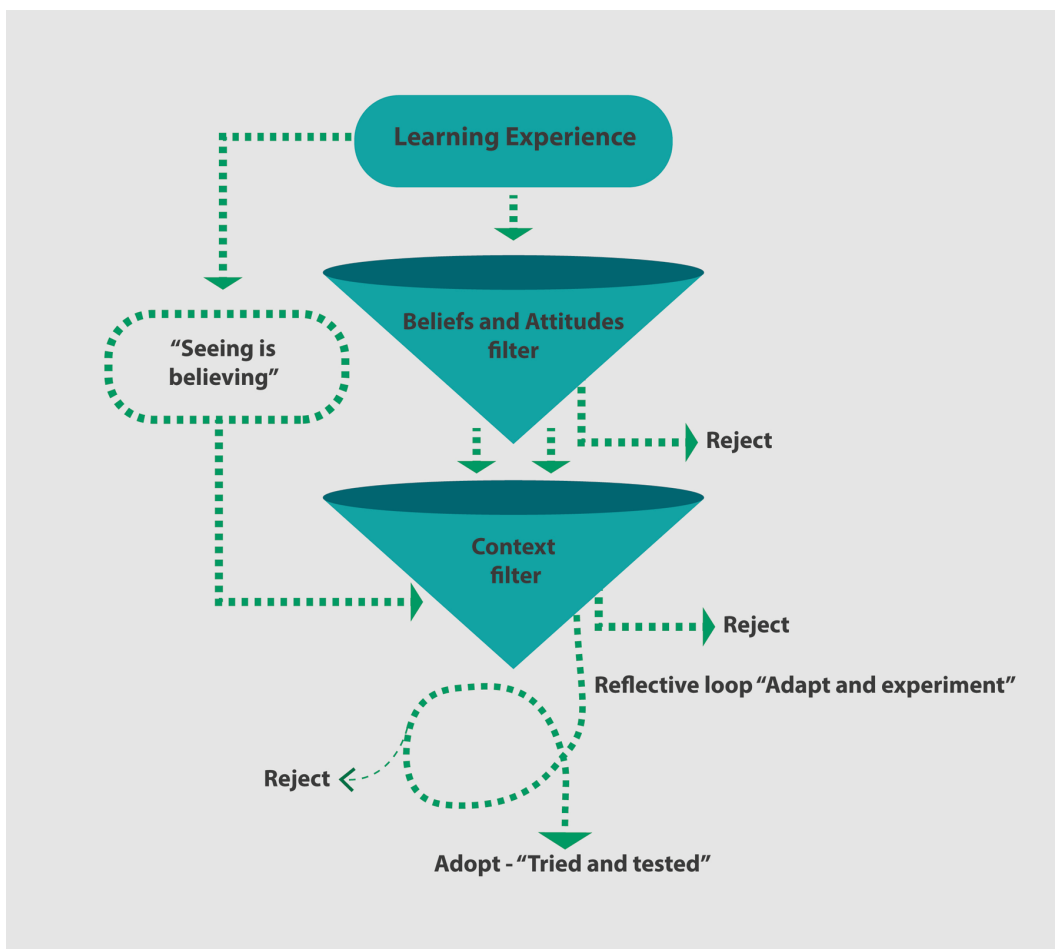


Figure 6 Filtering processes in coach learning (adapted from Stodter and Cushion, 2017)

Now answer the following two questions:

1. How do these processes and influences connect with coach learning and development?
2. What does this framework suggest coach learning experiences should pay particular attention to in order for effective learning to take place?

Provide your answer...

Discussion

1. When coaches see new ideas being used in a similar context to their own they are more likely to take an interest in them. This demonstrates how new ideas reinforced by favourable peer discussion might be adopted or adapted. In this way a coach's practice repertoire may be influenced by their colleagues, yet a coach's openness to change will also be shaped by any resistance from their colleagues and the culture of the environment they work in.
2. Coach learning and development should pay attention to the two filters, a coach's belief system and their coaching context, for new knowledge to be constructed. This means that 'individualised, contextually and practically relevant learning opportunities are most valuable' (Lyle and Cushion, 2017, p. 314). For this reason, having rich individual dialogue with coaches whereby you can start to surface their underlying beliefs gives you a chance to question assumptions and start to influence their belief systems (as discussed in Session 1).

The research by Stodter and Cushion highlights the complexity of learning and how specific it can be to each individual coach. Therefore without taking into account the **context** and **individual needs** of coaches, any homogeneous and generic learning programme is likely to have limited impact.

In the next section you'll explore the principles associated with adult learning. These can be used to design more sophisticated learning environments which could potentially dilute some of the filtering processes used by coaches to assess new ideas.

5 How do adults learn?

Coach developers should understand their audience and be familiar with how adults learn. Malcolm Knowles (1990) proposed six principles that explain how adults learn and why their learning might be different to that of children. Knowles popularised the term **andragogy**, which means the method and practice of teaching adult learners.



Figure 7 Do adults learn in a different manner to children? If so, what is distinct?

In the next two activities you will learn about the six principles associated with andragogy and how these can be applied to the design of learning environments. Then, using these principles, you will be asked to apply these to a workshop for coaches.

Activity 5 Introducing adult learning

Allow about 20 minutes

Watch the following video from the start to 04:51. The six principles of adult learning from Knowles (1990) are explained and then applied to an imaginary workshop. Your task is to make notes on each principle and what you need to do to enhance coach learning.

Video 2: [Introduction to Malcolm Knowles's andragogy theory](#)

Provide your answer...

Discussion

You can see that, to enhance learning and development in coaches, you need to:

1. Clearly explain the purpose of the learning and how it will benefit coaches.
2. Draw on the considerable and varied experiences of coaches as a rich resource for learning and recognise prior knowledge in the tone of your delivery.
3. Enable coaches to be responsible for their own learning and provide individual autonomy where possible.
4. Relate the content you are presenting as being applicable to their world and to current issues and challenges.

5. Use problem solving and task-centred approaches where possible.
6. Build intrinsic motivation by providing positive and constructive feedback that enhances self-esteem.

The principles developed by Knowles have been adopted by the International Coach Developer Framework (ICDF) (2014) as recommendations to inform how adults learn best. These recommendations are summarised in the box below.

Box 1 Adult learning recommendations for coach developers (adapted from ICDF, 2014)

Main theme: Adult coaches learn best when motivated by the practical application to their coaching.

Coaches learn best when (words in bold connect to the video in Activity 5):

1. They feel the **need to know** and understand the information.
2. Their **experience** and abilities are recognised and they are helped to reflect on and build on this.
3. They are encouraged to take responsibility for their learning and development of **self-concept**.
4. There is an immediate or obvious **readiness** and reason to learn.
5. They have plenty of opportunity to engage in **problem-oriented** issues and practice in their own context.
6. They experience some success and gain feedback that builds their **intrinsic motivation** and confidence.

You might want to print these recommendations or have them close to you for the activity in the next section where you consider the learning design considerations informing a workshop for coaches.

5.1 Applying adult learning principles to your practice

In the following activity you'll apply the principles you've just learned to an imaginary workshop scenario.

Activity 6 Applying the principles of adult learning

Allow about 20 minutes

In this activity you are going to use these principles to inform decisions involved in designing a 2–3 hour workshop intended to support the learning and development of coaches.

In the table below enter your ideas in the space opposite each of the six principles of adult learning. The workshop will support coaches working with children between 5

and 16 years of age in a large club environment. Most of the coaches will already have an initial coaching qualification. An example of one 'application to workshop' response is given below to help you consider how others may be completed.

Adult learning principle	Application to workshop
Need to know – <i>how will you ensure this workshop meets the needs of the coaches and will benefit their coaching?</i>	Identifying the most pressing issues the coaches believe they have will help respond to this principle. Perhaps you will consult or survey their immediate needs when coaching children. You will then need to demonstrate how this helped you determine the focus and content of the workshop.
Experience – <i>how might you draw on the experience and experiences of the coaches?</i>	Provide your answer...
Self-concept – <i>how can you give coaches autonomy and responsibility for their learning?</i>	Provide your answer...
Readiness – <i>will the content be appropriate to the coaches, are they ready for the content?</i>	Provide your answer...
Problem-based – <i>How can you use and draw on the real and everyday issues and challenges the coaches have?</i>	Provide your answer...
Intrinsic motivation – <i>how can you build and design opportunities into the workshop for coaches to experience success and positive feedback?</i>	Provide your answer...

Discussion

The following completed table is not intended to be an exhaustive application of adult learning principles to your environment. Instead it is intended to help you compare your own thoughts to other possibilities.

Adult learning principle	Application to workshop
Need to know – <i>how will you ensure this workshop meets the needs of the coaches and will benefit their coaching?</i>	Identifying the most pressing issues the coaches believe they have will help respond to this principle. Perhaps you will consult or survey their immediate needs when coaching children. You will then need to demonstrate how this helped you determine the focus and content of the workshop.
Experience – <i>how might you draw on the experience and experiences of the coaches?</i>	You will need to devise activities that capture and recognise the different levels of coaching experience in the room and perhaps celebrate this diversity. One option is for you to match people and make groups based on those with more experience working alongside those with less experience. Consider the pros and cons of grouping coaches by the age group they coach or across age groups. Ultimately, how will all the

Self-concept – <i>how can you give coaches autonomy and responsibility for their learning?</i>	experience present be best shared and used in the learning experience? Two ways in which you can design opportunities for coaches to take responsibility for their learning might include: i) ask them to find information before the workshop or come prepared with some problems, examples and questions they want to explore ii) offer a choice of activities to pursue and work on activities most connected to their needs
Readiness - <i>will the content be appropriate to the coaches, are they ready for the content?</i>	This principle is about the level of complexity coaches are able to tackle. You need to establish beforehand or early in the workshop their readiness for the content and allow some flexibility. Is the content appropriate for their level of experience and expertise is a critical question. Providing some additional reading or online links to those that want to pursue ideas further may be appropriate.
Problem-based - <i>How can you use and draw on the real and everyday issues and challenges the coaches have?</i>	This links to 'self concept' (above) since if they provide existing challenges and problems before the workshop you are more likely to capture their attention. Prior preparation of some typical problems before the workshop based on your own experience may help. These can be made relevant to coaches' context filter if you explore how any solutions would be adapted to their own situation.
Intrinsic motivation - <i>how can you build and design opportunities into the workshop for coaches to experience success and positive feedback?</i>	Ideally early activities will be designed to allow success and constructive feedback. Think about how to support their motivation with stimulating examples that allow them to discover new insights. This would be supported by feedback that encourages further self-exploration of a topic.

In Session 1 the role of a facilitator was identified as one of several roles coach developers can undertake. Facilitators design, generate and organise learning content and activities for coaches. By applying the principles of adult learning you can enhance the effectiveness of the learning environments you create. This might offer coaches more opportunities to discover ideas that match and fit with their beliefs and attitudes filter and work for them in their context. Designing content relevant to their needs is likely to reduce any readiness to reject ideas straight away.

When you come to the part of the course that focuses on teaching (Session 5) you will come across these ideas again as they also form the basis of relevant teaching principles. For the moment read the example in the box below which describes how the principles of adult learning are informing coach learning and development at the Lawn Tennis Association.

Box 2 Applying the principles of adult learning in tennis

Britain's Lawn Tennis Association has become a hub of adult learning, a concept that Simon Jones, the organisation's Head of Performance Coach Education has considered at length: 'Andragogy considers the principles of how adults learn and there are several things that stand out to me that we implement,' he explains. 'Adults learn best when they have a say and are involved in what they are learning. They learn best when they are sharing their own experiences with each other ... and hearing about other people's experiences' (Leaders Performance Institute, 2019).

If you view learning as a form of change or development you will perhaps recognise that people can be resistant to change. Unlearning previous embedded practices can be difficult and this is the challenge you will explore in the following section.

6 Cognitive rigidity: learning often needs unlearning

If new ideas are resisted by coaches, some claim (provocatively, perhaps) that a process of unlearning is required. As one teaching researcher suggests: '[practitioners] must learn to treat knowledge as something they construct, test, and explore, rather than as something they absorb and accumulate. They must unlearn much of what they know' (Cohen, 1991, p. 46).

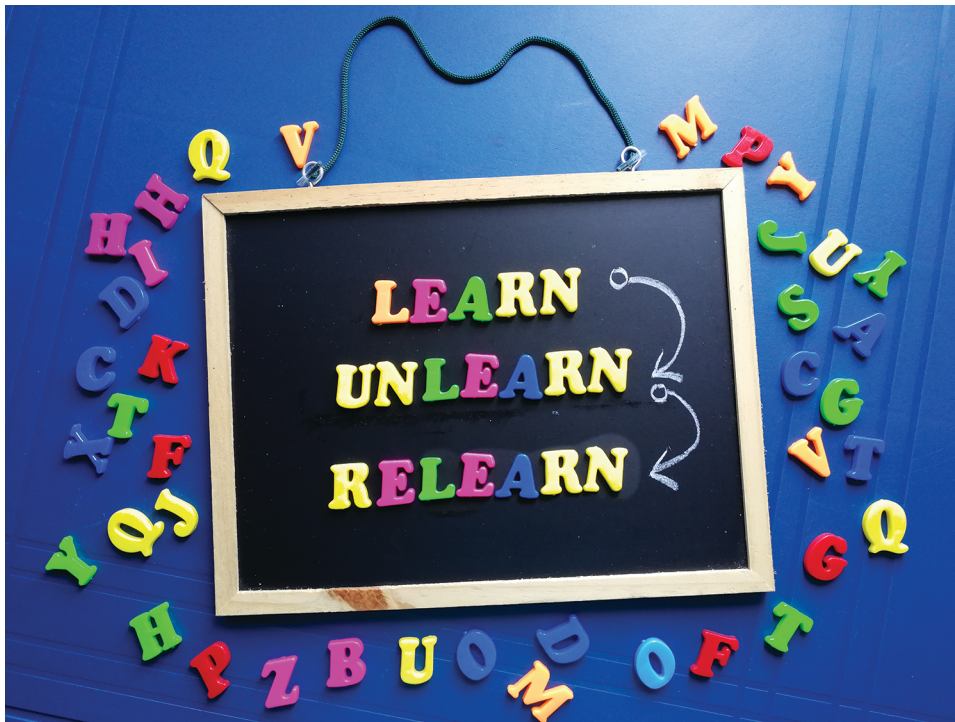


Figure 8 Changing your views on how something is done may require you to discard previous ideas first

The role of the coach developer is often to support coaches who are resistant to change. Practices become embedded and ritualised making change challenging.

Activity 7 Colleagues talking about unlearning

Allow about 15 minutes

Listen to this clip of colleagues Ross Garner, Owen Fergusson and Dom Price, who work in technology and learning businesses. They all embrace the need for unlearning in their sector. However, what aspects do they identify as problematic? Do these concerns mirror your experience of coaches changing their practice?

Audio content is not available in this format.



Audio 1

Provide your answer...

Discussion

The problems the colleagues identified as problematic were:

- particularly later in their careers people can become more fixed in their ideas, and dropping long-held ideas can be hard
- adopting new ideas often challenges people's core beliefs
- many people focus on past practice as opposed to what their practice can become in the future
- the mindset someone holds is important including a curiosity about practice (i.e. the mystery of practice)
- people need to be willing to fail as part of any unlearning.

In terms of your experience of coaches changing their practice the technology sector is ever changing while sport and coaching is slow to change and is conservative (Farrow et al., 2008). Perhaps this is because many coaches have developed ideas, beliefs and habits as players and bring these with them into their coaching. Rushmer and Davies (2004) highlight that the barriers to change include habit, security, fear of the unknown, stereotypes and lack of awareness of the need to change. Do these concerns mirror your experience of coaches changing their practice?

Open mindedness is a vital ingredient of successful unlearning. Therefore, coach developers need to establish sound learning relationships and trust with the coaches they work with. Unlearning is a contestable concept and as such you may disagree with the term and what it implies. Therefore, it is timely that you are introduced to the course forum where you have the option to share your thoughts with others about this and other topics on the course.

7 Your chance to contribute: share your ideas

In this session you have considered how learning often involves a social and collaborative process. Sharing and discussing ideas with colleagues is an invaluable part of learning. To support this, you are now invited to go to the [course forum page](#) and make a post to one of the two discussion threads below. **If you decide not to, it will not impact on you obtaining your digital badge.**



Figure 9 We want to hear your thoughts on what you have learned so far; but it is not a compulsory part of this course

'Coaching others to coach' course forum

- **Unlearning discussion thread** – to what extent do you agree or disagree that unlearning takes place and is sometimes necessary before learning occurs?
- **Coach developer learning discussion thread** – how do you believe you have learned to become a better coach developer? Are there any parallels between learning to become a better coach? If so, what are these parallels?

Reading and sharing your thoughts with others will add a further dimension to the learning you can gain from this course. The course forum will normally be moderated throughout the year. However, if your post needs a response from the Open University staff this will normally take two to five days.

8 Building your coach developer 101 guide

The main discussion points from this session that you might share and discuss with colleagues are described in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Some practices coach developers can use to build expertise in their role

Practices and ideas	Description
6. Categorising learning	Learning can be classified into formal, informal and non-formal learning, although it is not always easy to allocate learning situations neatly into one of these categories.
7. Social constructivist theories of learning	A collection of theories that explain how people construct knowledge through their experiences. This is a social, collaborative and active process that takes place within and through relationships between people.
8. Filtering processes	A method that describes how coaches adopt, adapt or reject new forms of knowledge and practice through two filters: a personal filter and a context filter.
9. Adult learning principles	The suggestion that adults learn differently to children ('andragogy'). Adult learning motivations are distinct and there is a need for the purpose of their learning experiences to be made explicit.
10. Unlearning	It is claimed that to learn you must sometimes unlearn existing knowledge so that it does not impede the potential to learn something new.

9 This session's quiz

Check what you've learned this session by taking the end-of-session quiz.

[Session 2 practice quiz](#)

Open the quiz in a new window or tab then come back here when you've finished.

10 Summary of Session 2

In this session you have:

- Read about different ways of classifying learning experiences. One of the most common is the distinction between formal, informal and non-formal learning.
- Examined learning from the perspective of a master chef. The story of Ross Stacey offered several insights into how chefs learn their craft that could be applied to coach learning and development.
- Explored how social constructivist theories of learning explain how individuals construct their knowledge through their experiences. These experiences are often shared with others. Learning is a social process that occurs within relationships between people.
- Considered the filters through which coaches assess new ideas and how this influences their adoption, adaptation or rejection of these ideas to their practice. It has been developed by Stodter and Cushion and captures how coaches learn as well as the complexity of the learning process.
- Reviewed the six principles of adult learning developed by Malcolm Knowles (1990). Knowles is associated with popularising the term andragogy to describe the characteristics of adult learning and how this is different to pedagogy (how children learn). Knowing the principles of adult learning can help you design more effective learning environments.
- Reflected on the concept of unlearning. A provocative and arguably contested term that suggests you have to unlearn things you already know and do before you can learn new ideas and change your practice.

While this session focused on how coaches learn you probably recognised there was much which could inform your learning as a coach developer. There are clearly many parallels between the two. Now, in the next session, you'll focus on developing effective learning relationships.

This focus is valuable since you have just learned that learning is often a social, collaborative and active process that takes place within and through relationships. One of the central questions you will explore is how to initiate and continue to build rapport with the coaches you work with.

You can now go to [Session 3](#).

Session 3: How do you build effective learning relationships?

Introduction

This session is about building relationships that promote learning and development. Watch as Stuart Armstrong explains more.

Video content is not available in this format.

Video 1



As Stuart explained, in coaching we work with people and this means being able to build trust and rapport with them. In this session you'll explore different models and perspectives that help you to understand how to nurture effective learning relationships. You will see how understanding the following inform your knowledge about the development of effective learning relationships:

- humanist-based counselling theory
- a lecturer's attempts to build rapport with over a hundred new students
- the strategies adopted by a coach developer, and
- teacher–mentor relationships in a school.

By the end of this session, you should be able to:

- understand the basis of effective coach–coach developer learning relationships
- know how to initiate and continue to build rapport with coaches
- appreciate how you can strike an appropriate balance between challenging coaches to improve their practice and supporting them through this process
- appreciate the value of learning from mistakes and failure.

1 Coach–coach developer relationships

How can we make sense of the relationship between a coach and coach developer, and does it in any way share similarities to the relationships between coaches and athletes?



Figure 1 Creating a positive learning relationship through closeness, commitment, complementarity and co-orientation.

One answer to this question might come in the form of research identifying four key elements that contribute to a healthy coach–athlete relationship (Jowett, 2005).

Activity 1 Explaining coach–coach developer relationships

Allow about 10 minutes

Think about the relationships you have developed with the coaches you support. How well do the following elements of the coach–athlete relationship model apply to your coach–coach developer relationships?

Closeness– the degree to which two people are connected with expressions of like, trust, respect and appreciation indicating a positive interpersonal relationship.

Commitment– both parties' desire to maintain their partnership over time.

Complementarity– the extent to which interaction between both is perceived as cooperative e.g. behaviours such as being responsive, at ease and willing.

Co-orientation– the degree to which similarities, including empathetic understanding between both parties, are shared.

Provide your answer...

Discussion

Ideally, all these would be evident between a coach and coach developer, and they align with some of the ideas in Session 1 about 'Exploring coach developer expertise?'. However, in your role perhaps circumstances get in the way of these relationships. For instance, you might be:

- a stranger or guest coming in from outside the coach's environment
- responsible for formally assessing the coach, or sometimes perceived by the coach as judging them in some way
- limited by a fixed period of time in which you can support the coach, and/or
- influenced by the transactional nature of your role when you are remunerated for your work as a coach developer.

These all impact the relationship between a coach and coach developer. Hopefully complementarity is evident since the coach should want to learn and the coach developer should want the coach to learn; there are shared goals about the experience.

But how can the coach developer build mutual respect and rapport, how can they build closeness?

To begin to answer this question you'll focus on the behaviours demonstrated in a training and learning situation taking place in a motor racing team.

2 High octane pressure in a motor racing team

In this section you'll witness an inexperienced pit-crew being trained to improve their performance by team manager Stewart.



Figure 2 Learning to improve performance in a high speed, high pressure environment

Stewart gives feedback to a member of the pit-crew about how to assist Chris Hoy (the former Olympic cyclist) in driver changeovers. The team were preparing for the Le Mans 24 hours where driver changeovers occur many times during the race. Hoy – who is wearing a helmet – tactfully tries to give his input.

Activity 2 Observing pit stop training

Allow about 15 minutes

Watch the video and respond to the questions that follow. **Be warned that there is some potentially offensive language and behaviour in the video so you should be careful where you watch the video in case it is heard by others.**

Video content is not available in this format.

[Video 2](#)



The relationship in this instance between Stewart and the pit-crew is perhaps not dissimilar to situations you might have observed elsewhere. Imagine now that you have been asked to mentor Stewart in his coaching of the team. Putting the gender characteristics of this environment to one side, answer these two questions:

1. How would you proceed in trying to build a working relationship with Stewart?
2. What background information might you ask Stewart about in your early meetings with him?

Provide your answer...

Discussion

1. You could try and establish what he hopes you can achieve together and discuss any shared goals. You may deliberately demonstrate empathetic understanding of his challenges in developing the pit-crew to help establish connection. You may perhaps look for some common ground in terms of either the sport, family or other interests and you might feel it is appropriate to disclose a bit of information about yourself that may contribute to building rapport.
2. It would be valuable to know how he got into the sport and the route to his current role. Perhaps some exploration of how he thinks people learn would be useful since his comment 'I don't want to hear excuses, I want to see people pushed' suggests he has a particular approach. It might also be useful to explore his perception about the 'culture' of the sport and how this potentially influences his approach. Ideally this should all be undertaken in a non-judgemental way.

An interesting point in any relationship is how much you can change someone's behaviour. Transformational change is not easy and requires persistence and time. In the next section you will explore the potential of a humanist approach as the basis for mentoring Stewart.

3 Learning from the humanist approach

Humanist theory suggests that people are their own best experts and therefore best placed to understand their perceptions and decisions (Rogers, 1983). If you were mentoring Stewart in his role as a team manager, your relationship with him would be facilitative and you would use a welcoming and safe environment to promote self-confidence and self-esteem. Stewart would be encouraged to speak freely about his frustrations and feelings of anger without the fear of criticism (Rogers, 1983). This person-centred approach is often what counselling practice draws from.



Figure 3 Understanding humanist theory

The psychologist Carl Rogers outlined how practitioners can make a relationship a 'growth-promoting climate' supported by:

- congruence – the practitioner is genuine and authentic
- empathy – the practitioner feels and demonstrates empathy, and
- unconditional positive regard – the practitioner maintains a positive feeling without reservations, evaluations or judgements.

Counsellors who work in this way often take up to four years to fully understand themselves before they can achieve this growth-promoting climate. Coach developers striving to work in a more person-centred way are unlikely to be able to develop themselves to this extent but it is valuable to think more about how humanist principles might influence their work.

Activity 3 Applying humanist principles to coach developers

Allow about 20 minutes

Look at Figure 4 and explore some of the tensions in applying congruence, unconditional positive regard and empathy to coach learning and development by

clicking on each heading. Take time to carefully read through these descriptions: these points are a central part of this session.

Interactive content is not available in this format.



Figure 4 The principles of humanist theory

Provide your answer...

Now, listen to this short audio clip of Lucy Moore and Stuart Armstrong discussing the extent to which the scope of their non-judgemental behaviour towards coaches very much depends on the scenario. There is a useful way in which Stuart describes how he introduces himself and his intentions in his first meeting with those he is supporting.

Audio content is not available in this format.



Audio 1

Keep Stuart's comments about the way he introduces himself in mind during the following sections in which you explore how first impressions matter when meeting others in contrasting situations.

4 First impressions count

The first impressions you portray can have a very important impact on how a relationship develops. How you begin relationships should involve careful thought.



Figure 5 How do you welcome over one hundred learners for the first time?

You will now explore this further in two activities, the first in a large group educational situation and the second in an individual mentoring context.

Activity 4 Meeting over one hundred new learners at once

Allow about 15 minutes

A first meeting is slightly threatening for both parties since those you meet might have inaccurate perceptions of you and you will be concerned about getting off on the right foot.

What about the challenge of meeting over one hundred new students at once in a lecture situation?

Listen to this audio of course author Ben Oakley and identify five strategies he adopts for this type of situation and notice any links made to person-centred humanist ideas.

Audio content is not available in this format.



Audio 2

Provide your answer...

Discussion

In his strategies Ben ensures the following:

1. He greets people at the door – this provides a welcoming atmosphere and sets an example of the environment he wants to create.
2. He is authentic in his communication – both in his opening remarks and also while talking to people at the door he speaks genuinely from the heart in a way that is congruent and person-centred. Smiling warmly also helps.
3. He discloses biographical information to support his relationship with the group – he talks about trying to show empathy (i.e. person-centred) with those in the audience although there is a balance as to how much of this is appropriate.
4. He demonstrates that he values the learners and what they can offer.
5. He asks easy safe questions and in so doing talks about his distinct aims connected with:
 - his familiarity with the audience
 - encouraging participation
 - showing that the audience is varied, and
 - acknowledging there are people with common experiences.

This activity demonstrates the importance of planning the initial meeting with building rapport in mind. Beyond group situations how would you go about planning an initial one-to-one meeting? How might the situation and context of this meeting influence your plan? For example, would it change if you were meeting a beginner coach or a highly experienced, respected and well-known coach in your sport?

5 Planning a first one-to-one meeting

In the following activity you listen to Alex, who you met at the start of Session 1, and hear how he has refined his approach to meeting a new mentee for the first time.



Figure 6 How do you plan your first meeting with a coach?

Since 2013, Alex has been involved in a mentoring programme which is focused on supporting grassroots voluntary coaches. During this time Alex has worked with over 20 coaches on an individual basis.

Activity 5 Meeting a mentee for the first time

Allow about 10 minutes

In this activity, listen to the approach Alex adopts to the initial meeting with a new mentee.

Was there anything that surprised you with this approach? How well might this approach work with Stewart from the motor-racing team?

Audio content is not available in this format.



Audio 3

Provide your answer...

Discussion

This might seem a very calculating way of initiating the relationship – Alex plans to act out what the sociologist Erving Goffman would describe as a **performance**, that is **managing impressions** and influencing the relationship building process.

This approach may well work with Stewart and is similar to that suggested in Activity 2. You may now think that to really engage with Stewart constructively requires initiating the relationship away from the race track and away from the heat of competition.

If you deliver coaching qualification courses, you will find it valuable to see how Alex adapts his welcome for a course-related learning environment.

Box 1 Alex adapts his welcome strategy to a more formal course-related situation

I make sure I arrive 45 minutes before the start time of the course – you can always guarantee that one of the coaches on the course will arrive very early. Initially I start by playing a video of a football match as a kind of welcoming gesture. As this plays I organise the furniture in the room and put up some posters to make the room look more like a coaching environment. I purposely leave the door open. I do this as I want the coaches to walk through an open door. As the coaches arrive, I greet them and give them a form to complete. This form has four boxes with a question in each box, these questions are:

1. What do you **want** to learn on this course?
2. Where and what team are you coaching at present?
3. How do you **think** you are going to learn on this course?
4. What is your favourite sporting moment and why?

This serves as an activity that the coaches can complete and share with each other while we wait for everybody to arrive and deal with any initial administrative issues. Once everybody, or almost everybody, has arrived we start by writing each coach's favourite sporting moment on a 'post-it' note and posting them to a wall where I then select one at a time and ask the coach it belongs too for a bit more information about the moment they have chosen. This gives me time to listen to each individual and start to get to know them as well as building the dynamics of the group. It is also a fun and non-threatening activity, no personal information needs to be declared and as a consequence the first activity is purposely designed to underpin the creation of an emotionally safe environment where each individual only has to disclose what they feel comfortable with.

Having planned to make a positive first impression you now consider different aspects that will help to evolve and sustain a learning relationship, particularly those around providing support and challenge.

6 Pulling together ideas

The role of coach developers is to support coaches to improve their practice, but your impact depends on several variables such as your skills, the coach's openness, their perceptions of the development process and initiating your relationship productively.

You have read about the need to get to know coaches as people and find some shared mutual connections that allow empathy and rapport. In effect, you have explored the first three steps in the Behavioural stairway model (Figure 7) introduced in Session 1.

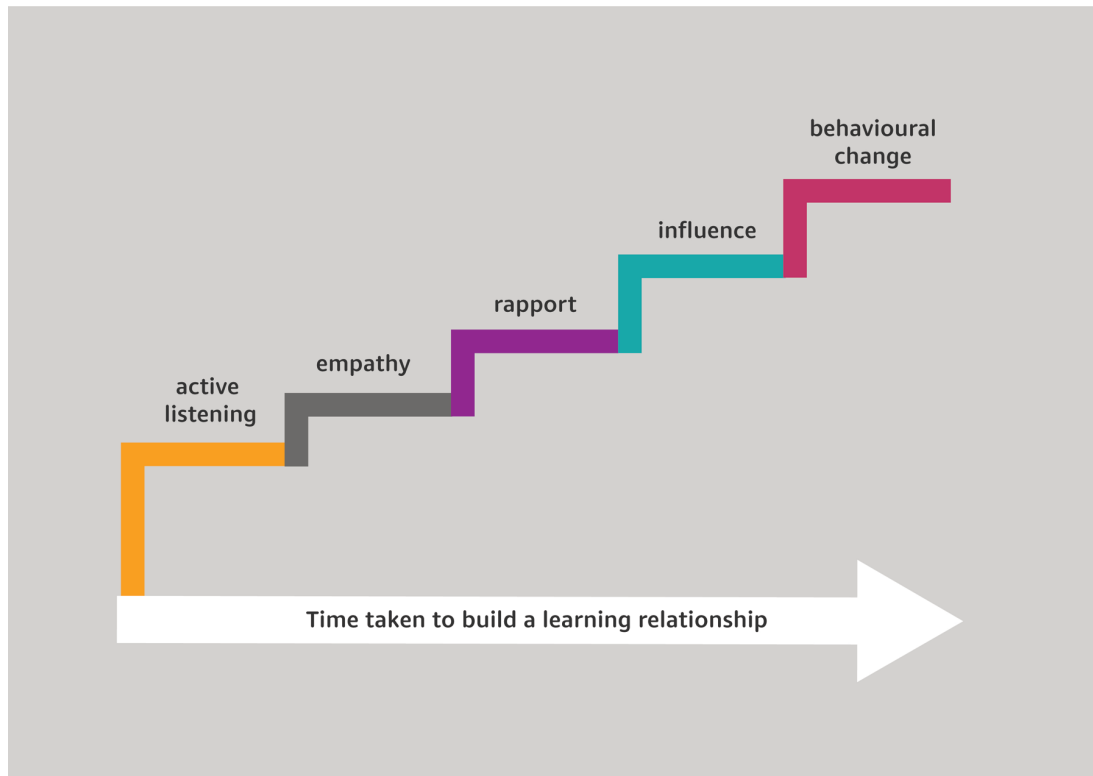


Figure 7 The behaviour change stairway model

Once rapport has been established you can start to exert some influence on the decisions and judgements that coaches make and help them develop their practice. One professional training route where building empathy, rapport and influence is a feature is the training of teachers. You will explore this next.

7 Learning from teacher–mentor relationships

Learning to become a teacher requires a significant amount of school-based practice, supported by an experienced teacher working at the school.



Figure 8 Developing a mentoring relationship

This teacher–mentor relationship is not unlike the role sometimes undertaken by a coach developer. What then can we learn from teacher–mentor relationships?

Activity 6 What do mentors and teachers say about their relationship?

Allow about 15 minutes

Listen to the audio below and note down the potential characteristics of the teacher–mentor relationship. How applicable is this to the coach–coach developer relationship?

Audio content is not available in this format.



Audio 4

Provide your answer...

Discussion

The issue of establishing trust is key. In a school there is an established formal relationship between the experienced practising teacher as a mentor and the student teacher. Perhaps in coaching the difference in experience might not be so obvious and

a coach developer will often be visiting the practice environment of the coach rather than the other way around in a school.

The trust that is needed in a new relationship is important when it comes to stretching and challenging a coach. They need to know that they are in safe hands; but what are the elements of establishing trust?

Activity 7 Knight's components of a trusting coaching relationship

Allow about 15 minutes

James Knight from the University of Kansas researches professional learning and coaching. Watch this video in which he identifies five components of building trust in the context of distance video-based teaching observations.

Which of these components may be more challenging for coach developers to establish?

Video 3: [Jim Knight: the 5 components of a trusting coaching relationship](#). Watch the first video on the page, from 00:00–03:23.

Provide your answer...

Discussion

Of the five factors Knight describes, three are arguably personality traits which you might need to outwardly demonstrate i.e. character (honesty), warmth and benevolence (helpfulness).

However, reliability and competence are more akin to skills. You need to be organised and efficient to be reliable while your competence as a developer perhaps comes with experience and confidence in your role. However, the very fact that you are studying this course suggests you are active in reinforcing your competence.

Trust is therefore particularly important when it comes to balancing the appropriate challenge and support for those you work with. As you can see establishing trust is not straightforward.

8 Balancing challenge and support

Any effective person-centred learning and coach development is based on achieving the right balance between the support which is appropriate to the individual and challenge to progress the coach in their thinking or practice. This balance is represented in Figure 9.

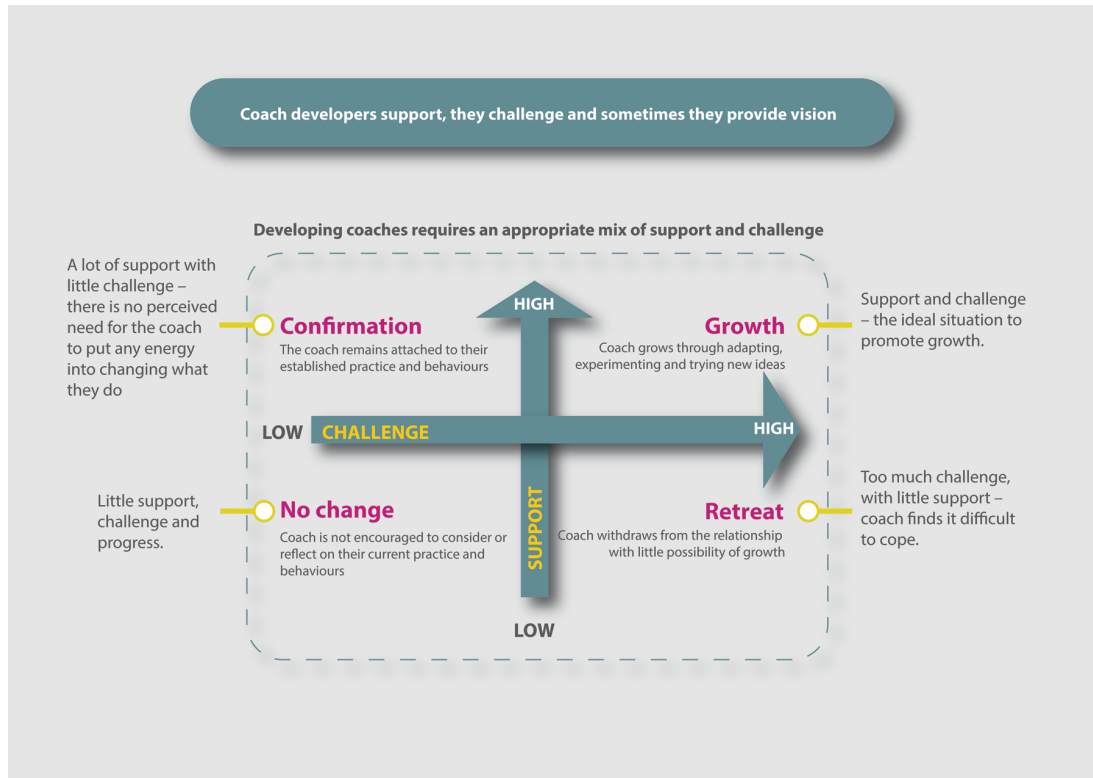


Figure 9 This diagram demonstrates pictorially the balancing dynamics of the coach developer role, between providing both support and challenge to the coach (Source: adapted from Martin, 1996; Daloz, 1986).

It is likely that coaches will need different levels of support and challenge in different situations and contexts. Also, the balance may change over time. Recognising the support or challenge needed in a particular circumstance and being flexible in your approach is a key skill.

Activity 8 Challenge and support

Allow about 10 minutes

Using the model above, think about supporting a coach. What coach developer behaviours in addition to those shown in the figure might be used to challenge and support a coach effectively?

An example is given below:

Challenge-related behaviours	Support-related behaviours
Ask them to try something different in their next session that stretches them	Share a session with them as a co-coach letting them take the lead role.
<i>Provide your answer...</i>	<i>Provide your answer...</i>
<i>Provide your answer...</i>	<i>Provide your answer...</i>
<i>Provide your answer...</i>	<i>Provide your answer...</i>
<i>Provide your answer...</i>	<i>Provide your answer...</i>
<i>Provide your answer...</i>	<i>Provide your answer...</i>
<i>Provide your answer...</i>	<i>Provide your answer...</i>

Discussion

Table 1 shows some examples of possible coach developer behaviours. Your response may well have differed depending on your working context. It is important to think about this balance between challenge and support throughout your work and to try and make it appropriate to each individual's needs: not an easy task.

Table 1 Examples of coach developer behaviours aimed at challenging or supporting a coach

Challenge-related behaviours	Support-related behaviours
Ask them to try something different in their next session that stretches them	Share a session with them as a co-coach letting them take the lead role
Invite them to explain a new idea they are using with another group (athletes or coaches)	Show care by contacting them outside your normal scheduled time e.g. 'Do you want to talk anything through before the weekend?'
Ask their permission to observe their session with video and/or an observation tool (see Session 7)	Pass on any resources you think may help them with an issue they are facing
Set them a goal of using feedback with athletes in four different ways	Invite them to watch a colleague with you
Extend an invitation to let them watch you coach and ask for their feedback	Receive feedback from them on your own coaching and ask them to explain how it may have benefited them?

Becoming a better coach is a complex process and sometimes things may not go according to plan, this is when the support part of your role becomes crucial. In this final

section you will find out more about learning from mistakes both as a coach developer and as a coach.

9 Learning from setbacks

Learning to become a better coach means being prepared to admit to making mistakes and accepting failure as an inevitable part of coaching. It requires an openness and willingness to discuss things that don't go to plan and to learn from these experiences. As a coach developer one of the most crucial aspects of your role is to support and guide coaches through the process of learning from failure. This will be helped by the strength and health of the relationship you have with these coaches.



Figure 10 Slipping up and making mistakes is a rich source of learning

Failure is not easy – sometimes shame, embarrassment and a fear of 'losing face' can be a barrier to accepting that mistakes happen and that something can be learned from them. These feelings may be felt because failure and a fear of mistakes have been socially constructed as a sign of weakness, under-achievement, losing and rejection.

Activity 9 Alex talks about his approach to mistakes

Allow about 15 minutes

In this activity Alex talks about his approach to helping coaches learn from their mistakes. In your experience, do coaches sit down with other people in real life to learn by reflecting on their mistakes, or is this just something that happens in theory?

Audio content is not available in this format.



Audio 5

Provide your answer...

Discussion

Alex claims that learning from mistakes is a vital part of becoming a better coach and a better coach developer. Sharing reflections on mistakes and failure may well be productive in a strong, healthy relationship that is supportive and co-operative. Sometimes the rhetoric around how you should deal with setbacks can seem rather theoretical but one thing is certain, failure is part of success. Often, working through setbacks while in a close, committed and complementary relationship can make the relationship stronger.

At the start of this session you saw that shared goals, connection, empathy, trust and attitude towards mistakes all contribute to effective learning relationships. The common coach development thread between all these ideas is the deliberate planning and effort that is needed for these to take effect.

10 Building your coach developer 101 guide

The main discussion points from this session that you might share and discuss with colleagues are described in Table 2 below.

Table 2 Some practices coach developers can use to build expertise in their role

Practices and ideas	Description
11. Using humanist principles	Based on Carl Roger's humanist approach to relationships it draws on the principles of congruence (being authentic), empathy and unconditional positive regard (being non-judgemental).
12. First impressions and planning the first meeting	Planning the first meeting with a coach is an important process, as it helps start the relationship on a sound footing.
13. Building trust	Trust is an important element of all learning relationships. For learning to take place people have to feel safe, valued and respected; it takes time.
14. Balancing support and challenge	Optimise when and why to challenge coaches and stretch them and know when and why they need support.
15. Learning from mistakes	Mistakes are a rich source of learning. Failure is an essential component of success if perceived in this way.

11 This session's quiz

Check what you've learned this week by taking the end-of-session quiz.

[Session 3 practice quiz](#)

Open the quiz in a new window or tab then come back here when you've finished.

12 Summary of Session 3

The main learning points from this session are:

1. You have examined the similarities between a coach–athlete relationship and a coach–coach developer relationship. You considered the extent to which a coach–coach developer relationship should resemble aspects of closeness, commitment, complementarity and co-orientation.
2. The principles of humanist practice to a coach developer role have been outlined, and you have considered how congruence, empathy and unconditional positive regard can create a growth promoting environment.
3. Planning the initial meeting with a coach that you will be about to support is crucial – it is a meeting that needs to be carefully thought through.
4. Balancing the challenges you deliver to coaches in developing their practice with the support you provide is a skilled process that evolves and changes over time and is specific to each coach you work with.
5. Trust and empathy are important components of successful learning relationships – they can be the bedrock on which coaches learn and develop their practice.
6. Becoming aware that mistakes are integral to learning – provided they are reflected on and accepted as opportunities to learn and develop. Mistakes only become opportunities to learn if they are perceived in this way.

This session has covered important elements associated with the process of building effective learning relationships. However, one element is missing. All relationships are structured by forms of power, and the coach–coach developer relationship is no exception.

In the next session you begin to explore the influence of power and the consequences this has for your self-awareness as a coach developer.

You can now go to [Session 4](#).

Session 4: Becoming self-aware of power in your role

Introduction

Have you ever experienced an uneasy relationship with a coach you are supporting – perhaps a feeling of coldness or scepticism being expressed towards you? Are you aware of the potential power you have over coaches and how you might, unwittingly, project your ideas onto them?

In this session you'll develop your self-awareness of how relationships are structured by different forms of power, and how they are infused with opinions, beliefs and perceptions that impact your ability to build rapport and influence change.



Figure 1 How self-aware are you as a coach developer? What is the image you see of yourself in this role?

You will explore these insights using three examples from research:

1. a coach being assessed for a coaching qualification
2. coaches participating in coaching qualification courses
3. coach developers entering a professional football club.

By becoming more knowledgeable about your status, identity and power you will develop your ability to manage the influence you have on other people.

To start this session, watch this short video where Lucy Moore and Alex Twitchen briefly discuss their understanding of power and it how influences their work as coach developers.

Video content is not available in this format.

[Video 1](#)



By the end of this session, you should be able to:

- describe the meaning of power in a coach–coach developer relationship
- reflect on case studies illustrating the use of power in coach learning and development relationships
- become more self-aware of your power and identity as a coach developer and where this power stems from.

Throughout this session you will come back to the ideas expressed in Video 1. You'll start, however, by exploring what is meant by power in social relationships.

1 Power and social circumstances

Power is an intrinsic aspect of all social relationships but often its presence or importance is not understood. A power imbalance of one individual over others can stem from factors such as their position of authority, status, reputation and personality.



Figure 2 Who has more power, and how unbalanced is the distribution of power in a relationship?

Power is not necessarily bad, but when there is a power imbalance between people the effectiveness of learning can be influenced by the way the possession of power is used.

Activity 1 Power, society and your role

Allow about 10 minutes

Watch this short video which describes power in personal and social relationships. Afterwards, make brief notes on the following question: What creates the power you have as a coach developer?

Video content is not available in this format.

[Video 2](#)



Provide your answer...

Discussion

Until you are made aware of it you are unlikely to think about where the source of power as well as imbalances in power, stem from. Certainly, by being labelled a coach developer, tutor, assessor, mentor, trainer or similar, imbues you with some authority, as does your history and reputation in your sport.

By the end of this session you will be able to appreciate where your power stems from more fully.

Power operates at both a societal level as well as within relationships between two people. If you are assessing a coach for a qualification you have a source of power as the assessor; this status and power is connected to the policy for coaches to be professionally certificated and the qualification system that is created to service this policy.

The source and distribution of power can be said to flow from the societal level right down to the interaction between you and any coach you are assessing. This is just one example of how power is created and distributed. In the next activity the idea of power as a relational process specific to the context of a coach–coach developer relationship is examined further.

2 Power and coach developers

In the following activity you will read an article that has been specially written for this course by Ed Cope, Learning design and development manager at the Football Association.

The article offers a rich insight into the type of power that exists between coaches and coach developers. The article also illustrates how coach developers can become more self-aware of the power they possess and in so doing use their power to better support learning and development.



Figure 3 Power is not something that can be turned off or on

Activity 2 Power: Why it should be shared with rather than exerted on coaches

Allow about 20 minutes

Read the following article (5 minute read time) by Ed Cope, Learning design and development manager at the Football Association. As you read the article respond to these three questions:

1. Why is context vital to fully understanding the distribution of power between a coach and coach developer?
2. Traditionally, how does the hierarchical structure of the coach–coach developer relationship influence power?
3. How can coach developers share power with coaches?

Understanding power in the learning and development process: Insights for coach developers

As a coach developer, you hold a position of power over coaches. Power is the notion of being able to influence the behaviours of others, and materializes in many different ways, including economic, cultural and social. In the context of the coach–coach developer relationship, it is social power that is most applicable. Social power refers to how people use their social position to influence the behaviours of others within a particular context. Context is a vital factor here, as this determines who holds the power and the extent to which they hold it. For example, while a coach developer may

have power over a grassroots coach because of the relationship they hold, the same coach developer will hold a different relationship with a coach working in a different context and therefore the power relationship will be different.

Status and esteem – a source of power

Traditionally, the role of a coach developer has been hierarchically positioned above that of a coach. This situation has emerged often because coach developers have transitioned into this role from being experienced coaches who often hold the highest-level coaching qualification and coaching positions relevant to the context they are working in. Because of coach developers' biographies and the esteem they tend to possess, their ideas and practices go unquestioned by coaches who simply conform through fear of being embarrassed or ostracized if they do not. This is especially the case on formal coaching qualification courses, where coach developers are responsible for making judgements of coach competency.

Historically, it has been common for coach developers to see themselves as the 'knowledge bearer' whose role is to pass knowledge down to coaches. The term 'empty vessels waiting to be filled' is a term that has been coined by coaching scholars (Cushion et al., 2003) to indicate how coaches are passive recipients of the education they receive. The more coaches are exposed to this approach the more they uncritically accept ideas presented to them. Over time, coaches transitioning into coach developer roles end up promoting the very approach that they were subjected to, and thus the process becomes cyclical and reproduced successively over periods of time. This is particularly problematic as their coach development practice will unlikely ever be as effective as it has the potential to be in terms of positively impacting coach learning and development.

Sharing power with coaches

Clearly a learning culture that does not promote the questioning of ideas and practices, and crucially where these come from, is not conducive for an honest, trusting and effective coach–coach developer relationship. To move this forward, coach developers need to recognize the power they have and adopt strategies that lead to this power being shared *with*, rather than exerted *on*, coaches. Such strategies include listening to coaches to understand their learning needs, avoiding making judgements on coaches' practice before understanding the context in which they work and who it is they work with, and being open-minded to consider alternative ways of responding to problems faced that may not fit with existing experiences.

(Cope, 2019)

Provide your answer...

Discussion

1. As you saw in the first activity of Session 1, the relationship between a coach and a coach developer varies according to the context of the relationship. This can mean the power relationship between a highly experienced coach developer and

a novice beginner coach will be very different to the degree of power the same coach developer will have over a highly experienced and well qualified coach.

2. Coach developers tend to be experienced and highly qualified coaches in their own right. Where this occurs it creates a hierarchical structure in which the distribution of power can be unequal and coaches feel relatively powerless to challenge or question the practice of the coach developer.
3. Coach developers can become more aware of the power they have – this is the purpose of this session – and through this greater degree of self-awareness they can learn to *share* rather *exert* power on coaches. The article provides some practical suggestions on how this can be achieved and these are worth noting.

In the sections that follow you explore three examples (Cases A–C) that illustrate further the arguments made in the article. As you will discover, two of the examples represent power and influence being *exerted on* coaches rather than *shared with* coaches, while the third represents power being *exerted on* coach developers.

The examples highlight the complexity of power relations and the extent to which the presence, use and effect of power to influence others shifts and flows from context to context. Power is therefore never produced and reproduced identically across all coach–coach developer relationships.

3 Coach developers in control

The first example of a power imbalance is a stark case and makes uncomfortable reading. In the example, a coach developer exerts power to regulate and control a coach as he assesses the coach for a qualification.



Figure 4 What happens when a coach and coach developer have a different perspective on an aspect of coaching practice?

As you undertake the activity reflect on whether or not you have been confronted with a similar experience in the past.

Activity 3 Case A: Do it like this

Allow about 20 minutes

Case A is drawn from a study of the relationships between mentors and beginner coaches (mentees) in the sport of swimming (Zehntner and McMahon, 2018). Read Case A about the mentor–mentee relationship in the context of a coaching certification process – the mentor is also assessing the coach. The trainee coach has noticed that a swimmer is having problems adopting the right breathing technique. Once you have read Case A, answer the following questions:

1. Where is the power the mentor is using coming from?
2. What are the consequences of the power being used in this way?

Case A:

As I approach the little girl, my mentor clicks his fingers like a person ... in a restaurant ... I turn towards him and he points to the same swimmer that I have already noticed. His face is screwed up and looks angry. 'Fix that' he says, 'That needs to be corrected now!' I nod and smile. I feel like I am in trouble. I quickly scan the parents on the pool deck and they have all heard

the interaction between my mentor and I. At this stage I am holding back tears, there are three other coaches on pool deck and everyone's attention seems to be on me so I just try and hold my emotion in.

I stop the little girl ... and talk her through what she is supposed to be doing. My mentor calls out from his chair, 'You need to hold her head and do it for her!' I feel panicky again. I do not feel comfortable with manipulation of the little girl's head. I know that he wants it done like that, but it does not sit right with me. But, I do it anyhow. I don't want to get into trouble anymore. It all feels incredibly awkward, I want this job, I want to coach, I need to do these hours here otherwise I will have to start over somewhere else. If my mentor refuses to sign off my hours, I won't get certified.

I gently hold the swimmer's head the boss [mentor] gets up off his chair and strides up behind me. He bends down onto one knee and pushes my hands away. He calls out with unnecessary loudness, 'that's not how you do it. Do it like this!'. He grabs the girl's head aggressively and turns it to the side. I cringe as he does it. I feel a knot in my stomach ... This is not how I want to coach but I know I have to do it his way to get though ...

(Zehntner and McMahon, 2018)

Provide your answer...

Discussion

1. The power that is being exerted by the mentor over the mentee coach stems from two sources. First, we assume the mentor is a more experienced and more highly qualified coach appointed by the sport's governing body. Second, power also stems from the context: the mentor's dual role of mentor *and* assessor is accompanied by the power to pass or fail the coach.
2. The consequences create a discordant relationship that does not appear to be conducive to learning and development. The direct action of the mentor illustrates how the mentor has a different way of approaching the coaching of the swimming technique, and he forcibly imposes his solution. The mentee reluctantly submits to the power of the mentor and doesn't challenge the mentor. He accepts this is how it must be in order to achieve his certification.

Zehntner and McMahon (2018) use concepts developed by Michel Foucault, a social theorist and critic of modern societies, to explain the social effects of power. According to this approach coaches are subtly regulated, disciplined and controlled so that their coaching practices become incorporated into established and dominant ideas about coaching. In Case A, the mentee feels relatively powerless to rebel or resist the power invested in the mentor and so they feel compelled to conform.

In the next section you'll explore similar ideas but in a different context. You'll read about the power and influence of individuals tutoring on coaching qualification courses.

4 It's my way!

You'll now explore how power relations can be applied to a coaching qualification course. In the activity that follows you'll read about how individuals tutoring on these courses deploy their knowledge and subtle forms of power over the coaches.



Figure 5 In control and doing it my way

Case B represents another example of power although, as you might conclude, a form of power that is closely related to the example you read about in Case A.

Activity 4 Case B: An open approach to responding to questions?

Allow about 20 minutes

Read the following extract from a study undertaken by Piggot (2012). To what extent do you recognise the tutoring being demonstrated in this extract? Please note, L1, L2 and L3 refer to the qualification levels adopted by the United Kingdom Coaching Certificate (UKCC) framework.

... coach educators ... employed a range of techniques to (re)produce knowledge and protect their positions of power. First, authority was established, usually through reference to experience and status. As Hayley explained: '... it was the constant reminder of his years of experience and years in the job that was drip-fed into the conversation ... [It] served as a reminder that he had the experience; he had the knowledge. Therefore, there was no need to question it.' (Hayley, Swimming L2)

Such practices served to establish dominant ... power relations which were described by coaches as 'paternalistic', [we were] 'treated like children or like players' (Lyle, Football L2). In order to reinforce these relations, coach educators drew on the technique of 'deifying knowledge', rendering unassailable the ideas and practices they were presenting. This practice was characterised by Craig: 'They constantly referred to 'when they were working with such and such a player' and 'when they were working with such and such a club' and erm ... you feel they were bringing them in because they feel their experience outweighs your own and undermines your own way of coaching' (Craig, Basketball L3). When coaches attempted to question this knowledge and the associated practices, questions were either bluntly 'shot down' or countered with the more subtle response: 'that's interesting but ...'. This technique characterised a sophisticated attempt to 'pay lip service to questions' (Evelyn, Gymnastics L1) whilst simultaneously drawing attention back to the orthodoxy, [e.g.]: 'they'll always say 'that's a good idea. I really like that but ...' Then they'll take it back to what they know. So there is that chance to sort of debate, but it's not real. It's artificial. It's for show. There's still that underlying feeling that their way is still the best way to do it and we accept that because we want to pass the course'. (Lyle, Football L2).

(Piggot, 2012)

Provide your answer...

Discussion

Case B reveals subtle yet powerful techniques that can be used unwittingly by coach developers to reinforce and reproduce certain forms of behaviour and practice. When tutoring a course you have an immediate potential power imbalance which can influence what and how coaches learn. If you are not self-aware the use of this authority can have unintentional consequences.

This power is often a constituent part of the relationship between the person delivering and those being taught. An expert coach developer should reflect and recognise the nature of the power relationship and how they can use their knowledge and that of participants to positively effect learning. Effective questioning is such an important part of a coach developer's work that Session 6 is devoted to this topic.

Reflecting on experiences and the ability to read the social situations that unfold is partly what makes a highly skilled coach developer. Being aware of the power you possess, the extent of this power, its source and how you can use your power constructively to support learning and development is vitally important.

As a contrast, in the next section you consider a situation where power has been inverted and the coach developer is in a relatively powerless position.

5 When power is turned upside down

As a coach developer you often enter organisations as the representative of another organisation. In the activity below you will read how a coach developer's work is compromised by the perceptions of their role and the organisation they represent.



Figure 6 How can you stop forms of power obstructing your role as coach developer?

Through the following case study you are continuing to build on your own self-awareness of power relations.

Activity 5 Case C: Placed 'on the back foot'

Allow about 15 minutes

The following three extracts are taken from interviews that examine the experiences of full-time coach developers, academy managers and coaches within professional football clubs (Cushion et al., 2017).

Read the extracts and then write down your thoughts on the following:

1. Can you think of examples where you have also been placed 'on the back foot' or met a brick wall as a guest at an organisation: how would you react in this situation?
2. Where do the views and opinions of the academy managers (Extracts 1 and 2) and the coach (Extract 3) come from, and why?

Extract 1

Interviewer: How do you see the coach [developer role] within your club?

Academy manager 1: Well, first of all, the word 'within' is dangerous, 'cause he wouldn't be within! ... He would be 'outside', supporting us with our qualifications. [They] could not come and start telling anybody what to do. It doesn't work that way. He's invited in as our guest, as our support person. I told him that he could come in but he wasn't going to change anything as we have our own way of doing things and our way is the right way.

Extract 2

Interviewer: Can you describe the impact that the coach [developer] had on your coaching programme?

Academy manager 2: None. No, we've asked the coach [developer] when he comes in ... to reinforce our coaching programme.

Extract 3

Coach developer: I was told I could come in but wasn't going to change anything as they (the club) have their own way of doing things and their way is the right way.

Coach: When I first came across the coach [developer] and asked who that is, oh it's ... from the Sports Governing Body, straightaway I was defensive.

(Cushion et al., 2017)

Provide your answer...

Discussion

1. Case C demonstrates how the coach developer's work is always constructed within, and shaped by, the beliefs, perceptions and opinions of individuals. Academy managers 1 and 2 are setting boundaries that impact on the support the coach developer can provide. The coach developer has been told he is not going to change anything: it is challenging to build a relationship to improve coaching practice when people are not open in the first place. The coach in Extract 3 reveals how a perception of the coach developer's organisation immediately puts the coach on the defensive.

Responding to these types of situations is hard and can be demotivating but honesty, authenticity and a willingness to try to develop rapport are sound starting points. In these examples any coach learning and development that takes place involves the interplay of power between the coach developer, the academy managers and the coaches.

2. Perhaps these views and opinions – and how they shape the distribution and balance of power between people – are either:
 - a fear of what somebody from an outside organisation might bring with them
 - a perception of the organisation the coach developers are employed by, and/or
 - a conviction that their club's coaching programme doesn't need to change or be challenged.

In these circumstances any potential to influence coaching practice becomes a complex and dynamic social process of accommodation, negotiation and compromise.

In this last example the tables have been turned. It is the coach developer on whom power is being exerted. Through the circumstances of this context the coach developers may have to explore and find some quite subtle methods of building relationships that will influence the development of coaching practice.

These three case studies have demonstrated how power relations between a coach and coach developer vary from situation to situation and are in a continued state of flux. They have also underlined the importance as to why coach developers should be self-aware about the degree of power they may have, or might not have, and the influence this can have on learning.

To draw this session to a close you are now introduced to a term that may be new to you: reflexivity.

6 The reflexive coach developer

Being reflexive means looking back on your experiences and understanding the effect you have on other people as well as recognising the reasons why you have this effect.



Figure 7 Looking back at yourself through the lens of your own self-identity – what do you see?

Being reflexive can be an important aspect of expertise for those supporting the learning and development of coaches. Lucy Moore takes up the story:

For me, being reflexive is a process of looking back on your own practices and behaviours to help you better appreciate how and why the coaches you are supporting perceive you in the way they do. It is having a heightened sense of self-awareness and understanding about your role as a coach developer – about understanding why you believe what you believe – and seeing this from the perspective of the coach. I always remember how I felt when I was being observed as a coach and being given feedback. Those experiences now shape my behaviour when I am supporting coaches. The saying goes ‘treat others as you want to be treated’ and I aspire to do so. Being reflexive increases your potential to navigate some of the power relations, opinions, beliefs and perceptions that you may encounter as a coach developer and understand these in more detail.

(Lucy Moore, coach developer)

Reflexivity is therefore more than just being reflective. Instead, it is reaching a point of knowing *why* you believe *what* you believe about developing coaches, and projecting this in your behaviours and actions (Warren, 2011). It is about how you construct your self-identity as a coach developer and what this role means to you.

Being reflexive requires having a deep sense of self-awareness and introspection and a willingness to always question yourself and imagine your effect on others through the lens

of how you would want to be treated. An important and integral part of this is recognising the distribution of power in your relationships with coaches.

7 Building your coach developer 101 guide

The main discussion points from this session that you might share and discuss with colleagues are described in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Some practices coach developers can use to build expertise in their role

Practices and ideas	Description
16. Power relations	Power is intrinsic in every relationship, but power is not distributed evenly and it stems from many different sources. The distribution of power can shift within relationships over time.
17. Sharing power	Self-aware coach developers share power through listening to coaches' needs, avoiding making judgements on their practice, being open minded and conscious of the context in which they work.
18. Hierarchy and status	Coach developers are often highly qualified and experienced coaches which reinforces a perceived hierarchy and status. Taking steps to listen and connect to coaches will help collaborative learning.
19. Reflexivity	This is the process of bending back onto yourself, your actions and behaviours to better understand the identity you project to others. This involves being introspective and knowing yourself well.

8 This session's quiz

Now it's time to complete the Session 4 badge quiz. It is similar to previous quizzes, but this time instead of answering five questions there will be fifteen.

[Session 4 compulsory badge quiz](#)

Remember, this quiz counts towards your badge. If you're not successful the first time, you can attempt the quiz again in 24 hours.

Open the quiz in a new tab or window then come back here when you've finished.

9 Summary of Session 4

The main learning points from this session are:

1. Power is a feature of all social relationships. Power can be a force for good or it can be used to constrain, discipline and impose ideas on others. The distribution of power within relationships is uneven and always changing.
2. Coach developers possess power through their status and reputation. Being self-aware of this is crucial in developing relationships with coaches and power should be shared with coaches not exerted on them.
3. Relationships of power between a coach and coach developer can vary from context to context. No two situations are the same and the distribution of power is constantly in flux as the specific circumstances of a relationship change.
4. You have read three examples how power influences the learning and development process. These examples demonstrated the fluidity of power between contexts and reveal where the sources of power can stem from.
5. You have been introduced to the idea of reflexivity. Reflexivity is more than being reflective. It is a process of bending back onto yourself the behaviours you use with others, recognising how you would respond to these behaviours if you were the subject of them and knowing why you believe what you believe about developing coaches.

Tutoring courses is one of the potential roles you may undertake as a coach developer. In this role as well as the ability and awareness to build effective learning relationships, and understand the power you potentially possess, you also require good teaching skills. This is the subject of the next session.

You are now halfway through the course. The Open University would really appreciate your feedback and suggestions for future improvement in our optional [end-of-course survey](#), which you will also have an opportunity to complete at the end of Session 8. Participation will be completely confidential and we will not pass on your details to others.

You can now go to [.Session 5](#)

Session 5: Developing your teaching repertoire and skills

Introduction

As a coach developer there may be occasions when you undertake some form of teaching. When you deliver a workshop, for example, you draw on teaching skills to explain information and support learning.

Helping coaches to learn through good teaching is a skill that can be continuously improved. In this session, you will explore the idea of developing your repertoire of teaching approaches.



Figure 1 The coach developer when tutoring uses a variety of teaching skills in this role.

This session cannot cover all teaching situations. Instead you will look more closely at the following three approaches:

1. problem-based learning
2. flipped learning
3. instruction.

You will focus on these approaches because they cover techniques including facilitation, group work, use of online technologies and instructional behaviours that are used elsewhere in teaching. In subsequent sessions you will also cover teaching-related skills

such as questioning (Session 6) and observation (Session 7). The overall purpose is to build a deeper knowledge of teaching and how learning occurs.

By the end of this session, you should be able to:

- appreciate different approaches to teaching that coach developers can draw on
- know the principles of problem-based and flipped learning, and
- use direct instruction more effectively.

You start this session by applying some of the assumptions about adult learning you covered in Session 2.

1 Beyond the assumptions of adult learning

You may remember Knowles' (1990) ideas about how adults learn from earlier in this course.



Figure 2 Adults need to understand why they are learning and how it applies to their context

The end point (in Session 2, Activity 5) arrived at the following six conclusions. To enhance coach learning and development you need to:

1. Clearly explain the purpose of the learning and how it will benefit coaches.
2. Draw on the considerable and varied experiences of coaches as a rich resource for learning and recognise prior knowledge in the tone of your delivery.
3. Enable coaches to be responsible for their own learning and provide individual autonomy where possible.
4. Relate the content you are presenting as being applicable to their world and to current issues and challenges.
5. Use problem solving and task-centred approaches where possible.
6. Relate learning to personal characteristics such as self-esteem, quality of life and job satisfaction.

This list is useful in comparing your current approach to teaching. Perhaps it makes you consider how you might adjust part of your teaching practice. Two further teaching approaches should also be encouraged according to Knowles et al. (2005), which are:

7. Adults should be involved in the planning and organisation of their learning.
8. Learning experiences provide the basis for experimentation and making mistakes.

One of Knowles' (1990) conclusions is that adults learn best when content is presented to them in a problem-centred way (item 5 in the above list); problem-based learning (PBL) is the first teaching approach that you explore in more detail.

2 Exploring problem-based learning (PBL)

Problem-based learning originated as a popular method of teaching in medical schools in the 1960s. The essence of the PBL approach lies in stimulating learning by actively exploring possible solutions to open-ended problems. It is considered a constructivist approach to learning, as learners construct and build their knowledge through the problem-solving process.



Figure 3 Collaboration with others often illustrates the different perspectives we have of a problem

Problems that directly address the immediate priorities and challenges facing coaches are also more likely to be motivating than simulated abstract problems that are unrelated to the context the coach is working in.

Activity 1 Exploring problem-based learning in practice

Allow about 20 minutes

Watch the following two videos. The first (Video 1) shows the reflections of a new sport lecturer introduced to PBL, and the second (Video 2) summarises the problem-based learning approach used by Maastricht University across all subjects. As you watch both videos respond to the following questions:

1. Explain the role of the teacher in PBL.
2. How might PBL be used in your context, perhaps with less regular contact with groups than those at a university?
3. How effective do you think PBL is for learning about a coaching problem when, to understand the problem, it requires learning considerable new knowledge?

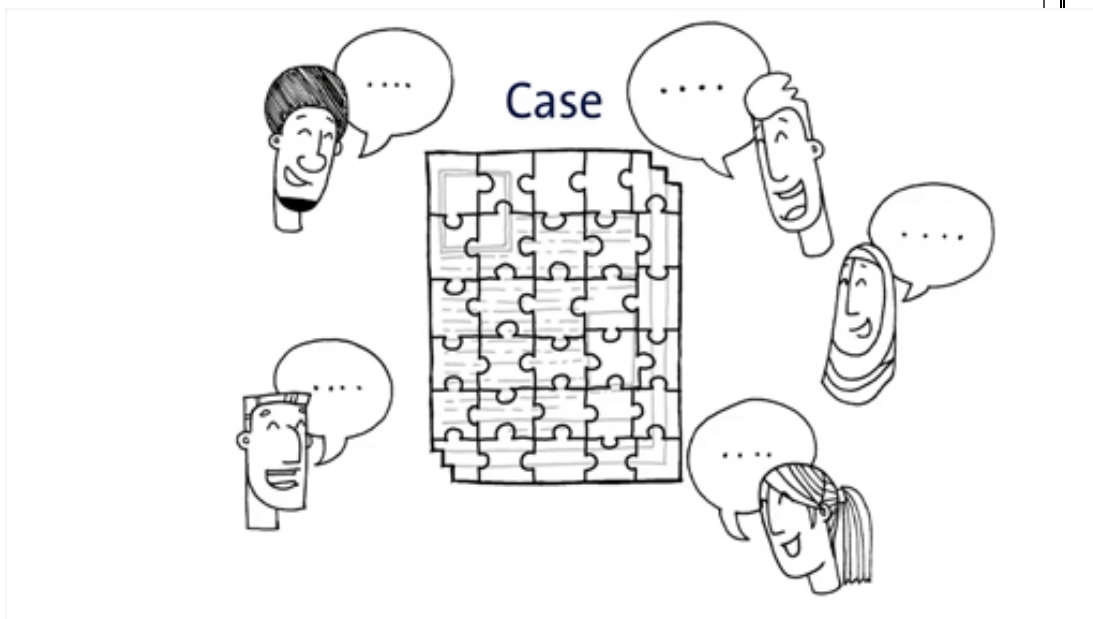
Video content is not available in this format.

[Video 1](#)



Video content is not available in this format.

[Video 2](#)



Provide your answer...

Discussion

1. The role of the teacher using PBL is to direct and facilitate a deeper, more critical understanding of the problem. Rarely does the teacher provide information – they are conducting the learning experience and helping students to learn through their own resources, curiosity and analysis. This is arguably more about facilitation skills than teachers conveying information.

2. It is impossible to know if PBL would work in your environment unless you try it. Also, the coaching problem you focus on needs careful framing; it is a skill to teach this way and it is likely to need some practice through trial and error. Ideally PBL needs enough time for coaches to go away and research further into a problem so the amount of contact you have with a group and their existing knowledge may shape how you implement PBL.
3. The videos do not directly explain how much prior knowledge is needed for PBL. However, if you are thinking of exploring a very complex problem you might question if coaches already have sufficient background knowledge to make sense of, and pick apart, the problem. De Bruyckere et al. (2015) present evidence that PBL is appropriate when applying existing knowledge to new problems; it is **not** an effective approach for acquiring new knowledge.

Having considered these aspects of PBL, you will now look at two examples where this approach to teaching might be used.

2.1 When would you use PBL?

Look at these two examples of problems that coaches might typically confront:

1. Your athlete suffers an injury three months before a major competition that limits their ability to train. How do you adjust and adapt the training programme and maintain the athlete's psychological welfare?
2. One of the participants that attends your regular coaching session suddenly becomes disruptive, uncooperative and openly critical of your coaching. What do you do?

These might be appropriate types of problems for coaches to find solutions for, but only if they are relevant to the context of the coaches you are supporting. They also suggest that your coaches need to have reasonable levels of prior experience and knowledge. They need to have time to explore the options and have the skills to collaborate in groups to address the problem. They need to be motivated to explore an issue and ideally you need to maintain some contact with them (in person or online) while they are problem solving. The next approach you discover more about is called flipped learning. It has a similarity to PBL in allowing people to explore topics on their own terms and with teachers again acting as facilitators.

3 Exploring a flipped learning model

The approach to the start of this section is very different – you go straight into an activity. The reason will soon become apparent.

Activity 2 Preparing for the section ahead: flipped learning

Allow about 10 minutes

Using the terms 'flipped learning' or 'flipped classroom' in an internet search engine, research what flipped learning means. You may even find a video of flipped learning being used in practice, even if it is outside of a sport context.

Provide your answer...

Discussion

Flipped learning is all about learners doing meaningful preparation, just like you have in already researching the topic of this section. By flipping a traditional approach to teaching you have already acquired an understanding of the ideas you are going to consider further.

When you flip the classroom and coaches and teachers meet face-to-face, the focus can be organised around discussing, clarifying, extending and applying the material the learners have engaged with prior to the session.

In the following activity you will extend your understanding further.

Activity 3 Rethinking space and time: how it applies to coaching practice

Allow about 20 minutes

Watch Video 3 which is about rethinking space and time using the flipped learning model. Then watch Video 4 in which Mark Upton (formerly of the English Institute of Sport) explains how he used flipped learning in his coaching practice at a professional club.

Answer these two questions:

1. What space and time is being changed?
2. What does Upton claim are the benefits of using flipped learning?

Video content is not available in this format.

[Video 3](#)



Video 4: [The 'flipped classroom' and sports coaching](#). Watch from the start up to 06:23.

Provide your answer...

Discussion

1. The 'space' relates to the classroom space and how it is organised, while 'time' refers to the face-to-face time when you meet with your learners.
2. Upton claims in Video 4 that flipped learning is more learner-centred than in a traditional teaching model as learners discuss and make sense of the content between themselves in a more engaged way. It was claimed from Upton's piece of research that learners' recall of tactical concepts was negligible after 'sage on the stage' learning. He referred to teachers using flipped learning as more of a 'guide on the side' i.e. not being the centre of attention or knowledge.

There is evidence to support the effectiveness of flipped learning. For example, Reddan et al. (2016) have reported on the successful use of flipped learning with a group of sports coaching students. The students preferred the flipped classroom method and teachers found that they could engage with their students more individually.

3.1 When would you use flipped learning?

Devising well thought through, structured activities that engage learners **before** you meet them is the essence of the flipped approach.



Figure 4 Flipped learning refers to how structured tasks are often undertaken before face-to-face teaching

You are most likely to use this approach if you have resources you can direct learners to; this might free up time in face-to-face contact. In a sense, this very course – if used as a pre-requisite for those attending coach developer training – could act as a form of flipped learning since everyone should arrive with similar baseline knowledge.

Both PBL and flipped learning have been termed **active** teaching approaches as opposed to passive i.e. learners do something rather than just sit and listen. In the next section you'll consider the extent to which the marginalisation of so-called passive teaching approaches, like instruction, could be unjustified.

4 Instruction: widely misunderstood?

Instruction is widely misinterpreted ... [Paul Kirchner] believes most teachers see it as 'drill and skill, authoritarian, isolated fact accumulation, one size fits all' when it is nothing of the sort.

(Times Educational Supplement, 2018)

All coach developers instruct to some extent. Yet instruction in teaching and sport is often maligned and its important role in learning can be marginalised. Perhaps this is because, as Gustafson (2019) claims, theories of **learning** – such as social constructivism (from Session 2) – have also been mis-appropriated as a theory of **teaching**. This has resulted in traditional instruction being perceived as authoritarian and old-fashioned while progressive teaching methods, characterised by minimal teacher input, have become more dominant.



Figure 5 In what circumstances is instruction an effective approach to teaching?

If done well using some basic principles, evidence shows that instruction is very effective (Stockard et al., 2018). Some of the principles of 'direct instruction' – as it is formally known by researchers – include ensuring that:

- learners have the prerequisite knowledge to learn something
- there is a clear explanation of what is expected of learners and what you want them to do
- you model the process, show learners how it is done, and try to talk through why you did it.

A more complete explanation of these and other principles follows in the next section.

4.1 Reviewing your current instruction practices

In the following activity you will explore some instruction principles that are based on the work of Neelen and Kirchner (2015) and compare them to your existing practice.



Figure 6 Knowing when to instruct coaches, and how to do this well, is a skill that all coach developers use on occasions

Activity 4 Instructional principles all teachers should know

Allow about 25 minutes

Look at the ten instructional principles in Figure 7, some of which may mirror your own current practices. Work through each principle in turn and reflect on examples from your own coach developer role where you already use all or part of the principle.

How might you implement it more fully in your context? When reflecting, think about both workshop knowledge delivery situations (i.e. class-based 'instruction') and practical coaching practice.

[Ten instructional principles](#)

Provide your answer...

Discussion

This activity highlights the importance of some teaching methods you may not have been aware of previously. For example, the importance of – ideally – daily, weekly and monthly reviews with learners is emphasised in the principles. Evidence shows that finding time for this type of dialogue is valuable; allowing a group or individuals to reflect back on their learning and articulate it is a powerful glue to learning. For example, daily reviews would be a particularly useful method on a coaching qualification course taking place over a number of days.

Peer-to-peer learning is also a useful technique cited both in the '**daily review**' and '**ask questions**' principles. In coaching you often use demonstrations to '**provide models**'; this principle (no. 4) emphasises the use of worked examples along with

talking through how something is done. The role of 'guidance' and '**providing scaffolds**' (i.e. creating a supporting structure around material) for progress towards '**independent practice**' is a familiar part of coaching.

4.2 When would you use instruction?

You are most likely to use this careful structured progression when coaches have limited knowledge of something and therefore you are breaking relatively new ground. It is often used to introduce new conceptual ideas or theories to a group.

Instruction as a teaching approach positions you in the role of guiding coaches through a series of sequenced steps while checking for understanding and giving them chances to show success.

It is also important that an over reliance on PowerPoint presentations is avoided.

In the following section you'll move on to consider professional development within teaching and the potential insights you can apply to coach learning and development.

5 What can we learn from the teaching profession?

If you view coach learning and development as sharing some aspects of pedagogy (teaching children) the teaching profession might offer further insights into improving your practice.

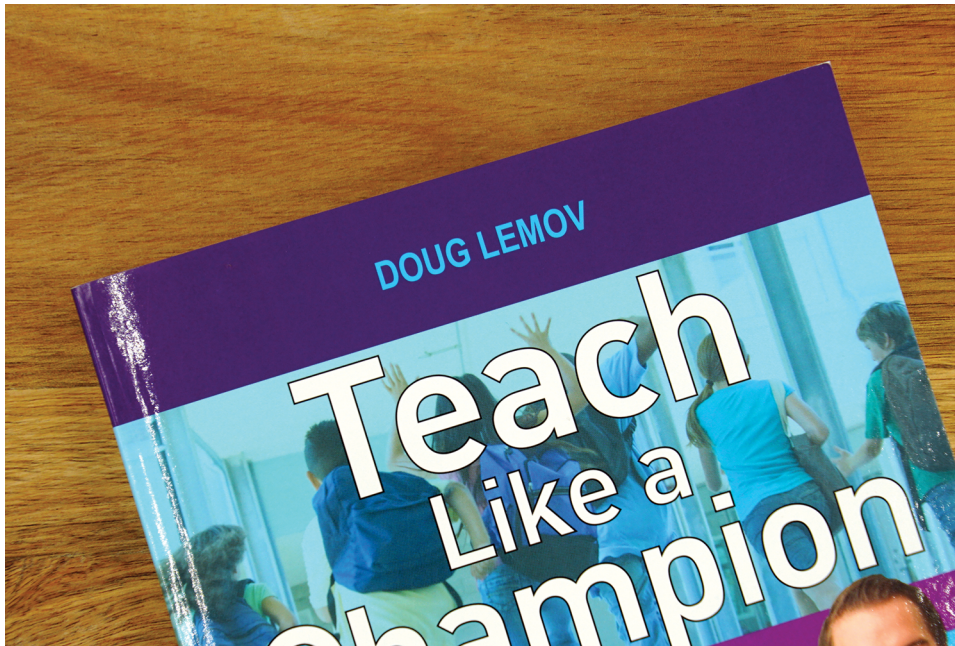


Figure 7 The professional development of teachers may offer insights for coach learning and development.

To begin to understand what you can learn from the teaching profession the following five ideas are a way of summarising contemporary teaching research. They are drawn from a fascinating book *Urban Myths about Learning and Education* (De Bruyckere et al., 2015). The book's authors, who are recognised researchers in this field, recommend:

1. **Keep the end in mind** – Identify the key information you want coaches to remember at the end of a session and formulate an appropriate question that provides focus (a bit like our question for this and other sections).
2. **Concrete examples and a narrative** – Avoid ideas that are abstract and out of context, use storytelling. Can you work the essence of your learning into a good narrative story?
3. **Variety and surprise** – Give your learners diversity to sustain their attention. Aim to do something different every 15 minutes e.g. an image, a story or something else that is different.
4. **Enough breaks** – Ensure you build in enough breaks for people to process information.
5. **Effective feedback** – Such is the importance of this topic that it is addressed in more detail in Session 7.

A shared coach developer vocabulary?

Like coaching, learning to teach is an ongoing process influenced by continuing professional development (CPD). Doug Lemov, an author and teacher developer, has observations about running CPD sessions for teachers that are potentially useful for coach development.

He suggests that the use of commonly named teaching practice behaviours that enhance shared understanding and discussion is valuable, i.e. a shared vocabulary.

Since the coach developer role is relatively new compared to other professions the shared vocabulary may emerge over time as learning and development practices become more established. This course aims to contribute to this process of a more widely shared vocabulary by the creation of the coach developer 101 guide.

Also of note in this audio clip was an appreciation that much of the learning takes place *after* any formal session, as new ideas reverberate around informal environments. This is, provided coaches' 'filters' do not result in new ideas being discarded straight away (Session 2).

Final thoughts

For many, including Lemov, teaching and coaching have elements of a craft; craftspeople adapt tools to their own style to the needs of the environment they are in.

The outcome of this session may be that you can begin to answer some challenging questions about

- which active learning methods
- in what kind of circumstances
- lead to more effective learning for which coaches
- are these methods genuinely better than traditional methods?

If you want to explore further evidence about this complex question we recommend you consult the list of references, in particular De Bruyckere et al. (2015) and Neelen and Kirschner (2015).

A top-down view of a collaborative meeting around a white table. Several people's hands and arms are visible, interacting with various items. A large black 'FORUM' sign is the central focus, underlined in red. Below it, 'DISCUSSION' is written in yellow, and 'SOLUTION' and 'SUPPORT' are written in red. Other items include a checklist, gears, speech bubbles, a coffee cup, and a 'Q & A' sign.

Wednesday 4 May 2022

Discussion

There are very limited opportunities for the voice of UK-wide coach developers to be heard so this forum represents a valuable place for you to air the needs and opinions of coach developers. In particular, it will be interesting to capture your views and suggestions on the topics of teaching, relationships and power, for example what further training would be useful.

The two discussion threads also represent very important feedback mechanisms to improve this course so that it can become a key part of new – or existing – coach developers' support and enhancement.

7 Building your coach developer 101 guide

The main discussion points from this session that you can share and discuss with colleagues are described in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Practices coach developers can draw on to build expertise in their role

Practices and ideas	Description
20. Problem-based learning (PBL)	An approach to learning that dissects an authentic 'problem'. Connects well to adult learning since it uses real world coaching issues and supports learners' motivations. The teacher becomes a facilitator.
21. Flipped learning	Learners research a topic and bring the information to a session. Flipped learning engages people in tasks earlier in the learning process and passes to them some responsibility for their own learning.
22. Instruction	A widely misunderstood teaching skill. Used well 'direct instruction' is an effective means of supporting learning, particularly when learning new content.
23. Shared vocabulary	The process of helping coach developers acquire and construct a shared vocabulary of terms related to learning and development.

8 This session's quiz

Check what you've learned this session by taking the end-of-session quiz.

[Session 5 practice quiz](#)

Open the quiz in a new window or tab then come back here when you've finished.

9 Summary of Session 5

The main learning points from this session are:

1. The method of problem-based learning (PBL) has been outlined and an explanation of how it might be used to support coach learning and development considered.
2. You have examined the method of flipped learning – an approach whereby learners are asked to prepare beforehand and so come ready to explore content in more detail. As with the PBL, the role of the teacher is to guide and facilitate learning.
3. Instruction is often misunderstood – it is still a valuable teaching method if undertaken well by following some key principles. These key principles were outlined in this session.
4. Explored five ideas which summarise research into teaching:
 - i. keep the end in mind
 - ii. use concrete examples and a narrative
 - iii. use variety and surprise
 - iv. provide enough breaks
 - v. effective feedback.
5. Your repertoire of teaching approaches can be continuously developed and expanded. Selecting when each approach might be most effectively deployed is a real skill and part of the craft of being a coach developer.

In the next session you continue to think about how you support learning through the type of questions you ask. It is a real skill to frame good questions, to listen attentively and not provide the answers too quickly.

You can now go to [Session 6](#).

Session 6: Asking good questions and listening actively

Introduction

In this session you will explore why questions are a valuable tool for coach developers and what principles can be applied to help you think about asking good questions. A lot of these ideas stem from a humanistic person-centred approach (e.g. counselling) which was introduced to you in Session 3. An equally important aspect is listening actively – this is more than just paying attention since it involves really understanding how you encourage genuine two-way dialogue.



Figure 1 Do coach developer's asks questions to help coaches illuminate their own practice and encourage new insight?

To ask great questions you have to know your stuff; I don't mean technical and tactical but curiosity, framing good questions and looking at something with a

critical eye. The coach developer needs to be asking questions not providing answers.

(Michael Poulton, Coach education and development consultant)

Good questions and active listening are all part of collecting information about coaching practice and understanding the reasoning and intention behind the behaviours demonstrated by coaches, as well as the judgements and decisions they make. Being skilled in asking good questions and listening well enables you to access their core beliefs as well as prompting reflection and dialogue.

By the end of this session, you should be able to:

- ask a range of effective questions to support learning and development and appreciate some questioning traps
- understand the importance of listening actively and hear what coaches are saying to you
- ask deeper questions about coaching purpose using a model of why, how and what.

1 Why ask questions?

Those who support coaches are often encouraged to use questioning as part of their approach (e.g. Kidman, 2005). Research also suggests that those who are coached this way – through questioning rather than just ‘being told’ – display greater performance gains and take more responsibility for and awareness of their learning (e.g. Chambers and Vickers, 2006).



Figure 2 It is unlikely you have come to questioning as a newcomer, you are probably on this track already but what is the purpose of questioning?

There are at least two dimensions to asking good questions. First of all, what *type* of question should you pose and secondly, how should you *frame* and *ask* the question? Combining these two aspects influences how a coach ‘hears’ your questions and responds to them. In the first activity you are going to watch two different people use questions in different environments to see how questions can be used to very different effect.

Activity 1 The use of questioning to support learning

Allow about 40 minutes

Watch the two short videos below which show how questioning is used to encourage reflection on practice. It’s possible that the presence of cameras influences the exchanges, as well as any differences there may be in ways of working between higher education (Video 1) and referee training (Video 2). However, despite this the contrast between approaches is fascinating.

While watching, make brief notes on the following questions:

1. Which word is used most frequently to open questions – for example, 'how' or 'what'? Are any other words used?
2. Of the conversations in the videos, roughly how much of the time is taken up by the coach developer talking, and how much by the trainee? For example, in Video 1 you might estimate that the coach talks twenty per cent of the time, and the coach developer eighty per cent.
3. How are the questions delivered, and in what manner are they posed?

Video content is not available in this format.

Video 1 (Higher Education). This clip features Thomas Legge (Senior Lecturer) at Hartbury University.



Video content is not available in this format.

Video 2 (referee training). This is a different style clip, an Australian training film; it features a rugby referee receiving mentoring support.



Provide your answer...

Discussion

Here are some observations about the two videos, addressing the three questions.

Video 1 (Higher Education) – Legge uses 'what' as the most frequent word to open his questions, and he talks for about forty per cent of the time. He maintains a positive stance towards individuals throughout and his use of 'I'm proud you have done that' was a particularly powerful use of words.

Video 2 (referee training) – the person mentoring the referee uses a full range of question-starting words: 'did you', 'what', 'when', 'how', 'tell me', 'why'. He only talks for about twenty per cent of the time. He makes evaluations of the referee's practice from which advice and guidance are given, perhaps in a fairly authoritarian manner, for example 'I want you to ...'.

These two examples demonstrate how questions can be asked in different ways using different words as a starting point. The questions also invite a response, they invite reflection which the coach developer can respond to and create a dialogue. This dialogue can build and develop, initially it can be welcoming before moving on to addressing areas for improvement.

Now that you have seen examples of the ways in which questioning might be used in diverse environments, you will next consider some overarching principles to follow for good questioning.

2 Principles for good questions

There are numerous checklists, books and online resources devoted to effective questioning. In the next few sections, you will explore some of the main principles that will help you in your work.



Figure 3 What is a principle? A proposition or ground rule that serves as the foundation of your coach development behaviours

You may be familiar with two types of questions: **open** and **closed**. Open questions are generally short and begin with 'what' or 'how' or occasionally 'when' or 'who'. They are very neutral and content free and they leave the answer open for the coach to interpret and answer as they see fit. These questions can optimise deeper exploration of coaching practice. Closed questions are occasionally useful to end part of the conversation or to check something out. They typically provoke a very closed response, usually comprising a 'yes' or 'no' answer. Closed questions are described as a form of conversational punctuation. Examples of closed questions are:

- Are you clear now about your action?
- Have we spent enough time on this subject?

Asking open and closed questions appropriately is a form of good practice, but there are some questioning 'traps' that you want to avoid. These are outlined in the next activity.

Activity 2 Questioning traps to avoid

Allow about 10 minutes

Listen to Audio 1. List those practices that are described as potential 'traps'.

Audio content is not available in this format.



Audio 1

Provide your answer...

Discussion

Questioning traps to avoid include:

Multiple questions: These tend to confuse. Imagine if someone were to ask you:

'So, what's the issue – I mean do you have one? Is it a wholly fitness-based thing or one of those psychological balance issues? I mean, what do you think? Is this important?'

Which question would you answer?

Leading questions: These tend to be questions which suggest there is a right or wrong answer. Some people refer to these questions as advice in disguise – they pose as questions but really they are all about what the coach developer thinks is the right answer.

Examples of leading questions include:

- Don't you think it would be a good idea to use a clearer voice? (The intent of the question is: 'I think you should speak more clearly')
- Have you thought about option X? (The intent of the question is: 'I think you should think about option X')

Questions beginning with 'why': This may strike you as strange – we use 'why' naturally in all kinds of situations. However, in a coaching conversation using the question 'why' can be interpreted negatively in meaning the coach needs to explain themselves: it can make the coach defensive. A good practical tip here is to create a why question without using 'why'. So, 'what was your thinking there?' or 'what were your intentions?' rather than 'why did you make that decision?'. Maybe you can appreciate the subtle but significant difference between these examples.

To summarise the ideas covered so far, you have explored open, closed, multiple and leading questions, and finally questions beginning with 'why'. Before you move on, watch Video 3 in which leading athletics coach Toni Minichiello (coach of Olympic gold medallist Jessica Ennis-Hill) reflects, with sophisticated self-awareness, on his own questioning style.

Video content is not available in this format.

Video 3



Notice how Toni admits to being 'conscious of what I say' and his comments on how to use video playback silently to get 'richer answers' before any questions are asked.

In this section you have explored several guiding principles. In the next section you will enhance these further.

3 Experiences of using questioning practices

Questioning should help to create a dialogue – it should be conversational, but it is a skill just like many other interpersonal practices.



Figure 4 Lucy Moore and Stuart Armstrong share their experiences of questioning practices.

In the following activity you will discover further nuances that may help you ask better questions.

Activity 3 Lucy Moore and Stuart Armstrong discuss their experiences

Allow about 20 minutes

Listen to Audio 2. In this audio Lucy Moore and Stuart Armstrong reflect on their own experiences to discuss the balance between persistence in asking questions in order to raise a coach's awareness and being more direct in proposing or suggesting something. They call this more direct approach 'tell' questions. What advice do they suggest in using 'tell' questions and when might it be appropriate to use this question type?

Audio content is not available in this format.



Audio 2

Provide your answer...

Discussion

Lucy reveals that she thinks she ought to use 'tell' questions more often while Stuart suggests he is trying to move away from his tendency to 'tell' in coach learning and development. This is largely based on their different personalities. They both suggest 'tell' can be used as a direct question such as 'have you thought of using' and that they only use it when it is obvious that a person has limited self-awareness and a protracted questioning approach is drifting without focus. They describe it as inviting someone to consider an idea. Being candid and giving facts that a coach may not be able to see (e.g. the proportion of time a coach talks in a session) is another way of using 'tell'. This can generate a meaningful conversation rather than 'a questioning pantomime' of a respondent trying to guess the answer that someone is looking for. A final tip that emerged from Lucy's story of a her telling a coach to try something different in their half time team talk was her reflection that she had not adequately explained **why** trying something new might be useful to the coach and their participants.

You have heard here how even two experienced coach developers are constantly reflecting on their own questioning practices and working towards improving their approach. Questioning is also an area that is researched. Cope et al.'s (2016) interesting conversational analysis in coaching suggests, amongst other findings, that when using questions you need to allow enough time for people to think and not being afraid of silence. This research is summarised more fully in an article by Oakley and Twitchen (2019): ['How to ask better questions in developing others'](#).

So far, the types of question you have focused on have addressed what coaches do. But there are also deeper questions and conversations to be had that start to explore the beliefs and values that coaches hold.

4 Deeper questions: from the inside out

This section is, for many, a central part of developing coaches. In Session 1 you explored how part of the process of coach learning and development is to help make implicit values and beliefs **explicit**, and therefore open to reflection and discussion. Deeper questions, delving closer to a coach's core beliefs, can help surface these.



Figure 5 Deeper questions about purpose and beliefs can help surface a coach's core ideas which they may not have articulated before.

Simon Sinek is a leadership and management author. He argues that, to be effective, some of the important questions organisations and people should be asking centre around purpose and beliefs. For coach developers this would mean asking questions such as: What is the purpose of your coaching? What are you trying to achieve? What are your coaching beliefs? What do you believe is meant by good coaching practice and why do you believe this? In the next activity you will pursue these ideas further.

Activity 4 Simon Sinek and understanding 'why'

Allow about 15 minutes

In Video 4, Sinek explains his ideas with reference to Apple, the digital business. While watching think about how this might transfer to coaches explaining and understanding their coaching practice.

Video content is not available in this format.

Video 4



Provide your answer...

Discussion

In coach learning and development, you are trying to help coaches understand and articulate their purpose and the influences that make them act in the way they do. You are trying to tease out why they *believe what they believe* and how this informs their *decisions* and *behaviours* and underpins how they coach and what they coach. Probing and asking these kinds of question may well help coaches become more self-aware. In addition, if you start to communicate in Sinek's terms 'from the inside out' you may be able to influence changes in behaviour with the coaches you work with.

This style of deeper questioning requires a trusting and open relationship since it will take time for people to reveal their inner motivations. It is not easy. You can't just jump in with this type of questioning. The following activity shows some of the bite-sized responses you may encounter and how more might be drawn out of such initial responses.

Activity 5 Coaches explain their approach

Allow about 20 minutes

When coaches talk about what drives them and what is important to them, it is most accurately described as their 'coaching ideology'. Yet the literature often calls this their 'coaching philosophy' (Lyle and Cushion, 2016). This latter term is an extremely ambiguous which is why it has not been used so far in this course. However, in Video 5 you will see how three coaches – Sara, Helen and Brett – attempt to respond to a 'What is your coaching philosophy?' question.

How would you summarise each coach's stated approach to coaching? What further questions would you like to ask them?

Video content is not available in this format.

[Video 5](#)



Provide your answer...

Discussion

Sara – Sara mainly refers to 'athlete engagement' and the 'efficiency and quality' of training. Further questions might investigate what she means by engagement and how she knows the extent to which an athlete is engaged. Further exploratory questions might progress on to focus on observations of her coaching practice compared to her intentions of 'efficiency and quality'.

Helen – Helen describes creating enthusiasm and encouraging an active lifestyle habit among young people. She also stated developing confidence and self-esteem as further aims. Additional questions might be: 'Tell us how you think your approach has changed over time?' and 'How do PE sessions influence lifelong habits?', or similar.

Brett – Brett makes three points: athlete enjoyment, allowing an athlete to choose their level of attainment, and the coach as role model. Subsequent questions might probe how he uses goal setting with athletes and any beliefs about how athlete enjoyment factors vary between different age groups.

By exploring, through the effective use of questions, what coaches state as their core guiding principles and then revisiting these ambitions in subsequent session observations, you may be able to gradually build a richer picture. The skill for coach developers is to see how far a coach's stated principles are put into action within their coaching practices and behaviours.

5 From bite-sized to banquet responses

Paddy Upton is an international cricket coach from South Africa. He is now a coach developer. In the following activity Paddy begins to explain why he looks at coaching in the way he does. It is far more fully developed than the bite-sized responses you saw earlier.



Figure 6 Probing into why coaches view coaching in the way they do can help to reveal their ideology

Activity 6 Paddy Upton: Why I look at things the way I do

Allow about 15 minutes

Watch this short video. How do you think Upton's stated purpose is reflected in his behaviour when developing coaches?

Video content is not available in this format.

[Video 6](#)



Provide your answer...

Discussion

Upton talks passionately about people and individuals. It is likely that he attempts to connect to coaches showing care and concern for their unique circumstances. It is also likely that he finds an appropriate way to use external expertise, science and statistics that is relevant to an individual's needs rather than treating a team as a homogeneous group with identical characteristics.

It is unlikely that those coaches you work with have devoted the time, like Upton, to assemble their thoughts. In Sinek and Upton you have examples of full, articulate and charismatic responses. Whatever replies from questions you receive from coaches, your active listening behaviour provides important cues and encouragement for the speaker to say more and make sense of their ideology and associated actions.

You will look at this next.

6 Active listening: more than just paying attention

It is all very well asking powerful questions, but you also need to actively listen to the responses. Active listening is far more than just paying attention.



Figure 7 Careful, attentive focus helps decode messages and non-verbal clues

In Video 7 you'll see psychologist Dr Julia Yates explain why listening is the most important coaching skill of all.

Video content is not available in this format.

[Video 7](#)



In this section and the next, you will explore active listening through several examples – first, you will investigate an example of poor active listening and then an example of excellent listening in action.

Activity 7 What makes someone a poor listener?

Allow about 10 minutes

Watch this example of a listener who is working in a career-mentoring role. Pay attention to what it is that characterises him as being so poor at listening. Consider his listening behaviour in the context of these terms: 'self', 'interpretation' and 'opinion'.

Then think about your own experiences of when you have not been listened to properly: what goes through your mind in such instances?

Video content is not available in this format.

[Video 8](#)



Provide your answer...

Discussion

The listener who is working in a career-mentoring role refers to his own agenda and gives the impression the conversation is partly about his own ego. He also offers interpretation of what the other person is saying and promptly offers his own opinion in a way that has little regard for person-centred (humanist) mentoring and the feelings of the other person.

The thoughts and feelings you might experience when you are not being listened to properly could include:

- frustration
- a dent in your confidence
- a decrease in any respect you hold for the other person
- perhaps a need to re-state any ideas you were expressing.

An alternative approach, as in this video, is to maintain a polite silence.

You will see a better experience of the same scenario with a more self-aware coach in the next section.

7 Active listening in action

There are three parts to this final section. The three steps that you take in developing a fuller understanding of active listening in action are:

- Better listening – In the previous section, you saw an example of a poor listener who was working in a career-mentoring role. Now you will see a transformation when active listening skills are applied
- Active listening summarised – Next you view a figure which contains a fuller description of the three main aspects of active listening: attentive body language, following skills and reflecting skills.
- Use minimal encouragers – In this final section you read about the small verbal and physical signals that help smooth the flow of conversation.

Collectively these sections are likely to raise your awareness of how you can more genuinely hear what others are communicating.

7.1 Better listening

Here you revisit the career mentoring discussion. Now in Video 9 you will see how the situation has a completely different complexion once the mentor applies his active listening skills. Now, the listener reflects back what he has heard and allows the other person to determine where the conversation goes.

The listener also checks for understanding which will reinforce not only that the person is being listened to, but also provide them with reassurance that what they are saying is worth listening to by others. A little bit of active listening goes a long way to completely changing the interaction.

Watch the video now.

Video content is not available in this format.

[Video 9](#)



Coaching interactions like this, in which there is a genuine attempt to listen to and support, are the basis for authentic coach developer relationships.

7.2 Active listening summarised

A summary of the key aspects of active listening appears in Figure 8 below. Click on each heading to reveal the summaries.

Following skills – (giving the speaker space to tell their story in their own way)

- Interested 'door openers'
- Minimal verbal encouragement
- Infrequent, timely and considered questions
- Alternative silences

Reflecting skills – (Restating the feeling and/or content with understanding and acceptance)

- Paraphrase (check periodically that you've understood)
- Reflect back feelings and content
- Summarise the major issues

Interactive content is not available in this format.



Figure 8 A summary of the three main elements of active listening

7.3 Use minimal encouragers

Imagine you are speaking but the people you are talking to remain completely blank and stand there stock still. You are getting no feedback from the others in the conversation that they are listening to you and understanding your message.

Words and sounds such as 'mm', 'yeah' or 'OK' play a vital role in active listening. These words and sounds signal for the talker to continue. Verbal signals and head gestures show comprehension and agreement, and they are known as minimal encouragers. One key tip is: nod more, it really gives encouragement.

Providing your coaches with small verbal and physical signals to feel more comfortable helps to smooth the flow of the conversation, and it is also part of the process of building trust and rapport. The trouble is we often forget to do it.

8 Building your coach developer 101 guide

The main discussion points from this session that you might share and discuss with colleagues are described in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Some proven practices coach developers can contribute towards asking good questions and listening actively

Practices and ideas	Description
24. Questioning traps	Multiple questions and leading questions are both traps that contribute towards ineffective practice. Inappropriate use of 'why' questions can make coaches defensive.
25. Why, how, what questions	Use clear and open 'why', 'how' and 'what' questions that require deeper thinking. Allow coaches time to answer and let their answers dictate the flow of the conversation.
26. Coaching ideology	Asking questions 'inside-out' addresses ideas and beliefs about coaching. This type of questioning opens dialogue about the purpose of coaching and why coaches view coaching in the way they do.
27. Active listening	Use small verbal and physical gestures during dialogue to convey that you are taking a real interest in what coaches are saying. For some coach developers: listen more, talk less.

9 This session's quiz

Check what you've learned this session by taking the end-of-session quiz.

[Session 6 practice quiz](#)

Open the quiz in a new window or tab then come back here when you've finished.

10 Summary of Session 6

The main learning points from this session are:

1. Questioning provides a useful tool for coach developers in encouraging the coaches they support to take more responsibility for and awareness of their learning. Good questioning also enables the core beliefs, values and ideas of coaches to be surfaced and raised to a level of conscious thought.
2. Good questioning practice involves use of questions that begin with 'what', 'how', 'who' or 'where', and allow time for a person to respond including not being afraid of silence.
3. Questioning traps include use of multiple or leading questions (the advice is disguised) or 'why' type questions. These traps are best avoided for effective learning to take place.
4. Active listening is an essential skill which is viewed as having three main aspects: attentive body language, following skills and reflecting skills. Listening actively really helps you to fully understand the coach and what they are saying or telling you.
5. Minimal encouragers, small verbal and physical signals play an important role in smoothing the flow of conversation.

Questioning is often used when you carry out coaching observations. Yet effective observation and feedback are far from straightforward – should you use a checklist? How do you frame your feedback? These are two dilemmas explored in the next session which will make you think about how you currently watch and support coach's practice.

You can now go to [Session 7](#).

Session 7: Effective observations and feedback

Introduction

Observing coaches and providing effective feedback is an important part of learning and for this reason it is a necessary skill for coach developers to master. Yet it is far from straightforward, and in this session you'll examine why it takes time to refine and implement well.



Figure 1 Does what you see depend on your focus?

Early in this session you will watch the same video of a coaching session twice, but each time you will use a different observational approach to analyse the coach and compare your thoughts. Observation is only part of coaching others; effective feedback is also a key component and you'll explore how feedback is best provided, what feedback you should provide, and why feedback is really effective when it leads to a meaningful conversation.

Your observation and feedback practices largely depend on your coach developer role. Observation can range from the formal – in which you are required to observe and provide feedback against set criteria – to far less formalised peer-to-peer approaches. There is evidence to suggest that the latter is far more conducive to learning than the former

(Williams and Reddy, 2016). Consequently, the value of creating a peer-to-peer observation and feedback culture is examined in the latter part of this session.

By the end of this session, you should be able to:

- reflect on and compare your current observation practices to a range of approaches and case studies
- identify how feedback can be discussed and framed to support learning and development
- consider the benefits of peer-to-peer observation and feedback in a coaching context.

In the first section, you will read an article that makes an interesting argument about observing others.

1 Are teacher observations a waste of time?

Education writer and speaker David Didau has questioned how observations of classroom practice contribute to learning and development. In the following activity you'll use his blog as a prompt to think about the purpose of observing coaches.



Figure 2 When we observe what are we seeing?

As you will see from the title, the blog raises an interesting issue about where our focus should be when observing practice.

Activity 1 Are teacher observations a waste of time?

Allow about 15 minutes

Read the following short blog (3 minute read time) from David Didau:

[Are teacher observations a waste of time?](#)

While reading the blog, identify any questions you think it raises about observing coaches. You might want to substitute the words 'coach' and 'participant' for 'teacher' and 'student' in the blog.

Provide your answer...

Discussion

Didau raises three questions that are of interest in relation to observing coaches. These are:

1. Should you be observing what the coach is doing or should your focus be on watching their participants and the learning that is taking place?
2. When observing a coach how prone are you to making judgements about their behaviour through your own ideas about what constitutes good practice? Your ideas might not be shared by the coach being observed.
3. Being observed can be a stressful and intimidating process and people often feel uncomfortable being watched. To what extent does the process inhibit how receptive coaches might be to any learning opportunity it provides?

These important questions demonstrate how there is more to observational practice than you might think. You now move on to explore three different approaches to observing coaching practice and examine the difference between these approaches. The first approach is observing *without* the aid of a criteria or checklist, the second is *with* a list of criteria and the third is through a process of systematic observation. Understanding these different approaches to observation will help you select the best approach for the role you undertake as a coach developer, albeit that in some situations your choice of approach may be determined for you.

2 Analysing coaches: structuring the observation process

Using a form with pre-populated categories or criteria is a common tool used in observational situations to help structure and collect information. But how does using an observation form assist you in your evaluation of coaches and your subsequent feedback to them?



Figure 3 If something sits between your eyes and their focus of attention does it influence what you see?

In the next activity, you will assess how the difference between using and not using an observation form can determine your observation and judgement. It is rather an unusual video example since it uses a coaching session in a sport many people have attempted: the sport of snooker. The fly-on-the-wall video shows a snooker coach working with a player. As such, you are observing only a tiny fragment of the coach's practice, so it will be difficult to draw definitive conclusions.

Activity 2 Observation: just watching and listening

Allow about 30 minutes

Snooker is a sport that perhaps does not come readily to mind from a coaching perspective. In this video you will watch an experienced snooker coach working with a player on their stance and cueing action.

1. Watch the video and answer the questions below – assume that this is not an observation for a coaching qualification, but instead the type of observation you might undertake in a mentoring role:
 - How did you record your observations, what did you notice and how did you decide what to watch and why?
 - Are there any questions you would like to ask the coach after the session has finished?

Video content is not available in this format.

Video 1



Provide your answer...

2. Now watch the video again but this time use this [11-point observation form](#) to assist you while you are observing the coach in action. This observation form is a shortened version of those that might be typically used to observe coaches. Using the observation form to help, reflect on how you observed anything different between the two occasions: with and without the form. The following prompts may be useful:
 - Did your observational focus change because of the categories on the observation form?
 - Did you prefer just watching the video without the form, perhaps making your own notes, or did you prefer having the form present?
 - How might your feedback to the coach have changed based on using or not using the observation form?
 - On both occasions did you have sufficient information to undertake an effective observation? Did you know the decisions the coach had taken in planning the practices? Do you know their beliefs about what coaching means to them and how this is informing their behaviours? Did you know enough about the coaching relationship between the coach and the player?

Provide your answer...

Discussion

1. Without using a form it is likely that you still structured your observation by making decisions about what to focus on and why. Perhaps these decisions were sub-conscious and perhaps you based your observation on what you expected to see or want you wanted to see and your ideas and beliefs about 'good coaching practice'.

2. Finding out why the coach has organised practice in the way they have, and knowing the underlying decisions is important. Without that knowledge it may be hard to undertake an effective observation. Shaping what you observe is about understanding the coach and their decision making as well as what you actually see.
3. It is likely that you might have used the observation form in a different way to other coach developers. Perhaps you used the categories as 'prompts' that informed your observation, whereas others may have used the categories more literally. Each coach developer may use an observation form in different ways to support their observation and this can be often be linked to their experience and the context of the observation. If, for example, it was an assessment the categories may have been used more rigidly and directed the gaze of the coach developer more intensely towards the behaviours represented by the categories.
4. Any feedback that you might give the coach will be influenced by how you have watched and observed the coach. If you watched without the presence of the form your feedback may be quite different to what you might provide had you used the form.

Using a coach observation form to highlight areas of strength and opportunities for learning and development is widespread. However, the extent to which the method is significantly better than just observing a coach and allowing your eyes to see without the categories and influence of a form is debatable. Perhaps without a form it gives you more opportunity to notice more and direct your sight on what the participants are doing rather than the coach, a point identical to the one raised by Didau in Activity 1.

Using and reflecting on different approaches to observing coaches is an integral part of the process of becoming more proficient in watching coaching practice. It is also important to inform the observation process by asking the coach about their ideas and beliefs about coaching and practice design. What you observe is the product of a coach's decision-making process which is then contributing towards their behaviours. For this reason, undertaking observation might best be started **once you have developed your relationship** with the coach and understood their approach to coaching in more detail.

Observing coaches can be a subjective process that embodies your own ideas, beliefs and ideas about coaching practice. In the next section you see how use of systematic observation tools can potentially overcome some of this subjective bias and potentially produce a more informed view of a coach's practice and their behaviours.

3 Systematic observation

Systematic observation, if undertaken rigorously, is a more methodical form of observation that measures coach behaviour through a standardised and consistent approach. It is often used in research to provide numerical evidence (often percentages) for the analysis of coaching behaviours.



Figure 4 The systematic observation of coach behaviours requires a rigorous, methodical and consistent approach

One of the most popular methods is the Arizona State University Observation Instrument (ASUOI) developed by Lacy and Darst (1984). This has fourteen categories that describe different coaching behaviours. For example, here are two coach behaviour categories from the ASUOI:

- **Questioning:** Any question to athletes concerning strategies or techniques
- **Praise:** Verbal or non-verbal compliments, statements or signs of acceptance.

Imagine using this with the snooker coach (Video 1), noting the *number of instances* when the coach asked questions or gave praise. Another approach is to time *how long* a coach is using these behaviours for. The final output for such analysis is a profile of the *proportions* of different behaviours being used by the coach under observation.

In the following activity you hear academic Chris Cushion discussing systematic observation.

Activity 3 Systematic observation: how aware are coaches of their behaviour?

Allow about 15 minutes

In Video 2 Chris Cushion is presenting at the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA, Ireland) coach development conference. Turn your attention to the bullet point on 'Interventions' which is what Cushion is addressing as the video begins.

Answer this question: how aware are coaches of their coaching behaviours? For example, a coach might claim, 'I use a bit of questioning but a lot more silence'. This could be tested with systematic observation – so if the coach demonstrates questioning behaviours = <5% of the time and silence = 10–20%, then this coach would be accurate and aware of their own behaviour.

Video content is not available in this format.

Video 2



Provide your answer...

Discussion

Cushion explains how systematic observation if done well can be useful for establishing a baseline of coaching behaviours, yet he explains that eight out of ten coaches are not aware of the proportions of their behaviours in sessions. Coaches 'talk the talk' about what they do but are not accurate in describing it; he recommends asking athletes or using systematic observation as a far more reliable measure of what happens in sessions.

Observation instruments such as the ASUOI, while primarily a research tool, can also be used by coach developers to support development. Their use will give you a different type of information – not necessarily better information – but just as an observation form guides your observation and what you are looking for, so too does a numerically based

instrument. Systematic observation can, however, provide the basis for a good conversation starter and it can be hard to argue against the reality of the data produced. But again, its success depends on the rigour and accuracy of the initial observation and collection of data – this has to be systematic and rigorous.

Perhaps one of the most important considerations in any observation process is setting up and planning the observation and this is what you turn to next.

4 How should you plan an observation?

In the next activity you will explore how one coach developer plans her approach to observation. As you undertake the activity reflect on why planning an observation is important.



Figure 5 Planning an observation: a vital ingredient in the observation process

Activity 4 Planning and observation

Allow about 20 minutes

Watch the following video of a basketball coach and make notes on the following:

1. What do you consider was effective about the actions taken by the coach developer?
2. How would you improve the planning of this process including any interaction in the days before the session?

Video content is not available in this format.

[Video 3](#)



Provide your answer...

Discussion

1. The coach developer greets the coach and reflects on the feedback provided from a previous session. The conversation then turns towards the current session and the coach developer invites the coach to highlight what aspects of her coaching she would like feedback on – this is a really strong feature of good practice. This dialogue, however, seems to have occurred just before the session began; it can often be difficult to have a constructive conversation at this point.
2. Perhaps it would be better to interact a day or two before the session. This would provide more time to discuss the observation and it will give the coach developer a better chance to plan the collection of appropriate information. For example, in the video the coach was asking for input on the extent to which she herself provided feedback to individual participants. Knowing this in advance the coach developer could have prepared an observation form that collects this information, perhaps supplemented with some form of unobtrusive video capture. A list of the players showing tally marks against each time feedback was provided to each player would be illuminating, perhaps with notes of the nature of feedback given on the form.

We don't know from the video the nature of the relationship between the coach and coach developer. How long has the coach been supported by the coach developer, and do they have a relationship whereby the coach developer is familiar with the coach's beliefs and ideas? If not, might this kind of conversation feature as part of the preparation for the visit?

A successful observation that supports learning and development requires preparation. In addition to finding out what a coach would like feedback on it is also worth agreeing the parameters of the observation and how this will inform your feedback – this enables you to focus your observational gaze.

5 Discussing feedback and encouraging dialogue

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, in their 2016 report *Could do better: assessing what works in performance management*, suggests it is not the content of feedback that is important in determining its effectiveness, but how people respond to it. In the next activity you'll analyse the feedback provided to a judo coach and assess its effectiveness.



Figure 6 After an observation do you provide feedback or have a conversation with the coach?

The video features Mike, a judo coach, working in a school environment and this may have an influence on the structure and organisation of the feedback provided by Rob, the coach developer.

Activity 5 Discussing feedback to allow constructive dialogue

Allow about 20 minutes

Watch Video 4. How well do you believe the feedback has been approached? Is this how you would like to receive feedback if you were the coach? Would you respond positively to the feedback and does the video reveal anything about the relationship between the two people involved and the context in which the feedback is being undertaken?

Video content is not available in this format.

[Video 4](#)



Provide your answer...

Discussion

The feedback is taking place in a calm environment and the body language and tone of Rob, the coach developer, appears helpful and sincere. The conversation starts on a positive note as Rob invites Mike, the coach, to reflect on the session by asking some prompting questions.

Before Rob provides his main feedback, he explains what he is doing and opens it by reinforcing some positive points. Mike is then provided with two things he might consider towards furthering his development. The feedback is framed positively, and Rob creates a constructive dialogue.

Aguilar (2013) writing about coaching in educational settings accepts that discussing feedback is an art that takes time to learn. People can be sensitive about receiving feedback on their performance, but she offers several suggestions you may find useful:

1. Know the person. Make an effort to know who you are giving feedback to and how you should adapt your feedback accordingly.
2. Ground feedback in observational data (for example, 'you used the word 'great' on twelve occasions'; 'you asked four questions in total'). Ensure you can support your feedback with examples from your observation.
3. Keep critical feedback to one or two key points. Focus on the immediate priorities. Try not to overload the coach with multiple areas in which they need to improve.
4. Ask for permission. Precede your comments with phrases such as 'can I share a couple of things with you', or 'would it be OK if I suggest this'. This helps to demonstrate that your feedback is coming from a place of care and a desire to help the coach develop.
5. Find the phrasing. Think about the language you use to convey your feedback and how the coach will hear you. Remember it is how feedback is received that influences its effectiveness, so you want a coach to hear you positively.

6. Invite reflection. Invite the coach to offer their reflection and thoughts. Watch their body language carefully as this can convey how they have responded to your feedback.

The timing of when to provide feedback is also worth considering. Straight after a game or session the coach may be on an emotional high and perhaps this is not always the optimum time for detailed feedback. Instead, if appropriate, leave the coach with a couple of questions to ponder and then arrange to speak over the coming days when they have had a chance to reflect and you will have thought through your feedback. This might help the coach be more receptive to your comments and open the possibility for a more productive dialogue.

Finally, when do you start to provide feedback to a coach? Aguilar's first point '*Know the person*' would suggest that providing feedback to a coach is best begun only when a relationship is **established** and when you have built an understanding of – and with – the coach. Perhaps you would start to observe but not provide any feedback – any observation does not necessarily require feedback, but you should explain this to the coach so they understand why you are watching them but not intending to provide any subsequent comment. Maybe your first observation could involve watching and focusing on the participants being coached to learn and understand more about them. Again, explain this to the coach and your reasoning for this. These points are reinforced in the next activity where you see how a culture shift towards peer-to-peer observation was developed in education. Could this work effectively in coaching?

6 Creating a peer-to-peer observation culture

When you observe others, how useful is it towards developing your own understanding of coaching? Similarly, if you are only occasionally observing a particular coach are you then seeing their normal behaviour or are you witnessing a special performance put on for your benefit? Both these questions raise issues about the value of the observational process and how it could be improved to become a better learning experience for everyone.

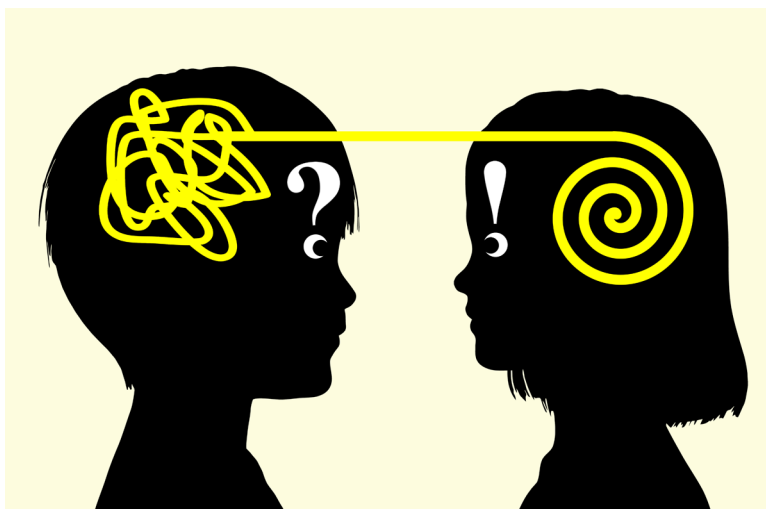


Figure 7 The power of your peers can be vital in making more sense of what you already know

In the next activity you'll learn about the potential value of peer-to-peer learning, especially when it is implemented sensitively and developed gradually as the trust between peers grows.

Activity 6 Peer-to-peer observation

Allow about 20 minutes

Watch the following video from the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership. Ask yourself, do the topics raised in this video have implications for the practice of observing and providing feedback to coaches?

Video content is not available in this format.

[Video 5](#)



Provide your answer...

Discussion

This school slowly created the peer-to-peer observation scheme, initially without feedback, to ensure that it was not perceived as a threat. Applying this to coaches could be useful if it were explained that watching other coaches, without feedback, is an important opportunity for everyone to learn. Extending this to a mutually beneficial exchange of ideas, good practice, problem solving and extending knowledge through a peer feedback process could be exciting. This would work best between coaches who work together regularly, and those who know each other well – could they be encouraged to become each other's coach developer. If so, this might be a form of critical friendship that was identified as one of the roles featured in the Coach Developer Family (Session 1, Figure 3).

Anecdotal evidence from the practice of some of the biggest companies in the world (e.g. Adobe, Deloitte and Accenture) indicates how they are moving away from formal annual appraisal processes in favour of more regular, informal developmental conversations between staff. This is increasingly being known as Peer-Assisted Learning (PAL).

Sports coaching can perhaps learn from this and recognise and encourage more peer-to-peer learning conversations between individuals.

7 Coach observation: pulling it all together

To help summarise this session there are two important final activities for you to complete that pull together your thoughts and ideas on observation and feedback.



Figure 8 Dave Keelty: When does observation take a narrow or broad focus?

Activity 7 Pulling together your thoughts and ideas on coach observation

Allow about 40 minutes

Part 1

Read this extract from a blog post (5 minute read time) by Dave Keelty. Keelty is a coach developer and mentor, having worked with organisations including New Zealand (NZ) Rugby, NZ Football, and Leinster Rugby and Hockey. The extract addresses many of the issues and ideas that you have considered in this session.

How might you now develop your approach to observing and giving feedback to coaches in light of any new insights you have gained?

[Is coach observation worth pursuing?](#)

Provide your answer...

Discussion

The article draws out several themes from this session which may influence your practice. These are:

1. The focus of an observer can be steered by how their observation is being directed by the presence of an observation tool or not.
2. As Keelty says, behaviours are often prematurely judged through the observer's own ideas and bias about good or bad coaching.
3. It is important to understand what the coach is trying to achieve, why and how. Knowing the intention of the coach is critical and you need to be careful about entering 'advice mode' before you fully understand the coach's aims for any session.
4. Narrowing or expanding your observational focus can depend on the nature of the relationship you have with a coach as opposed to their relative expertise and experience.

Dave Keely's blog can site can be found here:

<https://medium.com/@CoachngUnleashd>

Part 2

Listen to the discussion between Andy Bradshaw and Alex Twitchen. How do the issues and points they discuss further develop your ideas and understanding about observing and providing feedback to coaches?

Audio content is not available in this format.



Audio 1

Provide your answer...

Discussion

The discussion between Andy and Alex highlights several further aspects of the observation and feedback process. These are:

1. The timing of the observation – when is the right time to start observing a coach and what benefit will the coach gain from the observation.
2. You want to observe a coach as close to reality as possible and not see a performance just for your benefit.
3. Plan an observation *with* the coach and emphasise the supportive nature of the process.
4. Instead of feedback aim to have a conversation and dialogue with the coach – a shared conversation which is rich and meaningful. This is perhaps challenging to achieve in some contexts such as a coaching qualification course, but not impossible.

There have been several ideas discussed in this session and perhaps the overall message is that observation and feedback practices can be developed with experience. The process of observing and providing feedback via rich and shared conversations is also dependent on the context and role you are fulfilling as a coach developer. If, for example, you are tutoring a coaching qualification course you are more constrained when compared to supporting an individual coach in a mentoring role. Nevertheless, the key principles and considerations still apply, they are just implemented differently.

8 Building your coach developer 101 guide

The main discussion points from this session that you might share and discuss with colleagues are described in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Some practices coach developers can use to build expertise in their role

Practices and ideas	Description
28. Observational focus	Your observational gaze can be influenced by the presence or otherwise of observational criteria or a checklist that influences what is and what is not seen.
29. Systematic observation	A method, if used methodically and rigorously, that can provide detailed and often numerical data about the behaviours and actions of coaches.
30. Planning for observation	Observational visits need to be well planned and organised beforehand to be optimised.
31. Discussing feedback	Acting on feedback is influenced not by content but how the coach receives it. Carefully thinking through language and how it is discussed helps encourage coaches to be receptive.
32. Peer-to-peer feedback	Feedback between colleagues is a mutually beneficial learning process that should be encouraged as a continuous aspect of learning and development.

9 This session's quiz

Check what you've learned this session by taking the end-of-session quiz.

[Session 7 practice quiz](#)

Open the quiz in a new window or tab then come back here when you've finished.

Session 8: Refreshing coach development for the digital age

Introduction

This session explores how coach learning and development may need to adjust as technology, society and coaching evolve in a digital age.



Figure 1 How far will digital devices become integrated into learning? Will they become as widely used as starting blocks are now, following their debut in 1948 Olympic Games?

Technology will be the big one and there's a lot of unknowns in that respect and possibly something we've got to invest more time in, trying to predict and future-

proof our approach to both coach development and player development with the advent of different technological advancements.

(Edd Vahid, Assistant Academy Manager, Southampton FC, Leaders Performance Institute, 2019)

Coaching practice is now influenced by digital devices whether they be used for filming, collaborating or communicating. But coach learning and development has also been transformed with coaches having a wealth of expertise and information available in a few clicks. Watch as Stuart Armstrong explains further.

Video content is not available in this format.

[Video 1](#)



As this course comes to a close you will explore the future potential of digital technology – some of which is a little controversial.

By the end of this session, you should be able to:

- demonstrate a heightened awareness of the potential impact of digital technologies on coach learning and development
- consider and reflect on the concept of coach developers as ‘digital content curators’
- explore cases of coach learning and development informed through the use of social media.

1 Collaboration, information gathering and learning

The use of social media and digital devices arguably changes how coaching knowledge is created and shared.



Figure 2 If the digital age impacts athletes and coaching, what are the implications for coach learning and development?

An example of how coaching is changing comes from Steven Trigg (Head Performance Swimming Coach, University of Stirling). He suggests: 'The role of the coach is changing, it's not to be the holder of information but to encourage them [athletes] to go and get it' (English Institute of Sport, 2018). He describes how technology is enhancing learning with an example of race footage being sent to smart phones within 5 minutes of a race finishing; athletes then review the race and give coaches feedback on what they've felt and seen. They also make considerable use of WhatsApp.

If the role of the coach is changing due to technology what else can we learn from digital companies such as Netflix and Amazon?

Activity 1 Learner analytics: implications for coach learning and development

Allow about 15 minutes

Each year the Institute of Educational Technology (IET) at the Open University reports on trends in learning. The reading below describes the emergence of learner analytics as a trend in 2018. Learner analytics is the collection of digital data which can be used to profile and understand individual learner preferences to subsequently identify learning opportunities that might help them.

Read the text below and think of coaches in your sport who may have different learning needs. Using the reading as a prompt consider what tool you might ask a software developer to produce for the purpose of collecting data to inform coach learning. The resulting solution would ideally recommend appropriate learning opportunities for each individual coach. Imagine what features and possibilities this might entail.

What ideas can learner-led analytics take from Netflix or Amazon?

Learner-led analytics is the use of data to help learners learn. The trend for learner-led analytics signifies a shift away from just assessing what learners have learnt to focusing more on helping them to identify their own goals and ambitions and supporting them through their learning.

A practitioner's view comes from Nigel Paine, change-focused leader and learning expert: analytics will change learning.... 'We are in a data driven revolution. If you have the data and bring it together, you have a massively important picture of the learner.... It's about individualising the whole learning process ... the ultimate aim is to get learners to take charge of their own learning better – to facilitate that and enable them.

It's like Netflix – as I log onto the interface, what it gives me is totally unique. It's the same with learning – the personalisation of learning through algorithms. For an individual it means: what works for me and my needs and for my [role]. He suggests an example of being nudged or recommended – do you want to watch this Ted talk? Read this new blog? It's not very complicated and Amazon have been doing it for years.'

We are still at the early stages of learning analytics which use learners' preferences, ambition and past learning to recommend learning that is more personalised. That's the way that learning is going – targeted, personalised learning that meets the needs of learners and the organisation they work for.

(IET, 2018, pp. 12–13)

Provide your answer...

Discussion

The possibilities are endless but there are perhaps two components to consider in any software application or online tool that might be developed from learner analytics. First, in order for learning recommendations to be made data would need to be collected. This might mean coaches completing a questionnaire from which a profile of their preferences can be constructed. Alternatively, and as with Amazon and Netflix, the online search activity of coaches might be captured and used to identify patterns in their choices and behaviours. In both cases algorithms can be developed to make subsequent recommendations.

A second aspect is the learning opportunities it might refer individuals to. In addition to video and blogs a 'recommendations for you' list could also include research articles, webinars, interviews with other coaches, podcasts and national governing body resources, including courses.

In both instances the ability to collect data, analyse this data and produce individual recommendations is a powerful tool that is only beginning to influence learning and development.

The Institute of Educational Technology (IET) 2018 report on trends in learning is available free from [The Open University website](#).

Perhaps when it comes to assembling appropriate learning opportunities there is also a role for coach developers in sifting through, recommending, curating and pointing to the most useful online content. Perhaps a combination of learner analytics and the human influence of a coach developer is an interesting way forward?

You have begun to see how digital technology might offer some opportunities to enhance coach learning and development. Your focus in the next series of activities is how the digital age influences sharing, collaboration and building new knowledge. You will explore a range of digitally related coach learning and development possibilities including:

- digital messaging
- curating online content
- remote mentoring
- peer-to-peer support through an internet-based application.

2 The role of digital messaging

If communication, relationships and dialogue are an integral part of coach development then how does digital messaging, such as use of WhatsApp or other social media platforms, contribute if at all?



Figure 3 Digital messaging is often informal and outside of the control of organisations, but how can it be used to support coach learning and development?

The following activity shows how the messaging platform WhatsApp is being used and asks for your opinion of its purpose and usefulness.

Activity 2 Coach learning and development via WhatsApp

Allow about 10 minutes

Three different examples of messaging via WhatsApp in closed coaching groups are illustrated below. For each example review the conversation and think about:

1. the purpose and value of this communication
2. the extent to which you consider this plays a part in coach learning and development.

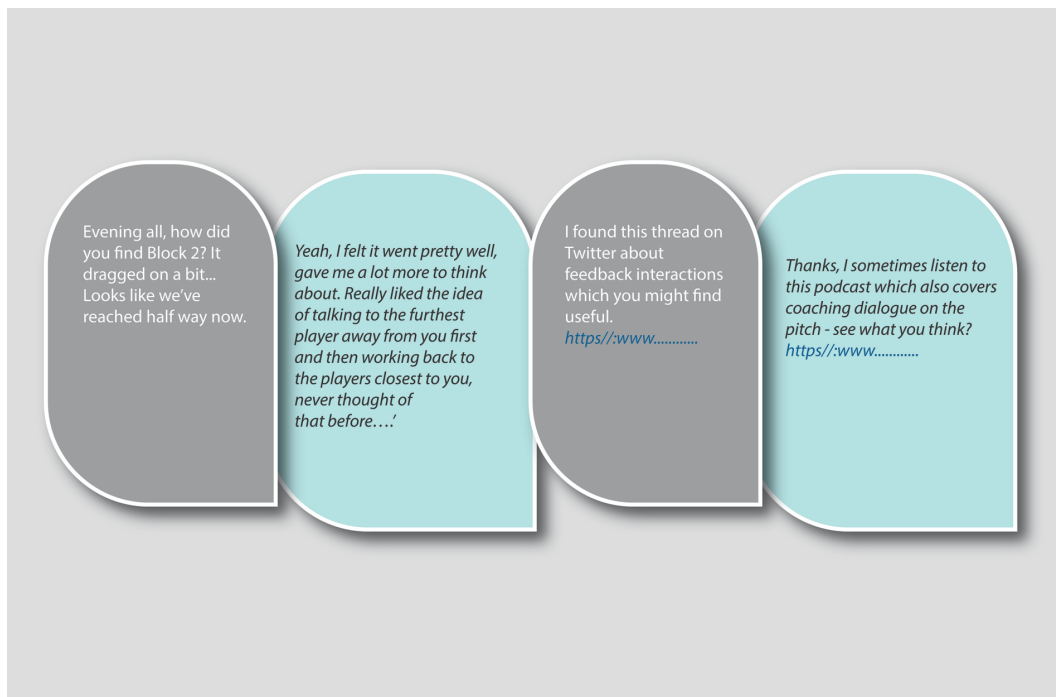


Figure 4 Example 1: A group of developing coaches on a learning programme have formed their own WhatsApp group separate from the coach developer.

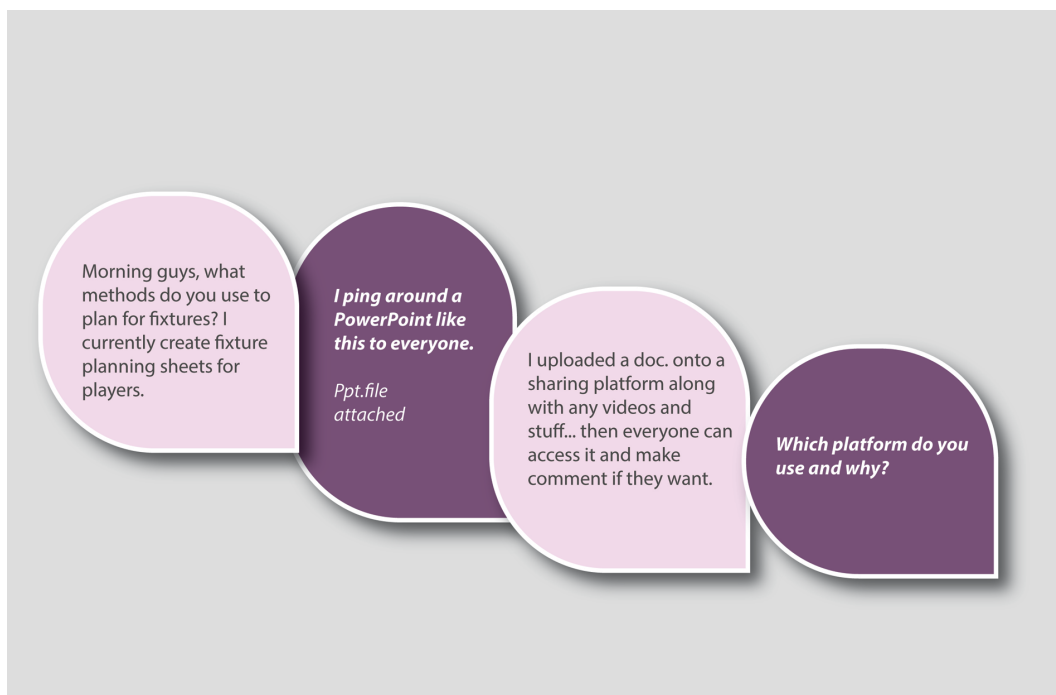


Figure 5 Example 2: This is the same group in which one member of the group asks a specific coaching-related question. Again, the coach developer is not present.

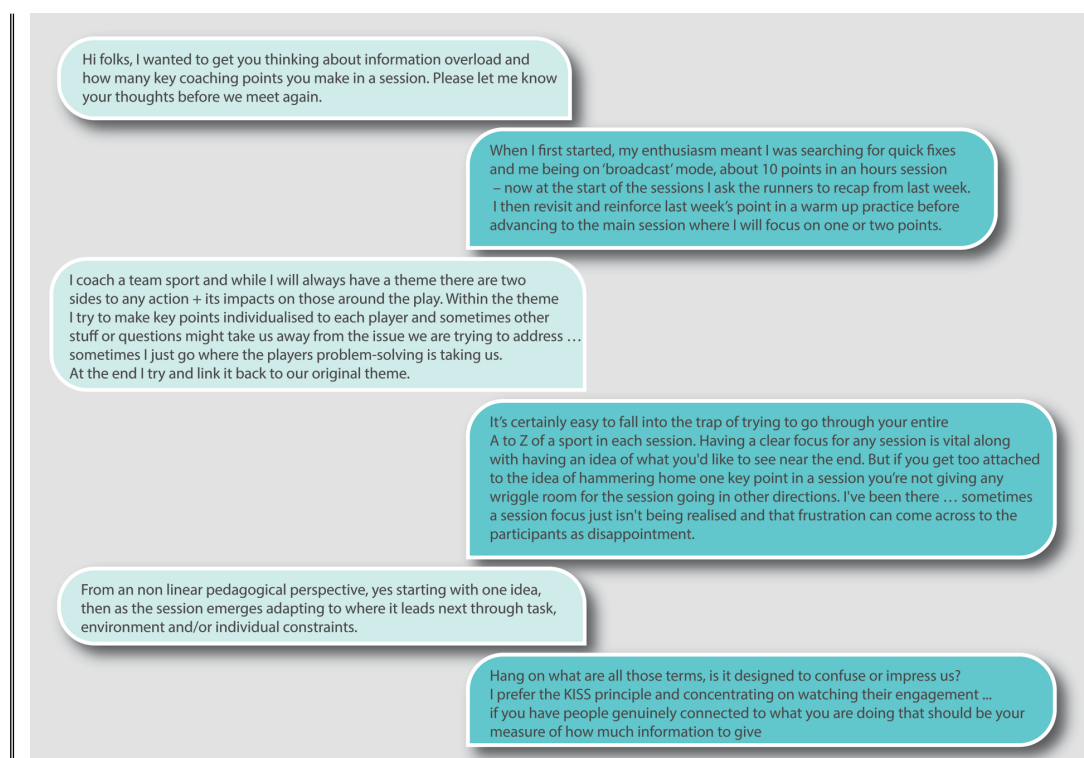


Figure 6 Example 3: This is a different WhatsApp group in which a coach developer stimulates the group to think about a particular issue and encourages them to share different perspectives.

Provide your answer...

Discussion

Comments are made on each example.

1. Example 1: In this case there is a small bit of reflection and then the dialogue turns to sharing online resources. Arguably this helps to create a type of shared learning community among the group. This might be called peer-to-peer coach development; the coach developer is not present, but it perhaps supports their learning and exposure to new resources.
2. Example 2: In this case one proactive coach wants to check how their fixture planning compares with others in the group. Again peer-to-peer learning is evident as information is exchanged as different solutions to an issue are shared. The coaches' perspectives of possible tools to use is certainly being broadened; this might stimulate further discussion when the group meets in the future. It is debatable whether any behaviour has been changed as a result, other than awareness of an alternative approach to solving an issue.
3. Example 3: In this example a range of opinions are articulated with the different contexts and learning of each person in their varied sports sometimes making the online conversation discordant. Perhaps when common purpose, shared goals and coaching context are present this would be easier. There is also an example, toward the end, of one member starting to be slightly offensive to another. Perhaps if this type of group had clear ground rules and was set up with clear expectations it could have an impact on coach learning and development.

All three examples show the potential of digital messaging to promote learning and development, but it would be wrong to overplay its significance. One of the above examples showed online resources being shared. A challenge for coach developers is to get others to recognise that online material can hinder as much as help due to the limited validity of some 'expert' opinions. Coach developers may increasingly need to help recommend reliable content to those they work with. You will look at this next.

3 Coach developers as content curators

In Session 5 you were asked to search the internet to find out about flipped learning. The information you found may, or may not, have come from reliable sources. How would you know?



Figure 7 How easily can you collect appropriate material and recommend it to others?

With more and more resources now available online, the question is – will the internet change the nature of coach learning and development? And should coach developers curate (i.e. filter, collect and use) online content for their coaches?

You will begin to answer these questions by exploring perspectives from education.

Activity 3 Should education change due to the internet?

Allow about 20 minutes

Watch this TED talk from Elizabeth Boese a higher education teacher. She suggests education should change in recognition of the fact that in her words 'the internet is the textbook'. When she talks of 'just in time learning' for her students think about:

1. How would this apply to coaches?
2. What changes, if any, are appropriate for coach learning and development in light of the internet as a potential source of knowledge?

Video content is not available in this format.

[Video 2](#)



Provide your answer...

Discussion

1. It would be false to assume that the internet can easily act as a coaching textbook. Many new ideas can be gleaned from skilled use of the internet such as ideas for sessions, training plans and valuable discussions among coaches. However, there is a 'but'. You construct knowledge by making sense of new ideas with reference to your existing mental models; coaches require some underpinning knowledge to help interpret new information. If you want a fuller explanation of this perspective Neelan and Kirshner's (2017) evidence informed article is useful: [Why Google® can't replace individual human knowledge](#).
2. You may find the following perspective useful in considering any changes needed in coach learning and development. Bhatt (2015), writing about education generally offers a view which you may recognise from your own use of Google. Some expert coach developers and indeed coaches are '**digital content curators**'. People use these types of sophisticated practices to search, sift, critically evaluate, collect and use online content.
3. Many coaches' online practices are about harnessing an abundance of information from a multitude of sources. Curation in this sense is about how learners use existing content to produce new content through engaging in problem-solving and inquiry (Bhatt, 2015). This can include taking sources from other areas and exploring how they might be applied within coach learning and development. In fact, this course is an example of a form of online curation of existing video and text content.

Perhaps some coach developers or organisation in the future may need to coalesce, bring together and **curate** content to support coach learning and development. Notice 'some', not all coach developers. Curation, therefore, becomes a kind of continual stewardship of

research, and coaching practice along with recognising others' material; it requires a self-regulating critical dialogue of what might be recommended to other coaches.

4 Fostering more mentoring

Mentoring is recognised as an important role undertaken by coach developers. It can have a positive and significant impact on learning and development. How then might more mentoring opportunities and support be achieved in the digital age?



Figure 8 People working together to support each other: but does it have to be face to face?

To answer this question here you see what is already happening in Triathlon. It shows what might be possible.

Activity 4 Seeing is believing: remote mentoring in action

Allow about 15 minutes

Watch this video of Sorrel, a triathlon coach, who opted to be remotely mentored, yet never met Toby, the person mentoring her, face to face. This appears to be an unstructured and relatively low-tech solution to mentoring.

Video content is not available in this format.

[Video 3](#)



After watching, answer this question: How might any additional structure or use of technologies (beyond phones) enhance mentoring in your context?

Provide your answer...

Discussion

It could be argued that this open, flexible approach to mentoring fosters individualised learning since Sorrel's needs determine the focus of her interactions. Her increased confidence is certainly likely to impact on her practice. However, if such mentoring were also used to structure, for example, coaches interpretation of common learning experiences (i.e. workshops, online resources), it might provide further valuable reflective conversations. Using more sophisticated technology such as Skype or conferencing software with video functionality may increase possibilities but this may come at a financial cost.

Next, you are asked to respond to a more hi-tech peer-support idea for transforming coach learning and development that draws on experiences in the education sector.

5 Technology for peer support

As Session 7 illustrated peer-support, or peer-assisted learning, is being recognised as an increasingly important aspect of learning and development. In this section you'll explore how technology can assist this form of learning.



Figure 9 People working together to support each other: but does it have to be face to face?

In the video from Session 3 (Activity 7 – researcher) James Knight spoke about trust in learning relationships. Knight works with an online video sharing platform called IRIS Connect. The videos in the following activity are from the same organisation and provide stimulus material for possibly extending and enhancing coach learning and development in the digital age.

Activity 5 Should video sharing and peer-support be more widely used?

Allow about 25 minutes

This activity involves working with two separate videos from IRIS Connect. The organisation and their technology grew out of a 2007 University of Sussex research project. The company expanded to the USA in 2015.

Watch this short animation explaining the rationale for their work.

Video content is not available in this format.

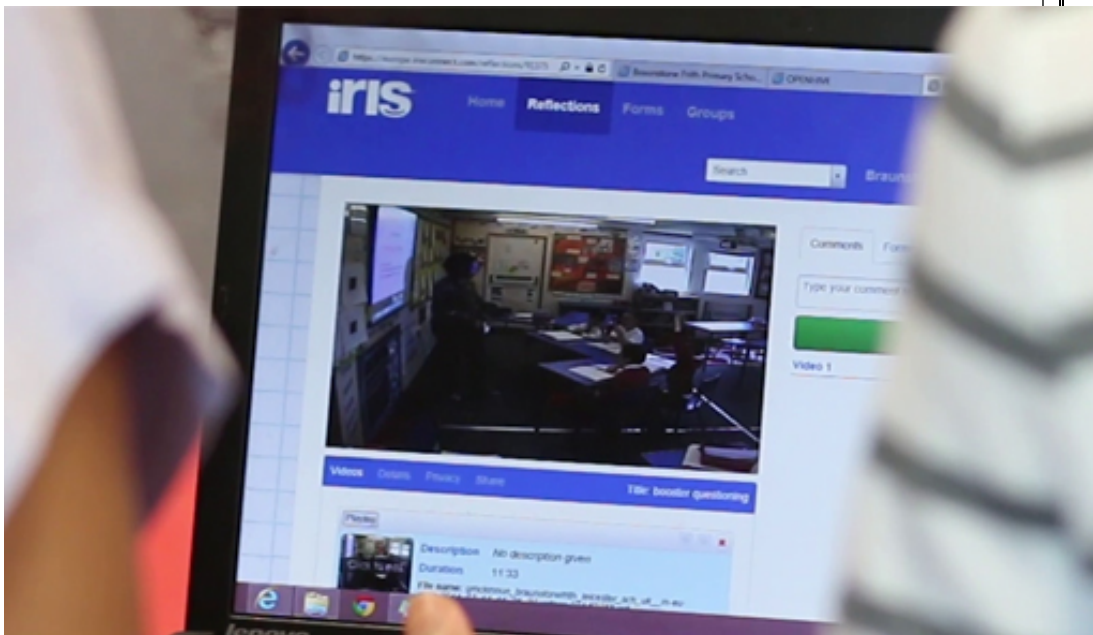
[Video 4](#)



Now watch a second short video which outlines the possibilities of the sharing platform

Video content is not available in this format.

[Video 5](#)



1. Note down the phrases which summarise the ten-point rationale for IRIS Connect's learning approach (tip: their rationale is similar to your exploration of developments in the digital age). For example, the first three phrases they use are:
 - personalised learning opportunities
 - [new] ideas for change

- putting ideas into practice.

2. With sufficient investment and training to what extent could this idea be adapted to the future development of coaches? Notice how you may well apply a filtering process, similar to your beliefs filter and your context filter.

Provide your answer...

Discussion

1. A very similar argument is presented compared to the one that you explored in Sections 2 and 3 earlier. For example, the following phrases were used:
 - the fit of [new] ideas
 - help people make sustained change
 - observing others
 - working with a coach
 - collaboration/sharing practice
 - closed door culture
 - collective (peer to peer) knowledge.
2. In your evaluation of this new idea would you be more willing to adjust your underlying beliefs and attitudes if you could see video sharing and peer support in action in your coaching context. With new ways of working perceptual barriers exist in terms of practicalities, costs and wishing to maintain face-to-face interactions. However, if other people focused professions such as teaching are adapting perhaps coach developers should at least investigate the opportunity further.

You are invited to contribute your thoughts on the possibilities this technology presents to a forum posting in the following section.

6 Forum posting

This final activity invites you to respond to the ideas you have read and heard about in this session and elsewhere in the course in order that the wider coach developer community voice is heard.



Figure 10 Making your voice heard

Any consensus evident on this forum will be communicated to Sport England, UK Coaching, CIMSPA and other appropriate organisations to help meet the needs of coach developers. You are reminded that a posting is not a requirement in order to obtain a digital badge.

Activity 6 Your chance to contribute and share ideas

Allow about 20 minutes or more

Go to the [course forum page](#) and create a posting articulating your thoughts on one or both of the discussion threads below.

The digital age

Which aspect(s) of facilitating coach learning and development in the digital age do you feel show promise? Which should not be pursued?

You are commenting on the topics you have learned in this session. Here is a reminder of what you have explored:

- using digital messaging
- curating online content
- fostering more mentoring
- video sharing and peer support (e.g. IRIS Connect)

The course as a whole

What is your feedback on your experience of this course? Is there anything that needs more or less attention and is there anything that was not covered? As a reminder here are key words from the titles of each session:

1. coach developer role
2. coach learning
3. learning relationships
4. power and self-awareness
5. teaching repertoire
6. questioning
7. observing practice
8. the digital age

Discussion

This forum represents a valuable place for you to express your opinion and, if they can be identified, the needs of coach developers. It will be interesting to capture your views and suggestions regarding the future potential of digital technologies. Is this an area where coach developers might require further training and support?

The two discussion threads also represent very important feedback mechanisms to improve this course so that potentially it can become part of any new or existing support to coach developers.

In the next section you will read the final part of the coach developer 101 guide. The guide is now complete with 36 practices you can use, share, discuss and draw on to develop your expertise and capability as a coach developer.

7 Building your coach developer 101 guide

The main discussion points you might share and discuss with colleagues are described in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Practices coach developers can draw on to build expertise in their role.

Practices and ideas	Description
33. Technology facilities	The use of digital devices and technologies such as social media can facilitate learning, communication and collaboration between coaches and coach developers.
34. Personalised learning	Creating a more personal approach to learning via digital technologies can make it more individual and suited to a coach's particular context and help avoid new ideas being filtered out.
35. Digital content curation	This is the process of curating learning resources by drawing on existing information available through the internet. But care is needed to make sense of this information and ensure its validity.
36. Remote mentoring	An opportunity provided by digital communications to remotely mentor coaches at scale with the possibility of sharing videos and documents.

The complete guide can be downloaded as a PDF: [Coach developer 101 guide.](#)

8 This session's quiz

Now it's time to complete the Session 8 badge quiz. It is similar to previous quizzes, but this time instead of answering five questions there will be fifteen.

[Session 8 compulsory badge quiz](#)

d

Remember, this quiz counts towards your badge. If you're not successful the first time, you can attempt the quiz again in 24 hours.

Open the quiz in a new tab or window then come back here when you've finished.

9 Summary of Session 8

The main learning points from this session are:

1. Digital technologies may facilitate learning and development through increased opportunities for sharing, collaboration, information gathering and support, but this does not automatically happen; the tone and environment need to be appropriate.
2. Communication examples between coaches and coach developers which use a social media platform suggest postings can contribute to reflection, resource sharing, problem solving and sustaining engagement particularly in between face-to-face gatherings.
3. Coach developers may become 'content curators' pulling together and making sense of information gathered from the internet. This involves a form of stewardship by coach developers as they filter and refine content that is evidence based, reliable and proven.
4. Technology may be able to support the development of coaches remotely via online mentoring and the opportunities offered by video sharing and peer-to-peer contributions.
5. A combination of these digital opportunities may well be able to increase personalised learning for coaches and help make learning and development more suited to individual needs.

10 Bringing things together

Congratulations and well done for reaching this point. You will by now have formed your own thoughts about this course and how it has possibly influenced your role as a coach developer. However, the following four questions are stated explicitly as a means of comparing what you think you have learned to what the course intended you to learn. The four questions are:

1. Do you better appreciate the skills, knowledge and personal qualities that you have which inform your ability to support learning and development as a coach developer in whatever role or roles you fulfil?
2. Has the course made you think about some of the implicit ideas, beliefs and values that influence your behaviour and actions as a coach developer (i.e. aspects that you may not have thought about before)?
3. Did the course make you reflect on what you believe good and effective coach learning and development practice means and why you believe it is good practice?
4. Is there anything you might change, adapt, adjust or experiment with in your coach developer role?

These questions represent the intentions behind the content and activities you have followed. Above all though, if you are a bit more confident and better able to support the coaches you work with, and if they in turn provide a better experience to the participants and performers they coach, then the aim of this course will have been achieved.

One final thought ...

Coach learning and development is changing in the UK. The Coaching Plan for England and the new approach to learning being adopted by UK Coaching (Transforming Learning, Transforming Lives) signify a shift towards a more person-centred focus. Coaches will be encouraged to take more responsibility for their learning and share, collaborate and connect with others to help them reflect and become more confident in their practice. How will this influence and change the role of coach developers? Perhaps it will mean that coach developers will have to become increasingly flexible and agile enough to more effectively support coaches with different needs in different contexts through different roles. Being attuned to the needs of each individual coach will be critical – as you reflect back on this course you might appreciate how this has been an integral aspect to what you should have learned.

Where next?

If you've enjoyed this course you can find more free resources and courses on [OpenLearn](#). You might be specifically interested in two other badged courses, [Exploring sport coaching and psychology](#) and [Communication and working relationships in sport and fitness](#). There is also a [page of sport and fitness courses on OpenLearn](#).

New to University study? You may be interested in our courses on [health and wellbeing](#). You might be particularly interested in our [BSc \(hons\) Sport, fitness and coaching](#).

Making the decision to study can be a big step and The Open University has over 40 years of experience supporting its students through their chosen learning paths. You can find out more about studying with us by [visiting our online prospectus](#).

Tell us what you think

Now you've come to the end of the course, we would appreciate a few minutes of your time to complete this short [end-of-course survey](#) (you may have already completed this survey at the end of Session 4).

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Activity 7: Video 3: IRIS Connect

Session 4

Text

Activity 3: case A: taken from: Power and knowledge in a coach mentoring program, (2018): Chris Zehntner & Jenny McMahon, Sports Coaching Review

Activity 4: case B: taken from 'Coaches' reflections of formal coach education; a critical sociological investigation' (2012) Piggot, D., Sport, Education and Society, vol. 17, no. 4, pp. 535–54.

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Activity 3: Audio 2: Lucy Moore and Stuart Armstrong; The Talent Equation

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Activity 6: Video 6: Paddy Upton

Session 7

Text

Is coach observation worth pursuing? David Keelty; <https://medium.com/@CoachngUnleashd>

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Audio-visual

Activity 2: Video 1: Barry Stark Snooker Coach

Activity 3: Video 2: research conducted by Loughborough University; Professor C. Cushion

Activity 4: Video 3: Australian Sports Commission;
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Activity 5: Video 4: Youth Sport Trust, 2010

Activity 6: Video 5: Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (aitsl)

Activity 6: Audio 1: can't find in the Portal?

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Activity 5: Videos 4 and 5: IRIS Connect

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