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## Coach developer 101 guide

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## The coach developer role

### 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. Behaviour 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 skilfully use a variety of tools, techniques and ingredients to facilitate and enrich learning to improve coaching practice.

# Coach learning

## 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.

# Learning relationships

## 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.

# Self-awareness and power

## 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.

# Teaching repertoire

## 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.

# Questioning practices

## 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.

# Observation and feedback

## 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.

# Coaching development and digital

## 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.